

We Are Fellowship Bible Study



Book: Isaiah

Chapter 5: "God's Disappointing Vineyard"

v:1 Now let me sing to my Well-beloved a song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard: My Well-beloved has a vineyard on a very fruitful hill. (Reference to Ps 80:8, 15; Jer 2:21; Matt 21:33; Mark 12:1; Luke 20:9)

The song is dedicated to God. "Beloved" and "His", are emphasized (capitalized) to address whose vineyard is being discussed. Reference to Psalm 80:15. This chapter is titled "Prayer

for Israel's Restoration". Upon reading Chapter 80 of the Psalms, it is a song of the rise, fall and restoration (through the Son of Man, who is seated at the right hand of the Father).

v:2 He dug it up and cleared out its stones, and planted it with the choicest vine. He built a tower in its midst, and also made a winepress in it; so He expected it to bring forth good grapes, but it brought forth wild grapes. (Reference to Deut 32:6; Jer 2:21)

Reference to Jeremiah 2:21 is given **"Yet I had planted you a noble vine, a seed of highest quality. How then have you turned before Me into the degenerate plant of an alien vine?"**

As I read Isaiah and Jeremiah one thing rang out loud, If God planted the best, and the ground was fruitful or fertile... what happened? How did the crop fail? If we look at the nature of grapes, its wine is affected by the amount of light it gets (time spent with God), the type of water it gets (in the Word), type of pruning it receives (chastising) and you can always tell the region of the wine by how it tastes. Sinful actions had caused the vine to produce an alien fruit. Alien because it was not from God.

The presence of a winepress and removal of stones shows that God created an environment for his people to thrive and to have good purpose. The example given, the winepress to turn grapes into wine, and how God removed the stone from our hearts to enable us to have a heart of flesh (not hardened), tender toward His love, mercy, and toward His children.

v:3 “And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge, please, between Me and My vineyard. (Reference to Rom 3:4)

Whenever it is said to “judge between me and someone else” it means “look and see if I’ve done anything wrong” to bear witness.

This verse has reference to Romans 3:4 which states “**Let God be true, and every man a liar**”. Even as God asks the people of Jerusalem to speak of any injustice, God reminds us that they are incapable of total truth, only God can provide that.

v:4 What more could have been done to My vineyard that I have not done in it? Why then, when I expected it to bring forth good grapes, did it bring forth wild grapes? (Reference to 2 Chr 36:15, 16; Jer 2:5; Jer 7:25,26; Mic 6:3; Matt 23:37)

When God says what more could have been done “to” My vineyard that I have not done “in” it. This again speaks to the outside influences that have corrupted the vine, since God worked inside of it, the fault was not within, but from outside influences.

v:5 And now, please let Me tell you what I will do to My vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it shall be burned; and break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. (Reference to 2 Chr 36:19; Ps 80:12; Ps 89:40,41)

The hedge was a form of protection that God took away as a result of the outcome of the vineyard. I thought to myself, why would something that is already corrupted and poisoned still

need protection? It doesn't. There is reference to Psalms 80 again, verse 12, (and 13 answers why), **"Why have You broken down her hedges, so that all who pass by the way pluck her fruit?"**

¹³**The boar out of the woods uproots it, and the wild beast of the field devours it."** This says to me that the worldly elements will be the cause of the poisoned vineyards destruction that they started.

v:6 I will lay it waste; it shall not be pruned or dug, but there shall come up briars and thorns. I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain on it." (Reference to 2 Chr 36:19-21; Is 7:19-25; Jer 25:11)

The first portion of this verse gives reference to 2 Chr 36:19-21 and was a prophecy fortelling the fall of Jerusalem where the King of the Chaldeans slaughtered the people of Jerusalem, **"Then they burned the house of God, broke down the wall of Jerusalem, burned all its precious possessions. ²⁰And those who escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon, where they became servants to him and his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. As long as she lay desolate, she kept Sabbath to fulfill seventy years"**.

When you combine this with the previous verses and chapters, you see that the betrayal of Jerusalem and partaking of worldly practices was the poison that led to their destruction and the

protection of God being removed from the people of Jerusalem who had become alien to Him.

v:7 For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts *is* the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are His pleasant plant. He looked for justice, but behold, oppression; for righteousness, but behold, a cry for help.

The metaphor and parable is made clear, describing Israel as the vineyard and the result of their sin which brought judgement. What God desired for us did not happen because of their actions, and caused the people to lament.

Impending Judgment on Excesses

v:8 Woe to these who join house to house; they add field to field, till there is no place where they may dwell alone in the midst of the land! (Reference to Jer 22:13-17; Mic 2:2; Hab 2:9-12)

Reference to Micah 2:2 discusses a people that “**covet fields and take them by violence, also houses and seize them. So, they oppress a man and his house, a man and his inheritance.**”

We’ve seen many instances of this as nation tries to rule over nation, claiming to own the land they did not create, nor was it given to them.

v:9 In my hearing the Lord of hosts said, “Truly, many houses shall be desolate, great and beautiful ones, without inhabitant. (Reference to Is 22:14)

This verse is repeated several times in the book of Isaiah telling of how the people will be separated from the physical things they held dear to them and worked to obtain. What good did it do them?

v:10 For ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath, and a homer of seed shall yield one ephah.” (Reference to Ezek 45:11)

After some light research, a bath of wine equals a little less than 6 U.S. gallons of liquid. This is important because of the ten-acre vineyard mentioned. One acre is said to typically produce a few metric tons of wine. This puts into perspective how much of God’s people were “good fruit”, as opposed to the many that were corrupted.

v:11 Woe to those who rise early in the morning, that they may follow intoxicating drink; who continue until night, till wine inflames them! (Reference to Prov 23:29, 30; Eccl 10:16, 17; Is 5:22)

This verse struck in twofold

- 1- The prophesy warns of the destruction of those who participated in drunkenness, referring to Proverbs 23:29-30
“Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long at the wine, those who go in search of mixed wine”.
- 2- I also see the continuation of the parable that Isaiah used in the prophesy of the vineyard and tainted wine. Mixed, or

poisoned wine, as a result of the corrupted vineyard in particular. In other words, they worshipped false idols, poisoned their temples, and then lamented until they were drunk with sorrow. The redness of eyes was from partaking in the corruption. They looked for it. Desired it. Now they enter into the result of their actions. The word "inflamm" used here means to persecute in the Hebrew translation.

v:12 The harp and the strings, the tambourine and flute, and wine are in their feasts; but they do not regard the work of the Lord nor consider the operation of His hands. (Reference to Job 34:27; Amos 6:5; Ps 28:5)

All of the instruments mentioned were once used to praise the Lord in song, as David had done. The Psalms were often songs or poetry of the work of God's hands, here, the instruments, song, and wine were removed from acts of worship, it has been reduced for use in drunken parties and entertainment.

v:13 Therefore my people have gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge; their honorable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst. (Reference to 2 Kin 24:14-16; Is 1:3, Is 27:11; Hos 4:6)

2 Kings 24-14-16 is referenced here again as it was in previous chapters that mighty men of valor were now captives to another ruler. Their multitude dried up with thirst meaning that their yearnings and desires have caused them to go desolate.

v:14 Therefore Sheol has enlarged itself and opened its mouth beyond measure; their glory and their multitude and their

pomp, and he who is jubilant, shall descend into it. (Reference to Prov 1:12)

Reference to Proverbs 1:12 (read entire beginning of Chapter 1 for better understanding) reminds the children to heed the counsel of their parents lest they be caught up in foolish acts of destruction that lead to hell. This is important because the first Chapter of Isaiah refers to the children of Israel and the people of Jerusalem as a people who forgot or don't know their Father.

v15 People shall be brought down, each man shall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled.

(Reference to Is 2:9, 11)

This is one of 3 repeated times of this verse in Isaiah 2:9 and 2:11.
-Describing the eventual humility of the people.

v:16 But the Lord of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God who is holy shall be hallowed in righteousness. (Reference to Is 2:11)

God asked for a witness to judge between him and Jerusalem. Bringing to mind a plaintiff and a defendant in a court of law. God is the plaintiff, the judge, the jury, and the law. This may seem like an unfair advantage against a defendant, but God is not only righteous, He fulfills the sentence of Jerusalem through Jesus.

v:17 Then the lambs shall feed in their pasture, and in the wasted places of the fat ones strangers shall eat. (Reference to Is 10:16)

The references to Isaiah 11:6 and 65:25 talk about the wolf laying down with the lamb, eating together, both predator and prey, **"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain."** This shows an end of war and a peace between unlikely unions.

v:18 Woe to those who draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as if with a cart rope;

A warning to those who heavily entice others. They are literally leading others into sin with lusts of the eyes.

v:19 That say, "Let Him make speed and hasten His work, that we may see it; and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw near and come, that we may know it." (Reference to Jer 17:15; Amos 5:18)

The people of Jerusalem wanted to quickly be delivered from their iniquity and oppression, wanting God to end their suffering that they caused. They now sought to know the word of the Lord.

v:20 Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

There is reference to verse 11 here that speaks to the mixing of the wine. Swapping darkness in place of God's light and swapping bitter for sweet. Corrupting what was good and mislabeling the creation and the purpose of God's creation. Sweet was intended, but it yielded bitter. A temple for reflecting God's light, but darkness dwelled within.

v:21 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! (Reference to Prov 3:7; Rom 1:22)

Continuing with the corruption of knowledge, reference to Romans 1:22 reads, **"Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man -and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.** This speaks to idol worship, idols created by man, corrupting the meaning and purpose of worship.

They claimed to have wisdom and in their actions, proved foolish.

v:22 Woe to men mighty at drinking wine, woe to men valiant for mixing intoxicating drink, (Reference to Is 5:11)

This is another warning and a repetition of verse 11. What was further interesting is that the strength these valiant men had came from the mixing of the wine. In other words, they strengthened themselves from sin, and were warned against partaking in that corruption that they built their strength from.

v:23-24 Who justify the wicked for a bribe, and take away justice from the righteous man! ²⁴Therefore, as the fire devours the stubble, and the flame consumes the chaff, so their root will be as rottenness, and their blossom will ascend like dust; because they have rejected the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

(Reference to Ex 15:7; Ex 23:8; Deut 25:1; Job 18:16; Ps 1:1; Prov 17:15; Is 51:23; Mic 3:11; 7:3)

This verse is a continuation of verse 20. Woe to the corrupted people who exchange light for darkness. Woe to those who take

bribes and label evil, good. Reference to Deuteronomy 25:1 is made here and speaks of a righteous court that restores order before the judge. God is telling Jerusalem that he will restore order and remove the corruption of His people and His land.

v:25 Therefore the anger of the Lord is aroused against His people; He has stretched out His hand against them and stricken them, and the hills trembled. Their carcasses were as refuse in the midst of the streets. For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still. (Reference to 2 Kin 22:13, 17; Is 64:3; Is 66:15; Ps 18:7; Jer 4:24; Nah 1:5; Is 9:12, 17; Jer 4:8; Dan 9:16)

Reference to 2 Kings 22:13 is given. When you read the entire chapter, you see King Josiah sending Shaphan the scribe to see Hilkiah the high priest. Hilkiah provides the book of the Law (Think Leviticus) to Josiah, who upon reading it, tore his clothes and cried in lament, knowing why God's wrath was upon them. God spared Josiah from the wrath because his heart was tender and receptive to the word of the Lord.

v:26 He will lift up a banner to the nations from afar, and will whistle to them from the end of the earth; surely they shall come with speed, swiftly. (Reference to Is 11:10, 12; Is 7:18; Zech 10:8; Mal 1:11; Joel 2:7)

This banner is a reference to the seed of Jesse, meaning, Jesus. Meaning, when Jesus is 'lifted up', he will draw all nations unto him, to the ends of the earth. This is also a reference to the great commission in Acts 1:8. He was lifted up on a cross, and was lifted

up during the ascension into Heaven. 'Lifted up' also means to esteem. We are called to remember the listing up on the cross, the lifting up into Heaven, and to esteem Him wherever we go, and to all nations.

v:27 no one will be weary or stumble among them, no one will slumber or sleep; nor will the belt on their loins be loosed, nor the strap of their sandals be broken; (Reference to Dan 5:6)

The image of God's people running to salvation and the call to be redeemed is given here. They will not tire, nor sleep. That which protects their steps from harming them will not wear out.

v:28 Whose arrows are sharp, and all their bows bent; their horses; hooves will seem like flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind. (Reference to Jer 5:16; Ezek 1:4, 15)

This verse has reference to Ezekiel 1:4, 15 and foretells Revelation **"Now as I looked at the living creatures, behold, a wheel was on the earth beside each living creature with its four faces."**

Their bows bent and arrows sharp showed they were in a readied position. Their horses moved so fast it looked like fire and smoke.

v:29 Their roaring *will* be like a lion, they will roar like young lions; yes, they will roar and lay hold of the prey; they will carry it away safely, and no one will deliver.

The arrival of those called to carry out God's judgement will be swift and loud, not like the thief in the night.

v:30 In that day they will roar against them like the roaring of the sea. And if one looks to the land, Behold, darkness and sorrow; and the light is darkened by the clouds. (Reference to Is 8:22; Jer 4:23-28; Joel 2:10; Luke 21:25, 26)

The darkness and sorrow is present throughout the land as a result of Jerusalem's sin. But this is not the end of the prophesy.

Understanding Chapter 5

God has done everything necessary to create a perfect atmosphere for us to grow, to be spiritually, physically, emotionally, and mentally healthy. Free will allows us to choose Him or choose the world (you cannot serve two masters). He desires good for us, but the world has no good intentions. Even still, He is a God of second chances. This was evidenced with Josiah. Once he was made aware of the defiance he took part in, he turned from his ways, repented, and God spared him. God wants to spare you from the destruction of this world. There is still time. When the judgements are poured out, you will either be redeemed, or refined.