

God's Plan in a Parable

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Different aspects of God's plan for mankind are explained in Christ's parables. One in particular covers a large sweep of history and reveals why mankind is experiencing many of the difficulties we are facing right now. Before examining this parable, it is important to understand the timing and setting. It begins with an owner who works hard to establish a successful vineyard before he transfers the responsibility of running and maintaining it to others. This has applications in both the spirit and physical realms because responsibilities were given to angels prior to the creation Adam and Eve, and to human beings later.

This separation is confirmed in a number of scriptures, but for the sake of brevity we will look at the following example confirming angels were created and functioning before any human appeared on the scene.

*Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said: "Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me. **Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?** Tell Me, if you have understanding (Job 38:1-4; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted; emphasis added).*

*To what were its foundations fastened? **Or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?** (Job 38:6-7; emphasis added)*

In this discussion, Almighty God is confirming that no human being was around when the morning stars, which are higher ranking angels, and other angels (sons of God) were created. After the creation of mankind, one of these morning stars, along with other angels,

appeared before the Lord in Job 1:6 and 2:1. However, at this point in time, that morning star had already rebelled against Almighty God and could no longer come before Him. Therefore "*the Lord*" in Job 1:6, would have been the spirit being who later became known as Messiah, or Jesus Christ.

*How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer (Day Star), son of the morning (morning star)! **How you are cut to the ground** (no longer allowed to come before Almighty God), you who weakened the nations (by encouraging sinful behavior)! (Isaiah 14:12; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).*

*And he (Christ) said to them (his disciples), **"I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven"** (Luke 10:18; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).*

The fact that Christ conversed with Satan on numerous occasions is also confirmed in Matthew 4:3-11 and John 13:27. Therefore the parable we are about to examine will reveal the attitude of Satan and the fallen angels; as well as human beings who can be influenced by them.

Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner (Almighty God) who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country (Matthew 21:33; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Although Christ was the active agent in carrying out his Father's creation, the Father nonetheless is the owner of all things and, as Christ said, greater than any created being.

***My Father, who has given them to me (Christ), is greater than all...** (John 10:29; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).*

*I (Christ) am going to the Father, for **my Father is greater than I*** (John 14:28; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

As we continue in this parable, it is helpful to consider that the word vinedressers can mean tenant farmers.

Now when vintage-time drew near, he (Almighty God) sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive (some of) its fruit (Matthew 21:34, Ed. notes in parentheses)

Because Almighty God does not change His mind, or reverse course, His consistency is completely reliable (cf. James 1:17). Therefore, His servants would have been doing the same thing that the Levitical priests were doing during the First Covenant period, and that is collecting the firstfruits of the harvest.

Bring the firstfruits of our dough, our offerings, the fruit from all kinds of trees, the new wine and oil, to the priests, to the storerooms of the house of our God, and bring the tithes of our land to the Levites, for the Levites should receive the tithes in all our farming communities (Nehemiah 10:37).

Going back to Christ's parable, these vinedressers not only refused to pay the owner of the vineyard the portion that was due to Him, but they were also abusive toward those He sent to collect this amount.

And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them (Matthew 21:35-36).

Christ identified who these vinedressers represented, and it was the religious/political class who exercised authority over the citizenry.

But the Lord (Christ) said to him, "Now you Pharisees make the outside of the cup and dish clean, but your inward part is full of greed (grasping or robbery) and wickedness (Luke 11:39; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and your forefathers killed them (Luke 11:47).

Therefore the wisdom of God also said, "I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and persecute, that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple." (Luke 11:49-51).

Going back to Christ's parable, the vinedressers knew what was required of them, but they rebelled against the owner and went even further by injuring and killing the servants who were sent to them. If this was not extreme enough, the owner sent his son who they also killed.

Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, "They will respect my son." But when the vinedressers saw the son (Christ), they said among themselves, "This is the heir. Come let us kill him and seize his inheritance." And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him (Matthew 21:37-39; Ed. note in parenthesis).

What is important to note is the Pharisees did not believe that Christ was the Son of Almighty God, but the vinedressers in the parable did believe this truth. This explains why Christ identified Satan as the one who was really behind the plot to kill him.

I (Christ) speak what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father (Satan). They answered and said to him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's

children, you would do the works of Abraham. But **now you seek to kill me**, a man who has told you the truth which I heard from (The) God. Abraham did not do this. (Instead), you do the deeds of your father." Then they said to him, "We were not born of fornication: we have one Father-God. Jesus said to them, "If (The) God were your Father, you would love me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of myself, but He sent me. **Why do you not understand my speech? Because you are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it** (John 8:38-44; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Ultimately, it is power from "the Father of all spirits" (cf. Heb. 12:9) that will deal with Satan and the other rebellious angels during a future judgment, which is described in Christ's parable.

Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers? They said to him, "He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons." (Matthew 21:40-41).

Christ then revealed that his Father's plan always included the means through which sin would eventually be eliminated altogether.

Jesus said to them, "Did you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders (of this present evil age; cf. Gal. 1:4) rejected has become the chief cornerstone (Christ). This was the Lord (Almighty's) doing. And it is marvelous in our eyes.'" (Matthew 21:42; Ed. notes in parentheses).

So, verse 42 confirmed that Christ would be the means through which all repentant sinners could be forgiven and restored in their relationship with God the Father. This was already in the plan of salvation before the first sin was committed.

*For we who have believed (God's word) do enter that rest (everlasting life), as he has said" So I swore in My wrath, 'They (unrepentant vinedressers) shall not enter My rest,'" **although the works** (God's plan) **were finished from the foundation of the world** (Hebrews 4:3; cf. Rev. 13:8; Ed. Notes in parentheses).*

Any punishment upon the vinedressers will have the goal of leading them to repent of their sins, which will include their part in Christ's death (cf. Rev. 1:7).

Therefore I (Christ) say to you, the kingdom (gov't) of God will be taken from you (vinedressers) and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. And whoever falls on this stone (Christ) will be broken (humbled and brought to repentance); but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder (completely remove the sinful person he used to be) (Matthew 21:43-44; Ed. notes in parentheses).

After giving this parable, it appears the leaders in Judah began making some connections, but it was not enough at that time to lead them to repent of their plans to kill Christ.

*Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking of them. But **when they sought to lay hands on him**, they feared the multitudes because these multitudes took him for a prophet (Matthew 21:45-46; emphasis added).*

In conclusion, Christ's parable reveals that he chose to lay down his life if/when necessary before any sin was committed, and that first sin originated with Lucifer who is now known

as the great dragon, that serpent of old (Gen. 3:1), the devil and Satan (Rev. 12:9). The vinedressers were granted responsibility to manage the owner's affairs, but they rebelled, which exposes Satan's lawless attitude toward his Creator's rules and regulations that are an expression of His love for all His children (1Jn. 5:3). Because the leaders in Judea during Christ's ministry did not believe he was Almighty God's son, but Satan and the demons did (Acts 19:15), it reveals the truth that Satan and his forces are ultimately responsible for murdering Christ. Finally, these fallen angels will enter a period of judgment in the future when they could choose to repent and be restored in their relationship with their heavenly Father because He is not willing that anyone perish forever (2Peter 3:9). In the meantime, mankind is still vulnerable to Satan's influence and manipulation, which explains why we are experiencing so many serious problems in the world right now. For further information on this subject, please click on the following link:

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