

“Appetite” Isaiah 5:8-30

Context: Isaiah, as a prophet, served as God’s prosecuting attorney, declaring God’s indictment against Judah and Jerusalem during the reigns of Kings Uzziah through Hezekiah. The “six woes” of our study summarize chapters 2-5, as Isaiah reveals God’s judgment on Jerusalem for (1) self-indulgent values, (2) irresponsible leadership, and (3) self-absorption of their women. Interspersed in these indictments is the revelation of the Remnant’s salvation intimated by verses 16-17. The prophet then concludes this first series of indictments with a ballad comparing Jerusalem to a vineyard and its people to rotten grapes. After describing the nature of these rotting grapes, Isaiah declares their punishment.

1. Appetite of Sheol– Isaiah 5:8-15

Isaiah used the metaphor of the greed of the land baron to represent self-indulgent spiritual decay. He prophesized that their grandeur will be reduced to rubble, their internal beauty emptied, and the labor of their hands unproductive. The ‘high’ living hard rocking partiers were also indicted. The intoxication of a ‘good high’ and ‘hot passion’ caused spiritual blindness to God’s dealings. Beyond that they could not even recognize why they have wandered into punishment and their learned were lacking for answers as well. The appetite of Sheol consumes them all, high-minded and beggar alike.

2. Appetite of God and His faithful – Isaiah 5:16-17

Only God is holy and exalted as declared in contrast to the proud cast down into Sheol by His righteous judgment. God’s Remnant, the lambs, are promised sustenance in their former places of oppression.

3. Appetite of the sinful – Isaiah 5:18-30

Four woes are levied here. The first is to the audacious sinner who in impious unbelief, sins with all his might. The second is to the wicked to whom evil has so perverted his taste as to make it seem good. The third is to the self-deluded elitist who smugly considers himself better than anyone else. The final is to the sensualist that for gain would deny the God-fearer their lifestyle of holiness. Their common rejection of YHWH brings their common fate, all consuming burning destruction.

Study questions:

- As a **Bible study method**, read the historical backdrop of the Syro-Ephraimite massacre of Judah (2 Chronicles 28:5ff) and Nebuchadnezzar’s siege (2 Kings 25:1ff). List specific examples of how the descriptions of Judah’s destruction in these historical accounts confirm the fulfillment of the prophet’s declaration of woes in Isaiah 5:8-30. Look up the use of the word “woe” in the Book of Revelation. How are they similar?
- What is Isaiah’s ultimate prophetic explanation for God’s judgment in Isaiah 5:8-15 (cf. Isaiah 5:16)? What lesson does this judgment teach? Are there any parallels of warning and judgment to the New Testament covenant community (cp Revelation 1:20-3:22)? Are there any specific characteristics of condemnation in the “six woes” that are applicable to our nation today?
- Isaiah reveals a ray of hope for the remnant living in the midst of the pangs, perishing, and peril of judgment brought down on their nation because of its wicked nature. Our doctrinal statement describes the same eternal hope for the believer saying that “they shall be made fully blessed...and enjoy God’s presence throughout the age of ages” (see footnote 10 addressing **‘On Last Things’** in our **doctrinal statement** under **what we believe** at www.gracepointfellowship.org). In contrast to Isaiah 5:8ff, use Scripture to give two concrete ways that you might live in the midst of a people whose lifestyles are destined for punishment.

Transformation exercise:

Reflect on Isaiah 5:24. Do you treat the word of God as living, as beneficial, as meddlesome, or possibly as irrelevant? Read and study through the verses considered today. Do any jump out at you? Why? How should you act on them?