

Matthew 21:33-46

The dangers of denying Jesus



Jesus's second parable spoken to this group of chief priests, elders (23) and Pharisees (45) widens his warning. The *whole nation* of Israel is in peril on account of their rejection of the Son of God.

➤ A bit of Jewish background

When Jesus starts talking about a *vineyard*, Jewish thoughts would undoubtedly have gone back to Isaiah 5, where a vineyard had produced “wild grapes” (instead of wild tenants!)

Jesus' quotation (42) from Psalm 118 needs to be set alongside the *crowds'* “quote” of the same Psalm in v9.

And there's a clear Jewish word-play lurking behind the scenes here. In v39 a *son* (Hebrew *ben*) is rejected; in v42 a *stone* (Hebrew *eben*) is rejected. They loved that kind of thing!

Questions to consider:

➤ The certainty of “the coming”

But is this how we really live?

➤ The patience of God

Do we presume upon this (Romans 2:4)?

➤ If God did *this to them* ... then what about us?

If Israel is (was?) God's “firstborn son” (Exodus 4:22-23), but could lose the Kingdom of God ... how should we be praying for *our* nation nowadays?

➤ But is it *all* “about them”?

The Jewish leaders finally perceive that Jesus spoke this parable “about them”.

When (and how) do we *fail to realise* that God is speaking to us through his Word?

But can we also make the opposite mistake, seeing Scripture full of (perhaps) stories of heroic encouragement for us, calling us to be mini-heroes of our own sagas ... when it is far more about showing us Jesus Christ, the *true* hero?

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