

February 11, 2018

“The Song of the Vineyard”

Focal Passage: Isaiah 5 (NIV)

Cross References: Matthew 21:33-46; John 15:1-8; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN

Feb 4 Leviticus 11-13 Feb 5 Leviticus 14-15
Feb 6 Leviticus 16-18 Feb 7 Leviticus 19-21
Feb 8 Leviticus 22-23 Feb 9 Leviticus 24-25
Feb 10 Leviticus 26-27 Feb 11 Numbers 1-2

NOTE: I’ve used the NIV this week, because the language is easier to understand. This is a long passage, so I have left off some of the final verses because they just reinforce what Isaiah has already said. Also, I have grouped all the “woes” together in the middle of the lesson for ease of looking at the message of this chapter.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS OF THE PASSAGE:

- God loves His people and desires righteousness from them.
- God punishes His people to draw them back to righteousness.
- Our selfishness, greed, and worldly desires will bring misery to our lives.
- We need to exalt the Lord Almighty.

Lesson Idea: God invests much love and care for us; we should abide in Him, so He can bear fruit in our lives.

Isaiah 5:1-7 God Cared for His Vineyard

*1 I will sing for the one I love, a song about his vineyard: My loved one had a vineyard on a fertile hillside.
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.
3 “Now you dwellers in Jerusalem and people of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard.
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?
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.*

*6 I will make it a wasteland, neither pruned nor cultivated, and briers and thorns will grow there. I will command the clouds not to rain on it.”
7 The vineyard of the Lord Almighty is the nation of Israel, and the people of Judah are the vines he delighted in. And he looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress.*

DISCUSSION:

- v 1. Who is singing this song, and who is the “one he loves?”
- v 1-2. Who is the vineyard? (see v 7) What does the activity of building the vineyard teach us about God’s care for His people? What did the vineyard owner expect to receive? How does this relate to God and us? (see John 15:1-8)

NOTE: Jesus used this same image in His parable of the wicked tenants and the vineyard (Matthew 21:33-46).

- v 3-4. God asks His people to “judge between Me and My vineyard.” How would you judge? How would you answer His questions in v 4?
- V 5-6. How did God say He would respond? Why?
- V 7. How did the Lord Almighty feel about His people? Why was He so disappointed in them?

Isaiah 5:8-12, 18-25 Woes and Judgments

*8 Woe to you who add house to house and join field to field till no space is left and you live alone in the land.
9 The Lord Almighty has declared in my hearing: “Surely the great houses will become desolate, the fine mansions left without occupants.
10 A ten-acre vineyard will produce only a bath of wine; a homer of seed will yield only an ephah of grain.”
11 Woe to those who rise early in the morning to run after their drinks, who stay up late at night till they are inflamed with wine.
12 They have harps and lyres at their banquets, pipes and timbrels and wine, but they have no regard for the deeds of the Lord, no respect for the work of his hands.*

*18 Woe to those who draw sin along with cords of deceit, and wickedness as with cart ropes,
19 to those who say, “Let God hurry; let him hasten his work so we may see it.
The plan of the Holy One of Israel— let it approach, let it come into view, so we may know it.”*

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.

21 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and
clever in their own sight.

22 Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine and
champions at mixing drinks,

23 who acquit the guilty for a bribe, but deny justice to
the innocent.

24 Therefore, as tongues of fire lick up straw and as dry
grass sinks down in the flames, so their roots will decay
and their flowers blow away like dust; for they have
rejected the law of the Lord Almighty and spurned the
word of the Holy One of Israel.

25 Therefore the Lord's anger burns against his people;
his hand is raised and he strikes them down. The
mountains shake, and the dead bodies are like refuse in
the streets.

Yet for all this, his anger is not turned away,
his hand is still upraised.

DISCUSSION:

- v 8-9. What was the sin that produced this "woe?"
How can this attitude of greed be seen among us
today?
- V 10. How would there greed not be rewarded?
Why?
- V 11-12. What was the daily priority of the people?
According to the end of v 12, what was not a priority
for them? How is our society like God's people
during Isaiah's time?
- V 18-19. How did the people treat their sin? How did
they treat the message of Isaiah concerning God's
plan to punish them? How do you respond to God's
plans?

NOTE: from David Guzik, *Enduring Word Commentary*:

They say, "Let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel
draw near and come, that we may know it." In saying
these empty words, they show their arrogant contempt
of the Lord. It is as if they are saying, "Go ahead, God.
We are ready for your judgment."

"He either cannot or will not do us any harm: we do
not fear him, let him do his worst; let him begin as soon
as he pleaseth. Not that any of the Israelites were so
impudent as to use these expressions; but this was the
plain language of their actions; the lived as if they were
of this opinion; their presumption and security showing

their desperate contempt of God, and of all his
judgments." (Poole)

Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil: Using
clever and deceptive words, they blur moral issues and
excuse their sin. They look at their own evil and call it
good, and they look at the good of others and call it evil.
Isaiah is describing a deep state of moral confusion.

- V 20. How do you see people today calling evil good
and good evil?
- V 21. Why do people think they are wise in their own
eyes? (see 1 Corinthians 1:18-25)
- V 22-23. How do these verses demonstrate the
mixed-up priorities of the people?
- V 24. What will happen to the people, and why?

Isaiah 5:13-17 People Humbled & God Exalted

13 Therefore my people will go into exile for lack of
understanding; those of high rank will die of hunger and
the common people will be parched with thirst.

14 Therefore Death expands its jaws, opening wide its
mouth; into it will descend their nobles and masses with
all their brawlers and revelers.

15 So people will be brought low and everyone humbled,
the eyes of the arrogant humbled.

16 But the Lord Almighty will be exalted by his justice,
and the holy God will be proved holy by his righteous
acts. 17 Then sheep will graze as in their own pasture;
lambs will feed among the ruins of the rich.

DISCUSSION:

- v 13-15. Why would God's people have to go into
exile? What would happen to those who think so
highly of themselves?
- v 16. What will the judgment help people
understand about God?
- V 17. How does peace come once God's people
recognize and exalt the Lord God?

APPLICATION:

- ✓ Is your life one in which God can bear fruit?
- ✓ How has the world's attitudes crept into your life?