

Handout: Matthew Lesson 20

Structure of the Fifth Narrative: Jesus' Ministry in Judea and Jerusalem:

Part I: Instructions for Christians (19:2-20:28)

- A. marriage and divorce
- B. celibacy
- C. children
- D. wealth (encounter with the rich young man)
- E. service (Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard)
- F. third prediction of the Passion
- G. the petition of James and John Zebedee's mother

Part II: Miraculous deeds and prophetic acts of the Messiah (20:29-21:22)

- A. healing of two blind men in Jericho
- B. Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem
- C. the second Temple cleansing
- D. cursing the fig tree

Part III: Hostile encounters with the Jewish leaders (21:23-22:46)

- A. dialogues with opponents
- B. three parables
 - 1. Parable of the Two Sons
 - 2. Parable of the Tenants
 - 3. Parable of the Wedding Feast
- C. questions and answers

Part IV: Denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees (23:1-39)

- A. woes against the scribes and Pharisees
- B. lamentation over Jerusalem

The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard (Mt 20:1-16): The owner of the vineyard is described in the Greek text by the word *oikodespotes* [*oy-kod-es-pot'-ace*], "the head of a family, master of the house" and as the *kyrios* (lord) of the vineyard. In the symbolic images of the prophets the vineyard was a symbol of Israel in covenant in God, His sacred assembly or *k(q)ahal*, His "called out" ones from the peoples of the earth, but this parable is about the coming "kingdom of heaven" (vs. 1)—the new Israel of the New Covenant Church. *Ekklesia* is the Greek for Church (see Mt 16:18 and 18:17 twice).

1. vineyard = the kingdom of heaven/the Church which is the house of God
2. housemaster/lord of the vineyard = God
3. laborers = those who serve the kingdom/house of God
4. market-place = the world
5. foreman who pays the wage = Jesus
6. wage = salvation
7. hours* = the age of man in salvation history and/or the lifetime of a person from birth to the end of life

*dawn, third (9AM), sixth (noon), ninth (3 PM), and eleventh (5 PM) hours marked the progression of the daily worship and sacrifice of the Tamid in the Jerusalem Temple.

Mt 20:22-23: "Cup" in the symbolic imagery of the prophets = the cup of God's salvation for the righteous or the cup of God's wrath and suffering for the wicked (see Is 25:6; Is 51:17, 23; Zec 12:2; Mt 26:39, 42; Mk 14:36; Lk 22:20, 42; Jn 18:11; 1 Cor 10:16, 21; 11:25-28; Rev 14:10; 16:19; 17:4; 18:6).