

# Pentwater Bible Church

*Gospel of Mark*

*Message 45*

*March 1, 2015*



Painting of the Parable by Jacob Willemszoon de Wet Cir Mid 17<sup>th</sup> Century.

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# Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Mark  
Message Forty-Five

JESUS TEACHES THE PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD OWNER

Mark 1, 2015

Daniel E. Woodhead



Vineyard by Andrew Thomasson

JESUS TEACHES ON THE PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD OWNER

Mark 12:1-12

*<sup>1</sup> And he began to speak unto them by parables. A certain man planted a vineyard, and set a hedge about it, and digged a place for the winefat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. <sup>2</sup> And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard. <sup>3</sup> And they caught him, and beat him, and sent him away empty. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some. <sup>6</sup> Having yet therefore one son, his well beloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son. <sup>7</sup> But those husbandmen said amongst themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours. <sup>8</sup> And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard. <sup>9</sup> What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others. <sup>10</sup> And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner: <sup>11</sup> this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? <sup>12</sup> 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 (KJV).*

## JESUS TEACHES THROUGH PARABLES

Mark 12:1

<sup>1</sup> *And he began to speak unto them by parables (KJV).*

Many of Jesus' teachings were accomplished through parables. These simple word pictures allowed people to quickly understand His messages. Jesus' audience of His day would have been very familiar with the general topics of His parables. The literal meaning would be easily conveyed. It was the hidden or deeper meaning that caused His parables to not be readily understood by all. This level of understanding forced people to discover the truth being conveyed for them. Jesus told his disciples that not everyone would understand his parables. *"And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand"* (Luke 8:10). He was aware that some who heard his parables refused to understand them. It was not that they could not understand them, but rather, their hearts were closed to what Jesus was teaching. The religious authorities had already made up their minds not to accept Him. God will only reveal the secrets of his kingdom to the humble and trusting person who acknowledges the need for God and for his truth. Parables are different from allegories and stories. In stories specific names of people are named and the story is the teaching. This chart compares the parable with an allegory. Unfortunately since allegories are in the Bible some teachers see the entire Scripture as an allegory and not factual stories.

	<b>Parable</b>	<b>Allegory</b>
1	Has one central point	Can have more than one central point
2	Teaches on truth	Can teach a number of truths
3	Every relevant detail reinforces the central theme or point of emphasis	The details of an allegory may be many and varied, relating to more than one theme
4	Can have irrelevant details; all features of the parable do not have to be identified	Can have irrelevant details; all the features of an allegory do not have to be identified
5	Usually the story is separate from its interpretation and application	Intertwines the story and the meaning
6	Application usually follows the parable	Application is found within the allegory

The parable the Lord Jesus is about to relate is addressed to the obstinate or bullheaded religious leaders of Israel. He was still in the Temple and this was Tuesday of the last week of His life. They had just questioned him *"by what authority"* He turned over the moneychanger's tables in the Court of the Gentiles. They tried to trap Him in a question designed to allow them to charge Him with blasphemy, which was punishable through death. They had failed to trick Him and He would not tell them who He was and who sent Him. In this particular parable Jesus is building a truth from a well-known passage in Isaiah.

*<sup>1</sup> Let me sing for my well beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well beloved had a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: <sup>2</sup>and he digged it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also hewed out a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. <sup>3</sup>And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. <sup>4</sup>What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? <sup>5</sup>And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; I will break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: <sup>6</sup>and I will lay it waste; it shall not be pruned nor hoed; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. <sup>7</sup>For the vineyard of Jehovah of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for justice, but, behold, oppression; for righteousness, but, behold, a cry (ASV 1901).*

In this song which Isaiah composed (Cir 714 B.C.) he sang about God's care for His vineyard and its condition. He moves on to discuss God's view of its condition. In the third stanza He identifies the vineyard as Israel. God has also referred to Israel in other Scriptures as a vineyard (Isaiah 3:14; Psalm 80:8–18; Jeremiah 2:21; 12:10; Ezekiel 15:6–8; Hosea 10:1). Isaiah describes God as Israel's loved one who plants a vineyard on a fertile hillside. He removes the many stones and plants only the choicest vines. Then He builds a watchtower out of stone to guard the vineyard. Completing the project He builds a winepress for the future production of excellent wine. Unfortunately only bad (wild) grapes grew on His vines. Finally God asks the people of Judah to judge the situation and tell Him if this bad quality fruit from good vines is His fault. He says that there is nothing more He could have done to provide for fine fruit and now He must destroy the vineyard. He will do this by removing the hedge of protection (wall) around the vineyard and let animals enter to destroy it. It won't be cultivated and as a result thorn bushes would grow up between the vines smothering them. He will also withhold water so the vines starve for nourishment. God loves Israel and wanted good fruit from them. He wanted justice and righteousness (Isaiah 1:21) but instead He only saw bloodshed and heard their cries of distress. Because of their "bad grapes" they would be killed or taken into captivity by the Babylonians and subjugated by several more oppressive regimes as well as scattered.

In this parable of Jesus He is describing judgment too. Galilee had many farmers who were absentee landlords who had hired tenant farmers to care for the fields and crops. The tenant farmer would pay their rent by giving some of the crops to the landowner. He in turn would send servants to the farmer to collect his rent. The key features of this parable are:

1. The man who planted the vineyard (God)
2. The vineyard (nation Israel)
3. The tenant farmers (the Jewish religious leaders)
4. The landowner's servants (the prophets and priests who were faithful to God and preached to Israel)

5. The son (Jesus)
6. The other to whom the vineyard was given (the Gentiles)

God planted Israel as a vineyard to bring salvation to the world. He gave them His Word and Messiah. The religious leaders just caused the nation Israel no small amount of harm as they hampered their divine purpose for which God had chosen them. Further they killed those who tried to fulfill the original purpose for which they were chosen (Matthew 23:37; Luke 13:24). They were corrupt and in their self-centeredness they ignored the welfare of the people that they were to cultivate to God. As Jesus tells this parable He is exposing in the hidden part of the parable their plot to kill Him. He through this parable is essentially warning them that their sins would be punished. The Sanhedrin interrogators who plotted against Him would be warned against their hostile intentions toward Him.

#### THE VINEYARD SENDS THREE OWNERS

Mark 12:2-5

*<sup>2</sup> And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard. <sup>3</sup> And they caught him, and beat him, and sent him away empty. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some (KJV).*

When the grapes had reached ripeness for harvest the absentee landowner sent servants to collect the rent. In general terms of that day the levied rent was a quarter to a half of the harvest. The tenant farmers either beat the servants or killed them. Jesus is referring to Israel's prophets and priests including John the Baptist who was recently executed. God had sent them many prophets over Israel's history and the ruling authorities refused to listen to them. One example is King Zedekiah putting Jeremiah in prison in 587 B.C. for prophesying that the Babylonians would invade and capture Judah (Jeremiah 37:6-10; 15-16). Within eighteen months of Jeremiah's imprisonment Zedekiah was captured by the Babylonians and subsequently punished. II Kings records the event.

II Kings 25:1-7

*And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, and encamped against it; and they built forts against it round about. <sup>2</sup> So the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah. <sup>3</sup> On the ninth day of the fourth month the famine was sore in the city, so that there was no bread for the people of the land. <sup>4</sup> Then a breach was made in the city, and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between the two walls, which was by the king's garden (now the Chaldeans were against the city round about); and the king went by the way of the Arabah. <sup>5</sup> But the army of the Chaldeans pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho; and all his army was scattered from him. <sup>6</sup> Then they took the king, and carried him up unto the king of Babylon to Riblah; and they gave judgment upon him. <sup>7</sup> And they slew the sons of*

*Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him in fetters, and carried him to Babylon (ASV 1901).*

Jeremiah told Zedekiah what would happen and he chose to put Jeremiah in jail. God sent His servant to the king of Judah and he persecuted him. So instead of listening to the prophets and taking their godly advice they mistreated them and stubbornly refused to listen to them. Some were even killed such as John the Baptist.

#### THE LAND OWNER SEND HIS SON

Mark 12:6

*<sup>6</sup> Having yet therefore one son, his well beloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son (KJV).*

The son refers to Jesus. The land owner (God) now sends His Son to provide for the Nation Israel. He was sent to Israel with the intent of Him being respected by the tenant farmers (Israel) and allowed to win them back to God. God referred to Jesus twice in the Scriptures as the well beloved Son. Once at His baptism (Mark 1:11) and the other at the Transfiguration (Mark 9:7).

#### THE TENANT FARMERS KILL THE SON

Mark 12:7-8

*<sup>7</sup> But those husbandmen said amongst themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours. <sup>8</sup> And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard (KJV).*

Now Jesus lets the religious leaders through the story of the tenant farmers that He knows they will not receive His message but will kill Him. In the parable the tenants probably thought that arrival of the son the father (land owner) had died so they would do as they wish with the property. In Israel at the time of Jesus ownerless property could be claimed by anyone who made claim first. So if they murdered the heir of the landowner they could claim the property for themselves (Mishnah *Baba Bathra* 3.3). So they conspire against Him, killing Him and throwing Him out of the vineyard. The son knowing that other servants have been mistreated knowingly allows Himself to be killed by the wicked tenant farmers. The emphasis here is the mistreatment of the Son that takes place within the vineyard (Israel) and He is ejected after being killed. The Son of God after He was resurrected went back to Heaven without setting the expected earthly Kingdom.

#### NEW TENANT FARMERS GET POSSESSION OF THE LAND

Mark 12:9

*<sup>9</sup> What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others (KJV).*

So now the landowner has to retaliate against the wicked land tenants for mistreating his servants and killing his son. The first divine retribution came in 70 AD When Titus

Vespasian, the Roman general, invaded Jerusalem fulfilling part of Christ's prophecy, he destroyed the Temple, sacked the city, and scattered the Jews who lived there to other countries, sending them to join others of the Diaspora. This added to the population of the earlier Diasporas, which took place in 722 B.C and 586 B.C. Then around 132-135 A.D. the Jews under Simon Bar Cochba rose up against the Roman rule, and the Romans tried unsuccessfully to put down the rebellion for three years. Hadrian finally put it down in 135 A.D., and the remaining Jews were scattered to regions outside Israel and the Romans renamed their land *Palestina*.

The Gentiles would be in full control over Israel with the Romans fully conquering and ejecting the last remnants of the priests and Sanhedrin. There was now no center of Jewish worship in Jerusalem with the Temple gone and the Christian Church began to flourish as a new entity. Even though faithful Jews started it Gentiles entered the new entity (Church) and eventually became the dominant group exerting their persecution on the unsaved Jewish population. God will not totally reject Israel. Jesus' prophecy from this parable predicted future persecution of the Jews. One of the greatest proponents was the Protestant German Reformer, Martin Luther (1483-1546 AD). He originally hoped they would accept his form of the faith, even initially praising their contribution to Christianity. However, when he did not succeed in converting the Jews, his attitude changed dramatically. In his work *Concerning the Jews and Their Lies* (published 1542), Luther wrote:

“All the blood kindred of Christ burn in hell, and they are rightly served, even according to their own words they spoke to Pilate. Verily a hopeless, wicked, venomous and devilish thing is the existence of these Jews, who for fourteen hundred years have been, and still are, our pest, torment and misfortune. They are just devils and nothing more.” Firstly, their synagogues should be set on fire. Secondly, their homes should likewise be broken down and destroyed. Thirdly, they should be deprived of their prayer-books and Talmuds. Fourthly, their rabbis must be forbidden under threat of death to teach any more. Fifthly, passport and travelling privileges should be absolutely forbidden to the Jews. Sixthly, they ought to be stopped from usury. Seventhly, let the young and strong Jews and Jewesses be given the flail, the axe, the hoe, the spade, the distaff, and spindle, and let them earn their bread by the sweat of their noses. We ought to drive the rascally lazy bones out of our system. Therefore, away with them. To sum up, dear princes and nobles who have Jews in your domains, if this advice of mine does not suit you, then find a better one so that you and we may all be free of this insufferable devilish burden - the Jews.”<sup>1</sup>

In a sermon given shortly before his death, he called for the immediate expulsion of all Jews from Germany. This would be implemented in a later period during the greatest persecution the Jews had on this earth to date, the Nazi Holocaust under Adolph Hitler.

## JESUS IS THE STONE REJECTED BY THE BUILDERS

Mark 12:10-11

*<sup>10</sup> And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner: <sup>11</sup> this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes (KJV)?*

Jesus through this parable then quotes Psalm 118:22-23. Like the son who was rejected by the tenant farmers and killed, He referred to Himself as the stone rejected by the builders. The cornerstone is the most important stone in a building, which was used as the standard to make sure the other stones of the building are straight and level. Israel's leadership did not care to the appropriate cornerstone to make their lives right, straight and true. They wanted a political king not a spiritual one. God's plan will always prevail and He will bring His Messiah back for a second visit. This time He will conquer the Antichrist and his armies when Israel finally begs for Him to return (Matthew 23:39). He began a new building separate from the Commonwealth of Israel called the Church where members are called out from all nations of the world, both Jew and Gentile. Jesus' life and teaching is the church's foundation.

## THE JEWISH LEADERS REALIZE WHAT JESUS SAID

Mark 12:12

*<sup>12</sup> 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 (KJV).*

Because they feared the people who loved Jesus they left Him alone. They really wanted to kill Him then as they realized that He was on to them and their motives. The authorities did not want a riot. The Romans would not be pleased by them upsetting the Pax Romana and would pay for it. So they left to strategize how to legally eliminate this threat to their authority Jesus.

## JESUS DEALS WITH THE HERODIANS

**Please call or e-mail with any questions or comments**

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<sup>i</sup> Luther, Martin, *Concerning the Jews and Their Lies*, reprinted in Talmage, Disputation and Dialogue, pp.34-36, as cited by Brown, pp.14-15. Brown, Michael L., *Our Hands Are Stained with Blood: The Tragic Story of the "Church" and the Jewish People*, published 1992 by Destiny Image Publishers, P.O. Box 310, Shippensburg, PA 17257, U.S.A