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The Parables of Jesus Christ: Some Vicious Vine Keepers

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THE PARABLES OF JESUS CHRIST

PARABLE FORTY: Some Vicious Vine Keepers (Mt. 21:33-45; Mk. 12:1-12; Lk. 20:9-16)

SURVEY

A landlord rented his fertile vineyard to some tenants and went away on a journey. When harvest time approached, he sent his servants to collect his fruit. However, the wicked tenants refused his rightful request, beating some of the servants, stoning others, and actually killing a few. In a final attempt, the owner sent his own son, assuming they would surely respect him. But to the contrary, the godless tenants murdered the son and took control of the vineyard. Responding in righteous indignation the furious owner descended upon the vineyard, killed those murderers and entrusted his vineyard to others.

SIGNIFICANCE

This is the only parable which seems to predict the following three events:

1. The rejection of both the Father and Son by Israel
2. The killing of the Son by Israel
3. The wrath of God (destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in 70 A.D.?) upon Israel

SPIRITUAL TRUTHS

As the context indicates, Jesus deals with the nation Israel in this parable. It contains a historical, prophetic, and spiritual element.

- The historical element
 1. The divine Householder did plant a special vineyard—Israel (Isa. 5:1-7).
 2. In the fullness of time He did send forth His servants to obtain fruit, but they were badly treated (see Acts 7:51-52).
 - a. Zechariah the high priest was stoned to death (2 Chron. 24:20-21).
 - b. Isaiah the prophet was (probably) sawn asunder (Heb. 11:37).
 - c. Elijah and Elisha were mocked.
 - d. Jeremiah was beaten and imprisoned.
 - e. Amos was rejected by the religious leaders (Amos 7).
 3. Finally, the divine Householder did send his beloved Son (Gal. 4:4).

- The prophetic element

1. The Son would be killed by crucifixion.
2. The city of the wicked workers would be destroyed (Titus the Roman general burned Jerusalem in A.D. 70).

- The spiritual element

The Father did not do what the crowd suggested in the parable, namely, to *"miserably destroy those wicked men."* To the contrary, the divine plan called not for destruction resulting from wrath, but rather for redemption resulting from grace.

"Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets, as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof and I will set it up; That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." (Acts 15:14-18)

"And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." (Rom. 11:26-27)