

Prophetic Parables

**A Trilogy of Temple Parables
Matthew 21 -22**

Introduction

Their location

The three parables that fall within these chapters were delivered by the Lord within the precincts of the Temple at Jerusalem. Accordingly they take on a particular significance. The Temple was no longer God's house but "your house." It had become a seat of profanity, the desolated province of vaunted Judaist pride vested in the Jewish religious hierarchy. The religious leaders were pathologically driven to preserve their position and power over the people. It was their endemic envy that prompted their question which sparked the first of these three parables from the Lord. "And when He was come into the Temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as He was teaching, and said, By what authority doest Thou these things? and who gave Thee this authority?" (Matt 21:23). How presumptuous of this ostensibly unlearned Galilean to teach the people at all, let alone do so within their domain – the Temple! *They* had not given Him permission to do so!

Their purpose

In these three parables the Lord identifies three things that were rejected by the benighted hearts and minds of the Jewish leaders:

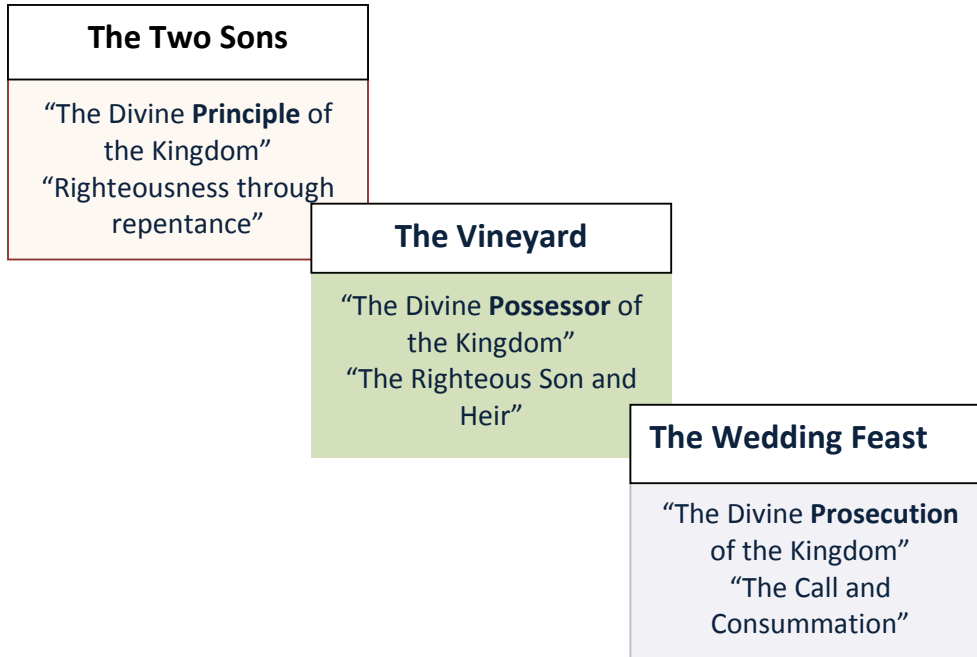
1. The Divine **principle** of the Kingdom which is righteousness through repentance.
2. The Divine **Possessor** of the Kingdom who is the righteous Son and Heir.
3. The Divine **prosecution** of the Kingdom in its righteous call and consummation.

Their timing

Significantly these parables were delivered before and after the events listed below. (Note that Mark records them chronologically whereas Matthew records them topically). They were delivered in the week just before the Lord was taken by wicked hands and slain on the cross at Calvary – the occasion when the opposition by the Jewish leaders and multitudes reached its heinous height. By this time the Lord had well and truly - in *principle*, set aside the nation. This is borne out in the study of the parables of Matthew 13. "For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother. And He began again to teach by the sea side: and there was gathered unto Him a great multitude, so that He entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land. And He taught them many things by parables" (Mk 3:35-4:1-2; Matt 12:50-13:1-3).

The Chronology

- The Lord's triumphant entry into Jerusalem and visit to the Temple. He surveyed it and retired to Bethany with His disciples (Mk 11:1-11; Matt 21:1-11).
- The cursing of the barren fig tree when He returned from Bethany (Mk 11-14; Matt 21:18-19).
- The second cleansing of the Temple in Jerusalem (Mk 11:15-19; Matt 21:12-17).
- The encounter with the barren and then withered fig tree when He left Jerusalem (Mk 11:20-26; Matt 21:18-22).
- The challenge to the Lord's authority (Mk 11:27-12:12; Matt 21:23-22:14).



- Further questions by the Jewish leaders (Mk 12:13-27; Matt 22:15-33).
- Final public teaching (Mk 12:28-40; Matt 22:34-23:39).
- Olivet prophetic discourse (Mk 13:1-27; Matt 24:1-51).
- Calvary – the setting aside of the nation judicially – the veil of the Temple was rent in two (Mk 15:38; Matt 27:51).