

Lecture 25 – Final Week (cont.); Teaching in the Temple

Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him. “By what authority are you doing these things?” they asked. Matthew 21:23 (NIV)

Key Terms

Controversy parables

Objectives

- *To describe the purpose(s) of Jesus’ warnings
- *To show how the history of Israel applies to the controversy parables

Lead Questions

- *How does Jesus answer His opponents when they try to trap Him with words?
- *To whom was Jesus speaking in Matthew 21-23?

Final Week (cont.)

V. Cursing of Fig Tree (cont.)

- C. Disciples’ surprising question
- D. “This mountain” - the temple mountain
- E. Conclusions

Mountain symbolizes that which sets itself up against God. In OT prophets, it was often a symbol for pride and rebellion. Jer. 51:25, Babylon called “destroying mountain” even though Babylon was built on a flat plain.

Teaching in the Temple - Matthew 21-23

I. Introduction

Jesus uses various tools to show Israel its true condition, warn them and call them to repentance. His teaching also helps the church, which replaces the temple, to be fruitful.

II. Debates

- A. By whose authority did you cleanse temple?
 1. Issue: the Jewish authorities never authorized Jesus.
 2. Reply: Jesus puts a counter-question regarding: John the Baptist, a dilemma to them.
- B. Pay Taxes to Caesar?
 1. A trap set by Pharisees and Herodians: Pay taxes or not?
 2. A perfect dilemma
 3. First century taxation
 4. A look at a coin and its inscription: Give to Caesar what is his, but not what is not.

What is the deeper meaning in Jesus’ reply to the Pharisees and Herodians when asked about paying taxes?

III. Controversy Parables - Initially Disarming, Transparent at End

- A. Two sons
 1. Symbol
 2. Message
- B. Wicked Tenants
 1. An allegory of Israel’s history
 2. Israel has rejected its cornerstone and will be rejected.
 3. Thus her kingdom and privileges will be taken away and given to the church.
- C. Promises of God to Israel now fulfilled in church

1. 1 Peter 2:5-10
2. Romans 5-8

IV. Warnings of Woe to Israel (Matt. 23)

A. The nature of the woes

1. Expressing anger and lamentation. Instruments of judgment and grace.
2. A last warning
3. Directly warns Jews; indirectly instructs others about hypocrisy's dangers.
4. Question: How could gentle, loving Jesus speak so?

For whose benefit were these judgments given? For what purpose(s)?

B. The content of the woes

1. They lay heavy burdens, 23:1
2. They love the show and rewards of religion, 23:5
3. They are blind guides, 23:16
4. They neglect the weighty matters, 23:23
5. They are wicked, 23:27

C. The heart of a scribe or a Pharisee: two kinds of hypocrisy

D. Woes predict judgment but also lament:

1. Jerusalem faces disaster.
2. Judgment comes on all unbelievers in hidden solidarity (Matt, 23:33-6, Rev. 17:6, 18:24).

V. Reflections on Preaching and Teaching from the Last Week

A. Hasten to the cross, the climax.

The distance between the redemptive-historical situation of the original audience and the post-resurrection church audience is greatest here.

1. The woes are not appropriate for the church, except indirectly.
2. They do not fit many unbelievers today; most are too ignorant to be this sort of hypocrite.

B. The reluctant diagnostician - a parable

1. A false kindness
2. Never deny the consequences of rebellion against God (Ezek. 3:16-21).

C. There is a piety that removes one from God (Jeremias).

Some are sure God should be on their side. The consequences were disastrous.