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THE PARABLE OF THE EVIL FARMERS

The messages of the parable

With the parable of the evil farmers the Lord speaks prophetically and hints at many great truths. To begin with He reveals the great providence and care which God showed to the people of Israel from ancient times. He also denotes the murderous disposition of the Israelites, which they always expressed towards the prophets and the righteous ones. Despite all these things however, the Lord stresses that God showed great long-suffering towards them and didn't omit anything of what was necessary, in order for His people to be trained in salvation. Consequently, the unique true God Himself is He who acts both in the Old and in the New Testament.

Also, with the parable, He prophesies His crucifixion and that this will bring great and important changes. The ancient people of Israel will undergo the utmost of punishments for the crime of the crucifixion and will abandon God, whom they were worshiping for centuries. The Kingdom of God will be given to another nation, that is the Church, to which people of all nations belong, who believe in Jesus Christ and are keeping His commandments. They henceforth will comprise the people of God, Israel, about which the prophets had formulated a great multitude of prophecies, and whose cornerstone is Jesus Christ. He is the foundation stone, which, as our forefather David had prophesied, was rejected by the builders, in other words, by the rulers of ancient Israel.

Training for repentance

In order for this parable to become more understood, we must know where and when it was said by the Lord. Running through the Gospel according to Matthew we ascertain that it was said in a discussion which Jesus had with the high priests and presbyters of the Israelite people. This conversation occurred, when the Lord had henceforth come for the last time to

Jerusalem and His glorious elevation on the precious wood of the cross was approaching. At the time when Jesus was teaching the people in the Temple of Solomon, the high priests and the presbyters approached Him and in an indirect way they disputed His authority to act and speak as a Messiah. The Lord answering, reminded them of the witness which the Precious Forerunner gave about Him and revealed to them that from a spiritual viewpoint they were in a worse position than the publicans and the prostitutes, because they did not believe in the preaching of the Forerunner. With this word He showed that whoever is wrong in dogma is in the same state with the most sinful and immoral people, even if they are living a very moral life in other things.

So after He first revealed to the rulers of the Jews that they are impious, because they did not accept Him as Messiah, with the parable of the evil farmers He reminds them that from ancient years their people were impious towards God. So He takes away their boast that they were children of Abraham and shows to them that they are not descendents of Abraham, but of those who were persecuting the righteous ones. Simultaneously He prophesies to them the great crime which they will perform, in other words, the killing of the Son of God. Furthermore with the phrase "outside of the vineyard" He is precisely describing the place in which the crime will take place, in other words, Golgotha, which was outside of Jerusalem. Even though God showed so much providence and long-suffering towards them for centuries, they were not corrected at all, but proved to be worse even than the thieves and the sinful women and in a little, due to the crucifixion of the Son of God, their falling away from the kingdom of God would come.

With all these things He gives them cause to be corrected. Upon hearing these fearful words, they could have become humbled and repented, as the Ninevites did of old. To become receptive of divine grace and not commit the awful crime of killing God. However, as we know, not only was there hardened heart not softened, but it became even harder with anger and, if they could have, they would've killed Jesus at that very hour. So the prophetic saying was realized in them: "we healed Babylon and she was not healed" (Jer. 28:9).

Ancient Israel comprises a type of the life of each person, and furthermore the believers. There does not exist a person who does not enjoy divine providence, in order to repent and be saved. And just the fact that we continue living upon the earth, is a proof that God awaits our repentance. In those who are in delusion, God speaks mainly with two books of His written in all the languages: the conscience and the book of creation. Paying attention to these, they may be led to the knowledge of the true God and to be directed to the path of His commandments. To the believers He speaks with the Scriptures, the innumerable books of the Saints, the miracles and divine grace. Also, just like the rulers of the Jews, God does not omit to threaten us also with eternal hell, so that we never go to hell. So let us not appear more hardhearted and more unrepentant than the rulers of the Jews. Let us not be crucifying the Lord with our sins, so that we are not cast out, like them also, from the Kingdom of God. Let us base our whole life on the foundation stone of the Lord, so that we remain unto the ages of ages in the house of God our Father. Amen.