

Lessons from the Beloved and His Vineyard



The vine was extensively cultivated in Palestine and a sign of peace and prosperity was that every man might sit under his own vine. The grapes were large and plentiful, as was proved by the cluster found at Eshcol and borne by the spies. (**Num. 13:24**) The illustration of a 'vineyard ' representing Israel was one that would be well understood by them. God had formed it in a very fruitful hill, planted it with the choicest vine, and had done everything possible for its fruitfulness and protection. Yet when fruit was sought, it was found to have brought forth only wild grapes. Eventually God broke down the wall thereof, and the vineyard was trodden down — a picture of the state of Israel until now. **Ps. 80:8-13; Isa.5: 1-10.**

Isaiah 5 begins with what may be called, The Song of Isaiah. In **Deuteronomy 32**, we have the song of Moses, which is partly retrospective and partly prophetic. Moses uttered his song at the start of Israel's national history; Isaiah uttered his song towards its close but the testimony of both is the same. The sad failure of the people was complete.

Israel had been Jehovah's vineyard, and He had ordered everything in their favour. A very fruitful spot had been their location with all necessary equipment. The law, given through Moses, had fenced them about, so as to protect them from contamination from outside, if they had observed it. Moreover they were a "choicest vine," for they had descended from Abraham, one of God's choicest saints. Thus everything had been in their favour. What was the result?

There were results, but of a wholly worthless and evil sort. Where judgment should have been, oppression was found: where righteousness, only a cry of distress.

Isaiah's song ends with the prophet giving figurative language for the hard, plain facts of Israel's sin. Six times over does he uttered a "Woe" upon them in **verses 8-25**, listing their moral evils that stirred the Divine wrath. The **first** woe is flung at the men for grasping after covetousness, who aimed at monopolizing houses and lands for themselves. The **second** woe condemns them for drunkenness and being given to pleasures. The **third** woe speaks of sinfulness in defiance of God who sees all things. The **fourth** woe speaks of perverting good and evil. The **fifth** woe condemns their pride and having confidence in themselves and not God. The **last** woe speaks of false judgments giving reward to the wicked. Therefore judgment in the form of desolation for both houses and lands would fall upon them.

Do not these sins speak to our conscience? Though perhaps spared from some of these sad failures, our hearts are most definitely the same!

Song of Solomon 2:15

"Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes."

We might well ask where all this begins. Is it not in allowing little things which grow and the conscience becomes hardened. Our lives are made up of moments and these moments can be used for God or self. What will it be?

Jeremiah 12:10

"Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness."

This is a solemn pronouncement that the leaders who should be shepherds are the ones who have been so guilty in robbing God of fruit for His glory while they sought to glorify themselves. We must measure ourselves by the Word of God to see that our ways and motives are righteous and pure. Is what we do and say truly for the Lord Jesus in love for Him who died for us?

Matthew 21:33

“Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country:”

Jehovah, the Householder had blessed Israel, His vineyard. He protected it and separated it from the nations and made it possible for them to bring forth fruit for his glory but instead they killed His Son and their Messiah. He is now in heaven, “a far country”, waiting the time for His return. During this time of His absence all who professes the Lord Jesus are in the sphere of this kingdom under His rule. Have we learned the solemn lessons from Israel’s sad history?

Matthew 20:1

“For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.”

This present period when the kingdom is in “mystery”, “the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ” as the King is in heaven but God still looks for fruit from His people. See **Matt. 3:8**;

7:20; John 15:8; Rom. 6:22; Gal. 5:22; Php. 1:11; Col. 1:6. Are you ready to serve God?

John 15:1

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman."

The Lord, when He was upon earth, said He was the true Vine and His disciples were the branches. There could not and cannot be any fruit-bearing but by abiding in Him. We must be saved and also be in communion with Him to bring forth fruit for God. When the Lord Jesus spoke of Himself as "the true Vine," the minds of His disciples perhaps turned back to Isaiah chapter 5, as ours also may do. Israel was the picked sample of humanity in which the trial of the whole race took place. The condemnation of Israel is the condemnation of all of us. We learn that nothing for God can come out of the activity of the flesh and that in the cross of Christ the old man was formally condemned root and branch. If we are to bring forth fruit for God's glory and the glory of our Lord Jesus we must abide in Him by the Holy Spirit. We must be in communion with Him so that our actions are righteous according to the Word of God and our motives are pure, produced by love for Christ.

The first man and his race are condemned and rejected and the Second Man, and those who are of Him and in Him, are accepted and established forever.

Matthew 26:29

"But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

Today the Lord does not have the fulfillment of His joy as “the fruit of the travail of His soul” has not yet been complete. He will soon have His heavenly people with Him in the Father’s house and His earthly people will dwell in the land in obedience and dependence. His joy will then be complete and He will drink of the vine.

1 Kings 21:1-29

“And it came to pass after these things, that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house: and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money. And Naboth said to Ahab, The LORD forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.” Vs 1-3

“And the men of his city, even the elders and the nobles who were the inhabitants in his city, did as Jezebel had sent unto them, and as it was written in the letters which she had sent unto them. They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people. And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him: and the men of Belial witnessed against him, even against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died.” Vs 11, 12

During the tribulation period the godly remnant (the seed of Jehovah) will learn from the Scriptures about their Messiah and turn to Him who they once rejected. In doing so they will be terribly persecuted, even unto death, as indicated in the story of Naboth whose name means “Seed of Jehovah”.

Although he is killed he is with his Lord like the martyrs in **Revelation 11**. He valued his inheritance and would not give it up just as the godly remnant during the tribulation along with their brethren. They will be brought back from the four corners of the earth at the very end of the tribulation and will enter into the earthly millennial kingdom. What a day it will be for Christ!

Psalm 80:14

“Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine; And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself.”

The godly remnant cries out for their Lord to come and take to Himself the vineyard. He will not only do so as he comes in judgment (**see Is. 63:1-4**) but He will set up His kingdom and then they will bring forth fruit for God. (**See Song of Solomon 6:11**)

John 2:1-10

“And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the

feast called the bridegroom, And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.”

This scene is a sign, which represents deeper teaching than just the historical event, and refers to the day when the Lord will change the water (the Word of God) to wine (joy in God) and not only change the water to wine but the stone “pots” will be changed to vessels of glory. **(See Ez. 36:26; Jer. 31:31-34; Zech. 14:20)**

Hosea 2:15

“And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.”

These and the following verses describe the wonderful day for Israel on earth during the 1000 year kingdom of Christ. The place spoiled by Achan’s sin, Achor which means “troubling” is now a door of hope and there will be great blessing.

Song of Solomon 1:14

“My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of Engedi.”

Song of Solomon 2:13

“The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.”

Song of Solomon 6:11

“I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley, and to see whether the vine flourished and the pomegranates budded.”

Song of Solomon 7:12

“Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my loves.”

Isaiah 61:5

“And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers.”

The figurative language of these verses tell us of the vineyard once ruined by unfaithful man will flourish resulting from the work of our Lord Jesus to who be all glory and blessing. Amen

E. Ferguson – April 2007

