

The Parable of the Tenants

Matthew 21:33-46

by Don Falkos

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Jesus told the people this story:

A man planted a vineyard, built a wall around it, dug a winepress in it, and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to a group of men, and went off on a long trip. When the time came for the harvest, the owner sent servants to collect his share of the crop.

The tenants took hold of the servants, beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. The owner sent a larger group of servants, who received the same treatment.

Then the owner sent his son, thinking, "They'll have to respect him."

But when the tenants saw the owner's son they said, "Someday he's going to own the vineyard. Let's kill him. Then we can claim the vineyard for ourselves." They took hold of him, dragged him out of the vineyard, and killed him.

Then Jesus asked, "What do you think the owner will do to those tenants when he comes back to the vineyard?"

The religious leaders replied, "He will put those wretched men to a horrible death and rent the vineyard to other tenants who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time."

Then Jesus said, "Surely you've read in the Scriptures, 'The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone. The Lord has done this. Amazing, isn't it!' I tell you, the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to people who will produce its proper fruit. Anyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and it will crush anyone it falls on."

The religious leaders wanted to arrest Jesus – they knew his story was about them – but they were afraid of the people, who believed Jesus was a prophet.