

Lesson 5
Isaiah 5 and 6
Isaiah's Song and His calling

Memory verse: "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."
Psalms 51:10 (NIV)

Isaiah, like a folk singer, sang a parable about a vineyard that compared Israel to a vineyard that Yahweh had planted and from which He legitimately expected to receive fruit. One cannot help but wonder if this passage lay behind Jesus' teaching on the vine and the branches in John 15:1-6. The prophet's original audience did not realize what this song was about at first. It started out sounding like a happy wedding song, but it turned out to be a funeral dirge announcing Israel's death.

This chiasmic "song" is only the first part of Isaiah's unified message in this chapter. His song flowed into a sermon. A chiasm (also called a chiasmus) is a literary device in which a sequence of ideas is presented and then repeated in reverse order. The result is a "mirror" effect as the ideas are "reflected" back in a passage. Each idea is connected to its "reflection" by a repeated word, often in a related form. The term chiasm comes from the Greek letter chi, which looks like our letter X. Chiasmic pattern is also called "ring structure." This is the first of several songs in Isaiah (cf. chapters 12, 35; 54:1-10;)

Some chiasms are quite simple. The common saying "When the going gets tough, the tough get going" is chiasmic. The words going and tough are repeated, in reverse order, in the second half of the sentence. Benjamin Franklin's axiom is another, "By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail." Other chiasms are more complex, even spanning entire poems. "In a way similar to Nathan's, when he used a story to get King David to condemn his own action (2 Sam. 12:1-7), so Isaiah sets his hearers up to judge themselves.. ' Oswald.

Other passages that provide examples of chiasms include Ecclesiastes 11:3—12:2; Genesis 6—9; Amos 5:4—6a; Isaiah 1:21—26; and Joshua 1:5—9. Chiasmic patterns in the Bible are just one more example of the richness and complexity of God's inspired Word.

Perhaps the people who had ignored his sermons would listen to his song. He sang about his own people (v. 7) and pointed out how good God had been to them. God gave them a holy law and a wonderful land, but they broke the law and defiled the land with their sins and failed to produce fruit for God's glory. God had done for them all that He could do. Now all that remained for Him to do was bring judgment on the fruitless vineyard and make it a waste.

Many serious students of Isaiah have believed that the record of Isaiah's call in chapter 6 occurred before he wrote any of the prophecies in this book. The title "Holy One of Israel," Isaiah's trademark name for God, connects with his call, and he used that title for God throughout the book. Likewise, the prophet's emphases on glory, majesty, and righteousness are strong in chapter 6, and they also appear throughout the rest of the book.

Also, chapter 6 provides a good transition into the prophecies that appear next, in chapters 7-39 and, particularly, in chapters 7-12. It shows how the sinful nation could become the Lord's servant (a kingdom of priests), namely, by really looking to Yahweh and allowing Him to deal with her sin, as Isaiah did. It also explains the hardness of Israel that follows; she had not looked to God and had not responded appropriately to Him, as Isaiah did. In the call of Isaiah (Isa. 6) his message stands out, but in the call of Jeremiah (Jer. 1:1-10) his person stands out.

Anyone reading Isaiah's first two messages might be inclined to ask, "What right does this man have to pronounce judgment on the leaders of our land and the many worshippers in the temple?" The answer is in this chapter 6: Isaiah's account of his call to ministry. Before he announced any "woes" on others, he first confessed his own sin and said, "Woe is me!" He saw the Holy One of Israel, and he could not keep silent.

Scripture reading: Isaiah 5:1-7 and Isaiah 6:8-13

Things to learn: 1) Parable of the Vineyard 2) Conviction and Cleansing of God's servant
3) The Calling of God's Workers

Discussion Questions:

1). Why is Isaiah's song of Chapter 5:1-7 ending with judgement in the remaining verses of the chapter for Israel are also warnings for to us today?

2). Explain what Isaiah saw in chapter 6:1-7 and its effect on him.

3). How can the missionary, the Christian worker or the witness of Jesus Christ learn from the commission of Isaiah in chapter 6 verses 8 to 13?