

Handout 1: Isaiah Lesson 3

Israel was a luxuriant vine yielding plenty of fruit. The more his fruit increased, the more altars he built; the richer his land became, the richer he made the sacred pillars. Theirs is a divided heart; now they will have to pay for it.

Hosea 10:1-2a

Isaiah's judgment homilies in Isaiah 2:5-4:6 focus on four aspects:

1. A call to recognize God's majesty and be humbled before Judgment Day (2:5-22)
2. A judgment against Judah and her leaders (3:1-15)
3. A judgment against Jerusalem's women (3:16-4:1)
4. A description of God's "day of restoration" (4:2-6)

In Isaiah 2:5-8, the prophet condemns his people's abandonment of the Lord God in four ways that has caused God to abandon them:

1. They turned to sorcery/divination like their pagan neighbors (2:6b).
2. They made alliances/covenants with pagans (2:6c)
3. They lusted after financial gain and filled their lives with material things to secure their future instead of trusting in God (2:7).
4. They replaced proper worship of God with man-made pagan idols (2:8).

These four practices are condemned according to the Law:

1. Sorcery/divination in any form was condemned (Ex 22:17; Lev 19:31; 20:27; Dt 18:10-11, 14).
2. The Israelites were forbidden to make alliances/covenants with pagans (Ex 23:32-33).
3. The Laws of the king forbade the accumulation of material wealth, horses and chariots; they were to rely on God to protect them (Dt 17:16-17; Ps 20:7).
4. To worship other gods violates the first of the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:3-5, 23; Lev 19:4; Dt 4:15-20; 5:7-8).

Isaiah 2:6-22 proclaims an oracle concerning the "Day of Yahweh" when the Lord comes to judge all humanity. But, with the coming of Jesus Christ, we understand the final Day of God's Judgment for all humanity will happen when Christ returns in glory (see CCC 1038-41 and Mt 24:29-31; 1 Thes 4:15-17; 2 Thes 1:7-9; and Rev 6:12-17).

In verses 13-16, Isaiah lists six things in nature and man-made that cause men to marvel and be proud:

1. The cedars of Lebanon were believed to be the world's greatest trees.
2. The oaks of Bashan were believed to be the world's longest living trees.
3. High mountains and tall hills were places where pagan gods were worshipped.
4. Stone towers and walls were building marvels of man.
5. Ships of Tarshish were great ships that sailed to what was believed to be the ends of the earth at the southern Iberian Peninsula and the straits of Gibraltar.
6. Everything held precious by man sums up all things that man admires.

All these things will be of no value to man on the Day of Yahweh's Judgment.

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Handout 2: Isaiah Lesson 3

Symbolic imagery in Isaiah 5:1-7 as it relates to Israel:	
He has planted in a fertile hillside that will get full sun.	God chose the land of Canaan as the place where His covenant people could thrive.
He spaded the ground and cleared it of stones.	God led Israel in the conquest of the pagan peoples and removed them from the land.
He planted the best vines.	God allotted the land to the twelve tribes of Israel.
He built a watchtower so servants can protect the vineyard.	God sent His prophets to watch over His people, and He protected them from their enemies.
He dug out an in-ground winepress to prepare for the fruitful harvest.	In God's divine plan for mankind's salvation, Israel was to be His agent to bring the Gentile nations to salvation. It was a mission that was to bring about the great harvest of souls into heaven and the Last Judgment at the end of the Age of Man.

Isaiah's "Vineyard" parable and Jesus' parable of the "Wicked Tenants of the Vineyard" are always paired in the Lectionary Readings in all three cycles (see Mt 21:33-46; Mk 12:1-12, and Lk 20:9-19).

Symbolic Imagery in the Parable of the Wicked Tenants (Mk 12:1-12)	
The master of the vineyard	God
The vineyard with a hedge and watchtower	God's covenant people, Israel/Judah The "hedge" was the Law and the "watchtower" the prophets
The tenants/vinedressers in charge of the vineyard's harvest	The religious authorities whose duty it is to ensure the salvation of the covenant people
The master's journey/absence for a long time	No theophany of God since Mt. Sinai
The three sets of the lord's servants	God's prophets down through salvation history
The master's son	Jesus, God the Son
The tenants/vinedressers who decide to kill the son	The religious authorities and others who reject Jesus as the Messiah and seek His death
The "others" who will now receive authority over the lord's vineyard	The Jewish and Gentile Christians who will be the "new Israel"* of the New Covenant Church of Jesus Christ

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* see CCC 877: "... In fact, from the beginning of his ministry, the Lord Jesus instituted the Twelve as 'the seeds of the new Israel and the beginning of the sacred hierarchy' ..."

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