

## Notes

### The Song of the Vineyard & Six Woes (5:1–30)

- The LORD is blameless in judging His people (Gen 18:25). Israel's ruin was not due to divine neglect, but wilful rebellion.

#### 1. A Song - The Parable of the Vineyard (5:1–7)

- Isaiah begins with *"a song of my beloved touching his vineyard."* The "Beloved" is the LORD, representing the Owner of the Vineyard; the vineyard is Israel (v7). Vineyard imagery: Ps 80:8–16; Jer 12:10; Matt 21:33–41. God's meticulous care described:

- *"very fruitful hill"* – prime location, ideal conditions to thrive.
- *"fenced it, and gathered out the stones"* – meticulous care and provision.
- *"choicest vine"* – Israel, a chosen people (Deut 7:6).
- *"tower... winepress"* – protection & expectation of fruitful harvest.

Historically, God redeemed Israel from Egypt, planted her in the Promised Land, protected her from enemies, gave her His Law, established temple worship, sent prophets, promised covenant blessings (cf Rom 9:4–5). God gives His people *"all things that pertain unto life and godliness"* (2 Pet 1:3).

- God expects grapes but found "wild grapes" (bitter fruit of sin). V7:

- He looked for judgment, but found oppression.
- He looked for righteousness, but heard a cry.

God asks: *"What could have been done more...?"* (v4). The fault lies not with the Owner, but with the vines. God is blameless; Israel is without excuse. Application: *"Receive not the grace of God in vain"* (2 Cor 6:1). Today, God seeks the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22–23).

- Because of Israel's fruitlessness, the vineyard would be dismantled and abandoned (Matt 7:17-19).

- protection removed – hedge removed (v5).
- neglect permitted – briars and thorns (v6a).
- blessing withheld – no rain (v6b).

Fulfilled historically in Assyrian and Babylonian invasions. God's judgment is always just. Bearing fruit is not optional for God's people (John 15:2).

#### 2. A Lament - The 6 Woes Against Sin (5:8–23)

- After exposing Israel as God's unfruitful vineyard, Isaiah unleashes a string of 6 terrible woes (categories of sin) uttered in judgment against the unfaithful Israelites. The message is unmistakable: Judgment is coming, deserved & will be devastating.

(i) *Woe to Greedy Landowners, 5:8–10*

- Sin: Covetousness & Exploitation. The wealthy ignored God's design - Jubilee laws (Lev 25:23–28). They accumulated estates, displaced small farmers & consolidated property for personal gain (Exo 20:17; Matt 23:14).
- Judgment: Houses desolate; fields barren.

(ii) *Woe to the Pleasure-Driven, 5:11–17*

- Sin: Drunken Indulgence; Disregard for God (v12). This woe addresses a society addicted to entertainment. Pleasure had replaced God. Their senses were overstimulated, but their souls were undernourished (Eccl 2:1-2). Modern danger: Entertainment replacing devotion (Rom 13:13).
- Result: captivity (v13), humiliation (v15), the LORD exalted (v16).

(iii) *Woe to Defiant Scoffers, 5:18–19*

- Sin: Flaunting Sin; Mocking God. These sinners deliberately drag their iniquity like a cart, openly defying God.
- They challenged God to act. They interpreted His patience as powerlessness (2 Peter 3:3–4). God's delay is mercy (2 Pet 3:9), not indifference.

(iv) *Woe to Moral Perverters, 5:20*

- Sin: Inverting Moral Values. Truth inverted; conscience corrupted. This verse is a strong denunciation of moral relativism and the distortion of truth: wrong becomes right, darkness becomes light, and bitter becomes sweet (cf Rom 1:18-32; 2 Tim 3:1-5).
- Christians are called to discern between good and evil, using Scripture as the ultimate guide. God's standards do not evolve with culture.

(v) *Woe to the Proudly Self-Wise, 5:21*

- Sin: Intellectual Arrogance. They trusted their reasoning above God's revelation (Prov 3:7). True wisdom comes from God (Prov 2:6); it begins with reverence, not self-confidence (Prov 9:10).

(vi) *Woe to Corrupt Leaders, 5:22–23*

- Sin: Drunkenness, Bribery, Injustice. God condemned leaders who were personally indulgent & publicly unjust. They perverted justice for personal gain. God demands justice and integrity in leadership (Micah 6:8).

- Summary of the Six Woes: Greed, Self-indulgence, Defiance, Moral Confusion, Pride, Corruption. The issue is not what we have, but how we live. Prosperity must not replace God (1 Tim 6:17–19).

3. A Coming Judgment - Foreign Invasions Announced (5:24–30)

- Judgment is inevitable because His Word has been despised. God is merciful but He will by no means clear the guilty (Exo 34:6-7).

(i) *Certainty of Judgment, 5:24–25*

- Judgment is not random. It is the logical consequence of sin.
  - like fire devouring stubble & chaff (Ps 1:4) – severe and complete.
  - root and blossom destroyed - total ruin.
- Reason for judgment: rejection of God's Law & His Word. How does a person "despise" God's Word? By ignoring it, by devaluing it, by refusing to live according to it. To despise God's Word is to despise God Himself (1 Sam 15:23, 26; Jer 6:19). Why do people reject God's Word?
  - preference for sin over holiness.
  - desire for autonomy rather than submission.
  - illusion of freedom, though actually in bondage to sin (John 8:34).
- The nation had already suffered judgment from the LORD and they will suffer further judgment from the LORD, for it is on account of His anger against them that the judgments are and will happen (v25; cf 9:12, 17, 21; 10:4). God's patience must not be mistaken for approval. When warnings are ignored, consequences intensify.

(ii) *Instruments of Judgment, 5:26–30*

- God summons foreign nations - Assyria and later Babylon - as instruments of His discipline (10:5–6; Hab 1:6).
  - Intense judgment (vv27-28): The invading army is described as tireless, disciplined & vigilant, armed and ready. When God summons judgment, nothing hinders it.
  - Inescapable judgment (v29): Twice compared to lions, the invaders seize their prey with no rescue possible. No alliances will save Judah.
  - Utter desolation (v30): The land would be filled with despair and gloom. Sin promises light but ends in gloom.
- If Israel was accountable for covenant privileges, how much more accountable are we under greater light in Christ (Phil 1:10-11)?