

## “Grapes of Wrath” Isaiah 5:1-7

**Context:** In chapters 2 and 3 Isaiah, as a prophet of God, revealed God’s indictment and judgment on Jerusalem for (1) self-indulgent values, (2) irresponsible leadership, and (3) self-absorption of their women. Chapter four provides a break from these indictments revealing hope through God’s promise of blessing to the remnant in the midst of the despair that surrounds them. The prophet then concludes this first series of indictments with a song of love for Jerusalem that quickly turns into a song of God’s reproach for their sin, ending with a prophecy of their destruction as judgment.

### 1. Vineyard of hope – Isaiah 5:1-4

The ballad utilizes the metaphor of a vineyard to symbolize the Lord’s very careful choice of Palestine for the planting place of Israel. It was placed in the very presence of the Lord’s illumination, as captured in the phrase “rays of the Son of Oil.” The metaphor depicts the Lord’s cleaning out of Israel’s enemies (the removal of stones) and His promised protection (the watchtower). This was done with eager expectation of production of the fruit of righteousness, symbolized by wine from the growth of fine grapes. God calls Israel to ‘the bench’ to judge the merit of the Lord’s accusation that He did everything that He could for them and got only worthless fruit in return.

### 2. Grapes of wrath – Isaiah 5:5-7

The Lord calls His people to weigh all He has done, His expectations, and the vineyard’s response to determine who bears the weight of righteousness versus condemnation. The principle is framed in a question: “Can the accused plead innocent of their abhorrent condition because the Lord has not done enough?” His answer: He will cause the vineyard to know that His protection will be removed, resulting in its existence as rubble of a well-trodden footpath, one without spiritual refreshment, guidance, or fruit (i.e. peace). How will they know this experientially? He reveals that they are the vineyard!

### Study questions:

- Scripture often uses parables or songs to convey a principle. As a **Bible study method**, seek out the principle underlying Isaiah 5:1-7. What is the Lord’s expectation symbolized by vineyard fruit? What New Testament passage uses the same symbolism, with the same expectation of the Lord and the same consequences should disobedience follow (i.e. John 15:1ff)?
  
- Our doctrinal statement describes the fruit of righteousness and justice as coming from a life changed and empowered by the Holy Spirit (see footnote 14 addressing ‘**On Salvation**’ in our **doctrinal statement** under **what we believe** at [www.gracepointfellowship.org](http://www.gracepointfellowship.org). Cf. also Philippians 2:12). How do “rays of the Son of Oil” in Isaiah 5:1 and “abide in Me and I in you” in John 15:4 demonstrate Old and New Testament continuity in the doctrine of sanctification?
  
- Isaiah 5:1-7 shows a common pattern that God uses to apply Scripture. First, He lays out the principle. Second, He invites you to judge the offense. Third, He points “the cannon” at you in order to seek your repentance, if necessary (also see the pattern in 2 Samuel 12:1ff). Remember 1 John 1:9-10.

### Transformation exercise:

Reflect on Isaiah 5:4a. What has God done for you spiritually, emotionally, and materially to position you to bear fruit? Take 30 minutes before God this evening and weigh whether you are using His gifts given to you in His way for His glory. Is repentance needed? Pray the fruit of justice and righteousness into the Lord’s Prayer this week.