

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Mark: Jesus, The Perfect Servant Of God

Part III: The Perfect Sacrifice Of Jesus, The Perfect Servant Of God, Mark 11:1-15:47

E. Learning To Heed God's Messengers In Accountability To God

(Mark 12:1-12)

I. Introduction

- A. Mark's Gospel was written by John Mark who was rebounding from having abandoned Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:13) due to Mark's lapse in following the Lord over some difficulty.
- B. However, Mark's failure partly rose out of his failure to see his accountability was to God, his ultimate Judge.
- C. Mark 12:1-12 in parable form reveals this failure existed in Israel's religious leaders, what led to their crucifying Jesus and thus being severely judged of God, and it offers significant application for us as follows:

II. Learning To Heed God's Messengers In Accountability To God, Mark 12:1-12.

- A. Having explained to Israel's religious leaders in Mark 11:27-33 that He had cleansed the temple by divine authority in fulfillment of Malachi 3:1-2 that predicted the arrival of Messiah's forerunner in John the Baptizer and in Himself as the Messiah, Jesus spoke a parable in Mark 12:1-11 to deepen this lesson's application:
 1. Jesus said that a land owner planted a vineyard, and developed it, building a wall around it, digging a pit beneath its winepress to collect the juice of pressed grapes and constructing a watchtower "for shelter, storage, and security," Mark 12:1a NIV; B. K. C., N. T., p. 160. "The details of the vineyard's construction are derived from Isaiah 5:1-2" (Ibid.) that recalls God's planting Israel as His vine to have it yield grapes of righteousness (5:2b) only to see it yield wild grapes of sin (5:7), especially in its leaders, Isaiah 3:13-15, Ibid. "As the vineyard is a familiar symbol for the nation Israel (cf. Ps. 80:8-19)" (Ibid.), when He started to give this parable, the religious leaders would have known Jesus was speaking against their sin!
 2. Jesus added that, typical of the practice of wealthy foreign landlords then, the owner leased the vineyard to tenants while he went into a far country, Mark 12:1b; Ibid. The landowner would send a servant at harvest time to collect the rent, what often led to tension between the tenants and the owner's servant, Ibid. Thus, Jesus told how the owner sent a servant to collect the rent and the tenants mistreated him, Mark 12:2-3.
 3. The landowner then consecutively sent other servants to collect his rental fees only to see the tenant farmers mistreat each of them and even kill some without paying the rent, Mark 12:4-5.
 4. Finally, the landowner sent his "beloved" (*agapetos*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 173) son, saying the tenants would respect him, but they said to each other that this was the heir, so if they slew him, the inheritance would be theirs, Mark 12:6-7. The tenants likely assumed the arrival of the son meant the owner had died, that the son's personal appearance meant he was the sole heir, Ibid. If a sole heir died, the property could be seized by "whoever claimed it first," for it was "'ownerless property,' unclaimed by an heir within a certain time period (cf. Mishnah *Baba Bathra* 3.3)," Ibid.
 5. Thus, the tenants caught the son, they killed him and cast his body out of the vineyard, Mark 12:8.
 6. Jesus then asked what the owner would then do, only Himself to answer that he would come and destroy those tenants and lease the vineyard out to other tenant farmers, Mark 12:9.
 7. Then, shifting from the parable to Scriptural allusions to make the application even sharper, Jesus added that the stone the builders rejected would become (literally) the "head of [the] corner" (*kephalen gonias*, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T., p. 174), the "keystone" (Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Engl. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 167), "the most important stone of a building," Ibid., Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 161; Mark 12:10. This action, referring to Christ's enthronement over Israel as Messiah following His rejection by Israel's leaders, was the Lord's doing, and was marvelous in the eyes of a future believing Israel, Mark 12:11, Ibid.
- B. The religious leaders knew Jesus spoke this parable against them, but instead of repenting, they sought to seize Him. However, in fear of the excitable Passover crowds, they left Him and went away, Mark 12:12; Ibid.

Lesson: *By the parable of the vineyard owner and his tenants, Jesus taught that the rejection of John the Baptizer and Jesus by Israel's religious leaders was a part of the long-term rejection by Israel's leaders of God's messengers down through history, that God would severely judge them and so give the Kingdom to another godly generation.*

Application: *(1) May we heed ALL of God's messengers, be they those in Scripture or those who proclaim God's Scriptures today, for these messengers are from the Lord. (2) If God convicts us of rejecting His messengers' ministries, may we repent for blessing. (3) If we are called of God as His messenger, may we faithfully serve Him.*