

hedge, digging the wine vat, and erecting the tower, are probably meant to indicate the earnest desire of the owner to obtain fruit. **Husbandmen.** The religious rulers of Israel, such as those who had just questioned his authority. **Went into another country.** This detail need mean no more than that the spiritual care of the nation was intrusted to the religious orders.

**10. At the season.** In the history of the Jewish nation inspired prophets had appeared who had warned kings and people of the necessity of bringing forth spiritual fruit. In each time of national emergency some such messenger from God had not failed to appear. **Servant.** "My servants the prophets." (Zech. 1, 6.) **Give him ... fruit.** The prophet, John the Baptist, had said (3, 8), "Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance." **Husbandmen.** Their relation to the vineyard is emphasized by the repetition of their title. They were not owners repelling an intruder; they were simply the tenants. **Beat him.** Treated him as though he were a usurper. **Empty.** Without the fruit for which he had been sent.

**11. Sent yet another.** A sign both of forbearance and of protest against the first atrocity. (See Rom. 2, 4.) **Him also they beat.** They mistook or disregarded the motive of the owner. **Shamefully.** Added insult to injury. **Empty.** They still denied the authority of the owner.

**12. Sent a third.** It cannot be that they will persist in their strange rebellion. **Wounded.** In Matthew and Mark one or more servants are at last killed outright. The tradition which Luke follows seems to have reserved the killing to the son for the sake of a stronger climax. Jesus spoke still more plainly on this topic in the same place. (See Matt. 23, 29-34.) **Cast him forth.** Half dead from his wounds. The officers who had just attempted to thrust Jesus out of his Father's house would not lose this detail.

**13. The lord of the vineyard.** The title calls attention to the rights which have been so flagrantly and persistently violated. **What shall I do?** The perversity of man is represented as perplexing the mind of God. **My beloved son.** Jesus had so often spoken of his unique relations to the Father, as John's gospel especially shows us, that the rulers would note this silent claim to an authority far greater than any they could claim. (Heb. 1, 5.) **It may be.** Or, I may reasonably expect. **Reverence him.** He represented more completely the authority and the rights of the owner. It was the unbelief of his contemporaries which most astonished and grieved Jesus. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews (1, 1-2) in like manner contrasted the dignity of God's own Son, as an instrument of revelation, with that of his prophets. So far from reverencing the son these Jewish husbandmen had demanded of Jesus what right he had to teach in the temple at all. (Ver. 2.)

**14. Reasoned.** Not without irony is this word used. What kind of reasoning was this? Jesus had had occasion before this to protest against the blindness and foolishness of such reasoning. (Mark 2, 8.) **This is the heir.** They unhesitatingly recognize both him and his legal claim. The Jewish officers cannot be credited with total ignorance as to the dignity of Jesus. (John 12, 10; 3, 2.) **Let us kill him.** These words must have had a startling sound to men who had already more than once taken secret counsel together how they might destroy him. In the first epistle which Paul wrote he took a retrospective glance at the bloody record of his people. "Who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and gave out us." (1 Thess. 2, 15.) **May be ours.** The last extreme of their insanity.

The rulers thought the death of Jesus would leave them in peaceful possession of their sovereignty.

**15. Cast him forth.** Would not give him so much as a grave on his own estate. According to Mark his lifeless body is cast forth. **Killed him.** Death alone would nullify his authority. This is what the technical question of verse 2 implies. **What therefore.** An appeal to the instinct of justice.

**16. He will come.** Matthew represents his antagonists as making this reply. They would at all events agree in their hearts with Jesus in his utterance of so righteous a sentiment. The owner will send no more representatives. The lord of the vineyard came when Jerusalem fell, in A. D. 70. **Others.** According to Matt. 22, 43 they would understand this as a distinct reference to the Gentiles. **God forbid.** According to the connection with verse 9 the people say this. In their loyalty to Israel they deem such national apostasy unthinkable.

**17. Looked upon them.** Scanned their faces with deeper earnestness. (Mark, 3, 5.) **What then.** If Israel could never kill the heir, what then does this prophecy mean? (Psa. 118, 22.) **Rejected.** They did not divine the plans of the chief architect. The people did not yet know how fully the rulers had rejected Jesus. **Made the head.** Given the most conspicuous place in the building. Peter remembered this quotation and made use of it more than once afterward. (Acts 4, 11; 1 Pet. 2, 7.)

**18. Felleth on.** Stumbles at and rejects the claims of Jesus. **Broken to pieces.** Shall lose his soul. **Shall fall.** Opposition like that of the rulers is here referred to. **Scatter him.** Utterly frustrate his opposition. The language suggests Dan. 2, 44.

**19. Sought.** Discussed various expedients for violently taking away his life without the knowledge of the people.

### The Lesson Council.

**Question 1.** For what reason did the Jews reject Jesus the Messiah? Did they know that he was the Messiah when they rejected him?

1. The masses rejected him because they were disappointed in his kingly character. They expected a temporal king having universal dominion. Hence their enthusiasm when Jesus made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. (Matt. 21, 1-11.) Even the disciples indulged this hope to the last. (Acts 1, 6.) 2. The parable of the vineyard was spoken against the chief priests and scribes, as they themselves knew. (Ver. 19.) The parable clearly teaches that they, being leaders, rejected him because they feared for their own craft. The religion of Jesus was to take the place of the old religion, and, therefore, they would be supplanted as leaders. Hence they said, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours." The masses did not know him as the Messiah; the chief priests and scribes did so know him.--*Rev. H. W. Ewing, B.D., Crisfield, Md.*

The rulers of the Jews understood perfectly that Jesus claimed to be Messiah. They recognized this at his first public appearance in Jerusalem, when he cleansed the temple. (Comp. Mal. 3, 1 with John 2, 18.) They knew also that he did the works which Messiah was to do. (Comp. John 11, 47; 16, 24.) And they distinctly saw that the parable of the husbandmen who slew the heir was intended for themselves. But the absolute knowledge of Jesus as the Christ was a matter not merely of the head, but of the heart. (Rom. 10, 9, 10.) And this was lacking in them. From the beginning they had