

Isaiah 56-57

Bible Study

Review

Chapter 54—Expansion of spiritual Israel, the family of God
Chapter moves to Christ's return—His 2nd coming

- Children of promise (Gal. 4: 27):
As part of the family of God, will expand in the millennium
- God will take Israel back, the past will be forgotten and the nation will not be forsaken
 - God promises security
 - All the children shall be taught by the Lord, and great will be their peace

Chapter 55—Come to the waters...of the Holy Spirit
By coming to the Lord, people will find complete satisfaction, abundant spiritual satisfaction

- The admonition to seek the Lord while He may be found
- Those who repent of their unrighteous ways and return to the Lord
 - He will have mercy upon them and abundantly pardon
- God's word brings forth spiritual life which accomplishes His purpose

Chapter 56

v. 1-8 Salvation and blessings offered to the Gentiles/all mankind
➤ With requirements

- 1 Thus says the Lord: “Keep justice, and do righteousness, For My salvation is about to come, And My righteousness to be revealed.
- 2 Blessed is the man who does this, And the son of man who lays hold on it; Who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, And keeps his hand from doing any evil.”

v. 1 ‘Justice’ (KJV) ‘judgment’ (Heb. *mishpat*)= justice (Theological Wordbook OT) “rightness rooted in God’s character; also designates an ordinance of law”
‘righteousness’ (KJV) ‘justice’ (Heb. *tsedaqah*)= righteousness (Theological Wordbook OT) “When applied to God means righteousness, His characteristics then becoming the ultimate standard for human conduct” (Psalm 119: 172)

v. 1 [Last part] “For my salvation is about to come, And My righteousness to be revealed”
By the 1st coming of the Messiah as a sacrifice for all mankind
...and ultimately to all the world in His 2nd coming, as salvation will be offered to all (Jer. 23: 6)

(Bible Knowledge Com.) “Isaiah linked present behavior with future salvation and blessings”

v. 2-7 Not defiling the Sabbath

2 Blessed is the man who does this, And the son of man who lays hold on it; Who keeps from defiling the Sabbath,
And keeps his hand from doing any evil.”

“Who keeps from defiling the Sabbath”—a critical part of doing righteousness

Exodus 31: 13-17—God shows that the Sabbath is an identifying sign between Him and His people

Exodus 31: 14, 17

14 You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people.

17 It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.’ ”

Isaiah 58:13-14

13 “If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, From doing your pleasure on My holy day, And call the Sabbath a delight, The holy day of the Lord honorable, And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, Nor finding your own pleasure, Nor speaking your own words,

14 Then you shall delight yourself in the Lord; And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, And feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

v. 3-8 Points to New Covenant times when salvation is offered to the Gentiles

3 Do not let the son of the foreigner Who has joined himself to the Lord Speak, saying, “The Lord has utterly separated me from His people”; Nor let the eunuch say, “Here I am, a dry tree.”

4 For thus says the Lord: “To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, And choose what pleases Me, And hold fast My covenant,

5 Even to them I will give in My house And within My walls a place and a name Better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name That shall not be cut off.

Under terms of the Old Covenant, eunuchs were not allowed to enter the assembly of the Lord



Deuteronomy 23: 1

He who is emasculated by crushing or mutilation shall not enter the assembly of the Lord.

v. 5 Those believing foreigners and eunuchs who keep the Sabbath will receive great reward, to be brought within God’s walls, His temple

Keeping the Sabbath is stressed as an important part of all who God will call, and working with them

6 Also the sons of the foreigner Who join themselves to the Lord, to serve Him, And to love the name of the Lord, to be His servants— Everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, And holds fast My covenant—

7 Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices Will be accepted on My altar; For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.”

8 The Lord God, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, says, “Yet I will gather to him Others besides those who are gathered to him.”

v. 6-7 The foreigner who keeps God’s Sabbath, to not defile it, and holds fast to God’s covenant, God will bring them into His house—His temple

- Deuteronomy 23 contains a list of foreigners who were not allowed into the assembly of the Lord
v. 7 (Millennium) Isaiah shows that God’s House/temple will be “a house of prayer **for all nations**”

v. 8 God makes it clear that other peoples will be gathered (to worship) besides Israel

Matthew 21: 12-13 (Christ quoted Isaiah 56:7)

12 Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves.

13 And He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a ‘den of thieves.’ ”

56: 9 —57:13 The message to the wicked

9 All you beasts of the field, come to devour, All you beasts in the forest.

10 His watchmen are blind, They are all ignorant; They are all dumb dogs, They cannot bark; Sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.

v. 9 wild beasts are called to devour (the sheep) who have been led astray

v. 10 The 'watchmen'—false prophets, ignorant spiritual leaders

- Not doing their job of leading God's people in righteousness

The message here at the end of the chapter and the beginning of the next was probably towards the end of Isaiah's life, and during the reign of King Manasseh (696-642 BC) when immoral conditions prevailed

11 Yes, they are greedy dogs Which never have enough. And they are shepherds Who cannot understand; They all look to their own way, Every one for his own gain, From his own territory.

12 “Come,” one says, “I will bring wine, And we will fill ourselves with intoxicating drink; Tomorrow will be as today, And much more abundant.”

(Bible Knowledge Com.) “Good shepherds know the best grazing land for their flocks. But these leaders were ignorant shepherds going their own way like their sheep.

They were more interested in their own gain than in their people’s welfare. Concerned only with their own pleasure, they failed to consider that judgment will come.”

(International Standard Bible Encyclopedia) King Manasseh of Judah (696 -642 BC)

“Manasseh plunged his nation into gross idolatry unequalled in Palestine since the days of Ahab and Jezebel. His reign was the antithesis of his father’s, which was marked with godly zeal and piety.

In the Hinnom Valley outside the city wall of Jerusalem the Hebrew king sacrificed children to the Ammonite god Molech. This was one of the most abominable rites of Canaanite paganism...moreover, Manasseh shed much innocent blood”

Chapter 57

The message to the wicked continues

1 The righteous perishes, And no man takes it to heart; Merciful men are taken away, While no one considers That the righteous is taken away from evil.

2 He shall enter into peace; They shall rest in their beds, Each one walking in his uprightness.

v. 1 A righteous person may die because of God's mercy, to spare them from an evil experience or hardship

(BKC) "The society then was so bad that the righteous had to die in order to find peace"

II Kings 21: 16

Moreover Manasseh shed very much innocent blood, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another, besides his sin by which he made Judah sin, in doing evil in the sight of the Lord.

v. 2 "enter into peace...rest in their beds

- They are sheltered in the grave awaiting the resurrection

Because the watchmen have slept, evil comes in (v. 3-10 Israel's false religion)

3 But come here, You sons of the sorceress, You offspring of the adulterer and the harlot!

4 Whom do you ridicule? Against whom do you make a wide mouth
And stick out the tongue? Are you not
children of transgression, Offspring of falsehood,

5 Inflaming yourselves with gods under every green tree, Slaying the children in the valleys,
Under the clefts of the
rocks?

v. 3 "sorceress"= soothsayer—observers of times

"offspring of the adulterer--Description of the people's apostasy, picked up from the pagans

v. 4 "Whom do you ridicule"—mocking the righteous while involved in sinful acts

"children of transgression"—fall into apostasy and sin

v. 5 "with gods (KJV) 'idols' (Companion Bible) "with the sacred trees; i.e. the Asherahs

"Slaying the children in the valleys"—the sacrificing of children to the pagan gods...to Molech or Baal

Jeremiah 19:5

(they have also built the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings to Baal, which I did not command or speak, nor did it come into My mind),

Places of idol worship

6 Among the smooth stones of the stream Is your portion; They, they, are your lot! Even to them you have poured a drink offering, You have offered a grain offering. Should I receive comfort in these?

7 “On a lofty and high mountain You have set your bed; Even there you went up To offer sacrifice.

v. 6 “the smooth stones”= the open places (Companion Bible)

➤ The bare places in a valley where idols were worshipped

“of the stream”—a low place in a valley where there was a stream of water, and often idol worship took place

v. 7 Worship places were set on high hills or mountains—to get closer to their gods

“your bed”= of spiritual adultery

8 Also behind the doors and their posts You have set up your remembrance; For you have uncovered yourself to those other than Me, And have gone up to them; You have enlarged your bed And made a covenant with them; You have loved their bed, Where you saw their nudity.

v. 8 Behind the doors and their posts of were the pagan symbols

“your remembrance”= symbols of paganism

The people’s homes were supposed to be centers for learning about God

- But the people were using them for idol worship and adultery

(Bible Knowledge Com.) “Beds and nakedness may refer to sexual perversity involved in such worship or they may symbolize idolatry”

9 You went to the king with ointment, And increased your perfumes; You sent your messengers far off, And even descended to Sheol.

10 You are wearied in the length of your way; Yet you did not say, 'There is no hope.' You have found the life of your hand; Therefore you were not grieved.

v. 9 "the king" = the god Molech, was often accompanied with child sacrifice

Equated with the Roman god Saturn who was worshipped at the time of the winter solstice with evergreen trees and child sacrifice

II Kings 23: 10 (King Josiah's reforms) (Later good king of Judah)

And he defiled Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter pass through the fire to Molech.

v. 9 "sent your messengers"--sending representatives to court gods of other nations

"descended to Sheol" ('Hell' KJV)—the lowest degradation

(Nelson Study Bible) "Sheol here alludes to the gods of the underworld, perhaps associated with necromancy."

v. 10 (NIV) "You were wearied by all your ways, but you would not say, 'It is hopeless. You found renewed strength, and so you did not faint'" (Kept on sinning)

v. 11-13 Description of Israel forgetting God

11 “And of whom have you been afraid, or feared, That you have lied And not remembered Me, Nor taken it to your heart? Is it not because I have held My peace from of old That you do not fear Me?”

v. 11 [1st part] Israel had forgotten and not feared God as they should have

“That you have lied”—been unfaithful to their vows

“because I have held my peace”—God had seemingly been silent which had emboldened them to sin

12 I will declare your righteousness And your works, For they will not profit you.

13 When you cry out, Let your collection of idols deliver you. But the wind will carry them all away, A breath will take them. But he who puts his trust in Me shall possess the land, And shall inherit My holy mountain.”

v. 12 “I will declare (expose) your righteousness And your works”
(Irony) Their supposed righteous works would be exposed for what they really are

v. 13 [1st part] When in trouble and crying out to their idols, the idols cannot deliver them

v. 13 [last part] In contrast, those that trust in the true God, would experience physical blessings,
including spiritual privileges in the millennium

Healing for the backslider—God’s promise of forgiveness

14 And one shall say, “Heap it up! Heap it up! Prepare the way, Take the stumbling block out of the way of My people.”

15 For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place, With him who has a contrite and humble spirit, To revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

v. 14 “Heap it up!”= remove the obstacles

- Remove the obstacles to those who will put their faith and trust in God

v. 15 “Who inhabits eternity” —God is eternal

- He pays attention to the humble person

16 For I will not contend forever, Nor will I always be angry; For the spirit would fail before Me, And the souls which I have made.

17 For the iniquity of his covetousness I was angry and struck him; I hid and was angry, And he went on backsliding in the way of his heart.

v. 16 God will not be angry at His people forever, He will pardon

[last part]—if God continued in anger they would be consumed

v. 17 Because of sin the people reaped judgment...God withdrew His presence from them...and they kept on with further sin

18 I have seen his ways, and will heal him; I will also lead him, And restore comforts to him And to his mourners.

19 “I create the fruit of the lips: Peace, peace to him who is far off and to him who is near,” Says the Lord, “And I will heal him.”

v. 18 God has seen the error of the people, but upon repentance He will pardon and restore them, and give comfort to mourners

v. 19 “I create the fruit of the lips” —God will enable the restored people to speak the words of repentance which brings them into peace

v. 19 The apostle Paul cited this verse talking about peace as applying to Christ

Ephesians 2: 17

And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near.

The contrast to the righteous, is the wicked

20 But the wicked are like the troubled sea, When it cannot rest, Whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

21 “There is no peace,” Says my God, “for the wicked.”

v. 20 ‘the wicked’—those who continue in sin

- They can find no rest as they continue to mire in sin

v. 21 ‘There is no peace for the wicked’—they don’t have rest and peace being doomed for judgment

Lessons

Keeping the Sabbath is an important part of what is expected by all those with whom God is working

Despite Israel's continuous rebellion, God who is merciful looks to the future redemption He has planned for them

The fear and punishment of the wicked is contrasted with the peace and reward of the righteous