

## Aim of lesson

To introduce the class to the moral state of the world in which Isaiah lived.

To show God's view of the attitudes and actions of that time and his view of the world today.

## Bible background

Isaiah 5

## Outline of lesson

### Objectives

Introduce the study by asking the class what they think might be the value of studying the words and actions of men and women who lived over two and a half thousand years ago. Encourage them to see that people's attitudes and values do not change very much, and God's attitudes and values do not change at all. God has caused these words to be preserved so that we can learn lessons from what he taught the people then. If the class members are unsure of the value of the study, ask at the end of the lesson about the value they have found.

### The Parable of the Vineyard

Read Isaiah 5:1-2 with the class. If you have young seniors, you may like to ask them to mime the actions in the study. You may find it helpful to pause after each phrase to ask the class why the owner of the vineyard cleared the stones or built the tower etc. Ask the class to turn to the workbook and identify the parts of the parable.

### The meaning

Ask the class to listen for the meaning of the parable as you read to them v3-7. As they identify the owner, the vineyard, the fruit that should have been produced and the fruit that was produced, encourage the class to consider the way in which God prepared and built his 'vineyard'. He had rescued the people of Israel when they were slaves in Egypt. He had taught them the right way to live by giving them his law. He had cared for them and settled them in their new land.

### Sour grapes

Ask the class to look at Isaiah 5:7 to find the sort of fruit God was looking for and what he found. The idea is that they will identify good fruit – like 'justice' and 'righteousness', and write the words in two of the grapes in the bunch in the workbook; similarly, words like 'bloodshed' and 'cries of distress' in two of the sour grapes in the second picture.

The class could look at the six woes, verses 8, 11-12, 18-19,20,21 and 23 to find other 'sour grapes' that God found in the nation of Israel and Judah. This can be done together or in pairs. It should include full discussion on the attitudes and behaviour described and discussion of the best word to sum up the attitude for inclusion in the workbook. The following words are suggestions: greed, drunkenness, mockery, lying or deceit, pride and corruption or bribery.

### Good grapes

Ask the class to think of words for the remaining good grapes by considering what might be the opposite of the sour grapes. Some ideas can be found in the section of Isaiah 5 the class have considered. In the second 'woe', respect for God is mentioned and could be used to contrast with drunkenness.

### God's warning

Look together at what God says he will do to the vineyard because of its corrupt moral state. See v5-6 and its meaning in v13-15 and v24-30.

- He will bring a distant nation against them, v26-30.
- Their country will be destroyed, v9.
- The people will be taken out of their country into exile, v13.
- Many will die, v13-14.

All these things happened to the nation during Isaiah's lifetime as will be seen in the next lesson. The nation was not completely destroyed, however, until many years later.

### Setting

At this point you may like to look with the class at the time chart at the front of their workbooks. If the students refer to Isaiah 1:1 they should be able to label the correct figure as Isaiah. They can also note his relationship in time to other people and events already known.

## Digging deeper

### More about Isaiah

This section looks at the background of Isaiah and some more of his preaching.

## Relevance to our lives

Discuss with the class the present day examples of greed, drunkenness etc., and God's view of such behaviour. Encourage them to consider which 'sour grapes' are a temptation to young people like them. Ask for their thoughts on the best ways to avoid such things and to produce 'good fruit'.

## Prayer

Ask the students for ideas about what they would pray if they received this warning from Isaiah, or they could think of one thing they often do wrong and ask for God's help in overcoming it.

## Other suggestions for activities

- A large poster illustrating sour grapes and good grapes could be made using newspaper and magazine cuttings.
- The students could write a song using the ideas from Isaiah 5:1-7. They could write the music or use a well-known tune.
- They could begin a newspaper for the time of Isaiah, perhaps with an article on the prophet's message and the way it was received. This could be continued through the four lessons on Isaiah.
- You could also look for more comments on what could be seen as bad fruit in Amos 2:4,6,7,8; 6:4, 6 and 8:4-6. Good fruit can be seen in 5:4,14,15 and 24.