

Series: Questions

Title: What More Could Have Been Done?

Text: Isaiah 5: 1-7

Date: March 25, 2018

Place: SGBC, New Jersey

We find in our text our next question that our Lord asks a sinner.

Isaiah 5: 4: 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?

In this passage, God the Father is speaking to his well-beloved Son, Christ Jesus, concerning his vineyard:

Isaiah 5: 1: Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard.

The vineyard he speaks of is “*the house of Israel and the men of Judah*”. They were the visible church of the Old Testament. God used Israel and Judah to show what all men are and will do if left in our unregenerate state, even with the greatest advantage given them.

Proposition: Sinners produce only dead fruit unless Christ creates us anew and produces fruit in us.

Divisions: 1) We will see what God did for Israel and Judah of the old testament and their response 2) We will see what God has done for his Israel of the new testament 3) We will take away some vital lessons from it

THE OLD TESTAMENT VINEYARD

We see the advantage God gave to the children of Israel. This is the Israel of the old testament. This is the visible church of old. And we see their response to all this advantage.

Isaiah 5: 1:...My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill:

Israel and Judah was the vineyard of God’s wellbeloved Son: Christ, the Mediator, between God and men. It was Christ our God who formed the nation Israel. It was Christ who spoke to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Christ was speaking in the burning bush to Moses. It was Christ giving Moses the words to speak to Pharaoh. Christ our Lord redeemed Israel out of Egypt and delivered them into the promised land of Canaan. Canaan is the hill spoken of here—a *very fruitful hill*—the land of milk and honey. When all the world was barren, God placed Israel in Canaan, in a very fruitful hill, where they would have all they needed to live and serve him.

Christ created that nation like a husbandman does a vineyard.

- **Isaiah 5: 2: And he fenced it**—he kept them protected.
- **Isaiah 5: 2:...and gathered out the stones thereof**—stones of darkness and ignorance
- **Isaiah 5: 2...and planted it with the choicest vine**—he let Israel wander 40 years until those who believed not perished. Then he planted his vineyard with God’s choice vine: elect sons of Abraham like Joshua and Caleb and others he regenerated and gave faith
- **Isaiah 5: 2:...and built a tower in the midst of it**—the tower was the temple of God like a watchtower in a vineyard. He gave them priests and prophets to stand as watchmen for their souls. The temple was the place where God promised to meet with them over the mercy seat.

- **Isaiah 5: 2:..and also made a winepress therein**—he set up his altar where the blood of his sacrifices flowed like the blood of grapes in a winepress bearing witness of Christ Jesus our Substitute.

Here is his charge against them.

- **Isaiah 5: 2:...and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes**—He looked for good grapes, good fruit like: *“love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”* (Gal 5: 22-23) But they brought forth wild grapes, wild fruit, dead fruit like: *“Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: ...they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”* (Gal 5: 19-21)
- **Isaiah 5: 7: For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts 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**—He looked for the *fruit of judgment*—justice in their dealings with God: confessing their sin, confessing their need for Christ to justify them; and he looked for them to be just with one another: showing mercy and forgiving one another. Instead, he found *oppression*—robbery toward God: stealing the glory that belongs to Christ for his work of saving his people. And they oppressed one another: men building their large houses at the expense of the poor. The religious leaders fleeced poor sinners for personal gain by stealing God’s offerings from them and taking them for themselves. He looked for the fruit of *righteousness* but the distressing *cry* of the poor came up into his ears.

So he asks the question.

- **Isaiah 5: 4: 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?**—the children of Israel were given every advantage men can be given. Paul said, *Romans 3: 1: What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? 2: Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.* Seeing the Lord could not have given them any more advantage than he did then why did they bring forth wild, dead fruit?

Be sure to get this: this is the lesson God teaches us using the whole nation of Israel. They brought forth dead fruit because a sinner, though given all these advantages by God, can do nothing but sin. You recognized the two kinds of fruit from Galatians 5. *The grapes*, the good fruit such as “love, joy, peace” is the fruit of God the Holy Spirit. *The wild grapes*, the dead fruit such as adultery, idolatry, hatred is the fruit of the natural, unregenerate flesh of man. A sinner, though given every advantage God can give him, cannot bring forth fruit unto God. The apostle Paul said when we were dead in sins

“ye were the servants of sin...ye...yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity;...What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.” (Rom 6: 17, 19, 21)

“For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.” (Rom 7: 5)

“A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.” (Mt 7: 18)

“Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit.” (Mt 12: 33)

Today, multitudes are religious of themselves, without Christ, without being born anew of the Spirit of God. All their many wonderful works is dead fruit of the flesh. For instance, most preach responsibility from this text but they do so preaching a lie. They say if we do not fulfill our responsibility then God's will goes unfulfilled like it did with Israel so that God had to go to plan B and send forth his Son. That is corrupt fruit by corrupt men just like the unregenerate children of Israel.

God's faithfulness to save is not altered when men do not believe. Paul said, *Romans 3: 3: For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? 4: God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.*

Indeed, men are responsible to obey God's word and bow to Christ. But when men refuse to bow to God's word, it simply proves what the Lord declares in our text that all men by nature are depraved sinners and left to ourselves we cannot produce fruit. He teaches us to "*cease from man for where is he to be accounted of.*" We must have Christ to save us!

So after the Lord called out his last elect from Israel, he finished with that nation and took down the hedge and justly destroyed the nation in 70AD and he says it shall never be built again.

- **Isaiah 5: 5: And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: 6: And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.**

Yet, mingled in all God's warnings of judgment to the children of Israel, Isaiah prophesied of a day when Christ would come to save his elect Israel from among Jew and Gentile.

Isaiah 4: 2: In that day shall the branch of the LORD [he is the Vine we are the branches, in the day Christ works grace for and in us, he and his people shall] be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth [the fruit Christ produces in his people] shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. 3: And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: [in the lambs book of life] 4: When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning. 5: And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, [his people and churches] a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence. [like the cloud and fire that led Israel in the wilderness, Christ himself shall be upon his people and his local churches for a defense] 6: And there shall be a tabernacle [Christ himself and his place of worship] for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.

Isaiah 5: 16: But the LORD of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness. [this is what he looked for in Israel when he looked for judgement and righteousness. He looked for them to exalt the LORD by casting their care on Christ. But he found robbery. In the day Christ came, he brought his people to exalt him by believing on him.] 17: Then shall the lambs feed after their manner, and the waste places of the fat ones shall strangers eat. [his elect among the Gentiles]

So in the fullness of time, Christ came as Isaiah prophesied. And Christ told these unregenerate, religious leaders a parable just like the one in our text:

Mark 12: 1: ...A certain man planted a vineyard, and set an hedge about it, and digged a place for the winefat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. 2: And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard. 3: And they caught him, and beat him, and sent him away empty. [so it went with all his servants. The children of Israel rejected God by rejecting his prophets] 6: Having yet therefore one son, his wellbeloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son. 7: But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours. 8: And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard.

When Christ finished this parable the self-righteous men of Israel and Judah perceived Christ spoke of them. So they did exactly what Christ said they would in the parable, they crucified the Prince of Life, God's own Son.

It is amazing that folks who oppose the believer for resting entirely in Christ do exactly as the Pharisees did to Christ in their opposition of him. Without knowing it, without intending it, in all their attacks on the believer they say and do precisely what Christ said they would according to the scriptures. Their goal is to convince us the bible is just another book and that Christ is just another man. Yet, by the very arguments they deem so ingenious, they only prove to us that Christ is indeed God our Savior and that every word of God is true. And while they endeavor to turn us from Christ they only make us cling ever more tightly to our Lord and Savior.

But in crucifying Christ, they fulfilled God's eternal will and by his blood, Christ created a new vineyard

CHRIST'S NEW TESTAMENT VINEYARD

Now, let's use our text with an eye to Christ and see what he has done for his Israel of the new testament, his elect.

Isaiah 5: 1: Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill:

When the Son of God took flesh and dwelt among us, God the Father spoke from heaven saying, "*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.*" (Mt 17: 5) The work of creating his people anew to be his eternal vineyard is Christ's work alone.

- **Isaiah 5: 2: And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine**—Christ himself is the Vine—God the Father's choice! (Is 42: 1) And also, Christ sent his choice apostles and preachers to preach his gospel. Paul said, "*I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.*" (1 Cor 3: 6) So his vineyard, his people, "*are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.*" (Eph 2: 20)
- **Isaiah 5: 2...and built a tower in the midst of it**—Christ is our "*Strong Tower the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.*" (Pro 18: 10) And the church where he places his watchmen is his watchtower in his vineyard because we preach Christ our Strong Tower. Right here in this place, Christ has provided us with a church—his watchtower—where we can hear the gospel of Christ preached in spirit and in truth by his watchman.
- **Isaiah 5: 2...and also made a winepress therein**—Christ himself trod the winepress of the fury of God's wrath all alone and there was no man with him to help. (Is 63: 3, 5) He suffered and bled to save

his people from our sins. Christ is the Fountain. We wash in his blood alone. His gospel refreshed us like wine.

- **Isaiah 5: 2...he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and** [by Christ's finished work of redemption] **it brought forth** [fruit in abundance all produced by Christ Jesus our Righteousness.]

Romans 7: 4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

John 15: 3: Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. 4: Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. 5: 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.

Psalm 92:12: The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. 13: Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God. 14: They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; 15: To shew that the LORD is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

Now, God is satisfied with Christ our Righteousness. So our risen Lord does the opposite for his fruitful vineyard of what he did to the unfruitful vineyard. Instead of taking down the hedge and the wall, Christ hedges us about and we shall never be eaten up by the adversary.

Isaiah 26:1: In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; Salvation [Christ our Salvation] will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.

Isaiah 27: 2: In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. 3: I the LORD do keep it.

1 Peter 1:5: Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Instead of laying it waste and not pruning it, Christ says of each his people in his vineyard now, "every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." (Jn 15: 2) Instead of withholding the water of the gospel, Christ says, "I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." (Is 27: 3)

Who is this new vineyard.

- **Isaiah 5: 7: For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the** [elect] **house of Israel, and the** [elect] **men of Judah his pleasant plant**—[elect from among Jew and Gentile]—**and he looked for judgment,** [and in Christ] **behold** [judgment]; **for righteousness,** [and in Christ] **behold** [righteousness]—

Isaiah 5: 16: But the LORD of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness.

Isaiah 60:21: Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.

Isaiah 61:3...that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

Philippians 1:11: Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

Now, let's answer the question concerning his new covenant vineyard.

- **Isaiah 5: 4: What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?**—Nothing more can be done! Christ declared, “It is finished!”
- **Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth [good] grapes?**—Because Christ the Vine produces only good grapes for and in his people. We are the workmanship of his hands!

LESSONS TO TAKE AWAY

In our day, God has given us far more light, far more advantage, than what he gave the children of Israel. Christ has come and accomplished redemption for his people. He has created his vineyard anew. He has placed his tower, his church, in this place where the gospel goes forth for you to hear weekly

Like Israel of old, we have a responsibility to walk in the light God has given us. Use it. Come hear the gospel of Christ preached. Study his word. Call on God to save you. Do not despise the light God has given you!

One day soon, just as the Lord destroyed the nation of Israel because they despised the light he gave them, he shall destroy this whole world and every sinner without Christ shall be cast into outer darkness. If God saves you it will be all of his doing and he shall receive all the glory; but if you perish it will be all your doing because you despised the light and would not walk in it.

Christ Jesus is the Savior of sinners. If you truly cast your care on Christ he will save you. He delights to show mercy! Seek him while he may be found! Believe on Christ and slip into his perfect robe of righteousness! Oh, may God the Holy Spirit make you put off the old man with his deeds and put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Believer, seeing the work of salvation is all the work of Christ performed freely for us, remember these words of the apostle Paul:

1 Corinthians 6:20: For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

1 Corinthians 10:31: Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

When we eat and drink at our Lord's Table in remembrance of Christ Jesus, we do so giving God all the glory!

Amen!