

## Isaiah 5

### Grace exhausted

**Introduction.** Hope beyond despair - 1:25-26 despite not deserving His blessing the Lord will 'turn his hand' and restore His people. 3:16- 4:1 the pride of the daughters of Zion receives judgement but judgement is not the last word, grace will triumph.

1. **Vs. 1-7. The Song of the Vineyard** concludes without hope. In 1:8 the vineyard was associated with the Lord's preservation of a remnant of Zion. In 3:15 when the vineyard was under threat from self-seeking rulers the Lord as judge intervened on behalf of the vineyard-people. But in 5:4 the Lord asks, 'what more could have been done for my vineyard?'
2. **Vs. 1-3.** The vineyard is not an allegory of God's care for His people but **an illustration of good horticultural practice**. All that could have been done to produce fruit has been done, but the vines did not produce significant fruit.
3. **Vs. 4-6.** The Lord through the prophet invites **the people to be judge and juror and so to condemn themselves**.
4. **V. 7.** The Lord spells out that **Israel and Judah are the vineyard which has failed to bear fruit**. The Lord Almighty delights in His people but they have rebelled against Him. They have failed **to act justly**, He finds the opposite, **injustice** resulting in deaths: deliberate or by neglect. The Lord looked for '**righteousness**' but only found people in **distress**.
5. **Vv. 8-30. Why such a poor vineyard/people?**
  - a. **There are 6 'woes' – God's judgement** (8, 11, 18, 20, 21, 22).
  - b. **The first two woes** (8, 12) address the **abuse of material benefits** and are followed by **two 'therefore'** – consequences - sections (13, 14-17).
  - c. **The second series of 'woes'** (18, 20, 21, 22) addresses the **moral and spiritual abuses**, and is also followed by **two 'therefore'**, sections (24, 25-30).
  - d. **Each of the first 'therefore' sections are short** and link **the coming judgement with the specific sins**.
  - e. **Each of the second 'therefore' sections are longer** and **forecast total judgement, 'death'** (13) and **'destruction'** (25-30).

**V. 16.** Teaches that **what makes God truly God, is not His great power or otherness, but His justice and righteousness**. God's chosen people and all humankind are humbled before God because of our inability to pursue justice and to act rightly (see Mic. 6:6-8).

**V. 20-21.** Sin is to **deny God and His law**. Sin leads to deception; wrong becomes right and evil becomes good and foolishness replaces wisdom.

**Chapter 5 ends with a terrible picture, the result of God's anger against His people (5:25); 'if one looks at the land, he will see darkness and distress, even the light will be darkened by the clouds' (5:30).**

**Reflection/Response.** How does God want us to respond to His grace, now supremely shown in Jesus Christ? Does our lifestyle reflect a commitment to justice and righteous living?