

Mark 12

The Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen & Greatest Command

Mark 12:1 And he began to speak unto them by parables. A *certain* man planted a vineyard, and set an hedge about *it*, and digged a *place for* the winevat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.

This is a continuation of his work in the temple on Tuesday, April 12, 30 AD. A certain man is God who planted the vineyard Israel cf:

Psalm 80:8-15 Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it.

A vineyard is a piece of land to produce grapes and make wine but the Pastors and husbandmen would destroy the vineyard cf:

Jeremiah 12:10

Isaiah 5:5 And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; *and* break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down:

A common way of inclosing fields was with thorns, thickset and growing.

A winevat is a pit dug in which the juice from the winepresses would flow.

The tower was a building in which the husbandmen dwelt. The owner let out this vineyard, with all its fixtures, to husbandmen. They gave him his rent at the proper seasons.

This parable is to represent that God planted a people in the land of Canaan and He hedged it with divine protection. The winevat is typical of Jesus' sufferings, and the tower, the temple of God. Its management was entrusted to the priests and Levites, and the scribes were the leaders. The tower was left to their management, under the general direction of God's laws and precepts.

Mark 12:2 And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard.

“at the season” he sent a servant to collect his (the landowner) part of the produce; or, ‘collect the rent’.

During Jewish dispensation God sent his prophets to warn His people about their departure from His law, and to demand the obedience and worship that were His dues.

Mark 12:3 And they caught *him*, and beat him, and sent *him* away empty.

Three steps taken: “caught”, “beat”, and “sent away empty”. The Jewish people, often led by priests and Levites, did so to the Old Testament prophets sent of God.

**The Prophets had come to claim the peaceful fruits of righteousness
cf:**

Isaiah 1:21

Mark 12:4 And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded *him* in the head, and sent *him* away shamefully handled.

The Lord sent still another servant demanding His due. They treated this one worse than the first. One step in rebellion and sin prepares for another.

Mark 12:5 And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some.

Their wickedness increases. The climax is now reached, the rest is simply repetition.

Jesus charges upon them the blood of all the prophets, cf:

Matthew 23:34-36 Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and *some* of them ye shall kill and crucify; and *some* of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute *them* from city to city: 23:35 That upon you may come all the

righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. 23:36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

One step after another in the path of crime has been taken so that, in this generation, it shall culminate in the sum of all crimes – the killing of the Son of God.

Mark 12:6 Having yet therefore one son, his wellbeloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son.

The others had been bondservants, slaves, in the Greek, but this is his own son. Thinking, ‘they will respect my son so as to heed what he says and pay the rent on the vineyard’. He here, foretells his own death and he holds out the thought that these religious teachers will do it.

The landowner’s son comes to the vineyard, “sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass.” But there had occurred a change in the hearts of the husbandmen from “his” vineyard, to “our” vineyard. Cf:

Mark 12:7 But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours.

Do you realize what we can do now? This is the heir, it's his legacy. The ownership of the vineyard is to be transferred to the son. Kill him, and it's all ours. "There will be no harvest without us, it's our vineyard, we've done the work!" Anger and greed capture the hearts of the husbandmen. Cf:

Mark 12:8 And they took him, and killed *him*, and cast *him* out of the vineyard.

Here, again, the three steps were taken.

Jesus died outside the gate of Jerusalem cf:

Hebrews 13:12

They have gone too far to stop now! Cf:

Matthew 14:10

Mark 12:9 What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others.

The design of this question was that they might condemn themselves, and admit the justice of the punishment that was soon coming upon them.

The landowner “moved away”. Luke adds, “for a long time”. Today God has again let out his vineyard to husbandmen, to the Church the professed followers of Jesus Christ. Each of us has a part of God’s vineyard to cultivate. He has fenced us round with promises and precepts, and given us the means for fruit.

Mark 12:10 And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner: cf:

Psalm 118:22 The stone *which* the builders refused is become the head *stone* of the corner.

This was first spoken of David, rejected of his parents, or passed over, chosen of God, became the builder of the kingdom of Judah. When the temple of Solomon was being built, a stone was rejected of the builders until almost the building was completed. Then it was seen to fit in the main arch and to be a key to hold in position and give strength to the whole arch. Jesus was rejected by the elders and the chief priests, yet, He became the headstone of the corner – the central truth of the whole system of the divine government.

Isa 8:13-15 Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and *let him be* your fear, and *let him be* your dread. 8:14 And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 8:15 And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.

Isa 28:16 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner *stone*, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

This parable finds its more complete fulfillment in the Christian system than in the Jewish. Today religious teachers pervert the will of God, reject his divine authority substituting ways of their own for the things commanded by God and sealed by his blood, substitute for them, as did the Jewish priests and elders.

I Peter 2:5-9 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. **2:6** Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. **2:7** Unto you therefore which believe *he is* precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, **2:8** And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, *even to them* which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. **2:9** But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Rom 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. **12:2** And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Mark 12:11 This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

The ordering of things which made the stone – Jesus - rejected by the leaders and teachers to end up the head of the corner, was God's overruling and controlling, and the whole development. The whole process is a marvel and a wonder to the universe. God put to shame them who are wise.

Mark 12:12 And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people: for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them: and they left him, and went their way.

That they wanted to capture him expresses the effect the parable had upon them. Too many of the enthusiastic Galileans were present. The scribes and Pharisees saw it was aimed at them as the leaders and teachers. The people most anxious to persecute are the most cowardly.

Mark 12:13 And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in *his* words.

Hate truly makes strange bed fellows. This is like the KKK and the Black Moslems conspiring together. Much like the Moslem parable: the enemy of MY ENEMY is my friend.

Luke 20:20 And they watched *him*, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor.

To lay snares for a good man is diabolical. Here enemies meet in their common hatred of Jesus. His answer to their question in the next verse which they hoped he would answer yes or no. Now they are trying him in a way which they had never before attempted.

Mark 12:14 And when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man: for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?

This was a hypocritical compliment, which was not believed by them but was artfully said, to conceal their true plan.

The family name of Julius Caesar, Roman emperor, applied to his all his successors. Common to all the emperors, as Pharaoh was the common name of all the kings of Egypt.

They thought he would be forced to reply “yes” or “no”.

Mark 12:15 Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see *it*.

They thought He would be forced to answer as a rebel against Caesar, or a traitor to God, who’s Son he claimed to be. But in this, as in all other attempts to ensnare him, Jesus in a few words put them to flight.

Being divine, Jesus had power to see and read their wicked thoughts.

Why try to lead me into a snare? As deeply as they had laid their wicked plot, cunningly framed their question, Jesus’ first word of His reply, he saw through it all – detected their evil design and their hypocrisy.

The original word was a denarius, which was the Roman government's foreign coin. Matthew 22:19 says: "Show me the tribute money." Taxes for the temple service was paid in the Jewish shekel.

Jesus wishes them to see it with their natural eye as well as to hear it in words.

Mark 12:16 And they brought *it*. And he saith unto them, Whose *is* this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Caesar's.

By asking whose image and superscription He is now putting them in the trap they set for Him with one simple question.

Both the coin and answer show submitting to Caesar's government, and enjoying his protection.

Mark 12:17 And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him.

Give to Caesar (the civil government under which you live) all that is due him – what rightfully belongs to him. Pay the taxes – pay him fully for protecting you. Caesar's image and name on money proved that it belonged to Caesar. It's proper and right to give it back to him, when he demanded it.

Do not forget that you are obligated to God also. You must give to God what He claims. "Ye were bought with a price;" Man is the coinage, and bears the image of God cf:

Genesis 1:27 So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

God demands that we pay Him our due:

Hebrews 10:25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Acts 20:7 And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

Mark 12:18 Then come unto him the Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection; and they asked him, saying,

They came the same day that Jesus put to flight the Pharisees and Herodians. The authorities now try another plan by a different party.

The Sadducees were a religious sect started about B.C. 260. A Priest named Zadok was founder of the sect. They were opposed to the Pharisees and rightly rejected the traditions of men. They disappeared from history after the first century. The three Jewish sects were: the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes.

Mark 12:19 Master, Moses wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave *his wife behind him*, and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

The children born later would be recognized as the children of the deceased brother; to all civil purposes they would be considered his

seed and heir. Taking a deceased brother's wife, to give him descendants was a custom older than the law cf:

Genesis 38:6ff

Mark 12:20 Now there were seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed.

Mark 12:21 And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed: and the third likewise.

Mark 12:22 And the seven had her, and left no seed: last of all the woman died also.

Mark 12:23 In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife.

Having now cited the law, they now state the case which they supposed was as difficult as possible.

Mark 12:24 And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?

As usual he answers them in a way they were not expecting.

He strikes their argument in its weak point – its assumption that marriage would exist in the resurrection.

Mark 12:25 For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven.

Had they known the scripture doctrine of the resurrection, they would have known that He could raise the saints without those carnal inclinations.

Mark 12:26 And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I *am* the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?

Jesus now furnishes a proof of the resurrection. These three had been long dead when Moses wrote this: Abraham 329 years; Isaac 224 years: and Jacob 198 years.

They must be still somewhere living.

Mark 12:27 He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.

This answer is especially aimed at the Sadducees who accepted only the writings of Moses as inspired. So Jesus quotes to them from the writings of Moses teaching of the resurrection.

Dead is used here in the sense of *extinct*, as the Sadducees used the word *dead*. God is not the God of the non-existent. He does not rule over those who are *extinct* or *annihilated*. He is the God only of those who have an existence. If this was admitted, then there was a state

of rewards and punishments. Then it would easily follow that the bodies of the dead would be raised. The raising is of the dead body, the soul is *never* referred to as being resurrected cf: Matthew 22:23-33 and Luke 20:27-40.

Mark 12:28 And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?

Matthew says, “A lawyer.” The man was both a scribe and lawyer. The Sadducees and Pharisees were consulting and planning together after the defeat of the Sadducees and the lawyer heard them.

This was a decision of the lawyer because of the great answer given by *Jesus* to the Sadducees on the resurrection.

This point was often disputed by the doctors of the law. The purpose of the lawyer was to *test* Jesus’ knowledge of the law.

Mark 12:29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:

These are the words in which every Israelite, each morning, confessed his faith in the Lord” Cf:

Deuteronomy 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD:

The word translated one is *E-had* is a compound unity singular and is used in Hebrew to denote more than one becoming or being one. Strong's says united, one, first, alike, altogether. A perfect Old Testament word used to describe the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Examples of *e-had* being used as a compound unity singular are:

Genesis 2:24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

Exodus 8:31 And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; and he removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; there remained not one

***e-had* is a completely different word from:**

***ya-ch-iyd* (yaw-kheed) Strong's says: The only one, solitary, unique.**

Examples of *ya-ch-iyd* being used in Scripture is;

Genesis 22:12 And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only *son* from me.

Zechariah 12:10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for *his* only *son*, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for *his* firstborn.

This distinction was clearly understood by Jesus when He taught in Aramaic and when the Holy Spirit inspired the New Testament writers to distinguish between the two in Greek.

Where Jesus uses the Greek compound unity *eis* hi-ce, meaning number one versus *mono*, which means one and only.

New Testament Examples:

Mark 12:29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:

Matthew 19:5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

Mark 12:30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment.

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

These present what should be the attitude of the heart. Love to God must fill the whole heart, in which personal consciousness originates, the whole soul, faculty of feeling and desire, whole understanding, all the powers of thought and will. It is called “the great and first,” but because in observing it all others are observed.

Mark 12:31 And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

Here Jesus quotes cf:

Leviticus 19:18 Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I *am* the LORD.

Even the love of God itself is to manifest and actualize itself by love to man – by love to all men, more particularly by brotherly love.

There is none greater because a part cannot be greater than the whole, for every commandment is included in obeying these.

Mark 12:32 And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he:

None of the schools of thought among the Jews could deny this proposition. The acknowledgment of the one true God must accompany all right views of His law.

Mark 12:33 And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love *his* neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

The scribe's answer has a change in the wording, yet the idea is essentially the same.

Realize the immense stride this man took in this explicit endorsement of Jesus, to displease his companions, and that it bears testimony to the enthusiasm which must have filled his heart.

Mark 12:34 And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him *any question*.

One's proximity to the kingdom of God is not an estimate of distance, but preparation and purpose of the heart. By virtue of His approval He gave evidence of His nearness to the kingdom of God.

The result of all their questioning had been to silence the incorrigible and convince the teachable, it was a losing business to His enemies. The scribe was *near* the kingdom, he needed another step to get into it, the unreserved committal of himself to follow Jesus in love. Where are you? All His opposers are silenced, and the last one who represented them is almost brought into the number of disciples.

Mark 12:35 And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the Son of David?

The attempts of His enemies to ensnare Him did not unnerve him in the least. As soon as his victory was won, He immediately proceeded with His regular teaching.

Up to this time Jesus had been acting on the defensive; but now turns to the offensive and convicts the scribes and Pharisees with ignorance and false notions of the Messiah.

Matthew 22:41-42 says: "Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, What think ye of the Christ? Whose son is he? They say unto him, *The son of David*." Their reply was correct.

Mark 12:36 For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The LORD said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.

Jesus quotes cf:

Psalm 110:1 The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

Thus David spoke of the Messiah as his Lord, his superior and sovereign. On the throne beside me, not merely as a position of honor, but as a partner of God's sovereignty and power cf:

A stool for thy feet implies their utter defeat and their most abject subjugation. The foot was often put on the neck of the vanquished.

Mark 12:37 David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he *then* his son? And the common people heard him gladly.

If David acknowledged Him as his superior and sovereign, from what source – by what means is he His son, and hence his inferior? One can only answer by acknowledging both the divinity and humanity of Christ. It is thus answered in:

Romans 1:3-4 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; 1:4 And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

The Pharisees worldly views of the Messiah, had lost sight of His divinity, they only held to His humanity as a royal descendant of David. If they had understood the true character of the Christ, they could have answered by saying, “As man, He is David’s son; but as God, David’s Lord.” He had an existence at the time of David, and was David’s Lord and Master.

Mark 12:38 And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and *love* salutations in the marketplaces,

Be on your guard against the teaching of the scribes. All their passion, their love and desire of display and honor is “to be seen of men.” They go around displaying themselves as much as possible “to be seen of men.” cf:

They love to go in long clothing. Long, flowing robes, reaching to the feet, similar to those worn by Romish priests, and were worn by the scribes as a kind of professional attire, in order to attract attention. When Christ sent his apostles out to preach, he directed that they should be clothed as the common people cf: Mark 6:9 and Matthew 10:10.

Mark 12:39 And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts:

The seats usually occupied by the elders of the synagogues, near the pulpit. These were the most honorable positions at the table during public feasts.

Brother B.W. Johnson said: “Everything which would lead the world to suppose that there were ranks and grades among the apostles as servants, they were to avoid. But they were not to receive it. It was to be unknown among the disciples. This title Rabbi corresponds with the title “Doctor of Divinity,” and other degrees as applied to preachers of the gospel. The Savior’s command is violated by the reception of such a title or titles as it would have been by their being called Rabbi. There should be no distinction among preachers. It tends to engender pride, and a sense of superiority in those who obtain it; envy, a sense of inferiority in those who do not; and the whole spirit and tendency of it is contrary to the simplicity and the purity that Christ envisioned for the Church.”

Mark 12:40 Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation.

These are other evil traits of character of the scribes; who under the pretense of counseling widows and managing their estates rob them.

Their prayers were made long in order to more effectually accomplish the evil purpose. The damnation was greater because the wickedness was greater.

They love appellations of honor and respect, such as Rabbi, Father, Master, Teacher. Men often profess a desire to magnify their office, when in truth they want to magnify themselves. They love robes that advertise to every one that they are separate from the rest of the people.

Mark 12:41

Deuteronomy 16:16 ff.

Jesus sat opposite to and in full sight of the treasury. "Many," not all of the wealthy gave freely.

Treasury is a name given by the rabbins to thirteen chests, called trumpets, from their shape, which stood in the court of the women, at the entrance to the treasure-chamber. "Nine chests were for the appointed temple tribute, and for the sacrifice-tribute; that is, money-gifts instead of the sacrifices; four chests for free-will offerings, for wood, incense, temple decoration, and burnt offerings. Jesus beheld how the people cast money. Jesus still takes note of our offerings.

Mark 12:42

Here, as in other places in the Bible, we must remember the exceedingly destitute condition of a poor man's widow in Israel in the first century. Two mites was the smallest of Jewish coins, about the value of one-fifth of a cent. It took its name from its extreme smallness.

Mark 12:43 And he called *unto him* his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:

That is, more in proportion to her means, cf: 2 Corinthians 8:12

Mark 12:44 For all *they* did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, *even* all her living.

Of their store ... They have given what they did not need. They have shown no self-denial.

She did voluntarily what Jesus had commanded the rich young ruler to do; though poor herself, she gave her all.

The worth of a gift is to be determined, not by value, but *by what it costs* the giver. The measure of that cost is what is *left*, not what is given. For the widow to give her mites was noble; for one well off to give "his mite" is contemptible.

All that she had, all her living. In love she devoted all to God, with strong faith in His ability to supply her needs.