



Isaiah 5

God's Judgement.

INTERPRETATION OF THE PARABLE

- a) Identification of the Vineyard

"For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel,"

- b) Identification of the Choice Plant

"And the men of Judah His delightful plant."

- c) Lack of Justice and Righteousness

"Thus He looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed;"

God expected justice but they committed bloodshed. He expected righteousness but in their oppression by their enemies they cried for help. This clear prophetic warning was not heeded but ignored.

Six impending Woe!

Isaiah 5:8-23,

V 8,

V 11,

V 18,

V 20,

V 21,

V 22,

1. Materialism

V 8-10, Woe to those 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! ⁹In my hearing the Lord of hosts *said*, "Truly, many

houses shall be desolate, Great and beautiful ones, without inhabitant. ¹⁰ For ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath, And a homer of seed shall yield one ephah.”

The sin that corrupted Judas was true of Israel. Insatiable greed of landowners, accumulating land and more land, and fields and more fields, and houses and more houses. Wealthy men ruthlessly acquiring all the property, squeezing out the poor and the helpless and making them buy things at an inflated price.

Every seventh year they were supposed to let the land rest.

Every fiftieth year, everything that they had acquired went back to its original owner. That was called the Year of Jubilee.

Started the economy all over again and prevented continual amassing and passing on and squeezing out everybody. So, every fiftieth year, everything went back to the original owner. If you knew that, you wouldn't pay too much for something if you had to give it back in a few years. God had designed that. But sad to say, they violated those Sabbath years. They continued that grasping materialism.

10 acres of land gave only less than 10 litres of Wine.

About 150 kilogram of seed yielded only 1.5 kgs of harvest.

2. Pleasure seeking

Drunken and pleasure seeking.

V 11-17, *That they may follow intoxicating drink; Who continue until night, till wine inflames them! 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. ¹³ Therefore my people have gone into captivity, Because they have no knowledge; Their honourable men are famished, And their multitude dried up with thirst. 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. ¹⁵ People shall be brought down, Each man shall be humbled, And the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled. ¹⁶ But the Lord of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, And God who is holy shall be hallowed in righteousness. ¹⁷ Then the lambs shall feed in their pasture, And in the waste places of the fat ones strangers shall eat.*

Characteristic of an alcoholic.

They start drinking in the morning. People who are consumed with drinking.

They don't have any interest in the things of God.

They are running at the party as fast as they can run.

They are filling it up as fast as they can fill it up.

When they are done, they are hungry and thirsty. They have nothing.

3. Rebellious Sinfulness

V 18-19, *Woe to those who draw iniquity with cords of vanity, And sin as if with a cart rope; 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."*

Imagery:

So much sin, so much iniquity they can't carry it. So, they have to get a wagon to put it in and pull it around like an ox.

The cords that they pull with are the cords of deception or the cords of falsehood. They are liars dragging around a wagonload of iniquity like a brute beast, filled with sin.

V 19 is the height of mockery against God.

They are mocking God with sarcasm.

4. Moral perversion

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!*

This is that sin for overturning everything.

Fornication is good and restraint is bad.

Homosexuality is good.

Lesbianism is good.

Divorce is good.

The reversal of everything. It doesn't even matter that you tell the truth anymore. Lying is better if it achieves your goal.

Loving God is bad because it's politically incorrect. Believing in Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation is bad because it's unloving and narrow.

Twisting and perverting of everything. Lifting up the wrong standard.

5. Arrogance

V 21, *Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, And prudent in their own sight!*

Everybody is clever in their own sight, wise in their own eyes, giving their own opinion.

The only right or wrong we understand is whatever the poll tells us. So it was in Israel.

6. Corrupt Leadership

V 22-23, *Woe to men mighty at drinking wine, Woe to men valiant for mixing intoxicating drink, ²³Who justify the wicked for a bribe, And take away justice from the righteous man!*

The leaders were corrupt.

They were drunk.

They abused people.

There was no equity and there was no true justice. People were buying offices, buying positions, taking bribes.

They weren't even in control of themselves because they were drunk. Perverse leaders. Drunkenness, bribery, corruption, perverting of justice. These were the leaders.

Isaiah 5:24-30 judgement/punishment on the nation.

V 24, *Therefore, 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.*

Therefore the transition.

They rejected the Law of the Lord of Hosts, and the word of the Holy One of Israel, and God's judgment will fall. How fast it comes. Because on the surface, everything looks like it's okay, as it did in Israel.

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.*

The Lord's going to lead the Babylonians. That bitter and hasty nation, as Habakkuk called them, that Chaldean nation, that pagan nation is going to be the judge of Israel, God's people.

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. ²⁷No 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; ²⁸ Whose arrows are sharp, And all their bows bent; Their horses' hooves will seem like flint, And their wheels like a whirlwind.

When a soldier is finished with his day, he takes his belt off, because attached to his belt is the apparatus with which he fights. When he unlooses his belt, and his garment falls, and he's at rest. But they are never going to take the belt off.

This standard appears to be the invading Persian army that will come and take away the people into exile. This nation will come speedily when the Lord draws it to the nation to judge her.

The invading nation will be focused, for they will come swiftly and will not get weary, stumble, sleep, and they won't even change their clothes on the way.

The invading army will be treacherous for their arrows will be sharpened and their bows strengthened, their horses feet will be hard like flint, and their chariots will travel as fast as the whirlwind which comes against a city.

V 29-30, *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. 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.*

God's judgment against Judah and Jerusalem was complete, for they destroyed the temple and the city by fire and then took all but the poor to captivity in Persia.

God in His mercy gave the nation a chance to repent and to turn to Him, for He told them of the judgment that was coming, however they did not take heed, and so now because they refused to repent the Lord will remove His restraining power and give them over to their sinful passions.

Let us move into Isaiah chapter 6 with this background information.

Isaiah 6:1, *In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple.*

The year that King Uzziah died was 740 B.C. We are about 150 years or 140-something years away from the Babylonian invasion.

So, they had plenty of warning.

God was very merciful, and God was very gracious to allow a century plus to go by before the judgment actually fell. But the seeds of that destruction were already in place, and God has His own timetable.

But what makes it significant is that Uzziah had been king for 52 years. That's a long time.

Uzziah was a very strong leader. He had brought peace, military strength and brought prosperity.

On the surface, everything looked good. As long as he was there, it was as if God had a stamp of blessing.

Everything went well and God is blessing, because Uzziah was essentially a good ruler.

Uzziah didn't die a normal death. He died an extremely unusual death. God executed him. God struck him with a disease that killed him because he was feeling so confident about himself and who he was as king, that he tried to invade the priestly office and function as a priest.

Uzziah stepped across the Law of God and violated that Law, and God killed him on the spot. Serious.

Isaiah understood. He had been preaching judgment. He knew the judgment was coming. He was well aware of the sins of his people.

Isaiah had just chronicled them in the fifth chapter. He was well aware that Tiglath-Pileser was already on the horizon of the northern kingdom to come and destroy that kingdom.

He knew full well that the Babylonians would eventually come with their horde to destroy the southern kingdom of Judah. He knew what was going on, and yet there was this one lingering hope on Uzziah. Uzziah was still there, and it was a like the stamp of God's approval. Then he died, executed by God.

Now Isaiah is confused.

So he goes to the temple.

V 4 also states that he went to the temple.

We can know why he went there.

- He knew Israel was a covenant people.
- He knew Israel was the vineyard of the Lord.
- He knew what God had invested in that vineyard.
- He knew what God expected from that vineyard.
- He knew that Israel was the people of covenant, promise.

But everything was going wrong.

Now divine judgment was going to fall, and he was much like the prophet Habakkuk who couldn't understand how God could punish Judah with a pagan nation.