



NOW will I sing to my well beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: ² And he fenced 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 made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes (Isaiah 5:1-2)

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

From ancient days to today, the Word of God has stood immutable and unchanging in its application. That which was written of Adam, Eve, Cain, and Abel are just as applicable to us today as when they were first uttered by the mouth of God. All that has preceded us in biblical history has been intended as historical example and legal obligation to us today. There is an antinomian heresy rampant in modern churches that denies that the very Commandments of God are no longer applicable to us today. Some churches even call themselves 'New Testament' churches discounting any value to them of the Old Testament. Others do essentially the same by claiming themselves to be 'Holy Spirit' churches implying that the Holy Spirit only moved in the New Testament era. These are heretical views of God's Word and a false concept of the Holy spirit.

The Laws of God are even MORE compelling to us today than when first written on Tables of Stone. Their compulsion then was more of a legal nature; today of a greater spiritual impact, but all to the same end of the betterment of our lives. We no longer live UNDER the Law, but BY the Law.

In the Old Testament, the Law was a curse. In fact, the last word of the Old Testament (if you have a real Bible) is CURSE. Why was it so? Because men believed not the promise of a coming Redeemer made to Abraham and felt that their salvation rose or fell upon the perfect keeping of the enumerated Laws of God.

God has been building His Church (Vineyard) from the very beginning at the Garden at Eden. The promise He made to Eve "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15) was precursor to the fuller promise made to Abraham. God always reveals His promises in measured graduation for our comprehension. The early people of God could never have comprehended the full meaning of the cross without a gradual subjection to God's revelation.

That Vineyard to which Isaiah makes reference is the Church, and Bride of His Beloved Son, Jesus. A Vineyard is designed to produce life, and in the greater sense, REPRODUCES life. If there was no living thing to care for the Vineyard, it could produce nothing. This accords fully with the natural law. The 2nd Law of Thermodynamics (simplified) reveals that all structures tend to devolve into less organized states when left without tending (entropy). This is true of a garden as well. Leave this year's garden unattended for the coming year and see the results! Underlying human labors to produce food for the family is the overriding sentiment of LOVE. The key to understanding how man can keep God's Commandments is summarized in that four-letter word – LOVE. *"love covereth all sins."* **Proverbs 10:12** Love will never intentionally harm or violate the object of its obsession. Love enables us to keep God's Law – not out of outward action, but inward spiritual intent. We do not keep those laws written on Tables of Stone, but in the secret chambers of our hearts. *"³ Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart."* (2 Corinthians 3:3)

Even the secular law excuses violations of law that are unintentional and unpreventable.

Under the terms of the Law, we were redeemed. Our Lord satisfied the terms of God's justice when He died in our stead and for our sins on the cross. This satisfaction of blood redemption began in the Garden east at Eden when an God sacrificed an animal to make a covering for Adam and Eve. The animal was totally innocent of any sin and was the first death upon earth. But this sad event foreshadowed a greater and perfect sacrifice which would come some 4,000 years hence outside the gates of Jerusalem.

The certain man who planted a Vineyard was God Almighty. When He planted His Vineyard, no man could fully understand what the nature of the fruit might be. The seed had to germinate in the darkness of the earth before bursting forth into effulgent light. This is true of prophecy as well. God gives us shadows and types by which the one who loves and studies His Word deeply can appreciate greater meaning that is available to all if they love that Word.

God also set a hedge about His Vineyard. That Hedge can represent a love for His Law. Those who do not love the Law and Word of the Lord will not feel comfortable in a church that exercises Godly discipline.

The place for the winefat was Calvary's Cross. The tower He built was to benefit our wider understanding of His Word. The prophets were sent to give us the long-view of His Word. It also was to guard against evil men who would invade and steal the fruit.

And who do you believe is the husbandmen? Why, it is you and I. We are the keepers of the vineyard. We serve under the constraints of God's Word and under those appointed as the under-shepherds thereof.

When Adam and Eve offended against God's Commandment (only ONE which they could not keep), He no longer fellowshiped with them regularly. He withdrew His Paradise to the New Jerusalem and dismissed the disobedient couple – *"and went into a far country."*

Men often begin to serve God in remembering the purpose and object of the true Church, but, in time, become preoccupied by the institution itself and forget that its purpose is not size or prominence, but to do the will of the Lord. Instead of belonging to God, they believe the Church belongs to them. This was the state of the Old Testament Church when our Lord came in His ministry. The Scribes, Pharisees, and religious Rulers consider the Temple and all things appertaining thereto to be of their own domain. The Truth and Spirit of God was no longer elevated. God sent many prophets to reveal the error of this state of affairs, but the rulers of the Vineyard treated them with contempt and rejected them. He repeatedly sent men of faith to warn the keepers of the Vineyard, but they treated them brutally and even killed some of them.

The owner of the Vineyard (God the Father) decided to send His only Begotten Son. Do not make the mistake of thinking that God did not have absolute foreknowledge of how this only Begotten would be treated and murdered by these culprits – He DID have! He is speaking according to human reason here in this parable. *"Having yet therefore one son, his wellbeloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son."* He is speaking in the only terms we can understand – HUMAN. Read the result: *"But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours.⁸ And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard.⁹ What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others."* There are important points for us here. Notice that the husbandmen (Pharisees and Jewish Rulers) knew precisely that the Son was the Heir of the Vineyard. It was for this very reason that they felt they must destroy Him. Their cozy little arrangement in running the Vineyard without the owner (as a modern church is run without her Lord) was threatened by the appearance of the Heir of the Vineyard. Kill Him and the Vineyard will be all theirs they believed.

How do you suppose God viewed their brutal contempt for His Son? Was their vanity not dealt with in the destruction of their old Jerusalem some thirty years later? Were they not scattered abroad living in constant fear? The keeping of the Vineyard was taken away from these husbandmen and given to a people bearing the fruits of the kingdom. God's Church is built – not upon the pebble which was Peter, or of men, but of the Rock which was Christ. He is the Stone the builders rejected. *"¹⁰ And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner:¹¹ This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?"* Having said these truths, the wicked husbandmen attempted to lay hold upon the Beloved son to destroy Him. But 'political concerns' got in their way. They were cowards hiding behind their robes.