

Isaiah 5:1-30

Isaiah 1:2-5:30 Overview

1:2-31 – Problematic Zion

- Judgment on Israel
- Call to repentance
- Promise of restoration

2:1-5 – Future Glorious Zion

- Mountain of the LORD exalted
- Nations streaming to learn

2:6-22 – Day of Yahweh

- Judgment on human pride
- All that is high brought low
- Call to stop trusting in man

3:1-4:1 – Leadership Crisis

- Judgment on Judah
- Inversion of power structures
- Desperation and reproach

4:2-6 – Future Glory

- Branch of the LORD beautiful
- Survivors holy and cleansed

5:1-30 – Song of the Vineyard

- Judgment on Judah
- Wild grapes instead of good fruit
- Coming invasion and darkness

Isaiah 5:1-30 — Overview

Verses 1-7: Judgment on the Vineyard (A)

- A beloved's vineyard that **planted** choice vines but **yielded wild grapes**
- God **looked for** **justice** but found **bloodshed and outcry**

Verses 8-14: Two Woes and Two Therefore (B)

- **Woe** to greedy land-grabbers and indulgent party-goers
- **Therefore** exile and death await the people

Verses 15-17: Divine Justice (C)

- Human pride humbled,
God exalted in **justice** and **righteousness**
- Desolation where the rich once lived

Verses 18-25: Four More Woes and Two Therefore (B')

- **Woe** to the provocative, morally confused, proud, and corrupt
- **Therefore** God's anger burns against His people

Verses 26-30: Judgment on the Land (A')

- God signals distant nations to come as His instrument of judgment
- **Darkness** and distress cover the land

Isaiah 5:1-7 (A)

The Song of the Vineyard (1-2)

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 and 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** .

The Appeal to Judah (3-4)

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** ?

The Judgment (5-6)

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.

The Interpretation (7)

⁷ For the vineyard of the LORD 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** !

Jesus and the Vineyard Parable

This passage may sound familiar as it has the exact same intro to one of Jesus's parables about a vineyard as well in Matthew 21:33-46.

Both passages feature a carefully tended vineyard that fails to produce proper fruit for its owner.

Taking the context here from Isaiah into account, reading Christ's parable becomes quite a bit more straightforward knowing what He's referencing.

Given Isaiah is one of the most often quoted books of the Old Testament in the New, It re-emphasizes our need to know the whole of the revealed scriptures.

Expectation vs Reality

Wild Grapes	בְּאִשִּׁים	<i>be.u.shim</i>
Definition: "stink fruit"		

In verses 2 and 4, we see at the end you have this expectation of what he looked for to yield grapes, but it instead yielded wild grapes or stink fruit. The next time you see this he looked for statement it's at the end of this little section in verse 7, when he is looking for justice and righteousness, but behold bloodshed and outcry. There's some wordplay going on here too:

Justice	מִשְׁפָּט	<i>mish.pat</i>
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Bloodshed	מִשְׁפָּח	<i>mis.pach</i>
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Righteousness	צִדְקָה	<i>tse.da.qah</i>
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Outcry	צַעֲקָה	<i>tse.a.qah</i>
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Hebrew scholar Robert Alter in his translation of the Hebrew Bible gives the following to try and capture this:

*"He hoped for justice,
and, look, jaundice,
for righteousness,
and, look, wretchedness."*

— Robert Alter, *The Hebrew Bible: A Translation with Commentary*

"What More Could God Do?"

The rhetorical question in verse 4 strikes at the heart of the tension between God's sovereignty and human responsibility and agency. God gives a rhetorical statement here, implying that there is nothing else that he could do for the people themselves.

Isaiah 5:8-14 (B)

First Woe: Greed (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.
- A** ⁹ The LORD 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."

Second Woe: Indulgence (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!
B ¹² They have lyre and harp,
tambourine and flute and wine at their feasts,
but they do not regard the deeds of the LORD,
or [see the work of his hands](#).

Two Therefores (13-14)

¹³ **Therefore** my people go into exile
for lack of knowledge;
B' their honored men go hungry,
and their multitude is parched with thirst.

¹⁴ **Therefore** Sheol has enlarged its appetite
A' 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.

Whose Land?!

Leviticus 25:23 says, "The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine. For you are strangers and sojourners with me."

The land ultimately belongs to God! And yet they want to take more and more at the expense of the needy – and what does it give them? Loneliness and isolation – kind of an ironic natural consequence of taking all the land for yourself.

Ancient Measurements

- Acre: area a pair of oxen could plow in a day
- Bath: 6 gallons (22 liters)
- Homer: 6 bushels (220–230 liters)
- Ephah: 0.6 bushels (22–23 liters)

Isaiah 5:15-17 (C)

- ¹⁵ Man is humbled, and each one is brought low,
and the eyes of the haughty are brought low.
- ¹⁶ But the LORD of hosts is exalted in **justice** ,
and the Holy God shows himself holy in **righteousness** .
- ¹⁷ Then shall the lambs graze as in their pasture,
and nomads shall eat among the ruins of the rich.

Isaiah 5:18-25 (B')

Third Woe: Provocation (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 it ;
let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw near,
and let it come, that we may know it!"

Fourth Woe: Moral Confusion (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!

Fifth Woe: Pride (21)

²¹ **Woe** to those who are wise in their own eyes,
and shrewd in their own sight!

Sixth Woe: Corruption (22-23)

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** !

Two Therefores (24-25)

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 the law of the LORD of hosts,
and have despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.
²⁵ **Therefore** the anger of the LORD 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,⁸
and his hand is stretched out still.

Isaiah 5:26-30 (A')

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.

Who's Really Destroying the Land?

When Yahweh "raises a signal" (something to watch for as we go), which is what causes the enemies to destroy the land.

While Israel may have often thought that Yahweh was absent in their terror and exile, He was not only there with them, but also the catalyst in the first place.

Yahweh is in control from start to finish.

Chaos abounds

Two of the main chaotic forces in the Hebrew Bible are the waters and the darkness. Genesis 1:2 starts off stating that these chaotic forces are what God overcomes in creating this world.

Here we see these chaotic forces at coming in for a prime de-creation. But if this is true, then what hope does Israel have to become the "Glorious Mountain" or the "Eden-like Wedding Tent"?

What can make them new again?