

Sunday Morning Message

August 2, 2020

What More Could God Have Done for His Vineyard in America

Topic – Parallels Between Old Testament Israel and America

Text – Isaiah 5

Congregational Reading – Isaiah 5:1 - 4

Introduction

In the first seven verses of Isaiah 5, we read *The Song of the Vineyard*. I am told that this is a beautiful song, much like many of the psalms, especially when sung in Hebrew. It is all about Israel and basically brings an indictment against them for failing to be the fruitful nation that God had intended them to be, especially after all that God had provided for them. The chapter divides into two sections: the song itself, describing the spiritual condition in Israel; and then the six woes, which describe six specific sins that Judah was guilty of that would eventually cause God to judge her. That judgment had already come to the northern kingdom through the Assyrians in 722 BC, but Isaiah was warning the remaining southern kingdom of Judah about the same kind of judgment that was coming for them, if they did not repent.

Jesus gives a parable in the New Testament that goes along with this song in Isaiah (See Matthew 21:33 – 46). Israel is also pictures symbolically in the New Testament as a fig tree (Luke 13:6 – 9; Matthew 21:19 – 21).

Though this chapter and this song is all about Israel in context, there are many parallels that can be seen in our own nation. America is a nation that was founded upon biblical principles and was given every opportunity to thrive in the world, but unfortunately, like Israel, she has chosen to forsake God and go her own way. In this passage, we can see many parallels between the problems in Old Testament Israel and the nation that we call home.

I. The Song (vs. 1 – 7)

Verse 1 – notice the phrase, “my well beloved” – this is often a phrase used representing Christ. The Song of Solomon uses the word, “beloved,” referencing

Christ twenty-eight times. The Father referred twice in to Jesus as His “beloved son” (Matthew 3:17; 17:5).

Notice that this was a fruitful hill – there was nothing wrong with the soil. It was good ground.

Verse 2 – this verse speaks of separation as well as protection. God protects us by separating us.

Fences are for our protection. They keep us inside the will of God, but they also protect us from the enemy without.

The stones hinder the growth of the grapes. They interfere with the roots, and take up the space of nutrient-rich soil. God needs to remove some things from our life that are hindering our growth.

The tower was also for protection. A tower provided a view of the entire vineyard that allowed the vinedresser to see if there was anything amiss.

God took Israel out of Egypt and planted them in Canaan. He removed the wicked inhabitants that were in the land, and gave them a place where they could thrive, both economically as well as spiritually. There was no reason that “wild grapes” or “poison berries” should have been produced.

Verses 3 – 4 – God asks a rhetorical question. “What did I do wrong?” Tell me, “where did I mess up?”

Verses 5 – 7 – God interprets His own parable here. This vineyard represents Israel, and the judgement alluded to here refers to both the Assyrian invasion and captivity that would come for the northern kingdom in Isaiah’s day, as well as the future Babylonian invasion and captivity that would come for the southern kingdom of Judah.

Let’s pause for a minute here and ask the question to ourselves. What more could God have done in our lives? What more can God do for you to get you to trust Him as your Saviour? What more does He have to do those of us who are already saved to get us to yield to His will and stop stubbornly insisting on our own way.

What more could God have done in this church? What more could God have done in America? Why isn't God getting the fruit out of us that He deserves. He gave us a great nation, with unparalleled natural resources and great soil. He has protected us from invasion on two sides with vast oceans. He has given us the Word of God and religious freedom. Why is America in such a mess? Perhaps we will find the answers to our problems in the rest of this chapter, just as God spelled them out here for Israel.

II. The Six Woes (vs. 8 – 30)

The six woes are identified in verses 8; 11; 18; 20; 21; and 22. These are the specific sins that caused Israel their problems.

A. Covetousness (vs. 8 – 10)

God states here that those that are greedy will end up with nothing.

Read Luke 12:15 – 31

"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (1

Timothy 6:6-10)

How much land is enough?

How much money is enough?

How big of a house is enough?

How fancy of a car is enough?

How many toys do I need? (Men – guns, boats, etc.; Women – clothes, shoes, jewelry, etc.)

B. Consumed with Pleasure – Drunkenness (vs. 11 – 17)

The Bible does not absolutely forbid the consumption of alcohol, but it clearly warns against it, especially strong drink, and it completely condemns drunkenness.

"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." (Proverbs 20:1)

"Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh: For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags." (Proverbs 23:20-21)

"Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine." (Proverbs 23:29-30)

"Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying." (Romans 13:13)

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;" (Ephesians 5:18)

Note – America is a nation that is consumed with seeking pleasure. Most of God's people are pleasure seekers, but most are also not fulfilling their God-given purpose.

"Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy." (Ezekiel 16:49)

C. Carelessness - Complete Forsaking of God's Principles (vs. 18 – 19)

These people have ceased fearing the Lord, have completely abandoned His principles, and are mocking the prophet, and even taunting God – daring Him to do something about it.

Illustration – Yesterday in Portland – some of the protesters were bringing in stacks of Bible that they were going to burn. These people are daring God to do something.

D. Changing the Rules to Satisfy Our Lusts (v. 20)

Whatever God says is wrong – these people say is right. Whatever God says is good – these people see as evil.

Illustrate - Immorality is ok now. Fornication, adultery, homosexuality are all condoned or even promoted, and if it you speak out against it, you are the bad guy.

Read Romans 1:18 – 32.

E. Conceit (Pride – v. 21)

Our big problem is our pride. We think we know everything. We think we are God.

“Pride is number one on God’s hate parade.”¹ J. Vernon McGee

“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.” (Proverbs 16:18-19)

F. Complete Corruption (vs. 22 – 23)

This speaks of corruption among the rulers. They are completely corrupt and wicked people themselves, and they help others who are corrupt do what they do because they are benefitting from them; all the while pretending that they are doing right.

III. God’s Solution – the Consequences (vs. 24 – 30)

Conclusion

America is doomed unless we turn back to God. There is not a lot that we can do for the nation, but we can be all that we can be as individual Christians, and maybe if enough of us as individuals turn back to God, we might just see the beginning of a revival that may just spread to the rest of the nation.

1. Trust Christ as Your Saviour

2. Yield to God Completely

Read His Word and spend time in prayer every day.

Obey what God tells you to do.

Hang around with God’s people in God’s church.

¹ J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary*, electronic ed., vol. 3 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997), 205.

Remove the things (and people) from your life that are hindering your growth.

Start influencing others for Christ. Be bold. Preach the gospel to your lost friends and family members. Live for God. Be a light to this dark world.

It may be that more severe judgment will fall upon our nation. We need to be strong, unwavering and faithful Christians during that time so that people will have somebody to look to for help. This world is in chaos, but we don't have to let that chaos affect who we are in Christ.