

THEME: THE PARABLES OF JESUS

TOPIC: THE WICKED VINEDRESSERS

TEXT: MATTHEW 21:33-46; MARK 12:1-2; LUKE 20:9-19

INTRODUCTION

As we saw in our last study, Jesus often used parables to reply to those who opposed Him. In the parable of "**The Two Sons**" (Matthew 21:28-32), Jesus responded to those who had rejected John the Baptist.

But in the parable of "**The Wicked Vinedressers**" (Matthew 21:33-46), Jesus vividly describes the sinfulness of those religious leaders who were rejecting the very Son of God!

I. THE MEANING OF THE PARABLE

A. THE VARIOUS ITEMS OF THE PARABLE ARE EVIDENT.

1. The vineyard immediately brings to mind Israel.
 - a. The figure of a vineyard referring to Israel was well-known – **Isaiah 5:1-7**.
 - b. But here it is not Israel as a nation per se.
 - Rather, "**the special advantages and opportunities which were given to the people as the chosen seed**" (W.M. Taylor, *The Parables of Our Saviour*).
 - For later Jesus explains the vineyard (or kingdom of God) "**will be given to a nation producing its fruit**" – **Matthew 21:43**
2. The landowner who planted the vineyard is God.
3. The wicked vinedressers represents Israel's leaders – **Matthew 21:45**
 - a. Their chief priests, scribes, elders, and all their followers.
 - b. Therefore, the physical nation of Israel as a whole.
4. The servants who were sent on behalf of the landowner represents the prophets.
 - a. As a nation, Israel rejected many of her prophets – **2 Chronicles 36:15-16**
 - b. Note the plaintive cry of Jesus over Jerusalem later on – **Matthew 23:37**
5. The landowner's son is Jesus Christ Himself.

B. THE SUCCEEDING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS REVEAL JESUS' INTENT.

1. Which was to help them see why God would be just
 - a. In bringing condemnation upon Israel.
 - b. In giving the blessings of Israel to those more deserving – **Matthew 21:43**
2. Indeed, their rejection of Jesus had been foretold in the Scriptures – **Matthew 21:42;**

Psalm 118:22, 23

- a. The "builders" were the religious leaders of the nation
- b. The "stone" which they rejected was Christ.
- c. Yet, this stone would be made a "chief cornerstone" by God Himself.
 - In which God would build a something "new"
 - I.e., the church in which both Jew and Gentile were fellow citizens of the household of God – **Ephesians 2:19-20**.
3. In elaborating on "the stone which the builders rejected", Jesus reveals the terrible consequence for those who reject it – **Matthew 21:44**

- a. Another way of saying it is anyone who opposes Christ is destined to fall, even be "pulverized".
- b. The same was said of those who would not trust in the Lord in Isaiah's day – **Isaiah 8:13-15**.

II. AN APPLICATION OF THE PARABLE

A. FIRST, NOTE THAT GOD OFTEN BESTOWS WONDERFUL PRIVILEGES...

- 1. This He had done with the nation of Israel.
 - a. Like a precious vineyard, God planted Israel in Canaan.
 - b. He blessed the nation with laws, priests, prophets, and other special privileges
 - c. He eventually sent His only begotten Son as their Messiah.
- 2. How about us today?
 - a. Have we not received wonderful privileges from God?
 - b. We enjoy free access to the Word of God, and the freedom to worship without fear of persecution; which is not the case in other parts of the World.
 - c. We are blessed to hear things that prophets, kings, and saints of old desired to hear and were not able – **Matthew 13:16-17**

CONCLUSION

The main lesson of this parable can be summarized in the words of **Psalm 2:12**.

"Kiss (i.e., pay homage to) the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little." Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him."

So obvious was Jesus' meaning and intent in telling this parable, that the religious leaders' would have arrested Him at that moment had it not been for the people (**Matthew 21:45-46**).

Truly God has given us wonderful blessings.

- a. He made us worthy to be **"partakers of the inheritance of the saints" – Colossian 1:12**
- b. He **"has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" – Colossians 1:13**
- c. In Christ we have **"redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins" – Colossians 1:14**.
- d. He sent us apostles and prophets of His Son, whose words are in the New Testament.