

The Authority of Jesus Challenged

²⁷And they came again to Jerusalem. And as he was walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to him,²⁸and they said to him, "By what authority are you doing these things, or who gave you this authority to do them?" ²⁹Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one question; answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. ³⁰Was the baptism of John from heaven or from man? Answer me." ³¹And they discussed it with one another, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven', he will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?'"³²But shall we say, 'From man'?"—they were afraid of the people, for they all held that John really was a prophet. ³³So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

The Parable of the Tenants

12 And he began to speak to them in parables. "A man planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a pit for the wine press and built a tower, and leased it to tenants and went into another country.²When the season came, he sent a servant^[a] to the tenants to get from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. ³And they took him and beat him and sent him away empty-handed. ⁴Again he sent to them another servant, and they struck him on the head and treated him shamefully.⁵And he sent another, and him they killed. And so with many others: some they beat, and some they killed. ⁶He had still one other, a beloved son. Finally he sent him to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' ⁷But those tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' ⁸And they took him and killed him and threw him out of the vineyard. ⁹What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others.¹⁰Have you not read this Scripture:

"The stone that the builders rejected

has become the cornerstone;^[b]

¹¹this was the Lord's doing,

and it is marvellous in our eyes?"

¹²And they were seeking to arrest him but feared the people, for they perceived that he had told the parable against them. So they left him and went away.

Q: *What is the context to this parable in verses 27-33?*

Q: What is the point of this parable? Who is Jesus criticising and why?

Q: How is the attitude of the Jewish leaders reflected in the world's attitude to God and his word today? How was it reflected in us?

Q: What does this parable show us about the character and purposes of God?

