

Luke 20:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they said, God forbid.

Analysis

He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they said, God forbid—Jesus pronounces the judgment: the owner will "come" (ἐλεύσεται, eleusetai, indicating future certainty) and "destroy" (ἀπολέσει, apolesei, utterly ruin) the wicked tenants, giving the vineyard to "others" (ἄλλοις, allois). The destruction is complete and just—they forfeited stewardship by murdering the heir. The "others" prophetically indicates the gospel's extension to Gentiles (Acts 13:46, Romans 11:11-24).

The crowd's response—"God forbid" (μὴ γένοιτο, mē genoito, literally "may it not be!")—reveals horror at the implication. Either they recognize that Israel's rejection of Messiah will bring judgment, or they reject the notion that God would transfer His covenant promises to outsiders. Their reaction shows they've grasped the parable's meaning: Jesus is the Son, the leaders are the wicked tenants, and judgment is coming. Yet mere recognition without repentance changes nothing.

Historical Context

This prophecy was literally fulfilled. In 70 AD, Rome destroyed Jerusalem and the temple after the Jewish revolt. The religious system centered on temple sacrifice ended permanently. The vineyard—representing God's covenant people and kingdom—was indeed given to "others": the church composed of both Jews and Gentiles. The gospel went to all nations (Matthew 28:19-20). Paul explained that

Gentiles were grafted into Israel's olive tree (Romans 11:17-24), inheriting the promises through faith in Jesus.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does the transfer of the vineyard to others demonstrate that God's purposes cannot be thwarted by human rebellion?
2. What does the crowd's "God forbid" reveal about recognizing truth without acting on it?
3. How should the sobering reality that God will accomplish His purposes with or without us shape our faithfulness?

Interlinear Text

ἐλεύσεται καὶ ἀπολέσει τοὺς γεωργοὺς τούτους καὶ
He shall come and destroy G3588 husbandmen these and G2532
G2064 G2532 G622 G1092 G5128 G2532

δώσει τὸν ἀμπελῶνα ἄλλοις ἀκούσαντες δὲ εἶπον,
shall give G3588 the vineyard to others when they heard And it they said G2036
G1325 G290 G243 G191 G1161 G2036

Μὴ γένοιτο
God forbid G1096
G3361

Additional Cross-References

Luke 19:27 (Parallel theme): But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.

Acts 13:46 (References God): Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

Matthew 21:41 (Parallel theme): They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

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