

Sermon Notes & References  
'Vineyard Fruit'  
Isaiah 27:2-6  
January 24, 2010

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<sup>A</sup> Isaiah 5:1-7, Psalm 80:8-19  
<sup>B</sup> Isaiah 4:2, John 15:16  
<sup>C</sup> Isaiah 26:2, 14, 15, 18, 19, 21; 27:1, 12; Romans 11:25-26  
<sup>D</sup> Psalm 121:4  
<sup>E</sup> John 4:13-14; 7:37; Revelation 22:17

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<sup>F</sup> Isaiah 27:9  
<sup>G</sup> Ephesians 2:4-5  
<sup>H</sup> Romans 5:10  
<sup>I</sup> Romans 5:1-2  
<sup>J</sup> Colossians 1:10, Galatians 5:22-23, Colossians 1:5-6

A. Introduction

1. the nation of Israel is portrayed in this chapter as a vineyard
  - a. in that vineyard nation under God's rule, its citizens were intended as a body together to constitute the vine
  - b. yet they fell short of God's purpose for them as a vine as we discovered in Isaiah 5: 1-7 – <sup>1</sup>¶ Let me sing now for my well-beloved A song of my beloved concerning His vineyard. My well-beloved had a vineyard on a fertile hill. <sup>2</sup> He dug it all around, removed its stones, And planted it with the choicest vine. And He built a tower in the middle of it And also hewed out a wine vat in it; Then He expected *it* to produce *good* grapes, But it produced *only* worthless ones. <sup>3</sup> 'And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, Judge between Me and My vineyard. <sup>4</sup> What more was there to do for My vineyard that I have not done in it? Why, when I expected *it* to produce *good* grapes did it produce worthless ones? <sup>5</sup> So now let Me tell you what I am going to do to My vineyard: I will remove its hedge and it will be consumed; I will break down its wall and it will become trampled ground. <sup>6</sup> I will lay it waste; It will not be pruned or hoed, But briars and thorns will come up. I will also charge the clouds to rain no rain on it.' <sup>7</sup> For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel And the men of Judah His delightful plant. Thus He looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; For righteousness, but behold, a cry of distress.
  - c. thus God warned Israel the vine through Isaiah of their failure; and, once more they failed; they failed to listen
  - d. so they were sent into exile and the land which once held God's vineyard was deserted, laid waste for 70 years
  - e. that was the state of the vine that Asaph describes in Psalm 80: either prophetically or as the poet of the exile
  - f. Asaph's prayer in Psalm 80: 8-19 reflects the imagery of Isaiah's prophecy – <sup>8</sup>¶ You removed a vine from Egypt; You drove out the nations and planted it. <sup>9</sup> You cleared *the ground* before it, And it took deep root and filled the land. <sup>10</sup> The mountains were covered with its shadow, And the cedars of God with its boughs. <sup>11</sup> It was sending out its branches to the sea And its shoots to the River. <sup>12</sup> Why have You broken down its hedges, So that all who pass *that way* pick its *fruit*? <sup>13</sup> A boar from the forest eats it away And

whatever moves in the field feeds on it. <sup>14</sup> O God *of* hosts, turn again now, we beseech You; Look down from heaven and see, and take care of this vine, <sup>15</sup> Even the shoot which Your right hand has planted, And on the son whom You have strengthened for Yourself. <sup>16</sup> It is burned with fire, it is cut down; They perish at the rebuke of Your countenance. <sup>17</sup> Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, Upon the son of man whom You made strong for Yourself. <sup>18</sup> Then we shall not turn back from You; Revive us, and we will call upon Your name. <sup>19</sup> O LORD God of hosts, restore us; Cause Your face to shine *upon us*, and we will be saved.

2. the Bible uses the picture of the vineyard in another way

- a. this, to, is echoed in Isaiah 4:2 – *In that day the Branch of the LORD will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth will be the pride and the adornment of the survivors of Israel.*
- b. the vineyard consists of the survivors of Israel, the faithful remnant, the true people of God, the people of God’s own choosing, the body of the redeemed, people whose history straddles both the old and new covenants
- c. central to that vineyard, is the Branch: Messiah
- d. for this reason we read that section from John 15
- e. listen to Messiah’s – Christ’s words – of His purpose for His redeemed people; John 15:16 – *You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.*
- f. ultimately, only the Lord Jesus Christ is the true, obedient Israel of God; only as we abide as branches in Him, the True Vine, can we accomplish God’s purpose for us, to bear fruit

3. So then, because Israel failed to bear fruit

- a. God abandoned His vineyard for a time
- b. but, now Isaiah turns a prophetic eye to the day when the prayer of Asaph in Psalm 80 is answered ...

B. God Re-Enters His Vineyard . . . . . 27:2

1. *In that day, ‘A vineyard of wine, sing of it!’*

- a. in this and the following verses, God’s own words about His vineyard are recorded by Isaiah
- b. God will take up again His relationship with His vineyard

2. **in that day** – the period of this prophecy is defined by these words along with what is in the preceding and following verses
  - a. 26: 2a, 'Open the gates, that the righteous nation may enter'
  - b. 26: 14b, 'therefore You have punished and destroyed them'
  - c. 26: 15a, 'You have increased the nation, O LORD'
  - d. 26: 18a, 'We were pregnant, we writhed in labour, We gave birth, as it seems, only to wind. We could not accomplish deliverance for the earth' (or, 'for the land')
  - e. 26: 19a, 'Your dead will live; Their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for you,'
  - f. 26: 21a, 'For behold, the LORD is about to come out from His place To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity;'
  - g. 27: 1, 'In that day the LORD will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent'
  - h. 27: 12, 'In that day the LORD will start His threshing ... and you will be gathered up one by one, O sons of Israel.'
  - i. so, in no particular order, we find that this period will encompass such events as: restoration of God's people, tribulation, resurrection, punishment and judgement – the Messianic age, as it may be variously understood; e.g.,
    - (A) as the millennial age of the reign of Christ on earth
    - (B) or, as Christ reigning in heaven over the church in this gospel age extending 'until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in,' and the salvation of all Israel (Romans 11: 25-26) and consummated by His return
  - j. God returns to a people who have turned to Him, who are
3. **vineyard of wine** – or, of 'red wine'
  - a. some render this as 'a fruitful vineyard'
  - b. and others as 'a vineyard of delight'
  - c. but, regardless of the exact words of the translation, one fact is clear in this verse: a vineyard is to produce fruit
  - d. and, Israel, God's vineyard, is now fulfilling her purpose

4. **sing of it** – this is a traditional translation dating back to LXX and the Latin Vulgate – but it is a translation open to question
  - a. these verses are not a song, to be sung by God’s people, but a record of God’s own words and promises
  - b. in the form of the word used here, the meaning is ‘**sing**’ at most three times in Scripture, and perhaps never
  - c. more common meaning of this form of the word is ‘**afflict**’
  - d. the passage then becomes a challenge from God to all His and their enemies, ‘Try your worst, you will not succeed! It is I, the LORD, who is looking after my vineyard now.’
  - e. this theme resumes later in the passage; for next we see

C. God Tends His Vineyard . . . . . 27:3

1. **I, the LORD, am its keeper; I water it every moment. So that no one will damage it, I guard it night and day.**
  - a. these words contrast sharply with God’s treatment of His unfruitful vineyard, back in the ‘bad, old days’
  - b. gone are the days when it was in a sorry state, when
    - (A) God broke down the wall, the hedge around them
    - (B) God stopped pruning and cultivating the vineyard
    - (C) God halted the rain from falling upon them
  - c. but, as the song says, it is all different now
2. God is present in His vineyard and God is acting on her behalf
  - a. God is Israel’s keeper and He is occupied with His work
    - (A) this is made emphatic by repetition
    - (B) ‘**It is I, Yahweh, keeping her**’ – a present, continuing reality and occupation of her covenant God
    - (C) and, at the end of the verse, ‘**I shall keep her**’ – this will be the case for any foreseeable future
    - (D) for all time; at all times, even as the Psalmist rejoiced: **Behold, He who keeps Israel Will neither slumber nor sleep.** (Psalms 121:4)
    - (E) God will keep her; God will watch over her; God will guard her: let the enemy do his worst, God is with His people so that none may damage or hurt her!
    - (F) there is also a very tender message here: you will recall that the watchman’s hut in the vineyard

was but a rude shack – nevertheless, God in Christ left glorious heaven to dwell among men; God in the Holy Spirit comes to live in us, a humble dwelling for the Almighty

b. God is always active in nurturing His people

(A) there He stands, as it were, with a pitcher, and as He sees one of His people with a need, He pours out for them a life- sustaining glass of water and causes them to drink, to drink fully of that life-giving stream

(B) <sup>13</sup> Jesus answered and said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; <sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.' (John 4:13-14)

(C) Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.' (John 7:37)

(D) The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.' And let the one who hears say, 'Come.' And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.' (Revelation 22:17)

(E) that's a promise and you can take it to the bank!

D. God's Wrath is Past . . . . . 27:4

1. I have no wrath. Should someone give Me briers *and* thorns in battle, *Then* I would step on them, I would burn them completely.

a. this, too, is daylight, whereas Isaiah 5 is darkness

b. there God's righteous anger burned against His people Israel, who had abandoned justice to shed blood instead

c. there God brought briers and thorns against His people

d. but, with salvation, all that has changed

2. the purpose of that judgement has been achieved

a. for the over a millennium, Israel pursued idolatry

(A) Jacob's wife Rachel stole her father's gods

(B) Israel, delivered from Egypt, brought their gods along

(C) Israel, adopted the false gods of pagan neighbours

b. but later on in this chapter we read, 'Therefore through this Jacob's iniquity will be forgiven; And this

will be the full price of the pardoning of his sin: When he makes all the altar stones like pulverized chalk stones; *When Asherim and incense altars (sun-pillars) will not stand.*' (Isaiah 27:9)

c. forgiveness has come; God's wrath has passed

3. so the former instruments of judgement now are warned off
  - a. the last part of this verse can also be read as a challenge from God to those once His tools to chastise His people: 'Oh! that I might meet the thorns and briers in war.'
  - b. their day of use is over
  - c. they are now to be stepped upon
  - d. they are now fit to be burned completely
  - e. but wait! hearken! there is a gospel call going out!

E. God's Offer of Peace . . . . . 27:5

1. *Or let him rely on My protection, Let him make peace with Me, Let him make peace with Me.*
  - a. sometimes the most important words in Scripture are the shortest and simplest: one I most treasure is in Ephesians 2:
  - b. *<sup>1</sup>And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ... <sup>4</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),* (Ephesians 2:4-5)
  - c. now we read that little word, 'or' – to those briers and thorns there is an alternative to being stomped upon, being burnt – an invitation of deliverance from destruction

2. God's Place of Safety – there is an alternative to destruction
  - a. literally: '*or rather, let him take hold of my place of safety*'
  - b. God has provided a means or a place of safety
    - (A) one that is available to those who were once enemies
    - (B) *For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.* (Romans 5:10)
  - c. entrance into that place is found at the foot of the cross
  - d. that place of safety is Messiah; Jesus Christ

e. that place of safety is entered by faith, accepting Christ

3. God's Place of Safety – there is a certainty of peace with God

a. 'let him make peace with me; peace let him make with me'

b. emphatically; repeatedly; an alternative to our own way is provided, that sinful man can be reconciled to Holy God

c. <sup>1</sup> Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup> through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. (Romans 5:1-2)

d. certain, since it depends on God's grace, not on my works

F. God's Purpose of Fruitfulness . . . . . 27:6

1. In the days to come Jacob will take root, Israel will blossom and sprout, And they will fill the whole world with fruit.

2. this verse has a current material fulfilment in Palestine<sup>{2}</sup>.

a. The land of Israel was once mostly barren. Famed author Mark Twain visited the Holy Land in 1867. He published his experience in a work titled 'The Innocents Abroad.' In it he made the following observation of Israel:

b. 'A desolate country whose soil is rich enough, but is given over wholly to weeds ... a silent mournful expanse ... desolation ... We never saw a human being on the whole route ... hardly a tree or shrub anywhere. Even the olive tree and the cactus, those fast friends of a worthless soil, had almost deserted the country.'

c. Now it is lush with produce of every kind, a land of orchards and fields bursting with produce that is exported around the world. In modern Israel there is a material fulfilment to Isaiah's prophecy. E.g., Jaffa oranges from plain of Sharon

d. as a demonstration of His spiritual blessings, God does bless at this less important material level; ask any tither

e. but more than that, we long for the day when Israel will blossom with justice and its fruit be righteousness



3. so we look and pray for a current threefold spiritual fulfilment
  - a. in good works – so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please *Him* in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God (Colossians 1:10)
  - b. in fruit of spirit – But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; ... (Galatians 5:22-23)
  - c. in the spread of the gospel of salvation –...the gospel which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing...(Colossians 1:5b-6)
  - d. for these three kinds of fruit we look and constantly yearn

#### G. Conclusion

1. Given the graciousness of God's free salvation
  - a. the love of God demonstrated at the cross of Calvary
  - b. His wooing and loving call to sinners to repent and trust
  - c. how we desire that God's purpose would be fulfilled in us
  - d. in us as a church, a local body of Christ
  - e. in us as individual believers, light and salt in the world
  - f. we pray that we may go and bear fruit, fruit that remains

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2. It Has Blossomed And Sprouted, by Kelly Boggs, Baptist Press – Kerux illustration # 35341