

THE HUSBANDMAN AND VINEYARD

Jon Macon

In Mark 12:1-11, our Lord Jesus Christ taught the following parable to the leaders of the Jews: “A certain man planted a vineyard, and set a hedge about it, and digged a place for the winefat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard. And they caught him, and beat him, and sent him away empty. And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled. And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some. Having yet therefore one son, his wellbeloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son. But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours. And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard. What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others. And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner: this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?” This parable says a lot about who Christ is, and also says a lot about the people it was spoken against.

The rejection of Christ by the Jews

The parable begins with Christ speaking of “a certain man” who “planted a vineyard, and set a hedge about it, and dug a place for the winefat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country” (Mark 12:1). The owner of the vineyard sent a servant to collect his fruit from the vineyard (Mark 12:2), but the husbandmen “caught him, and beat him, and sent him away empty. And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled. And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some” (Mark 12:3-5). Finally, the lord sent his only son and they cast him out of the vineyard and killed him (Mark 12:6-8). Jesus then said, “What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? *he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others*” (Mark 12:9). Jesus applied this parable to what was about to happen to him within the next few days. The Father had sent prophets

THE HUSBANDMAN AND VINEYARD

(continued)

to His people but they had rejected them. Now, God's only Son was being rejected by these chief priests and scribes and they would kill him. God would thus reject these people and give the kingdom to the Gentiles.

The judgment to come

Jesus came to this earth the first time "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). He did not come then to bring God's judgment upon wicked men. In John 12:47-50, he said, "And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak." One day, Christ is going to return and "be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, *in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power*" (2 Thes 1:7-9). The day is coming when all who reject Christ will face eternal destruction. In his parable in Mark 12:10-11, Jesus asked, "*And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner: this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?*" Here, Jesus quoted Psalm 118:22, "*The stone which the builders refused is become the head of the corner,*" which was a prophecy about Christ. Jesus Christ was the stone that would be rejected (like the son of the lord of the vineyard), but God would resurrect Jesus and make him the chief corner stone of the church (1 Cor 3:11; Eph 2:19-22; 1 Pet 2:4-8), and would make him the judge of all men (Acts 17:31). Thus, Jesus said, "Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (Luke 20:18). The chief priests and scribes "knew that he had spoken the parable against them" (Mark 12:12), but rather than repent, they attempted that very hour to fulfill the Lord's prophecy that they would kill him!