

Reflections on the message by Nolan Bradshaw on Sunday 16th May 2010

God's Vineyard (Isaiah 5:1-7)

Jehovah has displayed a constant favouritism for the nation of Israel, it seems, and centred His blessings upon it. God said that whoever touches Israel, it is like poking Him in the eye (Zechariah 2:8). God said that He had chosen Israel to be His own possession (Deuteronomy 14:2). What a privileged people Israel was! In spite of all these blessings, Jehovah God looked for a crop of good grapes but it yielded bad fruit. He sent prophets and teachers. The vineyard was prepared for a blessing. It had ideal conditions, but it yielded bad fruit.

Was it all a waste of time? What more could God have done for His vineyard, that is, His people (Micah 6:3). Micah says, answer me! Those who should have excelled have only themselves to blame. And we, with our freedom to preach and listen, our abundance of printed, video and audio teaching, who say we belong to Jesus, what sort of fruit will we produce?

Has God's love been wasted on you? Would God's love have been better spent on someone else? Would someone with your gifts and talents have served the Lord better? Would they have loved you more? May you wake up to what the Lord has done for you and give good fruit for all the time God has invested in you!

When the Owner of the vineyard comes, He has a right to expect fruit from us. We have responsibilities to the Saviour who has given His life for us. Britain is one of the most favoured nations on earth - a fig tree within the vineyard. I may belong to a good church, attend it well, and give tithes to it. But when the Saviour comes He will be looking for good fruit. We are not spectators in this Christian life. With privilege come responsibilities.

Isaiah 5 applies to the nation of Israel. It doesn't point to the Lord Jesus, but, written 500 years later, Luke 13:6-9 does. Whether it applies to a nation or individual nothing has changed – except that now there is someone to please on behalf of the fruitless plant. Doesn't our God have the right to expect good fruit from you? The man who took care of the vineyard is Jesus Christ. He wants to disturb the hard soil round about the tree and break up the fallow ground. He wants to feed it with His word, His promises and His presence. If it bears fruit, fine! If not, cut it down!

We don't need to be scared for we will not neglect the warnings our Lord gives to us. We will recognise that all we have is from Him alone: His vineyard, His vine. What more could He have done? He has done everything for me. "May I serve You well,. Don't give up on me, Lord. You have done great things for me!"