

The Lord and His Vineyard

By: Justin Witt

I was recently reading Isaiah 5:1-7. It speaks of a vineyard that God had created on a very fruitful hill. It later states that this vineyard is Israel and the men of Judah are His pleasant plant. He dug the vineyard up, cleared out its stones, planted it with the choicest vine, built a tower in its midst, and made a winepress in it. He had done all that could be done to make this vineyard profit as it should. There was nothing more that could have been done. What was His expectation concerning this vineyard? He expected this vineyard (Israel) to bring forth good grapes. But what was brought forth? What came up, in this vineyard, were wild grapes.

God gives so many blessings to all of us. Truly He continues to fulfill His promise that Jesus made in Matthew 6:33 of providing all the physical necessities of our life as we seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness before all things. More importantly He has given us His word that we may know His will. We are able, if we seek it out, to know what we must do to be pleasing to God. We are able to teach and be taught by others of like faith so that we can all be made stronger in the faith, understanding that Christians are not to be alone in this fight, but to be together. What more could we need to follow Him that we have not already been given? What more could we need to be among the few rather than the many (Mt. 7:13-14)?

If we indeed have been given all that we need then what is our Lord's expectation from us? We too are to bring forth good fruit. Jesus speaks of this in some detail in John 15:1-8. He calls Himself the vine, the Father the vinedresser, and we are the branches. He says that those branches that bear fruit will be pruned so that they can bear more fruit, so that they can become more profitable. But he also says that those branches that do not bear fruit will be cut off, will be removed from the vine, will be cast into the fire and burned. Very similar, in fact, to what God said would happen to His vineyard that only brought forth wild grapes in Isaiah 5. He said that the hedge would be taken away, and it shall be burned, and its wall broken down, and it shall be trampled down. It will be laid to waste, it will not be pruned. Briers and thorns would come up, and it would receive no rain. The vineyard would be destroyed, it would become unrecognizable as a vineyard.

There was a time that Israel was a great nation. All other nations feared Israel, they knew what God had done in Egypt. They knew what happened to other great cities and nations at the hand of God for Israel. But what happened to these nations of Israel and Judah? They were both delivered into captivity among their enemies. They became unrecognizable. This vineyard was destroyed.

Paul spoke of Israel as being branches of an olive tree that have been broken off (Rom 11:17-24). Subsequently, we were grafted into this tree though we were of a wild olive tree. We have become partakers of the fatness of the olive tree. We which, were wild by nature, were made a part of this cultivated olive tree. Paul also states that if God did not spare the natural branches (Israel), He may not spare us either.

God expects His people, that have been given absolutely everything they could need, to bear good fruit to Him. We are not to bear bad fruit. We are not to bear no fruit at all. We must understand the gifts we have been given and put them to work. The alternative is to be removed, cast out, and burned with fire.