

THE LORD'S VINEYARD

The Kingdom Principle Of The Lord's Vineyard: Grapes and Olives were important crops grown in biblical days. The activity of the harvest within a vineyard, teaches us about a Heavenly Kingdom; Matthew 20:1-16; Luke 20:9-16.

Fruit – often grows in clusters, and is symbolic of “groups” of people; Isaiah 18:5; Deut. 32:32; Revelation 14:18.

1. Climate, soil, sunlight and rain are factors which determine the quality of the fruit.
2. Grapes should be picked and eaten when they are ripe. A “sour” grape is immature; if the fathers “eat” (ingest and assimilate) a sour grape, the children’s teeth are “set on edge” (pucker at the taste; leaves an unpleasant sensation); Ezekiel 18:2; Jeremiah 31:29-30. “Like father, like son”: the sins of the fathers are visited upon the next generation until the Cross is allowed to work (God gives an opportunity to sons for redemption)
3. Olives were an important fruit in biblical days and were raised for food, for the purpose of light (illumination); Matt. 25:4; beautification; Ruth 3:3, and for the production of anointing oil; Exodus 27:20; 30:22-33.

Harvest – is produced as a result of the Gardener’s (Vinedresser’s) special care and attention; John 15:1:

1. The pruning of the branches:
 - a. Pruning is not punishment, it stimulates growth and fruit production; John 15:2.
 - b. Pruning causes the roots to grow deeper into the soil; Colossians 2:7.
2. The crushing of the grapes or olives:
 - a. Crushing is painful; it comes before the “pouring out”; Isaiah 53:10-12.
 - b. We do not know what is inside of us until we are crushed (pressure reveals who we really are, our true character). “Gethsemane” means “oil press”; Mark 14:32.
3. The filtering and isolation in the wine cellar:
 - a. To make wine fit for consumption, it had to be filtered from “vessel to vessel”. The deep settlements of the “lees” (sediment) must be dislodged; Jeremiah 48:11.
 - b. The separation process of isolation (being hidden, lonely, humbled) is necessary to produce the desired “bouquet”: the taste, seasoning, perfume or scent of His likeness and character; Ezra 10:11; 2 Corinthians 6:17.

Wine is symbolic of:

1. The life and power of the Holy Spirit; symbolic of Pentecost; Acts 2:4-13.
2. The “joy” that arises from His life; Song of Sol. 1:2, 4; Zechariah 9:15-17.
3. Wine was also called “The Blood of the Grape”. Jesus’ life was poured out for us; Matthew 26:27-29; 27:33-34. The life of the flesh is in the blood; Leviticus 17:11.
4. New wine – of the Kingdom is the truth of the Kingdom. The new wine is found in “the cluster” (a bunch of grapes), corporate anointing; Isaiah 65:8.
5. Transformation - Jesus turned water into wine (a pure beverage); John 2:9. The water of earth becomes the “wine of heaven” at the Master’s command. Grape juice is called “wine” in the Bible. The scriptures also address the use of “strong drink” or wine which is fermented; Leviticus 10:9; Proverbs 20:1; 23:31.

Wineskin – is the structure, the container, or vessel through which that life is poured out; Proverbs 3:10. “Old bottles” cannot hold “new wine”; Luke 5:37-38. There are three basic “wineskins” for the wine:

1. The individual, which consists of spirit, soul and body. The spirit is appointed to rule.
2. The Home and the Family. The “house” must come into divine order.
3. The Local Church. It is the “proving ground” of all legitimate ministry.

Vine – in the O.T. was Israel; in the N.T. is Jesus.

1. Jesus is the True Vine; branches (believers) are joined to Him. He is also symbolically referred to as The Tree Of Life; John 15:1-17.
2. Wild branches can be grafted in; Romans 11:16-24.
3. There are also degenerate plants of a “strange vine”; Jeremiah 2:21

Vineyard – is another term for the Church, the “land” which includes:

1. The activity or purpose of the vineyard is “fruit bearing”:
 - a. The principle of conversion: new converts (tender shoots, branches); John 4:36.
 - b. The development of fruit into maturity: the likeness and nature of Jesus Christ, through the indwelling Holy Spirit; Galatians 5:22-23.
2. The vineyard contains a “tower for the watchmen”: the oversight ministries who watch over the land; Ezekiel 3:17-19. These ministries watch for:
 - a. Locusts – are those influences which consume, strip away, or damage the crop.
 - b. Beasts – the “little foxes” that spoil the vines; Isaiah 5:1-2; Song of Sol. 2:15.
 - c. Thieves – those who try to climb in dishonestly, those who steal; John 10:1-10.
 - d. Neglect – those who are “at ease in Zion”; Proverbs 24:30-34; Amos 6:1.
3. There are “laborers” who work in the vineyard; Matthew 20:1-16.
4. A vineyard contains all the necessary elements for the process of “winemaking”.
5. A vineyard is also symbolic of God’s Kingdom; Matthew 20:1-16