



# His Final Steps... Led to His Enemies

Text: Selections from Luke 20:9-19 NAS 1995

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ: Today is our sixth and final Wednesday of this 2023 Season of Lent.

- We have followed Jesus' final steps ▶to a tomb, ▶to a dinner, ▶to the Court of the Gentiles, and ▶to a fig tree.
- On the fifth Wednesday, we heard Jesus' reaction to some Greeks who wanted to see Him.
- Today, *on this sixth Wednesday*, ▶we are in [Luke chapter 20](#) and ▶the setting is Tuesday of Holy Week. **On Holy Monday**, *Jesus cleansed the Court of the Gentiles*; then, **on Holy Tuesday**, *some of the Jewish Leaders questioned Jesus about what He did on Monday*. They were basically saying: The temple complex is under our control, *so who gave You the authority to drive out the moneychangers and merchants?* Since they would not answer a question Jesus asked them, *He did not answer their question*. Then, with those leaders – *who were seeking to murder Jesus* – still present, He told the parable of the tenants.

1. **The Setting:** Since †the chief priests, †the scribes, and †the elders heard what Jesus said, who were they?
  - a. The chief priests – “members of the Sanhedrin [*the ruling council of the Jews*] who belonged to high-priestly families” (BW, Danker).
  - b. The scribes – “...specialists in Mosaic legal matters... legal scholars, teachers of the law” (BW, Danker).
  - c. The elders – “Judean officials in Jerusalem, [members of] the Sanhedrin” (BW, Danker).
  
2. **The Parable of the Tenants:** [Jesus did not speak it to be mean, but to †*instruct the people* and †*call the Jewish leaders to repent.*] <sup>9</sup> And [Jesus] began to tell the people this parable: “A man planted a vineyard and rented it out to vine-growers, and went on a journey for a long time. <sup>10</sup> At the *harvest* time he sent a slave to the vine-growers, so that they would give him *some* of the produce of the vineyard; but the vine-growers beat him and sent him away empty-handed. <sup>11</sup> And he proceeded to send another slave; and they beat him also and treated him shamefully and sent him away empty-handed. <sup>12</sup> And he proceeded to send a third; and this one also they wounded and cast out. <sup>13</sup> The owner of the vineyard said, ‘What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.’ <sup>14</sup> But when the vine-growers saw him, they reasoned with one another, saying, ‘This is the heir; let us kill him so that the inheritance will be ours.’ <sup>15</sup> So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.”
  - a. Who’s who?
    - i. The **owner** of the vineyard is God the Father.
    - ii. The **vineyard** is the Nation of Israel.

- iii. The **vine-growers** are the Jewish Leaders.
  - iv. The **slaves** are the Prophets.
  - v. The **produce** is "contrition, faith, true obedience" (Lenski, 977).
  - vi. The **son** is Jesus.
- b. What's what?
- i. God made a *general* promise of the coming Savior in Gen. 3:15. *Adam and Eve believed God's promise!*
  - ii. God made a *more specific* promise to Abram, in Gen. 12:1-3, that the Savior would be one of His descendants. *Abram believed God's promise!*
  - iii. Those descendants became the Nation of Israel, *through which the Savior would be born*. Everyone *should* have kept believing in the coming Savior, *but many began to trust in their following of God's laws for salvation*. So, God sent many prophets to call the people to repent, *but the prophets were mistreated and even murdered by the various kings of Israel*.
  - iv. When Israel ceased to have kings, prominent Jewish men were given authority over the religious practices of the Jews. Over the centuries, *less and less trusted in the Promised Messiah*, while *more and more embraced the false religion of Judaism*.
  - v. That is when God sent His Son, saying, "**perhaps they will respect him,**" but what were those leaders planning to do? *Capture Him and murder Him 😞!*

3. **The Response of the Owner:** [Jesus continued talking to the people, *with the Jewish Leaders listening*.] "**What, then, will the owner of the vineyard do to them?** <sup>16</sup> **He will come and destroy these vine-growers and will give**

**the vineyard to others.”** // The destruction came in AD 70 and the “others” is a reference to the Gentiles.

4. **The Response of the Jewish Leaders:** **When they heard it, they said, “May it never be!”** // Those Jewish Leaders *thought* they had the favor of God, but they were deceived, and they were deceiving others – *the blind leading the blind!* Many of today’s leaders are similar.
5. **The Response of Jesus:** <sup>17</sup> **But Jesus looked at them and said, “What then is this that is written [in Psalm 118:22]: ‘THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone’?** <sup>18</sup> **Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust.”** // Those leaders were rejecting Jesus, who is the Messiah, *the Chief Corner Stone!* As every part of a proper building is in line with its cornerstone, *so every child of God is in line with Christ.* But for all who reject the Cornerstone, they will *✦fall upon it and be broken* or *✦lay under it crushed!*
6. **The Wickedness of the Jewish Leaders:** <sup>19</sup> **The scribes and the chief priests tried to lay hands on [Jesus] that very hour, and they feared the people; for they understood that He spoke this parable against them.** // They *so much* wanted to seize Jesus and have Him put to death, *but they feared the people who were excited about Jesus.*

**Let Us Pray:** Dear Jesus, You courageously went among Your enemies to love them, teach them, and win them. Even today You desire to save the lost. So, *help us to reflect Your love!*

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