



ShalomAZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption

"A Closer Look at the Rotten Fruit."

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts: Isaiah 5:8-26; Lev. 25:23, 28; Mic. 2:2; Is. 1:21-27; Amos 1:1; Zech 14:5

We've been walking through these opening chapters of Isaiah—the "preface" that sets the backdrop for everything else in this book. In the opening verses of Isaiah 5, we looked at the vineyard song, where God describes Himself as the owner of a vineyard who did everything possible to ensure good fruit. He cleared the ground, planted the best vines, built a tower, dug a winepress—He did it all. Yet when the harvest came, the fruit was rotten. And the question He asked was, *"What more could I have done?"* The answer, of course, was nothing. The failure wasn't with the Owner; it was with the vineyard.

Now in today's passage, Isaiah zooms in and gives us a closer look at the fruit itself. He names the bitter clusters one by one. There are six woes pronounced here—six marks of rotten fruit. And here's the challenge: our natural tendency is to read these passages and think of "those people" who need to hear it. But what if God is speaking to *me*? What if these words are meant to expose the rot in my own life, not just in the culture around me? So as we look at these three main themes from Isaiah 5:8-26, let's allow the Spirit to examine our own hearts.

1. THE ROTTEN FRUIT OF GREED AND SELF INDULGENCE (Is. 5:8-13)

Isaiah begins by saying, *"Woe to those who join house to house, who add field to field, until there is no room left."* The picture here is of people gobbling up land, building their own estates, pushing everyone else out, and hoarding what God had intended to be shared. God's law had made it clear: the land wasn't theirs to exploit—it was His gift to steward. By ignoring His instructions, they turned blessing into barrenness. Isaiah says the houses will sit empty, the vineyards will yield almost nothing, and famine will strike.

Then he moves to another kind of indulgence: *"Woe to those who rise early to pursue strong drink, who stay up late inflamed by wine."* The issue here isn't just alcohol—it's the bigger problem of living for pleasure, filling ourselves with whatever numbs us, entertains us, or distracts us. Their banquets were full of music and wine, but empty of any awareness of God's work. They didn't "consider the deeds of the LORD." That's the danger of indulgence—it dulls our spiritual sight until we no longer recognize God at work. Our "wine" might not be literal. It could be endless scrolling, binge-watching, shopping, sports, or whatever we feed our appetites with. The more we stuff ourselves, the less we notice God's hand at work. And the fruit is captivity—enslavement to our cravings, a slow erosion of our capacity to see truth.

2. ROTTEN FRUIT OF TWISTED MORALITY AND PRIDE (Is. 5:18-23)

Next Isaiah confronts another cluster of rotten fruit: deception and arrogance. He describes people dragging their sins behind them like animals pulling carts—ropes of deceit tying them tighter and tighter. Instead of repenting, they mock God and say, *"Let Him hurry, let us see His work!"* It's sarcasm, unbelief, and pride rolled into one. Then comes one of the most famous verses: *"Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness."* When people reject God's Word, morality flips upside down. Evil gets celebrated. Goodness gets mocked. Bitterness gets called sweet, and sweetness bitter. Doesn't that sound familiar in our world today?

But Isaiah isn't only talking about "out there." He's speaking to religious people who thought they were fine. They were still offering sacrifices, keeping the feasts, lifting their hands in worship. Yet in their daily lives, they had blended God's ways with the culture's values. That's the danger—we end up wise in our own eyes, clever in our own sight, thinking we can define truth for ourselves. But when we put ourselves on the throne, we invite ruin. Pride blinds us.

3. ROTTEN FRUIT LEADS TO GOD'S JUDGMENT (Is. 5:24–26)

Isaiah closes this section with a sobering warning: when the fruit is rotten, judgment comes. He says their roots will rot, their blossoms will turn to dust, and fire will consume the straw. Why? Because they *rejected the instruction of the LORD* and *despised the Word of the Holy One of Israel*.

God's anger, though slow, does burn hot against sin. Isaiah describes hills trembling, corpses in the streets, and nations summoned like predators at God's whistle. It's a terrifying picture—but not meant to drive us to despair. It's meant to awaken us before it's too late. Just as rotten fruit can't stay on the vine without spreading decay, unrepentant sin can't stay hidden without leading to destruction. But here's the hope: God's judgment isn't the end of the story. Even in His anger, His hand is still outstretched—not just to strike, but to save. The same God who warns us of rotten fruit also invites us to turn to Him and bear fruit that lasts.

CONCLUSION

Isaiah's words remind us that God isn't impressed by outward religion if our lives are producing rotten fruit. Greed, indulgence, pride, and twisted morality are bitter in His mouth. But He doesn't leave us hopeless. Through Yeshua, the True Vine, we can be grafted into His life and bear good fruit—fruit of justice, mercy, humility, and love.

The question today is simple: what kind of fruit is your life producing? If the Spirit is tugging at your heart—if you recognize bitterness where there should be sweetness—don't ignore Him. Repent. Let Him cleanse the vineyard of your heart. He is patient, but the time to respond is now.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think our natural tendency is to assume passages like this apply to others and not to ourselves?
2. What forms of "greed" or "self-indulgence" do you see creeping into your own life or community?
3. How can indulgence—whether food, drink, entertainment, or something else—dull our spiritual sensitivity?
4. Where do you see examples in today's world of "calling evil good and good evil"? How can believers resist that drift?
5. What steps can we take to ensure the fruit of our lives matches what God desires, not just what feels right to us?

CLOSING PRAYER:

Abba Father, we come before You humbled by the words of Isaiah. Search us and know us. Expose the rotten fruit in our lives—our greed, our indulgence, our pride, our twisted thinking. Forgive us for calling good what You call evil, and for despising Your Word. Thank You that even in Your judgment, Your hand is still outstretched in mercy. We turn to You now. Cleanse our hearts, renew our minds, and graft us into the True Vine, Yeshua, that our lives may bear fruit that pleases You.

In the name of Yeshua our Messiah, Amen.