

Two Sons

Matthew 21:28-32

“What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ He answered, ‘I will not’; but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, ‘I go, sir’; but he did not go.

Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.”

Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.



Working in the Vineyard

The grape harvest in Biblical times was very important. Grape vines were best planted on a hillside. The grapes would catch the sun well there, and the rain would run off the slope. Often the hillside would be stepped into a series of little terraces running along the slope. The edge of each terrace was marked with a wall of stones and rocks.

Before planting new vines, the farmer broke up the soil with his hoe. Then he planted out the vines, leaving plenty of room between them. While some vines grew along the ground, others needed sticks to climb on.

Pruning

During the winter the farmer cut out dead or broken branches. This left the healthy branches to grow and bear grapes.

Grape Harvest

When the grapes were ready to pick, in July, August or September, the farmer's family often went to live in a watchtower among the vines. At night they could guard the grapes from thieves, and during the day they picked the grapes, collecting them in big baskets.

The grape harvest was a festival time. There was much singing and dancing as well as plenty of hard work.

Using the Grapes

Some of the grapes were eaten fresh. Some grapes were crushed to make fresh grape-juice. Yet other grapes were spread out to dry in the sun to make raisins. But most of the grapes were pressed to make wine.

Adapted from The Kregel Pictorial guide to Everyday Life in Bible Times by Tim Dowley.

The Rebellious Servants

Matthew 21:33-46

“Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country.

When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way.

Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.’ So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him.

Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.”

Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the scriptures:

‘The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
this was the Lord’s doing,
and it is amazing in our
eyes’?

Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.”

When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

