

God's Good Fruit

Prophet Isaiah: ¹ Now I will sing for the One I love a song (ballad) about His vineyard: my Beloved had a vineyard on a rich and fertile hill. ² He plowed the land, cleared its stones, and planted it with the best vines. In the middle He built a watchtower and carved a winepress in the nearby rocks. Then He waited for a harvest of sweet (good) grapes, but the grapes that grew were bitter (bad)....

⁷ The nation of Israel is the vineyard of the LORD of Heaven's Armies (also called LORD of Hosts). The people of Judah are His pleasant garden. He expected a crop of justice, but instead He found oppression. He expected to find righteousness, but instead He heard cries of violence....

¹⁶ But the LORD of Heaven's Armies will be exalted by His justice. The holiness of God will be displayed by His righteousness....

¹⁸ What sorrow for those who drag their sins behind them with ropes made of lies (falsehood), who drag wickedness (sin) behind them like a cart! ¹⁹ They even mock God and say, "Hurry up and do something! We want to see what You can do. Let the Holy One of Israel carry out His plan, for we want to know what it is." ²⁰ What sorrow for those who say that evil is good and good is evil, that dark is light, and light is dark, that bitter is sweet and sweet is bitter. ²¹ What sorrow for those who are wise in their own eyes and think themselves so clever. ²² What sorrow for those who are heroes at drinking wine and boast about all the alcohol they can hold. ²³ They take bribes to let the wicked go free, and they punish the innocent. ²⁴ Therefore, just as fire licks up stubble and dry grass shrivels in the flame, so their roots will rot and their flowers wither. For they have rejected the Law of the LORD of Heaven's Armies; they have despised the Word of the Holy One of Israel. Isaiah 5:1-2, 7, 16, 18-24, New Living Translation 2nd Edition

The book of Isaiah has been called by some scholars the pinnacle book of the Bible. In the pages of Isaiah, one can see the living LORD God's hand working from creation in Genesis to His coming new creation at the end of the age. Importantly, the book of Isaiah reveals the Righteous Servant of God – Jesus!

The prophet Isaiah began his ministry in the year of King Uzziah's death, approximately 740 BC (e.g., see 2 Chronicles 26:22-23; Isaiah 1:1; Isaiah 6:1). The prophet Isaiah continued to proclaim the living LORD God's message to Judah and Jerusalem in the southern kingdom of Israel during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (e.g., see Isaiah 1:1; Isaiah 2:1). The prophet Isaiah prophesied to Judah and Jerusalem at the same time as the prophets Hosea, Amos, and Micah in the 8th century BC.

Amazingly, the prophet Isaiah predicted Israel and Judah's coming destruction and Exile from the Promised Land (e.g., see Isaiah 5:25-30; Isaiah 39:5-7). However, starting in chapter 40, the prophet Isaiah provides the people of God comfort and the coming salvation through a Righteous Servant of God – Jesus (e.g., see Isaiah 40:1-2; Isaiah 52:1-2). Through the Righteous Servant's suffering, the prophet Isaiah predicted He would provide salvation and righteousness for many and atonement for their sins (e.g., see Isaiah 52:13-53:12). Even more, the prophet Isaiah predicts the Righteous Servant inviting ALL PEOPLE to come and find salvation in Him (e.g., see Isaiah 55:1-3).

From the beginning, the living LORD God created a good world and humans to reflect His holy and good image (e.g., see Genesis 1:1-2, 26-28; Genesis 2:4, 7; Job 38:8-11). The LORD God created Adam and Eve in His image and likeness to be filled with righteousness and holiness (e.g., Genesis 5:1, 3; Genesis 9:6; 1 Corinthians 11:7; Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10; James 3:9). As created beings of the living LORD God, humans were to love, respect, and obey Him as their Creator above all else FIRST (e.g., see Genesis 2:15-17; Deuteronomy 6:4-6, 13-14; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Matthew 22:37; John 14:15). However, the first humans Adam and Eve disobeyed and rebelled against God, which led to the Great Fall and death of humanity (e.g., see Genesis 3:1-7; Romans 6:23). Humanities' sin and rebellion continued until the time of righteous Noah (see Genesis 6:8-9; Genesis 7:1; 2 Peter 2:5). At the time of Noah, humanities' sins and rebellion reached to heaven, which led to the living LORD God's cleansing of the whole earth through the Great Flood (e.g., see Genesis 6:5-8:19).

To begin again, the living LORD God raised Abraham, who became the Father of many nations (see Genesis 12:1-3; Genesis 17:3-8, 16; Genesis 18:18; Romans 4:17-18). The living LORD God chose Abraham so that he would direct and instruct his children and his household after him to keep and do His righteous, just, and good

ways on His earth He created (e.g., see Genesis 12:1-3; Genesis 17:1-2, 9 Genesis 18:19; Psalm 24:1-2; Isaiah 66:1-2). Abraham became the father of Isaac (see Genesis 21:3-8), and Isaac became the father of Jacob (see Genesis 25:26), who was later renamed Israel by the living LORD God (see Genesis 32:28; Genesis 35:10). Israel became the father of the Twelve tribes of Israel, which included Judah (see Genesis 35:22-26). Israel and his son Judah became God's vineyard, and the living LORD God loved and chose Israel and Judah as His special treasure (Isaiah 5:1, 7; see also Exodus 15:17; Exodus 19:5-6; Psalm 80:8-11).

The living and faithful LORD God redeemed and saved His beloved vineyard, Israel and Judah, from Egyptian slavery, and then He planted His beloved vineyard on a very fertile hill in the Promised Land, Canaan (Isaiah 5:1, 7; see also Exodus 3:10; Exodus 12:51; Exodus 20:2; Deuteronomy 7:7-9; Joshua 3:9-10; Psalm 80:8; Micah 6:3-4; Acts 13:18-19). As the LORD God Almighty's redeemed people, Israel and Judah were to obey and worship the living LORD God Almighty only and live according to His righteous ways and commands on His earth (e.g., see Exodus 19:4-6). Moreover, Israel and Judah were to be the living LORD God's holy Kingdom people to spread and carry out His righteous standards on His earth (e.g., see Exodus 19:6; Deuteronomy 4:5-9; Deuteronomy 7:6; Deuteronomy 14:2). The living LORD God nurtured and cared for His beloved vineyard, and the living LORD God planted within His vineyard the best vines (Isaiah 5:2; see also Deuteronomy 32:9-15; Jeremiah 2:21). Then, the living LORD God built a watchtower to protect and shield His vineyard and cut a winepress in the rocks (Isaiah 5:2; see also 1 Samuel 2:9; Isaiah 27:3; Isaiah 31:5).

The living LORD God of Heaven's Armies – GOD of the Angel Armies – waited for good fruit from His vineyard that He had protected, loved, and nurtured (see Isaiah 5:2). He expected His vineyard to produce a generous crop of good fruit – justice, mercy, peace, truth, and goodness (see Isaiah 5:7). However, the vineyard produced either no fruit or bad fruits that grew wild, sour, and worthless (Isaiah 5:2, 4; see also Matthew 21:18-19; Mark 11:12-13; Luke 13:6-9).

Instead of good fruit, the living LORD God's vineyard rejected His righteous ways and produced bad fruit: murder, idolatry, arrogance, greed (covetousness), oppression, adultery, corruption, and lies (Isaiah 5:7-8, 18; see also Deuteronomy 32:15-30; Isaiah

3:14-15; Isaiah 30:12; Isaiah 59:1-4, 7-8, 12-15; Jeremiah 2:5-8; Ezekiel 22:23-28; Acts 7:38-40). The people of Israel and Judah were robbing and defrauding people by buying up property, so others had no place to live, while their homes were built on great estates (Isaiah 5:8; see also 1 Kings 21:1-3, 15-16; Jeremiah 22:13-17; Micah 2:1-2; Haggai 2:9-12). Moreover, the people of Israel and Judah practiced idolatry, blackmail, committed robbery, oppressed the poor and needy, and mistreated the foreigner and denied the foreigner justice (e.g., see 2 Kings 17:7-23; Ezekiel 22:29). Even worse, amongst the prophets and priests, they were doing horrible acts: adultery, living a lie and strengthening the hands of evildoers and their wickedness (e.g., see Jeremiah 5:30-31; Jeremiah 23:10-14). Then, God's vineyard engaged in drunkenness and wild parties while disregarding the living LORD God and His righteous Law to love and care for others (Isaiah 5:11-12, 21-24; see also Isaiah 1:3-9, 15-23). Truly, the drunkenness, exploitation of others, and perversion of the people God had created were exceedingly great (Isaiah 1:2-5, 21-23; Isaiah 5:8-12, 18-24; Isaiah 24:5, 20; Ezekiel 9:9).

Then, the people God created blasphemy, mocked and dared His coming wrath against sin (Isaiah 5:18-19; see also Jeremiah 5:12-13; 2 Peter 3:3-4). These wicked people were even saying that what is right is wrong and what is wrong is right (Isaiah 5:20; see also Proverbs 17:15). Even more, these wicked people believed they were wise and smart by the world's standards (Isaiah 5:20-21; see also Romans 1:22; 1 Corinthians 1:20; 1 Corinthians 3:18-20). However, the LORD God saw the people of Israel and Judah as drunken fools who did not honor Him and took bribes to pervert justice while letting the wicked go free and hurting the innocent, the poor, and the foreigner (Isaiah 1:23; Isaiah 5:11, 21-23; Isaiah 10:1-2; see also Exodus 23:6-9; Proverbs 17:15; Proverbs 23:20-21, 29-30; Ezekiel 22:12). In summary, Israel and Judah had rejected the good covenant (Law) of the living LORD God Almighty and did not trust wholeheartedly in Him (Isaiah 1:10; Isaiah 5:24; Isaiah 30:9, 12; see also Exodus 19:1 through Exodus 24:18).

Then, the living LORD God of Heaven's Armies cried what more could have been done for His vineyard (see Isaiah 5:4)! He had graciously delivered His people Israel and Judah from Egyptian slavery and bondage (e.g., see Exodus 3:10; Exodus 6:6; Micah 6:3-4). The living LORD God of Heaven's Armies even sent His holy Word through His messengers – godly prophets – again and again, because He loved His vineyard (e.g., see 2 Chronicles 36:15;

Jeremiah 7:25-26; Jeremiah 25:4; Matthew 21:35-39; Matthew 23:37; Luke 13:34). However, the vineyard persecuted, mocked, and killed God's messengers (e.g., see 2 Chronicles 24:21; 2 Chronicles 36:14-16; Matthew 5:12). Even worse, the vineyard worshipped and served worthless idols instead of the true and living God (e.g., see Exodus 20:2-3; Jeremiah 2:5).

Therefore, the living LORD God of Heaven's Armies – the King and Judge – prepared for His judgment and wrath against His vineyard because of their sin, wickedness, and unfaithfulness against Him (Isaiah 5:3, 24; see also e.g., Deuteronomy 28:15-68; 2 Chronicles 36:16-17; Matthew 21:40). THERE ARE CONSEQUENCES TO SIN! First, the living LORD God declared that He would remove the fences and protective hedge around His vineyard and let His vineyard go to pasture to be trampled by cattle and sheep because of their unfaithfulness to Him and His righteous ways (Isaiah 5:5; Isaiah 6:11-13; see also Jeremiah 5:10-13). Next, the living LORD God promised not to prune nor hoe His vineyard but let the vineyard become overgrown with briars and thorns and become a dry wasteland (Isaiah 5:6; see also Jeremiah 12:10-13). Moreover, the living LORD God promised beautiful homes will lie deserted and the land unfertile for seventy years of rest because of Israel and Judah's sins and unfaithfulness against Him (Isaiah 5:9-10; see also 2 Chronicles 36:21; Jeremiah 25:11; Jeremiah 29:10; Daniel 9:1-14). Then, the prophet Isaiah predicted the living LORD God would send His people into Exile where they will receive just punishment for their sins (Isaiah 5:13; see also Deuteronomy 28:36-42, 64-68). In the Exile, the prophet Isaiah predicted the LORD God's prideful and wicked people would experience death, destruction, and despair because of their sin and unfaithfulness against Him (see Isaiah 5:14-15).

Next, the Sovereign LORD God – the LORD God of Hosts or Heavens Armies (Yahweh) promised His punishment and wrath on His vineyard using the nations of the world as His weapons of destruction (Isaiah 5:13-14, 25-30; Isaiah 10:5-34; see also Jeremiah 25:8-12)! The living LORD God gave His vineyard into the hands of the Assyrians and the Babylonians, who destroyed Israel and Judah and carried God's people into the Exile (e.g., see 2 Chronicles 36:17-20). In approximately 722 BC, Israel's northern kingdom was destroyed by the Assyrians, and the Assyrians scattered God's people (see 2 Kings 17:7-23). The Assyrians Then in approximately 586 BC, Judah and Jerusalem were devastated

by the Babylonian army, and the Jews were taken captive and into the Exile (see 2 Kings 25:1-21).

Here is the Good News! The prophet Isaiah predicted God's restoration, blessings, and comfort for His repented people (see Isaiah 40:1-2). The prophet Isaiah called on the vineyard to TRUST the living LORD God (e.g., see Isaiah 7:4; Isaiah 30:1-17; John 3:16). The living LORD God promised through His prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah goodness, peace, hope, favor, and restoration to His repented and faithful people who wholeheartedly seek, love, and trust Him (Isaiah 49:9-11; Isaiah 55:6, 12; Isaiah 54:6; see also Jeremiah 24:4-7; Jeremiah 29:10-14; Jeremiah 30:18-22; Matthew 7:7-11).

The living LORD God Almighty wanted His people to stop doing wrong, learn to do right, and seek goodness and justice for the fatherless, the widow, the foreigner, their workers, and the poor and not just more ceremonial rituals and self-serving fasting (e.g., see Isaiah 1:16-17, 23; Isaiah 58:3-4). The living LORD God of Hosts – Yahweh – loves justice, goodness, and mercy, and He hates robbery, evil, and wrongdoing (Isaiah 61:8; e.g., see also Psalm 11:7; Psalm 33:4-5). Thus, the living LORD God wanted His people to follow His righteous example and pursue love, justice, goodness, and mercy towards others, especially the poor, the homeless, and the oppressed (e.g., see Isaiah 58:6-7; Matthew 5:3-16). The living LORD God promised His blessings, healing, mercy, and grace to those who honor and obey Him and those who loves and cares for the poor, hungry, widow, the fatherless, and the foreigner (Isaiah 58:8-14; see also Deuteronomy 30:15-20).

Amazingly, the beautiful “Song of the Vineyard” announced by the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 5 was also told by the LORD God's Son, Jesus (e.g., see Matthew 20:1-16; Matthew 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 13:6-9; Luke 20:9-19). As Jesus announced during His public ministry on earth, unless you repent, you too will all perish (e.g., see Luke 13:3, 5). The living LORD God's Son Jesus calls upon the church – believers of Jesus – to produce good fruit or also risk punishment or removal (e.g., see Luke 13:6-9). The church through faith in Jesus have been grafted into the vineyard and become part of Israel (e.g., see Romans 2:28-29; Romans 11:22-24; Ephesians 3:6).

Jesus proclaimed during His earthly ministry that EVERYONE – Jews, Gentiles, young, old, black, and white – must REPENT and PRODUCE GOOD FRUIT (e.g., see Matthew 4:17; Matthew 21:33-40, 43; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 20:9-19; Galatians 5:22-23). Believers of Jesus can produce good fruit as we love and obey Jesus – the Vine, and the Owner of the Vineyard – Jesus’s Father, the living LORD God of heaven and earth (e.g., see Matthew 21:40; Mark 4:8; John 15:1-2, 4-5, 8, 16-17). Believers’ good deeds and good fruit brings glory to the living LORD God (e.g., see Matthew 5:13-16; Matthew 7:12; 15-23; John 15:8; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Ephesians 2:10; Titus 2:7, 14; Titus 3:1, 8, 14; 1 Peter 2:12, 15). The apostle Paul, a servant of the LORD God and His Son Jesus, continued the good message from the Old and New Testament. He encouraged believers of Jesus to do what is right, pure, and good, not only in the eyes of the God but also in the eyes of people (e.g., see Romans 12:1-2, 9-21; 2 Corinthians 8:21; Philippians 2:14-16).

Importantly, the prophet Isaiah proclaimed that the living LORD God Almighty is highly exalted on His heavenly throne, and He is justice and good (Isaiah 5:16; e.g., see also Deuteronomy 32:3-4; Isaiah 2:11, 17; Isaiah 6:1-3; Revelation 5:7, 10). The living LORD God commands justice and goodness on His earth (see Isaiah 5:7, 16). The prophet Isaiah, like many other faithful servants of God, saw the living LORD God’s throne of heaven and His Son Jesus (Isaiah 6:1-4; see also e.g., see Exodus 24:10; Numbers 12:8; 1 Kings 22:19; Psalm 123:1; Isaiah 52:12; John 12:41; Hebrews 11:26; Revelation 4:1-5:14). The prophet Isaiah predicted that one day the LORD God’s earth will be filled with His justice, goodness, and His glory (e.g., see Isaiah 1:26; Isaiah 9:6-7; Isaiah 28:5-6; Isaiah 33:5-6, 10; Revelation 21:1-3, 7-8, 22-27; Revelation 22:3-5). The Sovereign LORD God Almighty – the Holy One of Israel – is the LORD of the all earth, and He is GREAT enough, WISE enough, and TRANSCENDENT enough that He can always be trusted (e.g., see Deuteronomy 3:24; Isaiah 66:1-2)! Everyone who loves, honors, and respects the living LORD God Almighty will receive His abundant treasure in His Kingdom (e.g., see Isaiah 33:6; Matthew 6:33). Therefore, the prophet Isaiah calls up not only Israel and Judah but ALL PEOPLE ON EARTH to love, honor, and trust (faith) the living LORD God Almighty (Isaiah 8:13; see also Exodus 20:20; Isaiah 29:23).

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