

In Matthew 21:40 of this parable Jesus asked the question, "When the Lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will He do unto those husbandmen?" The chief priests and Pharisees replied, "He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons."

Jesus answered them in verse 43, "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

There is a traditional teaching that completely cancels out this verse and gives it practically no meaning or significance. This teaching says the Church is the kingdom of God. But the Church is not the kingdom. The Church is the body of Christ, a much higher order.

The Church consists of born again believers, but the kingdom was given to a nation. So said Jesus in Matthew 21:43. And the prophets declare that the kingdom was to be manifested first in one particular nation and then it was to develop and spread throughout the earth.

As for the Church being the kingdom: Whatever the kingdom is – and surely we can understand this – it was and is the position that the scribes and Pharisees occupied. They had the Scriptures with the laws, statutes, judgments and commandments. Therefore they had the responsibility to teach and administer these kingdom principles. This they failed to do. Therefore this position was taken from them and given to another nation, not to the Church.

In verse 45 we read,

"And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of

them." They were resentful and angry and "sought to lay hands on him," but they "feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet."

Christ was not telling them that personal salvation would be taken away from them and given to a nation. Personal salvation has never been taken away from any people. Anyone of any race or people may come and receive Jesus Christ as his personal Savior.

But as we learned from the book of Genesis from the example of Abraham with Ishmael, from the example of Isaac with Esau, and Jacob with his twelve sons, the kingdom nation was given to him whom God ordained. It was exclusively passed from Abraham to Isaac, Isaac to Jacob and then to Joseph. It was an exclusive inheritance, not revocable.

In Genesis 49 we are told that this kingdom nation was to come into full manifestation in the "last days." And in Matthew 21 Jesus said, "the kingdom shall be taken from you (the leaders of Israel in Christ's day) and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

The leadership (dominion) removed from the scribes and Pharisees and was given again to "a nation," Joseph's birthright nation, and they have brought forth the fruits that Jesus tells of in the 25th chapter of Matthew. The fruits were to be "feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and help people in distress." This should mean very much to you, for surely you are aware that the United States of America has done more of this than all other nations of all history combined.

Notice what Jesus said further in Matthew 21:44, "Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be