


Doubtless Living!

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THE GOSPEL OF
LUKE
That you may have certainty!

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Boiling Point!

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created by the Bible Project

PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD OWNER

THE PHARISEES DEVI
INTENTIONS UNMASKED

Luke 20:9-19

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OPEN THEOLOGICAL WARFARE

Five Contentious Controversies

1. The Source of Jesus' Authority (20:1-8)
2. Jesus' confrontational parable of the vineyard (20:9-19)
3. The dispute over Caesar's tax (20:20-26)
4. The Sadducees' trick question about resurrection (20:27-40)
5. Jesus' question about the interpretation of Psalm 110:1 (20:41-44)

Rapidly Escalating Tension

- Trying to catch Jesus in error, the leaders test Him in every sphere.
- Jesus embarrasses and silences them each time.
- All these events, plus the Olivet Discourse, happen on the same day!

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Parable of the Vineyard Owner

Luke 20:9-19

⁹ Now he began to tell the people this parable: "A man planted a vineyard, leased it to tenant farmers, and went away for a long time. ¹⁰ At harvest time he sent a servant to the farmers so that they might give him some fruit from the vineyard. But the farmers beat him and sent him away empty-handed. ¹¹ He sent yet another servant, but they beat that one too, treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. ¹² And he sent yet a third, but they wounded this one too and threw him out.

¹³ "Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What should I do? I will send my beloved son. Perhaps they will respect him.'

¹⁴ "But when the tenant farmers saw him, they discussed it among themselves and said, 'This is the heir. Let's kill him, so that the inheritance will be ours.' ¹⁵ So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

Parable of the Vineyard Owner

Luke 20:9-19

"What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? ¹⁶ He will come and kill those farmers and give the vineyard to others."

But when they heard this they said, "That must never happen!"

¹⁷ But he looked at them and said, "Then what is the meaning of this Scripture: *The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone?*

¹⁸ Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, but on whomever it falls, it will shatter him."

¹⁹ Then the scribes and the chief priests looked for a way to get their hands on him that very hour, because they knew he had told this parable against them, but they feared the people.

⁹ Now he began to tell the people this parable:

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The Setting

- Jesus had just silence and humiliated the Chief Priests and other religious leaders with the exchange about His authority.
- So, imagine the leaders standing there in the temple, speechless and infuriated, with extreme rage projecting on their faces.
- They were seething, and if looks could kill Jesus would have be dead on the spot.
- Jesus calmly turns a cold shoulder to the religious elite and begins to tell a parable to the crowd.

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⁹... "A man planted a vineyard, leased it to tenant farmers, and went away for a long time. ¹⁰ At harvest time he sent a servant to the farmers so that they might give him some fruit from the vineyard. But the farmers beat him and sent him away empty-handed.

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The Characters

- The vineyard owner represents God and the tenant farmers represent Israel, especially its leadership.
- The servants portrays the wave of prophets that God sent to Israel to guide them and counsel them on His behalf.
- Israel lacks fruit and has become hard-hearted, so they rejected the prophets just like the farmers rejected the servants.
- Time after time the prophets went away empty-handed, just like this parable.

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Public Indictment

- The Chief Priests and religious elite bear the bulk of responsibility and they are accountable for it.
- The parable shows opposition growing and hostility intensifying, indicating the problem is getting worse.
- So, by telling this parable to the crowd, Jesus is publicly indicting the religious leaders for the nation's failures, right there in the temple, in front of everyone.
- Can you feel the tension building and sense the anger rising among the religious elite?

¹¹ He sent yet another servant, but they beat that one too, treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. ¹² And he sent yet a third, but they wounded this one too and threw him out.

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¹³ "Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What should I do? I will send my beloved son. Perhaps they will respect him.'

Messianic Proclamation

- In the previous pericope, Jesus refused to answer their question about the source of His authority.
- But now, through this parable, He tells the religious elite three very important things:
 1. He has been sent by the vineyard owner, therefore
 2. His authority is from heaven, and
 3. He is the beloved son; He is the Messiah!

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Evil Plot Unmasked

- Jesus did it again; He read their minds.
- Jesus knew that they planned to kill Him, and by saying this in the parable He was letting them know that He knew.
- Not only had he unmasked their devious plot, but he had called them out publicly for their greed.
- They may secretly seek to arrest Him, but Jesus knows their plan and this exchange heightens the drama.

¹⁴ "But when the tenant farmers saw him, they discussed it among themselves and said, 'This is the heir. Let's kill him, so that the inheritance will be ours.' ¹⁵ So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

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¹⁵... "What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? ¹⁶ He will come and kill those farmers and give the vineyard to others."

Judgment Pronounced

- Jesus makes a strong point to His indirect audience; the Chief Priests and religious leaders.
- The tenants will be destroyed, and their opportunity to gain the vineyard will be taken away, and given to others.
- Judgment will fall on the nation, especially the leadership, for rejecting the Son.
- Israel will be judged, and Gentiles are being brought in, which they can see has already started to unfold right before their eyes, by the composition of the crowd.

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¹⁶... But when they heard this they said, "That must never happen!"

Crowd Reaction

- At that moment, the crowd remained staunchly supportive of Jesus.
- While they may not fully comprehend the meaning of the parable, they don't like His point and respond emphatically; "That must never happen!"
- Sadly, just a short while later (in Luke 23), the crowd will turn against Jesus and join the religious elite in rejecting Him as Messiah.

Implications of Rejection

- Jesus, as the beloved Son, is rejected by the nation but accepted by God as having the place of honor.
- Jesus is telling the religious leaders that they may reject Him but, in the end, God will exalt Him.
- The proverb about the stone's power and authority pictures the fate of those who fail to respond.
- Those who reject Him are either broken to pieces or crushed into bits.
- All those who reject Jesus will be judged by Him.

¹⁷ But he looked at them and said, "Then what is the meaning of this Scripture: The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone?"

¹⁸ Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, but on whomever it falls, it will shatter him."

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Boiling Point!

- The leader's reaction is hostile!
- Self-righteous indignation reigned supreme; how could this uninstructed Galilean with no real credentials challenge Judaism's official leadership?
- How dare He do this; especially so openly and publicly, in the temple no less, right in front of everyone?
- They wanted to seize Him immediately, within the hour, and kill Him, but they still feared the crowd.

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DELIBERATE DISCIPLESHIP

- The confrontation between Jesus and the religious elite rises to a new level, with Jesus on the offensive.
- Jesus reminds the people that God's promise is not an inalienable national right. Israel may have the promise, but that does not mean each Israelite is blessed.
- God examines each person for a response. The nation's response will not be adequate.
- Power and authority do not reside in the priesthood; they reside in Jesus, the precious rejected stone.
- Do you have a relationship with the exalted stone, or are you falling over the stone and being crushed by it?

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