

Overall Goal: The overall goal for all the lessons by Fig Tree Ministries is to help people deepen their understanding of the biblical text.

Class Learning Objectives: A more expansive understanding of the Parable of the *Wicked Tenants*. This is a parable that points towards Jesus' identity and the actions of the religious leaders.

Cultural Background: Jesus, as a master communicator, tailors his parables to his intended audience. In the case of the Wicked Tenants – the audience is 'priests' and 'teachers of the law.' Since both of these people groups are well versed in Scripture, Jesus weaves a masterful parable from an array of Old Testament passages.

1. **Preparation** – For the second part of our study on the parable of the Wicked Tenants, we are going to look at Matthew's version (Matt. 21:33-46). Before the lesson, it will be helpful for you to read over these verses. Notice the sentence at the end that Matthew includes (Matt. 21:44).

2. Mark 12:1-12 (Matt. 21:33-46) – The Parable of the Wicked Tenants

Unknown / Difficult	Known
Jesus' True Identity	Isiah 5 w/ twist
Actions of Religious Leaders	Psalm 118 – David
	Psalm 2 – Son
	Cultural Thinking of Messiah/Israel

3. **Psalms of Solomon**¹ – The Psalms of Solomon are a group of Psalms that are part of a body of writings called the Pseudepigrapha. Writings within the Pseudepigrapha are written under a pseudonym. In this case, they are presented as being written by Solomon but are actually written by an unnamed author.

We look at the Psalms of Solomon to help us understand some of the ideas that were popular in the years before Jesus' birth. These writings help us understand what the people were looking for in a Messiah.

For this lesson, see the final page for Psalms of Solomon 17:21-43.

Notes:

¹ <http://www.earlyjewishwritings.com/psalmssolomon.html>

Psalms of Solomon
Anti Roman: the writer wants to rid Jerusalem of Rome
Anti Corrupt Priesthood – the priesthood had become corrupted and was colluding with Rome
Present a picture of the Messiah – Psalm 17 presents a unique portrait of the Messiah

Psalm of Solomon 17	Messianic Expectation
v. 21-22	- “son of David” – a Messianic title
v. 23-24	- ‘rod of iron’ and ‘pottery’ – like Psalm 2
v. 32-33	- ‘righteous king’ and a ‘king of peace’
v. 36-37	- ‘pure from sin’ and ‘Holy Spirit’

3. Psalm 118: 22-24 –

- a. Who is the stone?
- b. Who are the builders?

The following explanation is from a document known as [Midrash Hagadol](https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/midrash-ha-gadol)². This is a later – 13th century – a document which is a compilation of earlier writings.

“The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner:” the builders refer to Samuel and Jesse. The words, “has become the head of the corner” refer to David because he became the head of the kings.

Midrash Hagadol on Deuteronomy 1:17

Notes: _____

² <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/midrash-ha-gadol>

4. The Stone –

“Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed.”

Matthew 21:44

“Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed.”

Luke 20:18

In a document that comments on the book of Esther – called *Esther Rabbah*³- there is a saying that concerned what happens to those nations which attempt to attack Israel. In the book of Esther, Haman plots to have the Jews destroyed – but in the end, he is killed.

If a stone falls on a pot, woe to the pot!
If a pot falls on a stone, woe to the pot!
In either case, woe to the pot!

Esther Rabbah 7:10

This helps us understand the verse from Matthew (21:44). Jesus is the stone, and the priests (the enemy) are the pot! Anyone who goes after Jesus will ultimately destroy their own humanity.

5. Mark 12: 1-12 – The Wicked Tenants Concluding Message:

Unknown/Difficult	Known
Jesus’ True Identity	Psalm 2 – “Son”
	Ps. of Solomon – “Son of David”
	Psalm 118 – David
	The Stone the builders rejected

Notes:

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esther_Rabbah

Unknown/Difficult	Known
Religious Leaders	Psalm 2 – “nations that conspire”
	Ps. of Solomon – “unrighteous”
	Psalm 118 – “builders”
	The enemy the stone falls upon

6. Concluding thoughts:

- the Parable of the Wicked Tenants is an intricate masterpiece.
- Jesus is in discussion with the Priests and the Teachers of the Law as to who he is and what part they are playing.
- Jesus weaves together multiple texts from the Old Testament: **Psalm 2, Psalm 118, and Isaiah 5.**
- The Priests and the Teachers of the Law caught the allusions immediately because they know their Old Testament by memory.
- Jesus is telling them his true identity.
- Finally, anyone who fights against Jesus is destined to lose. Woe to the pot!!

Faith Principle 1: Woe to the pot!

Anyone who attacks God or Jesus is destined to fail. We may not be able to see what is happening to their humanity (their soul) but we must rest assured that whether “the stone falls on them or they fall on the stone” – woe to the pot!

We have to be confident in how big God is and that ultimately He can handle – as the absolute – whatever humanity might say or do.

Our mission is to strengthen our faith so that we may stand in peace in the midst of the chaos having confidence that Jesus will prevail.

Psalm 17: 21-43

21 Behold, O Lord, and raise up unto them their king, the son of David, at the time known to you, O God, in order that he may reign over Israel your servant.

22 And gird him with strength that he may shatter unrighteous rulers, and that he may purge Jerusalem from gentiles who trample (her) down to destruction.

23 Wisely, righteously he shall thrust out sinners from (the) inheritance; he shall destroy the arrogance of the sinner as a potter's jar.

24 With a rod of iron he shall shatter all their substance; he shall destroy the godless nations with the word of his mouth.

25 At his rebuke nations shall flee before him, and he shall reprove sinners for the thoughts of their heart.

26 And he shall gather together a holy people, whom he shall lead in righteousness, and he shall judge the tribes of the people who has been made holy by the Lord his God.

27 And he shall not suffer unrighteousness to lodge any more in their midst, nor shall there dwell with them any man who knows wickedness, for he shall know them, that they are all sons of their God.

28 And he shall divide them according to their tribes upon the land, and neither sojourner nor alien shall dwell with them anymore.

29 He shall judge peoples and nations in the wisdom of his righteousness. Selah.

30 And he shall have the gentile nations to serve him under his yoke; and he shall glorify the Lord in a place prominent (above) all the earth. And he shall purge Jerusalem, making it holy as of old.

31 So that nations shall come from the ends of the earth to see his glory, bringing as gifts her sons who had been driven out, and to see the glory of the Lord, wherewith God has glorified her.

32 And he will be a righteous king over them, taught of God. And there shall be no unrighteousness in his days in their midst, for all shall be holy and their king the Lord Messiah.

33 For he shall not put his trust in horse and rider and bow, nor shall he multiply for himself gold and silver for war, nor shall he gather confidence from a multitude for the day of battle.

34 The Lord Himself is his king, the hope of him who is mighty through (his) hope in God. He shall be compassionate to all nations who (shall be) in fear before him.

35 He will smite the earth with the word of his mouth forever. He will bless the people of the Lord with wisdom and gladness,

36 and he himself (will be) pure from sin, so that he may rule a great people. He will rebuke rulers, and remove sinners by the might of his word;

37 and (relying) upon his God, throughout his days he will not stumble. For God will make him mighty by means of (His) holy spirit, and wise by means of the spirit of understanding, with strength and righteousness.

38 And the blessing of the Lord (will be) with him: he will be strong and stumble not;

39 his hope (will be) in the Lord: who then can prevail against him? (He will be) mighty in his works, and strong in the fear of God,

40 (He will be) shepherding the flock of the Lord faithfully and righteously and will suffer none among them to stumble in their pasture.

41 He will lead them all in holiness, and there will be no pride among them that any among them should be oppressed.

42 This (will be) the majesty of the king of Israel whom God knows; he will raise him up over the house of Israel to discipline it.

43 His words (shall be) more refined than costly gold, the choicest; in the assemblies he will judge the peoples, the tribes of the sanctified. His words (shall be) like the words of the holy ones in the midst of sanctified peoples.

44 Blessed are they who shall be in those days, to see the good fortune of Israel that God shall bring to pass in the gathering together of the tribes.

45 May the Lord hasten his mercy upon Israel! May he deliver us from the uncleanness of unholy enemies! The Lord himself is our king for ever and ever.