

Last week we explored chapters 54 and 55 of Isaiah and found that God has forever intended salvation to be for both the Jews and the Gentiles. The pattern that we see in the Scripture is that God offers salvation to the Jews first and then to the Gentiles. But, nonetheless, the Gentiles have been on God's original list of the to-be-redeemed from the very beginning.

This week we are going to finish this sixth section on Isaiah with a look at chapters 56 and 57. There are two contrasts that are represented here, one in each of these two chapters.

Days 1-2 - The Future Kingdom vs. the Present Kingdom - Isaiah Chapter 56

I would like you to start your double-spaced worksheet for this chapter by just reading it in its entirety at one sitting. See if you can immediately pick out where the shift is from the future kingdom to the present kingdom. I will tell you that the future kingdom is represented first and then the present kingdom.

Please mark key repeated verses or ideas: all mention of God and pronouns as the same marking, i.e., LORD, Lord GOD; salvation; Sabbath; Jerusalem (My holy mountain); Gentiles; Israel (Remnant); all references to Covenant: My covenant, memorial, everlasting name, cut off.

How can you summarize what God is saying about the "foreigner" in verses 56:3-7?

It appears that in the future to our day, during the Millennial Kingdom, the people will be back under the "Sabbath" restrictions found in the Law of Moses. How can this be? Move your thinking along side of dispensations of time to answer this question.

What else will be reinstated in the coming Millennial Kingdom? Draw on your knowledge from past lessons or if you would like, you can reread Ezekiel 40 through 48, where the Millennial Temple and the sacrificial system are described.

Jesus quoted Isaiah 56:7 in the New Testament. Find the cross-reference and write it out here. Hint: Look in the margin of your Bible.

Please read the following cross-references: Isaiah 2:2-4, 9:2-3, 42:6, 49:5-6, 52:10, 66:18-19, and Zechariah 8:22,14:16-21. Isn't this incredible!? These are all Old Testament verses that speak to the salvation of the Gentile nations as well as the Jews.

Do the Jews of today realize that the salvation of the Gentiles has always been a part of God's grand plan?

Should they know, especially, if they are well versed in the Scripture?

The Present Kingdom becomes evident in 56:9 and is the answer to the first question above. Jerusalem has been destroyed and rebuilt 27 times in history. God has allowed the secular nations of this world to come against Jerusalem because His people have been disobedient and followed after strange gods.¹ Remember the leaders of the day did not take up their responsibility to train their own and teach their own in God's ways. The Levites were particularly at fault since they had been dispersed throughout the lands of the tribes of Israel for the purpose of "shepherding the flocks."

What words describe the priests and the prophets in 56:10? Refer to a New Testament verse in Philippians 3:2. Who does Paul call "dogs"?

What would be a "dumb" dog?

In shepherding times, each shepherd had a dog for what purpose?

How were the leaders looking out for their own interests and not the welfare of the people in Isaiah's day?

Now, contrast the present kingdom of Isaiah's day with the future Millennial Kingdom presented in this chapter.

Please write your theme for Isaiah 56 on the respective double-spaced worksheet and also on the Isaiah-Theme-Summary chart.

Days 3-5 - The Righteous vs. the Rebellious - Isaiah 57

Please start out this study time with prayer and reflecting on Matthew 7:13-14.

I do believe the theme of the present kingdom of God beginning in Isaiah 56:9 is continued on into chapter 57 with the contrast of the righteous/devout man and the rebellious man. Mark the key repeated words found in this chapter. I marked all references to “the righteous” with the same marking, i.e., “the righteous man,” and the “devout man.” It may be that this “righteous man” is also the “Remnant” of Israel. I also marked all references to the rebellious the same, i.e., “sons of Sorceress,” “offspring of an adultery and a prostitute.” All references to God should be marked the same.

How can the righteous of this time period find peace according to Isaiah 57:1-2?

What does it mean that the rebellious inflamed themselves among the oaks and under every luxuriant tree? (Isaiah 57:5)

Did the rebellious really slaughter children in the ravines and under the clefts of the crags? (Isaiah 57:5) For what purpose would they do this?

What does it mean that the rebellious’ portion is among the smooth stones of the ravine? (Isaiah 57:6)

Why would the rebellious offer a grain offering to a foreign god and particularly, a smooth stone? Think about the time and how important the growing of crops were. Also think about Cain and his grain offering to God.

What does the location of a high and lofty mountain in 57:7 have to do with a sacrifice to an idol?

Will those idols the rebellious worship, deliver them or profit them?

What group of people in Isaiah 57:1-2 are persecuted by the group of people described in Isaiah 57:3-13?

How is God described in Isaiah 57:15?

Now, I would like you to go back through and build a picture of the righteous man and the rebellious man from Isaiah 57.

The Rebellious Man

The Righteous Man

What is the broad and the narrow pathways and how do they relate to the two men described above? Remember, we looked at these two pathways in Matthew 7:13-14 above.

Please find and read the parable of the wheat and the tares? Why would I ask you to do this in reference to this chapter and also right after studying Isaiah 56? I will give you two hints: Matthew 13:24-30 and “the kingdom of heaven.”

In the recent past to our day, sin was hidden because people were ashamed. Do we see sin out in the open today or is it still hidden? What has changed in just the past few decades of our culture and history concerning this?

In what verse does the comfort for the righteous begin. Hints: It is in the middle of a verse that the comfort for the righteous begins. Look for key words like, “take refuge.”

Contrast the two places God dwells found in Isaiah 57:15.

Why will God not always be angry with sin? See Isaiah 57:16.

How are the wicked described in Isaiah 57:20?

Who can give peace and why is He alone the true and lasting source of peace?

Please write your theme for Isaiah 57 on the respective double-spaced worksheet and also on the Isaiah-Theme-Summary chart.

This concludes our time in chapters 49 through 57. We have a God who has revealed Himself to be merciful beyond belief both to a world of rebellious Jews and rebellious Gentiles. For the one who will turn or return to Him, repent or turn away from their sin to righteous living, surrender their very lives completely to Him, and be thirsty for Him and Him alone, He will give His hope and He will give His peace. Streams of living water will come out of that person's being for he knows the LORD of Life and the LORD of Life knows him.

Thanks for staying with me on this journey. We have just one more wrap-up lesson on these nine chapters to do before we embark on the last leg of our journey into the final nine chapters of Isaiah. All of us have been real troopers to continue the study of this massive book. Don't you love it though? There is nothing I'd rather be doing than studying God's Word. It feeds me and quenches my thirst like nothing else.

ⁱ J.Vernon McGee, *Isaiah Volume 2*, LaVerne, California, El Camino Press, 1978, p.141.

THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE KINGDOMS

Present Kingdom* - Disobedient Judah	Future Kingdom-Obedient Jew & Gentile
<p><u>The Leaders of the Nation</u> - Isaiah 56:9 - 57:2 -all blind, forgetting to be watchmen 56:10(see Ezek. 3:17-21; 33:1-11), remaining alert, watchful, to keep the people from danger; they were out for personal gain, not putting flock before own desires -leaders included prophets, priests, rulers -if they had repented, God would have intervened, but they remained rebellious, causing Judah exile in Babylon</p> <p><u>The Idolators</u> - Isaiah 57:3-13 -the land was polluted with idols -Kings Hezekiah & Josiah - led small revivals, but afterwards, the people returned to the godless ways of the nations around them -they worshipped idols (stone gods) & practiced immorality 57:5 -they slaughtered their children to their gods in the fire, sacrificing them on the mountains 57:5-7 -they trusted the pagan leaders (foreign leaders) for their protection instead of their God and then they followed after the pagan gods, also 57:8-9</p> <p><u>The Proudful and Greedy</u> - Isaiah 57:14-21 -pride is the sin God hates and He resists (see Provs. 6;16-17, 1 Peter 5:5-6) -God was angry re Israel's sinfulness & greed; they did not repent, but did what they wanted- Isaiah 57:17 -God often took them to court & proved them guilty, yet they would not submit. -God saw Judah's way, but decides to heal, guide & comfort them anyway 57:18</p> <p><u>The Hypocrites</u> - Isaiah 58:1-14 <u>The Unjust</u> - Isaiah 59:1-21</p>	<p>justice will be preserved 56:1 -righteousness will be done and will be revealed 56:1 -salvation will have already come 56:1 -will be no profaning of the Sabbath; will be reinstated in MK 56:2 -will be no doing of evil 56:2 -in MK, the Gentile, foreigner, eunuch -will not be separated out by God 56:3 -in MK, the eunuchs will keep the Sabbath 56:4-5 -with God, in the MK, there will be no difference between those who have a physical malady and those who are perfect (see Deut. 23:1-8) 56:6 -in the MK, what the eunuch does will please God 56:4 -in the MK, the eunuchs will hold fast to God's covenant 56:4 -foreigners will join themselves to the LORD and minister to Him and love Him 56:6 -in MK, the foreigners will be His servants and will be asked to join in preserving the Sabbaths 56:6 -God will bring them to His holy mountain, make them joyful in His house of prayer, will accept their burnt offerings/sacrifices on God's altar 56:7 -God's house of prayer will be for all peoples 56:7 -God will gather the dispersed of Israel and also others not previously taken in 56:8</p>
<p>*Warren W. Wiersbe, <i>Be Comforted</i>, USA,SP Publications, Inc., 1992, pp. 149-153.</p>	

THE RIGHTEOUS MAN VS. THE REBELLIOUS - ISAIAH 57

The Rebellious	The Righteous
<ul style="list-style-type: none">-sons of sorceress - 57:3-offspring of an adulterer and a prostitute - 57:3-they jest, open their mouths and stick out their tongues - 57:4-they are children of rebellion; they are offspring of deceit - 57:4-they inflame themselves among the oaks - 57:5-they slaughter their own children 57:5-they offer grain offerings to an idol - 57:6-they make their bed on a high and lofty mountain - 57:7-they make sacrifice on a high and lofty mountain - 57:7-they set up their own sign, far from God, and they looked on others' sinfulness - 57:8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-the righteous man perishes and no man takes it to heart - 57:1-devout men are taken away while no one understands 57:1-the righteous man is taken away from evil - 57:1-they rest in their beds and enter into peace -57:2-each righteous one has walked in his upright way - 57:2-there is comfort for the righteous-Israelites who trust God will inherit the land Ps.25:12-13, 37:9,11,22,29