

The Gospel of Luke

The Parable of the Wicked Vine-Growers

Luke 20:9-18

1. **A Pointed Parable**

This story naturally drew Jesus' hearers in and would have caused them both to marvel at the gracious benevolence and long-suffering patience of the landowner as well as to become righteously angry with the increasingly wicked actions of the tenant farmers (cf. Mt. 21:41).

2. **A Historical Parable** (vs.9-12)

Jesus used the imagery of the vineyard and the vinedresser to refer to His followers (Jn. 15:1ff), but Israel had historically been referred to as God's own vineyard (Isa. 5:7). Israel was to produce wonderful fruit but delivered only worthless grapes (Isa. 5:4). The Lord had promised to judge the nation for unfaithfulness (Dt. 28:15), and though He graciously sent prophets to call the people to repentance (Jer. 7:25-26; 25:1-11), they refused to repent and rejected the prophets (Mt. 23:29-39).

3. **A Contemporary Parable** (vs.13-15a)

This is the apex of the farmers' wicked rebellion against the owner of the vineyard. These evil men knew the identity of the son (cf. Jn. 3:2; Lk. 7:22), and they planned to kill him in order to secure their place in the vineyard (Jn. 11:47-50). By the time that Jesus spoke these words in Jerusalem, all that was left for the Jewish leaders was to execute Jesus which they had long desired.

4. **The Implications of the Parable** (vs.15b-16a)

Any tenant farmer who acted in such a manner deserved the merciless judgment of the landowner. Israel had been judged in the past for their rejection of God and of His prophets. Jesus had spoken of the coming judgment upon Israel for their rejection (Lk. 19:41-44), and God has, for a time, given the stewardship of His gospel to another people (Rom. 11:25-29; cf. Acts 18:6).

5. **The Comprehension of the Parable** (v.16b)

The crowd called for the judgment of the vine-growers (Mt. 21:41). When Jesus renders the same verdict, though they appear to understand their self-condemnation, they not seek Jesus' instructions so as to avert judgment (cf. Lk. 3:10).

6. **A Concluding Proverb** (vs.17-19)

Though John heralded Jesus as having been sent from God (Jn. 1:29-30; cf. Lk. 20:6), the people and the leaders (v.19) have rejected Him (cf. Ps. 118:22). Jesus now warns the crowd that their opposition to Him will end in their own destruction.