Traditionally, the parable of the wicked tenants has been understood as a christological allegory. Recently, C. H. Dodd, Joachim Jeremias, and a few other scholars have shown that it is an authentic parable of Jesus, but they have not been able to elaborate a single point of comparison on which the parable hinges. Both Dodd and Jeremias consider it to be a parable told by Jesus to illustrate the fate of those who oppose him and his work. This makes the parable into a virtual allegory. We would like to suggest, however, that Matthew xxi 33-41 is not a christological parable, but rather a parable that attacks the methods of the first century Zealot movement. The point of comparison can be understood so that the hearers of Jesus' day are led by the parable to a conclusion that they would not normally accept, i.e., that the logical outcome of the Zealots' methods is their own destruction.

As it now stands in Matthew, the story shows the allegorical treatment given to it by the early Church. It will be necessary to move back through the various stages of the parable in order to see what form it originally took in Jesus' day, and then to develop an application which follows directly from the original parable. Comparisons with Mark, Luke, and the Gospel of Thomas will illuminate how the allegorization proceeded and why the early Church quickly saw in the parable an allegory about Jesus.

The first noticeable difference among the four versions of the parable is the introduction. As Jeremias notes, the Matthew and Mark versions contain a detailed picture of the vineyard that is in close agreement with the details of the Song of the Vineyard in Isaiah v 1ff. He goes on to explain that the scripture allusion immediately makes it clear that the vineyard is Israel and that the owner is God. Thus in Matthew, the allegorical treatment is im-
mediately presented. The allusion to Isaiah v is absent from Luke and Thomas.

The second appreciable difference is the manner in which the son is killed. In Mark and Thomas, the son is killed first and then his body is thrown outside of the vineyard. Jeremias suggests that this feature of the story "simply emphasizes the full extent of the husbandmen's iniquity: they go on to wreak upon the corpse the final indignity of throwing it over the wall and denying to the slain so much as a grave". In Matthew and Luke, however, the details have been rearranged so that the son is first thrown out of the vineyard and then killed. Both Dodd and Jeremias explain this curiosity by suggesting that Matthew and Luke have rearranged the sequence in order to refer allegorically to the fact that Jesus was slain outside the city. (John xix 17; Hebrews xiii 12f.) There is no good reason not to accept their hypothesis. The description of the murder of the son as reported by Mark and Thomas "betrays no reminiscence of the manner of the death of Jesus"), whereas, in Matthew and Luke, the parable has been given a christological colouring.

Thirdly, the four gospel authors do not agree on the number and arrangement of the servants who are sent by the landowner. The simplest version is to be found in Thomas where two servants are sent and beaten and then the son is killed. Luke reports the sending of three servants who are beaten and wounded and sent away empty-handed and then the son who is killed outright. Mark also reports the sending of three servants, two of whom are beaten, wounded, and sent away empty-handed, and the third who is killed, but then he adds that many others were sent, some of whom were killed and some beaten, before the sending of the son. Matthew has carried the details to the farthest degree. He reports that the first three servants were beaten, killed, and stoned respectively, and then the landowner sent another group of servants and they were treated the same. Finally the landowner sent his son. In the Thomas, Mark and Luke versions, the treatment of the servants builds to a climax with the killing of the son. Matthew, on the other hand, "has pursued the allegorizing method consistently to the end. The

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2) Ibid., p. 73.
4) Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 73.