

Isaiah 5:1-7
January 28, 2018

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

We left off last week learning that God will wash away sin and make it possible for people to be holy. God is the one who writes people's names in his book (4:3–4). God will create a new world order over Mt. Zion, and his glorious presence there will bring protection for his people. He will make the messianic Branch beautiful and he will increase the productivity of the earth. God is the one people can trust and he is the one to exalt. The future of this world is completely dependent on God.

Transition: But it's not just the "future of this world that is completely dependent on God. We are ALL dependent on God day by day. Where we can get in trouble is when we begin to believe that we aren't dependent on him. It's the line of thinking that says, "I've got this. I don't need Him." You can see what a slippery slope that can be, especially when things are going well!

For today's study, I invite us to consider that **all of us CAN honor God BY avoiding the SINS that the Lord's covenant people committed**. We will learn not only the sins they committed, but we will also learn what God's judgment will look like. Our task is to identify the key SINS that Israel committed. Let's see what they are and then figure out how to best apply what we learn in our own lives. Let's begin with verses 1-7 in which Isaiah provides the big picture. Then we'll start looking at more specific sins starting with v.8. Someone read v. 1-7 to get us started.

BOOK (NIV 1984):

V.1:

- I will sing for the one I love (God) a song about his vineyard: My loved one had a vineyard on a fertile hillside.

V.2:

- He dug it up and cleared it of stones and planted it with the choicest vines. He built a watchtower in it and cut out a winepress as well. Then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit.

V.3:

- "Now you dwellers in Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard.

V.4:

- What more could have been done for my vineyard than I have done for it? When I looked for good grapes, why did it yield only bad?

V.5:

- Now I will tell you what I am going to do to my vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it will be destroyed; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled.

V.6:

- I will make it a wasteland, neither pruned nor cultivated, and briars and thorns will grow there. I will command the clouds not to rain on it."

V.7:

- The vineyard of the LORD Almighty is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are the garden of his delight. **And he looked for justice, but saw blood-shed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress.**

Process Observations/Questions:

Q V.1: Isaiah decides to “sing” his vision from the Lord. Why do you think he resorted to a song? [Perhaps the people of God had been ignoring his sermons and decided the message would get across more effectively through a song.]

Q: Though the answer has already been read in v.7, let’s make sure we identify the parties referenced in the song. Who is the “loved One?” [God] And who does the vineyard represent? [the house of Israel, God’s covenant people.]

Q: Where did God situate His people? [On a fertile hillside]

Q V.2: What did God do to prepare the hillside for His people? [He dug it up and cleared it of stones and planted it with the choicest vines. He built a watchtower in it and cut out a winepress as well.]

Q: Why was there a watchtower? [The vineyard needed to be protected, so God had a stone structure built to guard it.]

Q: After God provided a wonderful land, what happened? [He looked for a crop of good grapes, but instead saw a crop of bad fruit.]

Q: How did that happen? God had put them in a great position to bear good grapes. [They apparently chose not to tend to the vineyard and care for it the way they should have.]

Q V.3-4: God confronts His people. What questions does He pose to them? [What more could have been done for my vineyard than I have done for it? Why did the vineyard yield bad grapes?]

Q V.5-6: How will God deal with this poor outcome of bad fruit? [He will take away its hedge, and it will be destroyed; he will break down its wall, and it will be trampled. Moreover, he will make it a wasteland, neither pruned nor cultivated, and briers and thorns will grow there. He will command the clouds not to rain on it.]

Q: Why do you think God went to this extreme? [Let people engage - they broke the law and defiled the land with their sins and failed to produce fruit for God’s glory. God had done for them all that He could do.]

Q Application: What do you think our initial takeaway needs to be based on what we just read? [When God provides generously for us, He expects us to take great care of what He’s given us. If we don’t, it’s taken away from us.]

LOOK:

When God entrusts us with fertile land, places a hedge of protection around it, plants the choicest vines, clears the stones to cut out a winepress, He expects us to cultivate it and tend to it so that “good grapes” come from it. How well are we stewarding all the good gifts He’s given us?

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today’s Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *Be Comforted* (pp. 25–26). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

3. What Isaiah sang (Isa. 5:1–7)

The preacher became a troubadour and sang a folk song to the Lord (“my beloved”). Perhaps the people who had ignored his sermons would listen to his song. He sang about his own people (v. 7) and pointed out how good God had been to them. God gave them a holy law and a wonderful land, but they broke the law and defiled the land with their sins and failed to produce fruit for God’s glory. God had done for them all that He could do. Now all that remained for Him to do was bring judgment on the fruitless vineyard and make it a waste. (Note that Jesus referred to this passage in Matt. 21:33–44.)

Martin, J. A. (1985). Isaiah. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures (Vol. 1, pp. 1041-1042). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

6. THE WORTHLESS VINEYARD (5:1–7)

In the first stanza (vv. 1–2) of this song which Isaiah composed he sang about God’s care for His vineyard and the condition of the vineyard. The second stanza (vv. 3–6) details what God said in view of her condition. In the third stanza (v. 7) the vineyard in the figure is identified. Elsewhere God referred to Israel as a vineyard (3:14; Ps. 80:8–18; Jer. 2:21; 12:10; Ezek. 15:6–8; Hosea 10:1).

5:1–2. In his **song** Isaiah pictured his **loved One** (i.e., God), planting a **vineyard on a fertile hillside**, removing the **stones** (of which there are many in Israel!) and planting only the best **vines**. **He built a watchtower**, a stone structure from which to guard the vineyard (cf. “shelter,” 1:8). And He made a **winepress** in anticipation of producing good wine. However, only poor **grapes** grew on His vines.

5:3–6. The words in these verses in the song are “spoken” by God. He asked the people of **Judah** to **judge** the situation. They were to tell whether the **bad** grapes were the fault of the **vineyard** Owner. Though God could have done nothing **more** to make the **vineyard** productive (v. 4) there was one thing He would now **do**: He would let it be destroyed (vv. 5–6). By removing the protective **hedge ... its wall** (probably of stone) around it, He would allow animals (including foxes, Song 2:15) to enter and destroy it. Without cultivating the vines, thorn bushes would **grow** up and smother them. Nor would God let **rain** fall on the **vineyard**. Because of the nation’s sinful actions (their bad fruit), destruction would come. Without God’s protection Judah would be ruined.

5:7. **The vineyard** in this song is identified as **Israel** and **Judah**. As elsewhere in Isaiah, “Israel” is sometimes a synonym for the Southern Kingdom (Neh. 1:6; 13:3). Delighting in His people, God wanted good fruit, that is, **justice** and **righteousness** (cf. comments on Isa. 1:21). Instead He **saw** only **bloodshed** (cf. 1:15) and **heard cries of distress**. Because of its “bad grapes” (injustice) most people would be killed or taken into captivity. Isaiah used two interesting cases of assonance (similarity in word sounds) to stress the contrast between what God expected in His people and what happened to them. “Justice” (*mišpāt*) was replaced with “bloodshed” (*mišpoḥ*), and instead of “righteousness” (*ṣedāqâh*) there was “distress” (*se’āqâh*).

Smith, G. V. (2007). Isaiah 1–39. (E. R. Clendenen, Ed.) (p. 159). Nashville: B & H Publishing Group.

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