

"Song of Woe . . . Who Will Go?"
Isaiah 5:1-6:13
Dan Leppo

It's great to see all of you returning POW'rs – can you believe it's been over 3 months? I especially am glad to see new faces. My prayer for all of you is that God will open your eyes and your hearts to this amazing book of the Bible – one of my favorites. There's so much in the book of Isaiah – Jesus quoted from it more than just about any other book in the OT. Let's start, though, in prayer.

The first 7 verses of Chapter 5 are known as "The Song of the Vineyard." It is a poetic presentation of God's evaluation of what He's done for the nation of Israel; how they have responded to what He's done; and, as a result of their response to His provision, His judgment. The Song can be broken down into three "P"s.

1. The Provision
2. The Perspective
3. The Pronouncement

Let's begin with the Provision in Isaiah 5:1-2b, "I will sing for the one I love a song about his vineyard: My loved one had a vineyard on a fertile hillside. 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." Now let's develop a list of characters in the song:

- "I" is the prophet Isaiah
- "the one I love" is the Lord Jesus Christ – the Messiah of Israel. He is also the possessor of the vineyard. This is an extremely important thing to remember.
- The vineyard is the nation of Israel.

So, in these first two verses, we see Isaiah is singing for Jesus about all He's done for His people – the nation of Israel. When someone wants to build a vineyard, He first must make sure that the soil is prepared and fertile in order for the grape vines to take root. In verse 1, Isaiah tells us there was nothing wrong with the soil. The soil is the promised land of Israel.

Verse 2 then tells us that Jesus cleared the promise land of stones – those peoples who would cause problems with the growth of the vineyard. The stones could be symbols of enemies of the nation of Israel such as the Amalekites and the Philistines who were cleared out as the people took possession of the promised land. We then learn the soil is planted with the choicest vines. As we learned in the first chapter of Genesis, when God creates things, they are good at their origin. A watchtower was typically built in vineyards those days – for the purpose of making sure there was no threat to the vineyard. The final statement in this section is also very important for us

to remember – Jesus cut out a winepress. What is the purpose of a winepress? To extract something good from the grapes.

The key point of the winepress is Jesus had an **expectation** that the vineyard – the nation of Israel – would produce something good. What goodness was He expecting of the nation of Israel? To bear fruit – to show the love God has shown to them to others, so He may be glorified. That doesn't seem like too much to ask, does it? Is that any different for us today? God has provided so much ***solely*** out of His love for us. Did we do anything to warrant this provision? Hardly. What is the fruit that Jesus is asking us to bear? He tells us in John's gospel (John 13:34-35), "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Jesus tells us that He is the "Vine" in John's gospel, and what fruit did He bear? **Love**. In these verses, Jesus is giving a new commandment, and with a commandment comes an **expectation** of fruit. What is His expectation of the fruit of this commandment? To love others for the purpose of revealing Himself to those we love. So, to summarize this first segment of this song – it is a statement of the provision that God made to the nation of Israel. I believe we all should remind ourselves regularly of the amazing provisions God has graced us with. It develops an attitude of gratitude and that helps guard against what we're about to see the nation of Israel did with God's provision.

Next, we get to the Perspective in Isaiah 5:2c-4, "Then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit. "Now you dwellers in Jerusalem and people of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. 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?" When we create something – it is only reasonable to step back and take an assessment of what we create. For example, you start your own business. A prudent move is to periodically review how the business is doing – to determine what is going right and what is going wrong. This is especially true if you have provided all of your own capital – mental, financial, and emotional capital – to make the business grow. What is the expectation of a business? To make money, right?

So here in verses 2c-4, God is providing us His perspective on His expectations of the vineyard – on the nation of Israel - it is clear, He's not very happy. At this point in history, the nation of Israel is divided into two kingdoms – the Northern Kingdom and Judah. The Northern Kingdom has already fallen to the Assyrians, so this pronouncement is on His perspective of Jerusalem and Judah. God then asks two questions – the first one reminding us that nothing we can do can exceed what God can do. The second question really is an answer to the first one – when we think we can produce something better than God, we end up producing something far less. We see here a pronouncement of pride and self-assurance on the vineyard – both leading to God's description of bad fruit.

Finally, we get to the Pronouncement in Isaiah 5:5-6, "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. 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." Notice the progression of the actions taken by the Lord. The *first* thing He does is take away the hedge. This is the hedge of protection that God was providing as long as they were obedient to His commands. Therefore, the first consequence to extended disobedience is the removal of God's hedge of protection. There is a very good book out now called, *The Harbinger*. Without giving out too much of the story, the premise is God is beginning to lose patience with the United States in its accelerating dismissal of Him from its conscience, and the events of 9/11 were the beginning of His judgment on America. The author proposes that 9/11 was a symbol of the destruction of God's hedge of protection on the United States. As I read these verses, I can see where he arrived at this conclusion.

The next step in the process is the evidence of what happens when the owner of the vineyard stops tending it – it becomes a wasteland. The pruning and cultivation that is necessary to maintain the potential for fruitfulness is taken away. What is left is briers and thorns – the residue of sin. This should cause us to remember what Jesus' earthly "crown" was made of – thorns – the residue of our sin. Finally, water – which is a symbol of the Word of God – is removed. Imagine life without God's Word. How do you feel when you haven't spent time in God's Word? Thirsty? Malnourished?

In this final verse of the song there are a couple of points worth noting. First, we are reminded that God delights in His people. Do you believe that God *delights* in you? The circumstances of life can leave us feeling anything but God's delight in us, but Scripture is very clear on this subject such as:

- **Psalm 147:11**: the LORD delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love.
- **Psalm 149:4**: For the LORD takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with victory.

The second point to make in Isaiah 5:7 is the word "looked." God does not lightly pronounce judgment – He's looking for reasons – He's looking for people – who are walking in His ways to keep from pronouncing final judgment. He takes no joy in judging His creation. If you knew that God was looking for justice and righteousness in you, would He find it? The conclusion of the Song of the Vineyard sets up the next section of our reading – the Six Woes.

As we go through these six woes, we see these pronouncements on specific sins of the nation of Israel that are no less applicable to the United States or to us as individuals. The first woe is found in verses 8-10, "Woe to you who add house to

house and join field to field till no space is left and you live alone in the land. The Lord Almighty has declared in my hearing: "Surely the great houses will become desolate, the fine mansions left without occupants. A ten-acre vineyard will produce only a bath of wine; a homer of seed will yield only an ephah of grain."

What is this sin Isaiah is speaking of? Covetousness. Colossians 3:5 tells us that covetousness is idolatry. Big business was expanding at the expense of the little man. Great fortunes are made at the expense of others. Greed – the insatiable desire for more – God has judged and will judge it again and again. Notice that not only did God judge the people and their things, but He judged the land – He did this because the people – largely agrarian – were depleting the soil for the purpose of making more money. Do we see covetousness and idolatry in today's American society – a separating of the upper class from the rest? According to the AP, the poverty rate in the U.S. today is over 15%. Compare that to a report from the World Wealth Report from Merrill Lynch and Capgemini that the U.S. has a record 3.1 million millionaires.

God judged Israel for its covetousness – we are fooling ourselves if we don't think He's not going to do it to us if we don't repent. We also need to investigate our own devotion to our possessions – this is not to say we can't have certain things that have sentimental or even material value. However, if they are getting in the way of our relationship with God or our desire to help those in need, then they are a problem.

The second woe is identified in verse 11, "Woe to those who rise early in the morning to run after their drinks, who stay up late at night till they are inflamed with wine. They have harps and lyres at their banquets, pipes and timbrels and wine, but they have no regard for the deeds of the Lord, no respect for the work of his hands."

What is being identified here? Hedonism – the pursuit of pleasure above all else. It does not take much to see that this is the direction our country is headed. We all know we've been headed in this direction for some time, but it seems to me the pace of the pursuit of pleasure or entertainment – absent of any moral restraint – is rapidly accelerating. Pornography and filthy language are showing up on network TV more and more, and any attempts to resist this movement is hotly rebuffed by those making all the money in the entertainment field via claims of protecting free speech and guarding against the tyranny of censorship.

However, concluding a prayer in public with the words, "in Jesus' name" is a violation of church and state and an offense to those who aren't Christians. Given the backlash against taking a stand for morality, it is easy to see why we would be afraid of taking such a position. However, Peter offers us this encouragement in chapter 3, verse 14 of his first epistle, "But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened." In reality, the idea of standing up for what is morally right is an act of love to those who don't know that there truly is a right and a wrong. When we proclaim what is right, we are acting as messengers of warning

to those who don't know any better. Job warns of this in the 31st chapter of his book, verse 3, "Is it not ruin for the wicked, disaster for those who do wrong?" Hedonism denies the notion of right and wrong. We know better – there is right and there is wrong, and God has put this truth in our hands to let others know.

Verses 12-17 send a clear message that there are consequences to sin – there is judgment on sin. Our homework rightly emphasizes verse 12 that sin is disrespect of the Lord. As we read these verses, it is worth noting what these consequences are and who they impact. The first thing we learn that ignorance of what is right and what is wrong is an excuse God will not listen to. He states that His people will go into exile for lack of understanding. Next, we see what happens to those who don't accept the ramifications that to those much who much is given, much is required. The leaders who have either supported or allowed hedonistic behavior will be judged with death. However, it won't just be the leaders feeling the heat – even the common people will be parched with thirst.

The nobles and masses will also die. We once again see the fate of the arrogant and prideful – they will be brought low and humbled. They'll witness their excesses being eaten by sheep. It is all too easy to point fingers at the hedonism going on around us, but when was the last time we asked God to do an inspection of our lifestyles? Would He be happy with our choices of entertainment, or how much time we devote to seeking pleasure compared to seeking time with God or serving for Him? Please understand that as I challenge each of you throughout this lesson, I am doing the same to myself – none of us is perfect. We owe it to God to do this – we were bought for a steep price. The question we need to ask ourselves is are we living in a manner that justifies the price that was paid?

We learn of the third woe in verses 18 and 19, "Woe to those who draw sin along with cords of deceit, and wickedness as with cart ropes, to those who say, "Let God hurry; let him hasten his work so we may see it. The plan of the Holy One of Israel—let it approach, let it come into view, so we may know it." You could call this sin liberalism – J. Vernon McGee described it as "a nation giving itself in abandon to sin without shame or conscience." This section describes a people who are thumbing their noses at God – literally challenging God to show Himself and His judgments.

It's worth noting that there is no judgment identified here. Should that be comforting? Just because there isn't judgment identified doesn't mean there won't be judgment. The writer of Hebrews offers this chilling warning, chapter 10, verse 31, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Candidly, when I hear of people such as described in these verses, I get angry – offended at their arrogance. People such as Bill Maher and Bill Nye. Righteous anger by itself is appropriate. However, what should we be doing for these people? Praying for them – loving them. We need to remind ourselves that they are blind and every bit as entitled to God's grace and

forgiveness as we are. I must confess that this is an area in which I need a lot of work. How about you?

Verse 20 outlines the fourth woe, "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter." This is the sin of relativism and existentialism – the lack of absolutes. It is staggering to see what extents people will go to, to justify the lusts of their flesh. We have long-time friends who are Christians, but they have a very liberal view of Scripture. They recently left their church because their pastor dared to stand up and say that people who are living together outside the boundaries of marriage are living in sin. Their daughter is currently living with a man – unmarried, and they couldn't handle the thought of their daughter being called a sinner. These people are long-time Christians, and I believe they are using their indignation for this absolutely proper and Biblical stand by this pastor as a guard against the discomfort they are feeling deep down – knowing he's right. The truth hurts if you're not living in the truth.

Let's think about this sin – the notion that anything goes. The word "chaos" is defined as a state of utter confusion. If everyone is doing what they want – everything is relative – then what would you call that environment where there is no order – no common thread ruling the land – no plum line? Chaos. Chaos and God have nothing in common. God is a God of order. Job 25:2 says, "Dominion and awe belong to God; he establishes order in the heights of heaven." Once again – we see no judgment pronounced – but when a verse begins with the a "Woe," you can be sure it will be followed by an "uh oh."

The fifth Woe is outlined in verse 21, "Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight." The fifth woe is against the sin of intellectualism and pride – typically people who don't believe in God or question His existence – such as agnostics. Here's some wonderful irony about agnosticism – which is fueled by intellectualism. Agnostic - derived from the negation of the Greek word [*gnosis*], which means esoteric knowledge of higher things. Thus, a'gnostic means No-knowledge or not knowing. So, the so called intellectual who claims to know so much really has no knowledge.

This brings more appreciation to Psalm 14:1, "The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." Once again, I confess I take some perverse pleasure as I mock the intellectual; however, I don't believe God sees any humor in this sin at all. Look at the extent He went to reveal Himself by sending Jesus to Earth and to be crucified on our behalf for our sins. No, God does not respond to this sin lightly. For those of us who don't dare to enter into a battle with intellectuals regarding the existence of God out of fear of looking stupid, may I suggest a far more powerful weapon. Love them to God. Intellectuals are typically seekers of hard-core evidence to take the strong positions they do. While the Bible is indeed sharper than a two-edged sword, intellectuals typically have a pre-conceived notion of folly when it comes to the Bible. However, the

demonstration of Holy Spirit-fueled agape love has no viable opponent. If we can show an intellectual an example of how the love God has poured out on us, the intellectual has no response to this. Remember – love conquers all.

We arrive at the sixth and final woe in verses 22 and 23, “Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine and champions at mixing drinks, who acquit the guilty for a bribe, but deny justice to the innocent.” The sin identified here is drunkenness, or alcoholism – people are so drunk they have lost their sense of justice. Drunkenness was a major issue in the nation of Israel in this time, and God would judge it.

I want to share what I’m sure you will find as some startling statistics from “Learn-about-alcoholism.com” regarding alcohol and the United States”

- Alcohol is the number one drug problem in America
- There are more than 12 million alcoholics in the U.S.
- 3/4ths of all adults drink alcohol and 6% of them are alcoholics
- A person is killed every 30 minutes in alcohol-related car accidents

Alcoholism also is a factor in 73% of child beating cases, 81% of wife battering cases, and 83% of homicides. The issue of alcohol in the church is no small issue. At a minimum, we see in these verses God will judge the drunkards. However, and I’m likely going to offend some of you, I believe no follower of Jesus Christ should drink alcohol. Now let me be clear – there is nothing in the Bible that prohibits drinking alcohol – I know of no verse that specifically forbids the occasional glass of wine or cocktail. Let me also be completely honest – I have had alcohol during my earlier years as a Christian, so I cannot and will not stand before you as some shining example of abstinence.

However, I want to share my convictions for taking this position on alcohol. First, I felt the conviction as a father. There is alcoholism in my family background, and I couldn’t help but to see myself as setting a poor example to my children. I wanted to show my sons and now my grandchildren that you can live a happy life without the influence of alcohol.

Secondly, the Christian men I have come to admire – without exception – do not drink alcohol. Finally, I was convicted by the arguments by those who resisted this position. The first argument Christians typically throw out in defense of drinking alcohol was what I mentioned earlier – the Bible doesn’t forbid the occasional glass of wine. Well, the Bible doesn’t say anything about me bashing my head against the wall, but I choose not to do it because it will ultimately cause harm to my head. Moreover, if we think of every argument we can come up with about giving ourselves peace and rationalizing the occasional drink, what is the common theme of the arguments? It’s basically – we want to satisfy our flesh – or the pain of our flesh – with alcohol.

I don't have time to get more into this, and I've probably lost some of you on this topic anyway, but I'll leave you with this one point to ponder. Ephesians 5:18 tells us not to be drunk on wine but be filled with the Spirit. Do you honestly think you can have a drink or two of alcohol and also be filled with the Spirit? Will that glass of wine or cocktail draw you closer to God? In my view, one of the greatest failures of the modern church has been the soft stance it has taken on the subject of alcohol. The church is supposed to be a place where things are different from the world – where the presence of the Lord is a far greater healing power than the occasional cocktail. As I've said before, I used to drink as a Christian, so I don't offer this position as a judgment or condemnation – just a point for each of us to reflect upon. Let's move on.

We find the word "therefore" leading off verse 25. Whenever we see the word "therefore" in Scripture, we should always ask, "What is it there for?" Well, here, it's quite obvious. God begins to pronounce the judgments on the woes of the nation of Israel. "They have rejected the law of the Lord Almighty and spurned the Holy One of Israel." Therefore, well, the picture isn't very pretty when the Lord's hand is raised is it? There is judgment when the Lord's hand is raised. Who would know this better than Jesus? His hands were raised on a cross, and He took the raised hands of the Father's judgment on our sin.

The message for the United States and for us today is the same as it was for the nation and people of Israel. There is punishment for sin – there is judgment. Whether it is the natural consequences of sin or the heavenly proclaimed consequences of sin, judgment is very real – history proves it. What is different today for us as people, is we can repent – one by one – and turn back to God – that is how nations repent – one by one until the movement of the Holy Spirit is unstoppable. I'm afraid if we don't do more to send the message of judgment – and the ability to avoid it by turning back to God, the Lord will have no choice but to exact more severe judgments on the U.S. – just as He did on the nation of Israel. The balance of the verses in Chapter 5 provides the warning of the coming invasion of the brutal Assyrian army. It wasn't pretty back then – to think it won't be the same for America is foolishness.

Chronologically, the Book of Isaiah begins with Chapter 6. The chapter begins with a notation about where we are in history – the year that King Uzziah died. It's worth noting that King Uzziah was one of Israel's best Kings. He reigned for 52 years, and the nation of Israel prospered under his reign. F. Delitzsch says, "The national glory of Israel died with King Uzziah and has never recovered to this day." It's probably not a coincidence that it took a great figure like Uzziah to die before Isaiah saw the Lord. Any time we put a person, a job, or anything above the presence of the Lord, He will patiently wait until that individual or whatever is the object of our attention dies or disappoints us – and **then** He will reveal Himself to us.

We also learn something about Isaiah – where did he go in his time of grief? The temple – to the Lord. J.Vernon McGee rightly says, "In God's temple, Isaiah makes the

discovery that the true King of the nation is not dead.” Another point worth noting – where is the Lord? He is high and exalted – seated on a throne. I think we all need to remind ourselves – especially in light of these times – that God **IS** on the throne. Satan, your boss, your illness, your broken relationship – anything that attempts to give us the idea that they’re in charge of our lives – is **NOT** on the throne ruling. **GOD** is on the throne. God is alive, He is love, He is listening to your prayers, and He is in control. We also need to constantly remind ourselves that the Lord is high and exalted. Why? Because of our old sin nature, we let our pride and ego falsely raise or puff ourselves up in our minds – as if we’re deserving of a certain status or treatment. A true encounter with the majesty and awe of God will melt even the most prideful of hearts. We need to remember that the Lord is high and exalted.

In verses 2 through 4 we are introduced to the highest order of angels – seraphim. Seraph means to burn – it is the word used in connection with the sin offering and judgment. Seraphim search out sin – cherubim protect the holiness of God. We will hear about these beings again only in the books of Ezekiel (Chapter 1) and Revelation (Chapter 4). Seraphim are very powerful beings. I read in some references that Lucifer was a seraphim – I’m not sure this is correct. We should take note what these powerful beings are doing – they are staying close to the Lord endlessly worshipping Him.

Have you done that? Have you become so fixated on God that all you can do is worship Him and praise Him? Nothing else matters – it’s just you and the Lord. May I suggest you try that – put yourself in a place where you can’t be distracted – no people, no phones, no TV – and just meditate on God’s majesty, on God’s love, on God’s goodness, on His provision, on His blessings – I’m certain you will find yourself entering into a deeper moment with Him – you’ll find yourself praising Him and thanking Him – maybe even singing to Him. Go ahead – give it a try. What do you have to lose?

In Chapter 5, Isaiah pronounced 6 woes over the nation of Israel. Now – upon seeing himself in the full light of the Lord – he pronounces a woe upon himself. Like I said earlier – a true encounter with God will reveal everything that is not holy – all the facades, all the false self-righteousness, all the pride is literally ruined. If you’re walking around with even a shred of unconfessed pride, you have not had a recent encounter with God. Isaiah is not the only person in the Bible who is humbled before the presence of the Lord. Take a look at some of these notable characters:

- **Job 42:5-6**: “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore, I abhor *myself*, and repent in dust and ashes.”
- **Daniel 10:8**: “Therefore, I was left alone when I saw this great vision, and no strength remained in me; for my vigor was turned to frailty in me, and I retained no strength.”
- **Revelation 1:17**: “And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead.”

You can see one reason God chose Isaiah – and it is important we understand that Isaiah was chosen **before** this very moment – **before** his confession. God knows where we are in our hearts and minds – yet He will use us because He knows where we're going to end up. Remember, He is the author and finisher of our faith. Isaiah goes to immediate confession – there's no attempt to make excuses. His claim of being a man of unclean lips could mean he has a problem with profanity or maybe gossip – and he's hanging around others who are doing the same – and he knows it's unacceptable in the light of the Lord.

So, Isaiah confesses his sin – and look at the *immediate* response from heaven – one of the seraphim brings a live coal from the altar of sacrifice and touches him where his sin is. He then pronounces that Isaiah's guilt is *taken away* and his sin is atoned for. Here we see the progression of entering into *relationship with* and *service for* God – confession from us; forgiveness from God. It is interesting at the way forgiveness is described here. In the OT, sins were merely covered by the blood of the animal sacrifice. In the NT, forgiveness by the blood of the Lamb ***takes away*** the sin and the guilt. So, we see Isaiah's receipt of atonement is a foreshadowing the forgiveness we are granted. Confession of sin is what God was looking for from the nation of Israel – He didn't get it. He's looking for it from the U.S. – will He get it? He's looking for it from us – will we do it? We should because look at the wonderful promise made in 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

We now arrive at Isaiah 6:8, our memory verse for today. We see evidence of the Trinity in this question – "who will go for us?" Have you wondered why God even asked the question? He already knew what Isaiah's response was going to be. Why didn't He just order Isaiah to begin his ministry? I believe it is all about choice – not God's – but ours. I'm of course speaking of the concept of free will. Free will is a wonderful thing, and today's world loves it – except today's world has tried to remove an inseparable partner to free will – consequences of choice. We all want the freedom to make our own decisions, but we don't want the consequences should the decisions turn out badly. Even the right decisions come with consequences.

Free will, when it is applied to service for God, carries even more consequences. If we choose to "go," then we will begin to experience the consequences of a life of service for God. Since the world is at enmity with Jesus, then it will be at enmity with those who choose to align themselves with Him and serve Him. Should we say "no" to serving God, then we are forced to face the consequences of choosing something less than what our Creator knows is best for us. I'm certain Isaiah had no idea of the consequences that would come into his life because of his willingness to be sent by God. However, if he could speak to us today, I'm certain he would say it was worth it.

In verses 9-10, God's instructions seem strange on the surface. "This people" is the nation of Israel. It sounds as if God's instructions for Isaiah are ***intended*** to make the people of Israel calloused and blind. This is not so – God does not seek to harden hearts or blind people. This is a matter of preaching light to the darkness for the purpose of revealing the darkness in people. If someone is sick and therefore needs healing, the healing can't really begin until the one who is sick realizes he/she is sick. So, it is for millions of lost souls out there – many of them don't know they're lost. Jesus asks us to share the gospel to not only reveal Himself to them, but also reveal His light on their darkness – making them realize the need for salvation. That is the essence of Isaiah's instructions.

Isaiah, probably a little confused at the instructions, asks a reasonable question – "For how long, Lord?" God's response is what would become a perfectly fulfilled prophecy – indicating the ultimate takeover by the Babylonians. Chapter 25 of 2 Kings gives an account of Nebuchadnezzar's taking of the Jews in Judah into Babylonian captivity and even confirms in verse 25 that people were left behind – proving the fulfilled prophecy noted in this section where it says, "though a tenth remains in the land." Let's pray.