

ISAIAH 5

Six Woes and Four Therefore

The Wasted Vineyard

1 Let me sing for my beloved [Yahweh]¹ my love song concerning his vineyard:

My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. 2 He dug it, cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines. He built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it. And he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded stinky grapes.²

3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard.³ 4 What more was there to do for my vineyard, that I have not done in it? When I looked for it to yield grapes, why did it yield stinky grapes?

5 And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured. I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. 6 I will make it a waste. It shall not be pruned or hoed, and briars and thorns shall grow up. I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. 7 For the vineyard of Yahweh of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting. And he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry!⁴

Six Woes and Four Therefore

8 Woe to those who join house to house, who add field to field,⁵ until there is no more room, and you are made to dwell alone in the midst of the land. 9 Yahweh of hosts has sworn in my hearing:

Surely many houses shall be desolate, large and beautiful houses, without inhabitant. 10 For ten acres of vineyard shall yield but one bath, and a homer of seed shall yield but an ephah.

11 Woe to those who rise early in the morning, that they may run after strong drink, who tarry late into the evening as wine inflames them! 12 They have lyre and harp, tambourine and flute, and wine at their feasts. But they do not regard the deeds of Yahweh or see the work of his hands.

¹ Isaiah had a very intimate, personal relationship with God.

² Did Jesus learn how to tell parables from reading Isaiah? **Mt 21:33** 33 Hear another parable. There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and built a tower and leased it to tenants, and went into another country.

³ The evidence is so compelling, Yahweh allows the defendant, Judah, to sit in the judge's chair.

⁴ **Is 3:14** 14 Yahweh will enter into judgment with the elders and princes of his people: It is you who have devoured the vineyard, the spoil of the poor is in your houses.

⁵ This wasn't supposed to be happening in Israel because of the fifty-year Jubilee.

13 Therefore my people go into exile (גלה) for lack of knowledge (דעת). Their honored men go hungry, and their multitude is parched with thirst.

14 Therefore Sheol has enlarged its appetite and opened its mouth beyond measure, and the nobility of Jerusalem and her multitude will go down, her revelers and he who exults in her. 15 Man is humbled, and each one is brought low, and the eyes of the high are brought low. 16 But Yahweh of hosts is exalted in justice (משפט), and the Holy God shows himself holy⁶ in righteousness (צדקה). 17 Then shall the lambs graze as in their pasture, and nomads shall eat among the ruins of the rich.

18 Woe to those who draw iniquity with cords of falsehood, who draw sin as with cart ropes, 19 who say:

Let him be quick, let him speed his work that we may see (ראה) it. Let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw near, and let it come, that we may know (ידע) 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 (חכמים) in their own eyes, and understanding (בין) in their own sight!⁷

22 Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine and valiant men in mixing strong drink, 23 who acquit the guilty for a bribe and deprive the innocent of his right!

24 Therefore, as the tongue of fire devours the stubble, and as dry grass sinks down in the flame, so their root will be as rottenness, and their blossom go up like dust. For they have rejected (מאס) the law (תורה) of Yahweh of hosts and have despised (גא) the word of the Holy One of Israel.

25 Therefore the anger of Yahweh was kindled against his people, and he stretched out his hand against them and struck them. And the mountains quaked, and their corpses were as refuse in the midst of the streets. For all this his anger has not turned away, and his hand is stretched out still. 26 He will raise a signal for nations far away and whistle for them from the ends of the earth, and behold, quickly, speedily they come! 27 None is weary, none stumbles, none slumbers or sleeps. Not a waistband is loose, not a sandal strap broken. 28 Their arrows are sharp, all their bows bent. Their horses' hoofs seem like flint, and their wheels like the whirlwind. 29 Their roaring is like a lion, like young lions they roar. They growl and seize their prey. They carry it off, and none can rescue. 30 They will growl over it on that day, like the growling of the sea. And if one looks to the land, behold, darkness and distress, and the light is darkened by its clouds.

⁶ See *The Holiness of God*.

⁷ Pr 3:7 Be not wise in your own eyes. Fear Yahweh and turn away from evil.

Biblical Worldview

- 1. God loves Israel and set her up as a vineyard to produce justice and righteousness.**
 - a. **Is 5:1-4** 1 Let me sing for my beloved my love song concerning his vineyard: My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. 2 He dug it, cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines. He built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it. And he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes. 3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. 4 What more was there to do for my vineyard, that I have not done in it? When I looked for it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes?
 - b. God rightly expects spiritual production from his vineyard, Israel.
 - c. Today, God rightly expects spiritual production from us, his Church.

- 2. Israel has produced only violence and injustice, so God will make her a waste.**
 - a. **Is 5:5-7** 5 And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured. I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. 6 I will make it a waste. It shall not be pruned or hoed, and briars and thorns shall grow up. I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. 7 For the vineyard of Yahweh of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting. And he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry!
 - b. Because of Israel's sin, Yahweh turns from husband to punisher.

- 3. Woe #1: Woe to the lonely rich who squeeze out the landless poor.**
 - a. **Is 5:8-10** 8 Woe to those who join house to house, who add field to field, until there is no more room, and you are made to dwell alone in the midst of the land. 9 Yahweh of hosts has sworn in my hearing: Surely many houses shall be desolate, large and beautiful houses, without inhabitant. 10 For ten acres of vineyard shall yield but one bath, and a homer of seed shall yield but an ephah.

- 4. Woe #2: Woe to those who intoxicate themselves with alcohol and disregard God.**
 - a. **Is 5:11-12** 11 Woe to those who rise early in the morning, that they may run after strong drink, who tarry late into the evening as wine inflames them! 12 They have lyre and harp, tambourine and flute, and wine at their feasts, but they do not regard the deeds of Yahweh, or see the work of his hands.

- 5. Therefore #1: Israel will go into exile, and hunger and thirst will prevail.**
 - a. **Is 5:13** 13 Therefore my people go into exile (גלה) for lack of knowledge (תִּדְעוּ). Their honored men go hungry, and their multitude is parched with thirst.

- 6. Therefore #2: Death will swallow up the prideful leaders and people of Israel.**
 - a. **Is 5:14-17** 14 Therefore Sheol has enlarged its appetite and opened its mouth beyond measure, and the nobility of Jerusalem and her multitude will go down, her revelers and he who exults in her. 15 Man is humbled, and each one is brought low, and the eyes of the high are brought low. 16 But Yahweh of hosts is exalted in justice (צִדְקָתוֹ),

and the Holy God shows himself holy in righteousness (הַקְדֻשָּׁה). 17 Then shall the lambs graze as in their pasture, and nomads shall eat among the ruins of the rich.

- 7. Woe #3: Woe to arrogant sinners who chuckle at God's power to punish them.**
 - a. **Is 5:18-19** 18 Woe to those who draw iniquity with cords of falsehood, who draw sin as with cart ropes, 19 who say: Let him be quick, let him speed his work that we may see (רָאֵה) it. Let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw near, and let it come, that we may know (יָדַע) it!
- 8. Woe #4: Woe to those who twist what God has determined to be good and evil.**
 - a. **Is 5:20** 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!
 - b. In New Zealand today, anything LGBTQ is good, while anything against LGBTQ is evil.
 - c. Friedrich Nietzsche encouraged us to advance "Beyond Good and Evil."
- 9. Woe #5: Woe to those who celebrate how wise humanity has become without God.**
 - a. **Is 5:21** 21 Woe to those who are wise (חֲכָמִים) in their own eyes, and understanding (בִּינָה) in their own sight!
 - b. **Ro 1:22** 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools.
- 10. Woe #6: Woe to intoxicated judges who for personal gain render unjust verdicts.**
 - a. **Is 5:22** 22 Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine and valiant men in mixing strong drink, 23 who acquit the guilty for a bribe and deprive the innocent of his right!
- 11. Therefore #3: Everything these arrogant rebels have done will turn to nothing.**
 - a. **Is 5:24** 24 Therefore, as the tongue of fire devours the stubble, and as dry grass sinks down in the flame, so their root will be as rottenness, and their blossom go up like dust. For they have rejected (מָאָס) the law (תּוֹרָה) of Yahweh of hosts and have despised (בָּזָא) the word of the Holy One of Israel.
- 12. Therefore #4: A huge, well-disciplined army will fill Jerusalem's streets with blood.**
 - a. **Is 5:25-30** 25 Therefore the anger of Yahweh was kindled against his people, and he stretched out his hand against them and struck them. And the mountains quaked, and their corpses were as refuse in the midst of the streets. For all this his anger has not turned away, and his hand is stretched out still. 26 He will raise a signal for nations far away and whistle for them from the ends of the earth, and behold, quickly, speedily they come! 27 None is weary, none stumbles, none slumbers or sleeps. Not a waistband is loose, not a sandal strap broken. 28 Their arrows are sharp, all their bows bent. Their horses' hoofs seem like flint, and their wheels like the whirlwind. 29 Their roaring is like a lion, like young lions they roar. They growl and seize their prey. They carry it off, and none can rescue. 30 They will growl over it on that day, like the growling of the sea. And if one looks to the land, behold, darkness and distress, and the light is darkened by its clouds.

Notes