

Vinedressers, Pharisees, and Fallen Angels

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One of Christ's parables, in the 21st chapter of Matthew, compares the responsibilities of vinedressers, or tenant farmers, to those with political or religious influence in the physical and spiritual realm. Upon close examination, this parable reveals the damage that "power hungry" individuals can cause to others. Therefore, it acts as a warning to anyone who abuses a position of responsibility or trust.

In Matthew 21:33, the landowner represents Almighty God who set in motion all the events associated with the spiritual and physical creation. Once initiated, Almighty God left the completion and management to others under His authority. Having done this, He went into a "far country", which is a metaphor representing the "heaven of heavens" which is His dwelling place.

The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's; but the earth He has given to the children of men (Ps. 115:16; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted).

The identity of the landowner who planted the vineyard is confirmed by Jesus Christ.

But he answered and said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted" (Mt. 15:13; cf. Jn. 6:44, 65).

King David expressed a deep desire for Almighty God to return from the "far country", while at the same time acknowledging that "the Branch", which Almighty God "made strong", must first finish the work given to him. That "Branch" is Jesus Christ.

Return, we beseech You, O God of hosts; look down from heaven and see, and visit this vine¹⁵and the vineyard which Your right hand has planted, and **the branch that You made strong for Yourself** (Ps. 80:14-15; emphasis added).

Let Your hand be upon **the man of Your right hand, upon the son of man whom You made strong for Yourself** (Ps. 80:17; emphasis added).

Once this "son of man" finished a vital part of the commission given to him, he returned to the "right hand" of his heavenly Father.

This Jesus, God (Almighty) has raised up (from the dead), of which we are all witnesses.³³Therefore **being exalted to the right hand of God**, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear (Ac. 2:32-33; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

But **this Man** (Christ) after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, **sat down at the right hand of God** (Almighty) (Heb. 10:12; cf. Heb. 1:3; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Once Jesus Christ finishes every aspect of the work given to him, all sinners will have had an opportunity to be "revived" and "restored" in their relationship with Almighty God.

Then we will not turn back from You; **revive us**, and we will call upon Your name. ¹⁹**Restore us**, O Lord God of hosts; cause Your face to shine and we will be saved! (Ps. 80:18-19; emphasis added).

The phrase "revive us" refers to the resurrection of the dead which has two parts. The first resurrection is for those who received God's word and acted on it, while the second resurrection is

for everyone who did not hear God's word, or rejected it when they did hear it.

Having established that the landowner is God Almighty, we can now examine the rest of Christ's parable. As tenant farmers are expected to give some of their produce to the landowner, it is appropriate for anyone sent by the landowner to be treated respectfully. However, this has not occurred.

Now when vintage-time drew near, he (the landowner) sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. ³⁵And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned the other (Mt. 21:34-35; Ed. note in parentheses).



AGAIN HE SENT OTHER SERVANTS, MORE THAN THE FIRST, AND THEY (THE VINEDRESSERS) DID LIKEWISE TO THEM.

[Matthew 21:36; Ed. note in parentheses](#)

At this point, it would be reasonable for the landowner to react strongly. Instead, he exercised great restraint and patience, hoping that the vinedressers would change their attitude and regret their actions.

Therefore, he sent other servants to collect what was due.

Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they (the vinedressers) did likewise to them (Mt. 21:36; Ed. note in parentheses).

Having given the vinedressers every opportunity to change their attitude and respond appropriately, the landowner sent his son to collect what was owing.

Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' ³⁸But when the

vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.' ³⁹And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him (Mt. 21:37-39).

At this point, it must be emphasized that "the heir" of the landowner is Jesus Christ who will inherit all things in the spirit and physical realm. Therefore, the vinedressers are those in the spirit and physical realm who object to Christ's preeminence, and his future rule as King of Kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:16).

God (Almighty) who at various times and in different ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, ²has in these last days spoken to us by **His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things**, through whom also He made the worlds (Gr. *aiones, aeons*; ages); ³who being the brightness of His (Almighty God's) glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when he (Christ) had purged our sins, **sat down at the right hand of The Majesty on high**, ⁴having become so much better than the angels, as **he (Christ) has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they** (Heb. 1:1-4; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

It was by the hand of fallen angels that "the heir of all things" was murdered, and Satan is chief among them.

And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him (Christ), for they feared the people. ³**Then Satan entered Judas**, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve (disciples). ⁴So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him to them. ⁵And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. ⁶Then he promised and sought opportunity to betray him to them in the absence of the multitude (Lk.

22:2-6; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

When Jesus had said these things, he was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray me" (Jn. 13:21).

Then, leaning back on Jesus' breast, he (John) said to him, "Lord, who is it?" ²⁶Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it." And having dipped the bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. ²⁷**Now after (receiving) the piece of bread, Satan entered him.** Then Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly" (Jn. 13:25-27; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Because it is hard to recognize the connectivity between fallen angels and mankind, the Jewish people are often blamed for the death of Jesus Christ. However, the real murderer is Satan and those in positions of power that he is able to deceive.

You (religious leaders) 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... (Jn. 8:44a; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Going back to Christ's parable, the owner of the vineyard will appear at an appointed time in the future. Specifically, He will be present at the resurrection of those who were responsible for His Son's murder (Rev. 20:11-13). This will be the period of judgment referred to as the second resurrection.

"Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?" ⁴¹They said to him, "He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to **other**

vinedressers who will give to him the fruits in their seasons" (Mt. 21:40-41; emphasis added).

Again, the timing is associated with the second resurrection which will occur after Jesus Christ has ruled this planet for a thousand years (Rev. 20:4-6). Therefore, the "other vinedressers who will give to him fruits in their seasons" refers to those who repented of their sins and acknowledged that Christ's shed blood cleansed them of their sins. Because Christ's death provided the way to everlasting life, he is compared to "the tree of life" that will assist God's true servants to "produce fruits in their seasons".

And he (an angel) showed me (John) a river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. ²In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was **the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month...** (Rev. 22:1-2a; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

As confirmed previously, the landowner is Almighty God who sent His servants to collect what the vinedressers owed Him. As this parable is referring primarily to spiritual realities, the question should be asked; what did they owe Him?

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: **Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.** ¹⁴For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether it is good or whether it is evil (Eccl. 12:13-14; emphasis added).

So when the landowner sent his loyal servants to the vinedressers, these vinedressers should have expressed appreciation for the privilege of using his land. This gratitude should have been

expressed by a willingness to obey whatever He commanded them to do. Instead, the vinedressers abused, and even killed, the landowner's servants, including his son.

This is a rebellious people, lying children, children who will not hear the law of the Lord; ¹⁰Who say to the seers, "Do not see (God's truth)," and to the prophets, "Do not prophesy to us right things; (instead) speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits. ¹¹Get out of the way, turn aside from the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us" (Isa. 30:9-11; Ed. notes in parentheses).

"The Holy One of Israel" refers to Jesus Christ who worked with the ancient nation of Israel, and their forefathers (Mk. 1:24b),



NOW WHEN THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND PHARISEES HEARD HIS PARABLES, THEY PERCEIVED THAT HE WAS SPEAKING OF THEM.

Matthew 21:45

Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud (Nu. 12:5), all passed through the sea, ²all were baptized (symbolically) by Moses in the cloud (in the name of Jesus Christ; cf. Ac. 2:38; Nu. 14:14), and in the sea, ³all ate the same spiritual food (Jn. 6:32-35; cf. Jn. 6:55a), ⁴and all drank the same spiritual drink (Jn. 4:10; Jn. 7:38-39; cf. Jn. 6:55b). For they drank of **that spiritual Rock** that followed them, and that Rock **was Christ** (1Cor. 10:1-4; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

This spiritual Rock, which represents Christ, is the chief cornerstone of God's true church. This stone is rejected by Satan, his angels, and the

physical leadership of this present evil age (Gal. 1:4).

Jesus said to them, "Did you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders (and vinedressers) rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?' ⁴³Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. ⁴⁴And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder." (Mt. 21:42-44; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Christ emphasized that the potential to enter the kingdom of God has been suspended, pending repentance of sin, for all those who reject him. Rejecting Christ means refusing to acknowledge why he came as a flesh and blood human being and then died. He did this as the only means through which the sins of this world can be forgiven (Jn. 1:29; Heb. 9:22). Contrary to popular belief, once someone repents of their sin, they are to begin living a new life of obedience to every word of God (Mt. 4:4; Rom. 6:4). Those who claim to know God and yet refuse to obey His every word, will have to wait until the second resurrection in order to understand the serious nature and consequences of living contrary to God's word (Mt. 7:21-23; 13:41).

Apparently many of the Jewish religious leaders, who sought to kill Christ, understood that the parable in Matthew 21:33-44 included them.

Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking of them (Mt. 21:45).

Sadly, most of these religious leaders were so determined to get rid of Christ that they were unable to see how deceived they were about who he was, and the commission he was fulfilling (Mt. 5:17).

But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitudes, because they took him for a prophet (Mt. 21:46).

Although Satan and his angels are to blame for the death of Christ, human religious leaders were complicit, just as Judas Iscariot was. Therefore, there is no difference between the vinedressers, Pharisees, and fallen angels. All of them represent individuals who will give account for their part in murdering the son of the landowner, as well as other loyal servants of God who were sent to them from the beginning of man's history until the present day (Mt. 23:29-35).

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