

Luke 20:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty.

Analysis

And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty—"At the season" (καιρῷ, kairō) indicates the appointed time for harvest and payment. The owner's request through his "servant" (δοῦλον, doulon) was entirely legitimate—he sought the fruit (καρποῦ, karpou) that was rightfully his. The servants represent the prophets God sent to Israel calling for righteousness, justice, and covenant faithfulness.

The tenants' response—they "beat" (δείραντες, deirantes, flogged, struck) the servant and sent him away "empty" (κενόν, kenon, with nothing)—reveals rebellion masquerading as management. This wasn't mere failure to produce fruit but violent rejection of the owner's rights. The beating symbolizes Israel's persecution of the prophets (1 Kings 19:10, Nehemiah 9:26, Jeremiah 37:15, 2 Chronicles 36:15-16). Rejection of God's messengers reveals rejection of God Himself. The empty-handed servant testifies against the tenants—they produced fruit but refused to share it with its rightful owner.

Historical Context

Israel's history chronicles persistent rejection of God's prophets. Jeremiah was beaten and imprisoned (Jeremiah 20:2, 37:15). Zechariah was stoned in the temple courts (2 Chronicles 24:20-21). Elijah fled Jezebel's murderous rage (1 Kings

19:1-3). Jesus later declared, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee" (Matthew 23:37). The religious establishment consistently opposed prophets who called for reform and challenged corrupt leadership.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How do the beaten servants represent God's patient pursuit of His rebellious people through the prophets?
2. What does sending the servant away empty reveal about religious activity that produces no fruit for God?
3. In what ways do churches today sometimes persecute or marginalize prophetic voices calling for reform?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἐν	καιρῷ	ἀπέστειλεν	πρὸς	τοὺς	γεωργοὶ	
And	at	the season	he sent	to	G3588	the husbandmen	
G2532	G1722	G2540	G649	G4314		G1092	
δοῦλον	ἵνα	ἀπὸ	τοῦ	καρποῦ	τοῦ	ἀμπελῶνος	δῶσιν
a servant	that	of	G3588	the fruit	G3588	of the vineyard	they should give
G1401	G2443	G575		G2590		G290	G1325
αὐτὸν	οἱ	δὲ	γεωργοὶ	δείραντες	αὐτὸν	ἐξαπέστειλαν	
him	G3588	but	the husbandmen	beat	him	and sent him away	
G846		G1161	G1092	G1194	G846	G1821	
κενόν							
empty							
G2756							

Additional Cross-References

Nehemiah 9:26 (Parallel theme): Nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy law behind their backs, and slew thy prophets which testified against them to turn them to thee, and they wrought great provocations.

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