

Commentary on Isaiah chapters 4 and 5 by Chuck Smith 3.29.23

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March memory verse 1 Peter 1:25 (NKJV)

But the word of the LORD endures forever." Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.

Commentary on Isaiah chapters 4 and 5 by Chuck Smith 3.29.23

Chapter 4

Now Isaiah looks on through the Lord to the future.

And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and we will wear our own clothes; only let us be called by your name, to take away our reproach ([Isa 4:1](#)).

It was a reproach to a woman in those days, of course, not to bear a child. But there will be a shortage of men, so seven women will take hold of one man and say, "Hey, we'll take care of ourselves. We'll provide our own food and everything else, but we want you to take away our reproach and give us your name."

But in that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful ([Isa 4:2](#))

The branch of the Lord, of course, is one of the terms by which Christ is described, the branch of Jehovah. He is called, actually, the branch of David, and Jehovah's servant, the Branch, in Zechariah and the term branch is used many times in reference to Jesus Christ.

In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. 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: 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. And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defense. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from the storm and from the rain ([Isa 4:2-6](#)).

So going ahead again from the darkness of the impending judgment and the long period of time in which the Gentiles shall rule to the day of the Lord when He shall once again

Commentary on Isaiah chapters 4 and 5 by Chuck Smith 3.29.23

rule, and Israel and Jerusalem shall be blessed in the center of God's righteous reign upon the earth.

Chapter 5

Now in the fifth chapter the Lord takes up the **parable of a vineyard in which He likens Judah or Israel, His people, unto a vineyard.**

Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof ([Isa 5:1-2](#)),

And you that have been over know what a job it is to gather the stones out of the vineyard and you see how that they gathered the stones and make walls with the stones and terraces with the stones. And you that have been there get a good mental picture of that.

and planted it with the choicest vine, and he built a tower in the midst of it ([Isa 5:2](#)),

Some of these watching towers you'll still discover over there as you go through the land. They have these towers where during the summer season the people move out of the cities and onto the plots of ground that they own in the country. And on these plots of ground they have these towers, and in these towers are the living quarters for the family. And while they are taking care of the crops and harvesting during the summer and autumn period, they live in these towers out in the midst of the fields. And the towers, of course, also serve as watchtowers where they can watch over their land for people who come and try to steal the fruit of the land. So, "He built a tower in the midst of it."

and also he made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, but it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, between me and my vineyard.

Now you determine. You make the judgment.

What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? ([Isa 5:2-4](#))

In other words, God said, "What more could I have done for the people? I brought them into the land. I established them there. They built and established their cities. They planted it. And I did everything for them. What more could I have done for them that I haven't already done? Judge."

Wherefore [or why is it], that when I looked and it should have brought forth grapes, that it brought forth wild grapes? And now go; I'm going to tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; I'm going to break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: And I will lay it waste: it shall not be

Commentary on Isaiah chapters 4 and 5 by Chuck Smith 3.29.23

pruned, nor digged; and there shall come upon it briars and thorns: that will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. 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 there was oppression; he looked for righteousness, but there was a cry from those who were being oppressed ([Isa 5:4-7](#)).

God was looking for fruit from His vineyard.

Now, Jesus said, "I am the true vine, My Father is the husbandman, and every branch in Me that bringeth forth fruit He purges or cleanses it that it bringeth forth more fruit" ([John 15:1-2](#)). Again, over there in the land you will notice that as you go through the area of Eshcol, where they grow some of the most delicious grapes in the world... man they're great! You go over there in October. Ah, fabulous! But you'll notice these grapevines in Eshcol grow on the ground. Big old main branches that are on the ground, and they prop them up with rocks. They do have some of the grapevines on trellises, but through the valley of Eshcol, most of these big luscious grapes actually grow right on the ground. And you'll see these big old vines just growing on the ground propped up with rocks. And when the grapes come out on the vines they actually lay right on the ground. So as the grapes are developing they will go through the vineyard and they will take these grapes that are there on the ground and they will pick them up and they will wash them, get the dirt and all off of them, as they are developing, and then will usually prop them on a rock or something in order that it might bring forth better fruit. If they just lie on the ground, then the little bugs and all start eating them, so they prop up the grapes after they've washed them in order that they might bring forth better fruit, more fruit. So Jesus is making reference to this.

Now, "My Father is the husbandman and I am the true vine and you're the branches and every branch in me that is bringing forth fruit, He cleanses it, washes it that it might bring forth more fruit." Now He said, "You are clean through the word that I have spoken unto you" ([John 15:3](#)). The washing of the Word in my life, the cleansing. Now what is the purpose of the Word? In order that I might bring forth more fruit for God. What is God interested in my life? Fruit. What was He interested in for the nation of Israel? That they would bring forth fruit. Why did He do so much for them? So they would bring forth fruit. Why is God doing so much for us? That we would bring forth fruit unto Him. "And herein is the Father glorified, that you bear much fruit" ([John 15:8](#)). That's what God desires of your life, that you bring forth much fruit. So the Lord comes to His garden and He's looking for fruit.

Now it is interesting in the same context in which Jesus takes the vine and makes now the application to the church, He then speaks of the new commandment that I give you that you love one another, and He relates this loving with the fruit that God was looking for. So it's significant that Paul tells us in Galatians, "Now the fruit of the spirit is love" ([Galatians 5:22](#)).

Now this is really what God is looking for, because out of love proceeds true judgment, fairness. If you really love, you are not gonna be oppressing someone. So where in the

Commentary on Isaiah chapters 4 and 5 by Chuck Smith 3.29.23

Old Testament it was, "Let's have righteousness, judgment. Let's not oppress the poor," and these kind of things, in the New Testament, it is put in a positive sense, "Hey, let's love one another as we love ourselves. For if we love each other as we love ourselves, we're not gonna be taking advantage of each other. We're not gonna be oppressing each other, but we're gonna be helping one another. We're gonna be lifting up the one that has fallen. We're gonna be giving aid to those that are down. We're going to be concerned with the needs of others." And that's exactly what God is... that's the kind of fruit that God is looking for, for in our lives and in the church today that we really have a genuine love and concern for each other, where we are giving to one another those that are in need, for when one member suffers, they all suffer. We all step in to help the one that is hurting, that is down. That beautiful love within the body where we begin to bear one another's burdens, and thus, we fulfill the law of Jesus Christ. And that's the kind of fruit that God wants from our lives.

Now the opposite to this is selfishness. And that is one of the biggest problems that we have to deal with is our own self-centeredness and our own selfishness, where we're wanting everything for ourselves. We will give as long as it doesn't take away from me, and as long as it doesn't hurt me. But God wants the fruit of love to come forth from His vineyard, and so God comes to His garden to collect His fruit. And if He finds nothing but wild grapes, He'll forsake the garden. He'll say, "This is what I'm gonna do. I'm gonna break down the hedge. I'm just gonna let go. If it's going to bear wild grapes, it doesn't need Me. I'm just gonna forsake the garden."

Now God pronounces His woes upon Israel. There are six of them.

Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth! ([Isa 5:8](#))

Sounds like Orange County--all of our subdivisions and condominiums and townhouses; joining house to house; lay field to field so there is no room left.

In mine ears said the LORD of hosts, Of a truth many houses shall be desolate, even great and fair houses will be without inhabitants ([Isa 5:9](#)).

And land that will no longer produce, the land will be worn out.

Ten acres of a vineyard will only yield eight gallons of fruit, and eighty-six gallons, a homer, of the seed will only yield about a bushel ([Isa 5:10](#)).

So real famine conditions.

Woe unto them [second woe] that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night ([Isa 5:11](#)),

The description of the alcoholic, really.

Commentary on Isaiah chapters 4 and 5 by Chuck Smith 3.29.23

till wine inflame them! ([Isa 5:11](#))

When you really get to the... real alcoholism is when you start drinking the moment you get up in the morning, take your first drink to get your day started. That is a sign of real alcoholism. When you get to that point, you are a full-fledged alcoholic when you need to get your day started with a drink. Woe unto them until the wine inflames them!

And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and the wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of his hands ([Isa 5:12](#)).

People are just looking for entertainment and pleasures, but they don't give God a consideration in their life.

Therefore ([Isa 5:13](#))

Because of this, because people have become pleasure mad, because people have not regarded God in their lives, God has given them over to captivity.

because they have no knowledge: and their honorable men are famished, and the multitude is dried up with thirst. Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it. And the mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled: But the LORD of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness. Then shall the lambs feed after their manner, and the waste places of the fat ones shall strangers eat ([Isa 5:13-17](#)).

The next woe:

Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of emptiness, and sin as it were with a cart rope ([Isa 5:18](#)):

So much sin that it takes a cart rope, a huge rope, to draw it.

That say, Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it: and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it! ([Isa 5:19](#))

They begin to challenge God and challenge the judgment of God, "If it's so, let God do something that we might see it, you know. If He's really there."

The next woe:

Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil ([Isa 5:20](#));

They call those who believe in creation misfits and fools.

Commentary on Isaiah chapters 4 and 5 by Chuck Smith 3.29.23

that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! ([Isa 5:20](#))

Now, of course, we are living, I feel, in an age in which we are really calling evil good and good evil. Men who try to stand up for something that is decent and moral are made to look like fools in the paper. If people who are interested in decency and morality get together and decide to do something about child prostitution, child pornography, and some of these other things, then the papers begin to say, "Oh, a threat of Nazism or something, and here they're wanting to rule." And they'll have a picture of Khomeini and they make them look like a bunch of half-witted idiots, you know, that are trying to force moral standards, their own moral standards, upon everyone. All we're saying is we'd like to have a decent place to live. We don't want our children to be exposed to the Playboy cover girls when they have to go to the store to buy a quart of milk. We don't want them to have to deal with the wicked, vile imaginations of perverted men when we send them out to the playgrounds. We want some laws that will really deal with these perverted men who want to display themselves and shock these precious little daughters of ours who are eight and nine years old. We feel that the sickos ought to be put away and should not be a threat to our children. And so we're made to look like a bunch of fools and prudes and idiots.

Yet, the gay community gets together and they have a large banquet in Los Angeles to raise funds in order to lobby for certain legislation that will bring a liberalization for their activities and the Mayor comes to speak, and the papers herald it as a glorious event, a step of progress for these people. And you don't find a lot of overtones and threats in the papers of all the evil that will take place because the gays have had this big fund-raising dinner and they're going to have money to lobby against legislation that would restrict and restrain their activities to their own kind. But this is heralded in the paper as a marvelous thing. Woe unto those that call good evil and evil good, the editors of our liberal press today. Boy, it's right there. I could go on, but I won't. It's easy to climb on your little box and really wail.

Woe unto those who are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! ([Isa 5:21](#))

Men who do not look at themselves in the light of God, men who do not judge themselves by God's standards, but by their own standards.

The sixth woe, and the last:

Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, men of strength to mingle strong drink: Which justify the wicked for a reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him! ([Isa 5:22-23](#))

God is talking here about the legislators and the judges, and it is interesting that the highest alcoholic consumption in the United States is in Washington, DC. The highest consumption per capita is in Washington D.C. I think that's tragic. All of the lobbying,

Commentary on Isaiah chapters 4 and 5 by Chuck Smith 3.29.23

"which justify the wicked for reward and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him," a lot of these edicts that are coming from these boozed legislators and judges and all, and it's tragic. You don't have to go to Washington to find it, you can find it right here in your own local community. It might be a good idea that you examine some of the judges that are sitting on the bench.

Now, I don't blame them for becoming alcoholics. I wouldn't want to be a judge. I wouldn't want to have on my conscience the things that they must have on theirs. And you've got to do something to live with yourself and sleep at night, so I don't blame them for becoming alcoholics. If I weren't a Christian, I'd probably be an alcoholic too. How else are you gonna cope with this stupid world? But woe unto them.

Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumes the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel. Therefore is the anger of the LORD kindled against his people, and he hath stretched forth his hand against them, and hath smitten them: and the hills did tremble, and their carcasses were torn in the midst of the streets. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still ([Isa 5:24-25](#)).

God has brought his judgment, but He's not through yet.

For he will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth: and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly; none shall be weary nor stumble among them; none shall slumber nor sleep; neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of their shoes be broken: Whose arrows are sharp, and whose bows are bent, their horses' hoofs shall be counted like flint, and the wheels like a whirlwind: Their roaring shall be like a lion, and they shall roar like a young lion; yea, they shall roar, and lay hold of the prey, and shall carry it away safe, and none shall be able to deliver it ([Isa 5:26-29](#)).

And so Judah, Jerusalem was carried away captive unto Babylon.

And in that day they shall roar against them like the roaring of the sea: and if one look unto the land, behold darkness and sorrow, and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof ([Isa 5:30](#)).

So, the opening of Isaiah, the opening judgments of God that are proclaimed, plus always, the glorious light at the end of the tunnel when God has finished with His judgment the glorious kingdom that is coming.

Shall we stand.

The Bible study tonight can have one of two effects upon you, and it all depends on what you are. Blessings unto the righteous; you'll eat of the fruit of the land. Woe unto the wicked; you think it's bad now, it's gonna get worse. What a hope we have, a

Commentary on Isaiah chapters 4 and 5 by Chuck Smith 3.29.23

blessed hope, of the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who, when He comes, He is gonna change our vile bodies that they might be fashioned just like His own glorious image.

As we get to the twenty-sixth chapter, we find the glorious promise of the Lord taking away His people and hiding them while the time of His indignation and wrath is poured out upon the earth. For a little season, until the judgments are through, then the unfolding of the glory of His new kingdom of which you may all have a part - it's up to you. "Come now let's us reason together saith the Lord." Why should He have to lay more stripes upon you? What's it gonna take to turn you around? What's it gonna take to awaken you to God's love and that which God wants to do for you if you just give Him the chance? Though your sins be as scarlet, they may be as white as snow. God is willing tonight to wash you and cleanse you from every sin, from all iniquity. He's willing to make you over a new person. He's willing, but that's not enough. You must be willing too. If you are, I'd encourage you just go back to the prayer room. Get on your knees before God and say, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." He will. And though your sins be as scarlet, you can walk out of here tonight as white as snow.