

Day 1

Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today’s study.

Isaiah 5:1-7 (written about 700 B.C.)


¹ I will sing for the one I love a song about His vineyard: My loved one had a vineyard on a fertile hillside.

² He dug it up and cleared it of stones and planted it with the choicest vines. He built a watchtower in it and cut out a winepress as well. Then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit.

³ "Now you dwellers in Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. ⁴ What more could have been done for my vineyard than I have done for it? When I looked for good grapes, why did it yield only bad?"

⁵ Now I will tell you what I am going to do to my vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it will be destroyed; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled. ⁶ I will make it a wasteland, neither pruned nor cultivated, and briers and thorns will grow there. I will command the clouds not to rain on it."

⁷ The vineyard of the LORD Almighty is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are the garden of his delight. And He looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress.

 The Pharisees and other Jewish religious leaders of Jesus’ time would have known these words of Isaiah, because God had used the “vineyard” metaphor from the lips of Isaiah to rebuke the Jewish religious leaders of Isaiah’s time. God had “planted [the vineyard] with the choicest vines” expecting it to produce succulent fruit. Alas, it produced only “bad”. The nation of Israel was “God’s chosen nation and it was to bear fruit – to carry out His work and to uphold justice.” [Life Application Study Bible]

The Parable of the Tenants

¹ He then began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey.

Q1. What is a parable?

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Q2. Why did Jesus use parables? Why didn’t He just speak the Truth?

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Q3. What does the “vineyard” represent?

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Q4. Who might the “man” represent?

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Q5. Who might the “farmers” represent?

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Q6. What would the owner of the vineyard expect from the “farmers”?

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² At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard.

Q7. To eliminate any ambiguity, who does “he” represent: the owner or the farmers?

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Q8. Who does “the tenants” represent: the owner or the farmers?

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Q9. Through-out Jewish history, who might the “servant” represent?

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Q10. Does the owner’s request seem reasonable?

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Day 2

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³ But they seized him, beat him, and sent him away empty-handed. ⁴ Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully. ⁵ He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.

Q11. If you were the owner, what would you have done?

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⁶ He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

Q12. Who might the “son” represent?

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⁷ But the tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' ⁸ So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

⁹ What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others. ¹⁰ Haven't you read this scripture: "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone [or cornerstone]; [Psalm 118:22]

“The cornerstone (or foundation stone or setting stone) is the first stone set in the construction of a masonry foundation. All other stones will be set in reference to this stone, thus determining the position of the entire structure.”
[<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cornerstone>]

“A keystone (or capstone) is the wedge-shaped stone at the apex of a masonry arch or typically round-shaped one at the apex of a vault. In both cases it is the final piece placed during construction and locks all the stones into position, allowing the arch or vault to bear weight.” [a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keystone_(architecture)">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keystone_(architecture)] Over the years the terms ‘keystone’ and ‘capstone’ have become more precisely defined.



https://www.usna.edu/CyberDept/_files/images/capstone.png

Peter the uneducated common fisherman later took these words of Christ Jesus as recounted in verse ten and rebuked the Jewish religious leaders.

Acts 4:5-12

⁵ The next day the rulers, elders and teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. ⁶ Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and the other men of the high priest's family. ⁷ They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this [healed a crippled beggar]?"

⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! ⁹ If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed, ¹⁰ then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. ¹¹ He is "the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone. ' ¹² Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

¹¹ the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?" [Psalm 118:23]

¹² Then they looked for a way to arrest him because they knew he had spoken the parable against them. But they were afraid of the crowd; so they left him and went away.

Q13. If the religious leaders truly believed that they were doing God’s will, wouldn’t they have acted on that sure-knowledge and arrested Jesus despite their fear “of the crowd”?

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Q14. What additional thoughts did you have as we looked at this passage, that did not come out in our discussion?

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Day 3

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Paying Taxes to Caesar

Over the next few verses, we will study three ruling groups:

Q15. Who are the Pharisees?

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Q16. Think about the name; what can you infer about the Herodians?

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Q17. What can be said about the Sadducees?

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The politics of the Pharisees and Herodians were incompatible. It is remarkable that they joined forces; therefore, they clearly viewed Jesus as a common enemy.

¹³ Later they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus to catch him in his words.

Q18. Did the Jewish religious leaders come to Jesus to learn from Him?

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^{14a} They came to him and said, "Teacher, we know you are a man of integrity. You aren't swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are; but you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth.

^{14b} Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not? ¹⁵ Should we pay or shouldn't we?"

If Jesus said “Yes”, the Pharisees could accuse Him of supporting Rome.

Q19. What was Rome to Israel at this time in history?


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Q20. What kind of lifestyle do you think the Romans followed?

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Q21. Do you think the Jewish people considered paying taxes to Rome a good thing or bad?

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 If Jesus said “No”, the Herodians could accuse Him of treason and subversion against Rome.

✍ By the way a denarius was equal to about day’s wages for a laborer.

¹⁶ But Jesus knew their hypocrisy. "Why are you trying to trap me?" he asked. "Bring me a denarius and let me look at it." They brought the coin, and he asked them, "Whose portrait is this? And whose inscription?"

"Caesar's," they replied.

¹⁷ Then Jesus said to them, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's."

And they were amazed at him.

Q22. Why did Jesus need the coin?

✍ His answers were perfect. They still didn’t get it - that Jesus might be actually be who He said He was.

Day 4

Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today’s study.

Marriage at the Resurrection

¹⁸ Then the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question.

Q23. What does “no resurrection” mean to you?

The Sadducees believed unequivocally in the Pentateuch – the first five books of the Old Testament (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy); and through their study of these five books, they could find no direct references to “resurrection”; therefore, they concluded that there is “no resurrection”.

¹⁹ "Teacher," they said, "Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and have children for his brother.

Q24. Why would God through Moses have instituted this provision? [See Deuteronomy 25:5-10]

Deuteronomy 25:5-10

⁵ If brothers are living together and one of them dies without a son, his widow must not marry outside the family. Her husband's brother shall take her and marry her and fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to her. ⁶ The first son she bears shall carry on the name of the dead brother so that his name will not be blotted out from Israel. ⁷ However, if a man does not want to marry his brother's wife, she shall go to the elders at the town gate and say, "My husband's brother refuses to carry on his brother's name in Israel. He will not fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to me." ⁸ Then the elders of his town shall summon him and talk to him. If he persists in saying, "I do not want to marry her," ⁹ his brother's widow shall go up to him in the presence of the elders, take off one of his sandals, spit in his face and say, "This is what is done to the man who will not build up his brother's family line." ¹⁰ That man's line shall be known in Israel as The Family of the Unsandaled.

²⁰ Now there were seven brothers. The first one married and died without leaving any children. ²¹ The second one married the widow, but he also died, leaving no child. It was the same with the third. ²² In fact, none of the seven left any children. Last of all, the woman died too. ²³ At the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?"

Q25. If the Sadducees believed in “no resurrection”, why did they ask this question of Jesus?

Q26. Have you ever experienced or imagined a joyous homecoming? What was it like?

Q27. What happens to Believers when we die?

Q28. Is there something we-who-believe must do (or have done)?

Q29. Do you think that if we are happily married in this life that our marriage to our spouse will continue in Heaven?

²⁴ Jesus replied, "Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God?"

Q30. If you had been a Sadducee, how would you have reacted to Jesus’ statement? Why?

²⁵ “When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.

Q31. What or who are angels?

Psalm 34:7 God’s angel sets up a circle of protection around us while we pray. (MSG)

Hebrews 1:13-14 To which of the angels did God ever say, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet"? [Psalm 110:1] ¹⁴ Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

Hebrews 13:1-2 Keep on loving each other as brothers. ² Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.

✍ There are 310-references to “angel(s)” and 73-references to “cherubim” in our Bible (NIV-1984), with the earliest reference occurring in Genesis 3:24 (Cherubim) and the last in Revelation 22:16 (angel).

²⁶ Now about the dead rising -- have you not read in the book of Moses, in the account of the bush, how God said to him, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? [Exodus 3:6]

Q32. What does the statement referring to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob mean about the “dead rising”?

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²⁷ He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!"

✍ The Sadducees had successfully used their question in past arguments with the Pharisees. Yet, Jesus was able to use Scripture – and specifically a passage from the Pentateuch – to refute the core belief of the Sadducees. While the word “resurrection” did not appear in the Pentateuch, “resurrection” was certainly implied.

Day 5

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The Greatest Commandment

²⁸ One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"

Q33. Do you think the teacher of the law was still trying to challenge Jesus’ teaching with his question?

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²⁹ "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. ³⁰ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' [Deuteronomy 6:4,5]

✍ Jesus went directly to Scripture to provide His answer. He quoted from Deuteronomy, which is one of the first five books, which were written by Moses. The Jewish people had spent hundreds of years as slaves in Egypt. Then, God introduced Himself to Moses at the “burning bush” and conscripted him to lead the Jewish people out of Egypt into the Promised Land.

Deuteronomy 6:1-9

¹ These are the commands, decrees, and laws the LORD your God directed me [Moses] to teach you [the Jewish people] to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, ² so that you, your children and their children after them may fear [child-like reverence] the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. ³ Hear, O Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, promised you.

⁴ Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵ Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. ⁷ Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸ Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Q34. The Jews believe that this verse (and others) state that there is one and only one God (monotheism). Therefore, Christianity is wrong because a Christian worships three Gods (polytheism). How would you argue that issue with a Jew?

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John 14:9 – *Jesus one with The Father*

Jesus answered: "... Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.

John 14:11 – *Jesus one with The Father*

Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves.

John 17:11^b – *Jesus one with The Father*

Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name -- the name you gave me -- so that they may be one as we are one.

John 17:22 – *Jesus one with The Father*


I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one:

John 15:26 – *the Holy Spirit*

"When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.

³¹ The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' [Leviticus 19:18] There is no commandment greater than these."

³² "Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but Him. ³³ To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."

 Jesus is speaking with a man who has spent his entire life studying the Old Testament Scriptures and the 600-plus man-made laws that the Jews had developed to "supplement" God's Scripture.

Q35. Do you think that the "teacher of the law" considered Jesus (1) the Messiah, (2) another one of God's many prophets, (3) a peer – another teacher, or (4) someone like a self-taught itinerant (wandering) preacher?

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Q36. What was the attitude of the "teacher of the law"? Condescending? Eagerly teaching about God's law?

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³⁴ When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.

Q37. What did Jesus mean by "You are not far from the kingdom of God"?

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Q38. Why did they not dare to ask Jesus "any more questions"?


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Day 6

Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today’s study.

Whose Son Is the Christ

 King David was a great king of Israel. He is known, too, because of his adultery with Bathsheba, who was another man’s wife; she became pregnant with David’s child, so he then contrived to have her husband Uriah killed in battle. During his lifetime King David suffered consequences for the sins he committed. [The story of David, Bathsheba, and Uriah may be found in 2 Samuel 11-12.] Throughout history God has used flawed, sinful individuals to further His plans for humankind. God inspired the repentant David to write many of the Psalms contained in our Holy Bible and Jesus used those words as He taught.

 For example, Psalm-22 foretells the agony of the crucifixion of Christ Jesus and contains words that Jesus uttered while hanging on the cross painfully gasping for breath. In a few verses we will read that Jesus quotes from Psalm 110 as He teaches. And earlier in this chapter, verse ten, Jesus quoted from Psalm 118.

³⁵ While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, he asked, "How is it that the teachers of the law say that the Christ is the son of David?"

Q39. What does “Christ is the son of David” mean? Does it mean a true son in the literal sense?

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Q40. Do you think that the Jewish leaders were listening to Jesus’ teachings? Why?

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Q41. Why would Jesus provoke the Jewish leaders? Here He was on their turf (the temple). Shouldn’t He be watching what He said?

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John 6:47 I tell you the truth, he who believes [in me] has everlasting life.

John 8:32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Q42. Jesus said He is the “Truth”. Could He ever “not quite tell the truth” (lie)? After all, He was here in human form.

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Q43. Is “truth” black-and-white or is it shades-of-gray? Is there such a thing as absolute truth?

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Q44. Is there a lesson here for us about telling the Truth about Christ Jesus?

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³⁶ David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit, declared: “The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.” [Psalm 110:1] ³⁷ David himself calls him ‘Lord.’ How then can he be his son?" The large crowd listened to him with delight.

Q45. Why was the crowd “delighted”?

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Q46. How would you explain the meaning of this phrase: “The Lord said to my Lord”?

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³⁸ As he taught, Jesus said, "Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted in the marketplaces, ³⁹ and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. ⁴⁰ They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely."

Q47. “Teachers of the law:” aren’t they exhibiting normal human nature? And why will they “be punished most severely”?

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Q48. Why did Jesus single-out the Jewish leaders?

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The Widow's Offering

⁴¹ Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts.

Q49. According to Scripture it was unusual to find Jesus sitting down to watch people offer money to the temple. Why do you think He chose this moment to sit?

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⁴² But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny.

⁴³ Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. ⁴⁴ They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything -- all she had to live on."

Q50. Scripture teaches that we are to tithe. Are we also supposed to give “all [that we have] to live on”?

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Leviticus 27:30 A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord.

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