

JUDGE BETWEEN THE LORD AND HIS VINEYARD

Isaiah 5:3-4 "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?"

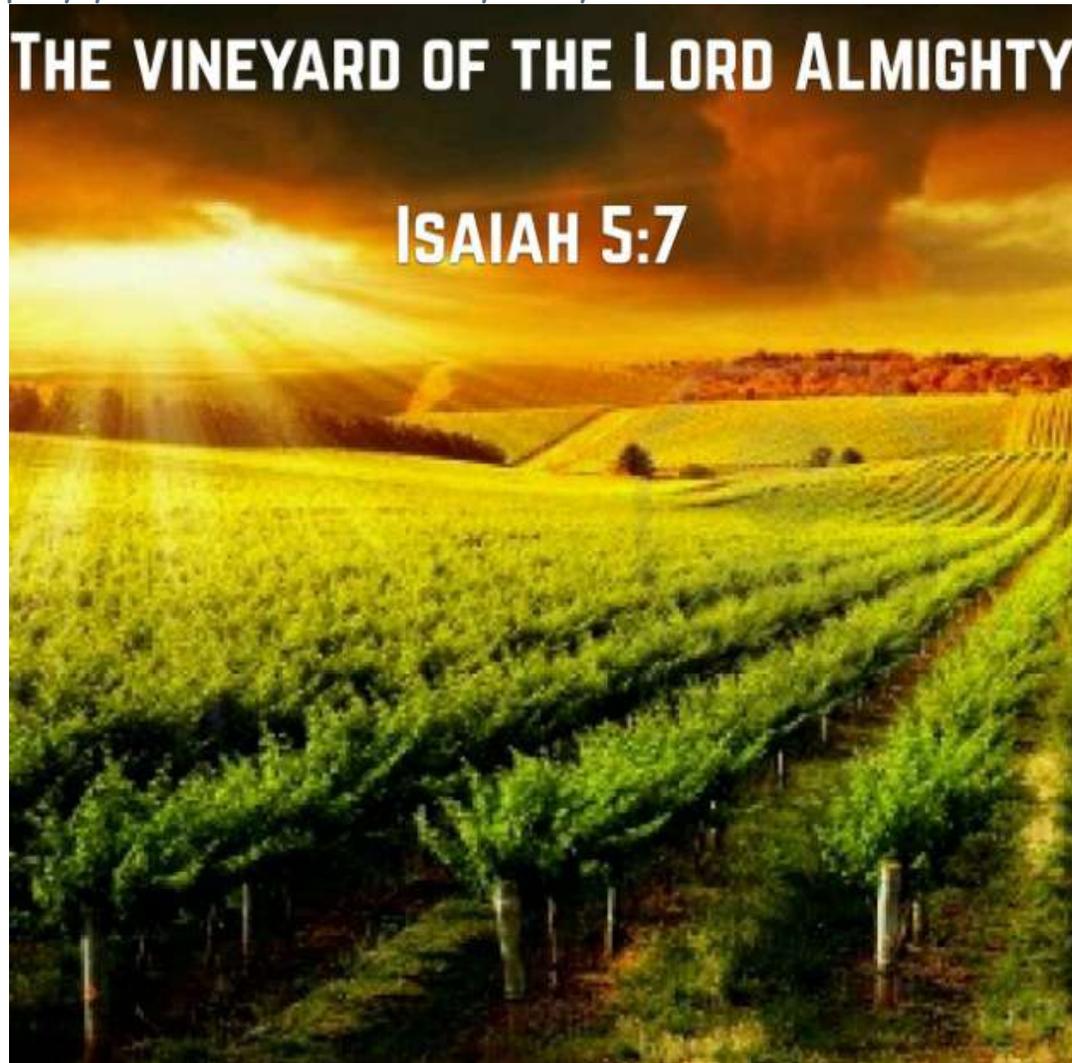
Now let me sing to my Well-beloved
A song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard:
My Well-beloved has a vineyard
On a very fruitful hill.
² He dug it up and cleared out its stones,
And planted it with the choicest vine.
He built a tower in its midst,
And also made a winepress in it;
So He expected *it* to bring forth *good* grapes,
But it brought forth wild grapes.
³ "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah,
Judge, please, between Me and My vineyard.
⁴ What more could have been done to My vineyard
That I have not done in it?
Why then, when I expected *it* to bring forth *good* grapes,
Did it bring forth wild grapes?
⁵ And now, please let Me tell you what I will do to My vineyard:
I will take away its hedge, and it shall be burned;
And break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down.
⁶ I will lay it waste;
It shall not be pruned or dug,
But there shall come up briars and thorns.
I will also command the clouds
That they rain no rain on it."
⁷ For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts *is* the house of Israel,
And the men of Judah are His pleasant plant.
He looked for justice, but behold, oppression;
For righteousness, but behold, a cry *for help*.

When David sinned with Bathsheba, he ordered Uriah, her husband, killed in order to cover up his sin of adultery. For these crimes David remained unrepentant for some time.

The Lord sent Nathan the prophet to David and he told him the parable of the ewe lamb, how a rich man stole the one, little pet lamb of his poor neighbor and killed and ate it. David was so angry when he heard this story that he said he would have the rich man killed for his pitiless deed. Nathan said to David, "Thou art the man." David condemned

himself in his judgment of the rich man. Often we are blind to our own faults.

The Lord, in our text, is doing to us what Nathan did to David. He wants us to pass judgment on something He has done for us. The Lord says, "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard."



These words certainly apply to us also, so —
JUDGE BETWEEN THE LORD AND HIS VINEYARD

1. WHAT MORE COULD THE LORD HAVE DONE?

"My well beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill," [Isaiah 5:1](#). The Lord planted His vineyard in a choice location where the sun and rain could be had in abundance.

"And he fenced it," [Isaiah 5:2](#). The ground was worked and perhaps trenched. The stones were gathered and placed in heaps or used to build walls. The choicest vines were selected and planted.

An observation tower was built to watch for thieves and marauders, and a winepress was made to receive the fruits of the vineyard.

Can we add anything to these preparations, or suggest any improvements anywhere? Has something been left undone? What more could the Lord have done? Remember, too, He is the perfect Husbandman.

Surely the Lord can not be faulted when He expected a harvest after all this careful planning. "And he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes." The result of all this work is almost unbelievable; wild, worthless grapes were on the vines. What a great disappointment for the Lord.

The failure of the vineyard seems almost impossible in the realm of nature, but it is rather common in the kingdom of the Lord. Remember, the Lord is speaking of His people, His children, to whom He promised the Savior from sin.

Look at the history of God's people. The world before the great flood was somewhat like this vineyard. God made a wonderful world in which man could live. He placed all things into the hands of man, and made him the king of creation. He filled the world with marvelous foods for man's sustenance. Even after man sinned and corrupted himself, God promised a Savior who would restore eternal life to man again. What were the results of all this labor on the part of the Lord? Things got progressively worse until we read statements like this, "And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth"([Gen.6:12](#)). That is a description of the wild grapes which the Lord found in the old world.

What about the people of Israel to whom our text was especially directed? The Lord gave them the land of Palestine, the land of Milk and honey. To them alone He entrusted His precious Word, the Old Testament. In His Word the Lord again and again repeated His promise

to send the Messiah who would redeem the world. Periodically the Lord sent His prophets unto them. Did the Lord find grapes this time? "For the vineyard of the Lord is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry"(v7). More wild grapes!



Is the New Testament Church any better? The Lord planted this Church all over the world and gave Her the full revelation of His will. He gave Her the Gospel of Jesus Christ crucified for the sins of the world. He blessed this Church with an extra measure of His Holy Spirit. Here the Lord concentrated the greatest blessings of all times. Are the results in this vineyard as expected? Is the Lord satisfied and pleased? Or does the Lord see too many wild grapes in this vineyard also?

Let us judge honestly and fairly between the Lord and His vineyard. As we do, our eyes begin to fall downward, and our heads begin to sink upon our breasts, being convicted by our own consciences. We are compelled to say with the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner,"([Luke 18:13](#)).

2. WHAT NOW SHOULD THE LORD DO?

In the verses following our text the Lord states what He will do with His vineyard. He will take away the hedges and walls, and let everything revert to a wilderness, and permit the animals to eat everything up, and trample down His vineyard.

Is the Lord being unjust? Has He acted too hastily? Can any honest person blame the Lord?

This statement of intention on the part of the Lord is not just so many idle or threatening words. He is, indeed, patient and longsuffering, but He means every word when He speaks.

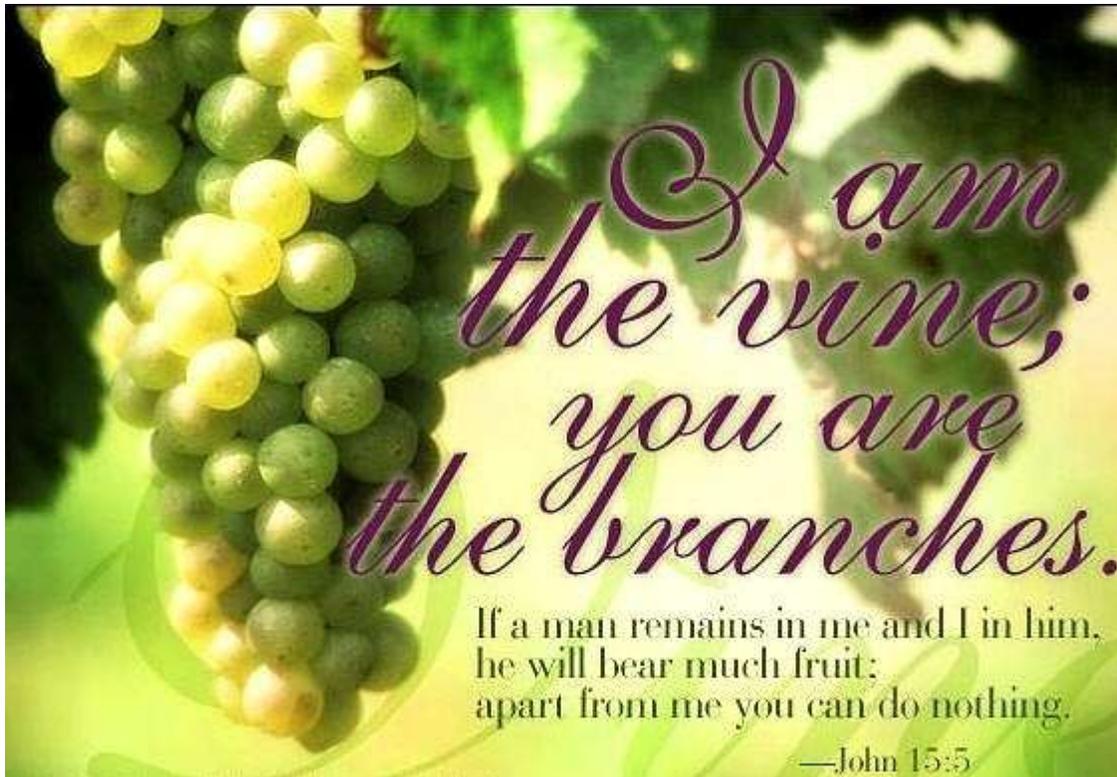
Look again at the old world which was corrupted. What happened? The Lord sent a great flood which utterly destroyed the whole world. Only Noah and his family found grace in the eyes of the Lord. See what happened to the children of Israel. Jerusalem was completely destroyed in 70 A.D. and the Israelites were scattered over the face of the earth.

No one, except the Lord, can state what will happen to the Church of these latter times. Even here we see many things that have happened to nations which had the Gospel and then rejected it. Many of these nations have been ravaged by war and destruction. Who knows what the Lord will do if He finds too many wild grapes in His vineyard?

We are brought to our knees, and we confess with David, "I have sinned against the Lord" ([2Sam 12:13](#)). We further confess with Daniel the prophet, "We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets" ([Daniel 9:5-6](#)).

We throw ourselves entirely upon the mercy of God in Jesus Christ our only Savior who died for us on the cross. We further plead with Daniel, "O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God; for thy city and thy people are called by thy name" ([Daniel 9:19](#)).

Jesus has already given us an answer to our confession, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" ([John 6:37](#)). He also gives us this invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" ([Matt.11:28](#)). Whosoever trusts in the blood of Jesus for forgiveness of sins shall receive it. Through faith in the crucified Savior we have the promise that the Lord will take us with Him to heaven.



"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing," says our Savior in [John 15:5](#). Clinging to Him, strengthened by the Holy Spirit, we can produce good grapes, good fruit, good works. Good works do not take us to heaven, but they are a necessary fruit of a true faith in Christ. We promise the Lord, with the help of the Holy Ghost to amend our sinful lives. We beseech Him to let the vineyard stand just a little longer, so that He may find some fruits among us also.

Judging between the Lord and His vineyard, we have again learned that the Lord is righteous in all His dealings with the children of men. When He comes to judge us on the last day, may we be found worthy to enter with Him into eternal glory, washed pure and white in the blood of the Lamb that once was slain.

AMEN.

PRAYER. Unto Thee, O Lord, do we confess all our sins and iniquities. We have not bore the fruit which Thou didst expect from us. We ask Thee, for Jesus' sake, to again forgive us all our sins. We promise Thee, O Lord, with the help of Thy Holy Spirit, to amend our sinful lives. Help us walk closer with Thee, that we ever be with Thee in eternal glory in heaven. Hear us for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. AMEN.