

TEXT Luke 20:9-19

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to explain the parallel between the rejection of the master's son by the husbandmen to the rejection of Christ by the majority of people in the world today. They will also relate what the end result will be of those who turn Christ aside.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER He came unto his own, and his own received him not. — John 1:11

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. — Isaiah 53:3

ANSWER TITLE: **The Consequences of Rejection**
SEARCH TITLE: **The Wicked Husbandmen**

REFERENCE INFORMATION

Husbandmen is an archaic or poetic term used for "farmers, plowmen, tillers of the soil, or laborers." They may have been either tenants or owners. In this parable the husbandmen were tenant vine dressers. They rented from the landowner who was to be paid from each year's grape crop.

Most Jewish vineyards were on slopes or hills where they got the most sun. The vines usually grew along the ground. Around them were stone walls which had watch-towers, both of which helped keep out animals, thieves, and other intruders. Wine presses were cut out of solid rock.

YOUR OPENER

The Wicked Husbandmen

TEXT: Luke 20:9-19

KEY VERSE: He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. — Isaiah 53:3

RESPONSES

1. The parable was directed against the chief priests and scribes. They tried to lay hands on Jesus, as the husbandmen in the parable did to the heir, because of their jealousy, hatred, and rejection of Him. The sinner who is confronted with evidence of his wrongdoing may deny his guilt, try to excuse his misdeeds, or at times even become violent. None of these reactions change the fact of his guilt.

2. God was turning away from the Jews, and His vineyard, or church, was being given to the Gentiles. Thus we have the opportunity to receive salvation. Discuss with the students what was required of a Gentile who wanted to be saved during Old Testament times, bringing out that he had to submit to the Law with all its ordinances and sacrifices. Jesus fulfilled that Law, and opened the door to justification by faith. Because the Jews as a nation rejected Christ, the Gospel has been offered to the Gentiles. They have the privilege of enjoying God's salvation— His love and mercy being directed toward them. See Romans 11:11-12.

3. As soon as Jesus Christ was crucified, God began to open the door of His mercy to the Gentiles. Have your class talk about the miraculous way God showed Peter that the Gentiles were to be included in receiving the Gospel (Acts 10:9-16). Discuss the attitude of Paul: how he preached first to the Jews, but when they rejected the preaching of the Cross, he preached to the Gentiles (Acts 18:5,6), resulting in many conversions. Why did God reject the Jews? Because their religious leaders rejected Him and crucified His Son. The nation was overthrown in 70 A.D. when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem with a fearful slaughter of the Jews.

4. "The stone" refers to Jesus, the Son of God, who is the Chief Cornerstone of the Church. Even though the Jews did not receive Him, but rejected Him, to "as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God" (John 1:11-12). Emphasize the fact that there is no "other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," but the name of Jesus. See Acts 4:12.

Jesus' parables were given to provide spiritual lessons. In this story the religious leaders of God's chosen people are likened to wicked husbandmen of the vineyard which their lord had planted. Through the years God sent prophets to Israel instructing and admonishing them to be obedient and to do right, that they might be a fruit-bearing vineyard. But the leaders, on the whole, treated the prophets shamefully, wounding some and killing others. Finally God sent His only begotten Son, but they rejected Him also, causing Him to be crucified.

1. Against whom was Jesus directing this parable? Compare their reaction to the reaction of a sinner confronted with evidence of his wrongdoing.

2. What did Jesus mean in the parable when He said God would destroy those husbandmen and give the vineyard to others (Matthew 21:41,43)? What impact does this have on us?

3. In reference to the answer for question two, when did this happen? See Acts 10:34-35,44-45.

4. What is meant by the prophecy which Jesus quoted in our text, "The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner"? See Acts 4:10-11.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

5. Jesus said, "Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (Matthew 21:44). How would you explain this?

6. Do you think the Gentiles as a whole are treating Jesus any better today than the Jews did? Give reasons for your answer.

7. Many who are rejecting Christ today, and giving Him little or no thought, seem to be prospering materially. After reading Ecclesiastes 8:11-13, what are your feelings as to the end result in the lives of those who are turning Christ's love aside?

8. Some do not outwardly deny Christ or reject His deity, but continually neglect to do anything about their soul's salvation. What danger is there in following such a pattern in one's life? See 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3 and Hebrews 2:3.

9. God's Spirit departed from the Jews and turned to the Gentiles because the Jews rejected Christ. In these days, the Gentiles' rejection of Christ will cause God to turn back to the Jews (Luke 21:24; Romans 11:19-22). What does this tell us concerning God's time for us? See 2 Corinthians 6:2.

5. Falling on this stone, which is Jesus, signifies one's coming to Him in repentance. His sinful tendency or desire will be broken, and Christ will give him a new heart (Ezekiel 36:26). Judgment will fall on the one who refuses to come, who rejects Him as the Jews did. The Jewish nation was destroyed and the people scattered among the nations. This would be a good time to stress the importance of coming to Christ while mercy's door is open and God's Spirit is drawing.

6. Many Gentiles are receiving Christ as their personal Savior. However, bring out that even many religious groups are denying Christ's deity as the Son of God, His virgin birth, His Blood atonement, and His resurrection. They are trying to bring Him down to man's level as just a good teacher and example. Stress the importance of believing in Him as the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

7. Give your students an opportunity to express their thoughts. Then discuss the fact that even today there is no way the Christ-rejecter can escape the judgment of the Lord. As the Jews in Christ's time were punished for their sins, so will those in our day eventually be punished, even though they seem to prosper materially for a time.

8. Show that neglecting God and putting off salvation until some other time is one of the most dangerous things a person can do. One of these days sudden destruction will come to those who say, "some other time."

9. Discuss with your class that as surely as God judged the Jews, so will He judge the Gentiles. Stress the importance of daily obeying and following God's Word, so we will be ready when Jesus comes for us.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

What does *reject* mean?

What are some of the reasons people today reject Christ?

Why is it important not to reject Christ, and how can we keep from doing this?

Name some ways to prove you love God and are not guilty of rejecting Him.

Why would anyone reject Christ after hearing of what He has done and will do for them?

What are some of the consequences of rejecting Christ?

Can one actually reject Christ without really knowing it? Explain.

What would have happened if the husbandmen had repented of their wrongdoings and had accepted and honored the owner's son? What happens when we repent and honor Jesus Christ today as our Lord and Savior?

In our ANSWER story, what was Shannon's reaction to the fact that the warnings of an expert were ignored? What warnings are being ignored by people in our day? In a spiritual sense, to what would you parallel the rejection of the expert in our story?

THINGS TO DO

Show your students a gift-wrapped box. Tell them it represents God's gift to man—salvation through Jesus Christ. (You might put this label on the box.) Demonstrate two ways of rejecting the gift. One way is to lay it aside and ignore it. And the other is to stomp on it without regard. Ask the students how they would feel if they had been the giver of the gift. Imagine how God must feel when we reject His precious Gift.

Bring a job application to class. Using it as an introduction, make a list of rejections that can change your life, such as being fired from your job, turned down by the college of your choice, or jilted by your sweetheart. Compare these to rejecting Christ and the consequences one would face.

Hand one of your students something you have made. Bring out that, because you made it, this gift is a part of you. Discuss your probable emotions if the gift were to be rejected. Liken this to God's giving of Himself when He gave His own Son. How grieved He feels when His Son is rejected!

Prepare a basket of apples and include a few which are partly spoiled. With your class, sort out the good apples leaving only the spoiled ones. Ask what will happen to the spoiled ones. (They will be destroyed as were the husbandmen in our lesson.) What will happen to the good apples? They will be used. (Give one to each student.) Show how the end results will be enjoyable or good just as with a person who has chosen to exalt Christ.

Answers for ANSWER

Don't Turn Him Away

The words on the list below are from the Bible text. Write them in the grid where they fit. The word REJECTED is already printed. Rejecting Christ is something we never want to do.

SON
LORD
VINEYARD
HUSBANDMEN
REJECTED

SON
LORD
SERVANT
BELOVED
VINEYARD
HUSBANDMEN