

Isaiah 56

Is. 56:1 Thus says the Lord, "Preserve justice, and do righteousness, For My salvation is about to come And My righteousness to be revealed.

We find in Isaiah 56 what we discovered in Isaiah 49:5-7, that the *salvation* promised to the Jewish nation extends to the Gentiles as well. As we learned in Isaiah 51:5 and 52:10, Jesus is *salvation* (you might want to read the notes associated with those two verses). Therefore, the *salvation* addressed in this verse, along with the *righteousness to be revealed*, points to the Person of Jesus who will return at the Second Coming. It is then that all the unconditional covenants given to the physical Jewish nation will be fulfilled, confirming what we studied in Isaiah 55. This same *salvation* (the Person of Jesus) will also greatly affect the believing Gentiles, confirmed by Isaiah 56. The fruit of all who believe in the Messiah, be they Jew or Gentile, is a change of lifestyle wherein *justice* and *righteousness* are pursued above all else. Therefore, Isaiah encourages all believers to live in such a way as to bring glory to the Creator as they eagerly await His return.

Is. 56:2 "How blessed is the man who does this, And the son of man who takes hold of it; Who keeps from profaning the sabbath, And keeps his hand from doing any evil."

Anyone *who takes hold* of the *salvation* addressed in verse 1, the *salvation* being the Person of Jesus, will be *blessed* in that he or she will desire to walk in obedience to the truth. They will honor the *sabbath* and refrain *from doing any evil*. In other words, they will desire, with their whole heart, to please the Lord in all respects. This applies to the redeemed of both the Jews and the Gentiles.

Note: During the Church age, every day can be a *sabbath* as far as the believer is concerned. All church saints have the capability of entering into *Sabbath rest* (Hebrews 4:9-10) as they trust Christ's life within them to do His *work* through them (1Corinthians 15:10; Philippians 2:13). The *sabbath* will be observed during the Millennium, not as a result of the Mosaic Law being reinstated, but as a natural by-product of the worship of Jehovah. Neither will the observance of *the Passover* (Ezekiel 45:21) and *the Feast of Booths* (Zechariah 14:16-19) mean that the Mosaic Law will be in force; for *the Passover* and *the Feast of Booths* (Tabernacles) will be observed by Jews and Gentiles alike as a memorial to what Jesus has already accomplished. In fact, they will serve the same purpose as communion serves today—as a memorial to what Jesus achieved on the cross (1Corinthians 11:23-26). It is interesting that the Gentiles will be required to observe Passover and the Feast of Booths. This was not the case under the Mosaic Law, again confirming that the Mosaic Law will not be in effect.

Is. 56:3 Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the Lord say, "The Lord will surely separate me from His people." Neither let the eunuch say, "Behold, I am a dry tree."

Verses 3-8 describe conditions that will exist during the Millennium, conditions that will prohibit any Gentile believers from being excluded from temple worship. The words "*foreigner*" and "*eunuch*" in verse 3 probably relate specifically to what is described in Deuteronomy 23:1 and 3-6. There, we find that the Mosaic Law prohibited tabernacle or temple worship for the *eunuch* (Deuteronomy 23:1). The same applied to the *Moabite* or *Ammonite* unless a specific condition was met. If a *Moabite* or *Ammonite* became a believer in Jehovah, his family was required to wait until *the tenth generation* after his conversion before entering into tabernacle or temple worship (Deuteronomy 23:3-6). The RSV renders Deuteronomy 23:3 as follows:

“No Ammonite or Moabite shall enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none belonging to them shall enter the assembly of the LORD for ever;

Take note of the phrase, “*even to the tenth generation none belonging to them shall enter the assembly of the Lord for ever.*” We just addressed the fact that a *Moabite* or *Ammonite* could *enter the assembly of the Lord* if certain conditions were met. However, the last portion of Deuteronomy 23:3 states that they cannot *enter...for ever* (RSV). If *for ever* means “forever” in the sense of never ending, we have a contradiction, not only in Deuteronomy 23:3 itself but also as it relates to Isaiah 56:3. Why? According to Isaiah 56:3, any redeemed Moabite and Edomite will be allowed to join into temple worship during the Millennium. Even Jeremiah 48:47 and Jeremiah 49:6 confirm that the redeemed Moabites and Ammonites will be blessed during the Messianic Kingdom. How then is this apparent contradiction reconciled? The answer is given in the following paragraph.

The word “*forever*” in Hebrew points to a specified period of time, the length of which is dependent on the context of its usage. It is not, therefore, a synonym for eternity as we tend to define the term. For instance, 2Chronicles 6:2 and 7:16 both state that King Solomon’s temple was to stand *forever*, when in essence it was destroyed in 586 BC. The same applies in Ezra 9:12, Psalm 78:69, 132:14, 148:4-6, Ecclesiastes 1:4, Jeremiah 17:25, and Micah 4:7, verses that describe the heavens and earth as existing *forever*. However, according to Revelation 21:1, there will one day be *a new heaven and a new earth*, meaning that the present heavens and earth are temporary. This is easily reconciled by applying the Hebrew definition of *forever*—a specified period of time, the length of which is dependent on the context of its usage. Are you seeing the importance of understanding the meaning of every word used in the Scriptures? What an amazing letter the Lord has written us!

Is. 56:4 For thus says the Lord, "To the eunuchs who keep My sabbaths, And choose what pleases Me, And hold fast My covenant,

The *eunuchs* who know and obey the Lord during the Millennium will be greatly blessed, as is confirmed by this verse and the verse which follows.

Is. 56:5 To them I will give in My house and within My walls a memorial, And a name better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name which will not be cut off.

The believing eunuchs during the Millennium will have their names memorialized within the temple *walls*. It is through this means that the eunuch, who is incapable of producing offspring, will have his name honored without bearing *sons and daughters*. Obviously, the eunuch will be allowed to worship at the temple, as is confirmed by verse 7 as well.

Is. 56:6 ¶ "Also the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, To minister to Him, and to love the name of the Lord, To be His servants, every one who keeps from profaning the sabbath, And holds fast My covenant;

The word “*foreigners*” probably points to the Moabite and Ammonite in the specific sense (as we discussed in the notes associated with Isaiah 56:3), as well as to all Gentiles in the general sense. Obviously, all believing Gentiles will be permitted to worship at the Millennial temple, again confirming that the Mosaic Law will not be in effect, since such a thing was prohibited by the Law. The “*covenant*” mentioned here is the *new covenant* which replaced the Mosaic Law through Jesus’ First Coming (Hebrews 8:1-13).

Note: It is interesting that the *Ethiopian eunuch* of Acts 8:26-39 was not only a foreigner but also a *eunuch*.

Is. 56:7 Even those I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on My altar; For My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples."

The believing Gentiles, many of which will be the *sheep* Gentiles of Matthew 25 (who assist the Jews during the Tribulation), will be *joyful* as they offer *sacrifices* to the Lord on the *altar* of the Millennial temple. It is during this time that the temple will finally become *a house of prayer for all the peoples*. This verse confirms, along with many other verses in God's word, that salvation is made available to all the nations. This is what Jesus died for (read Isaiah 49:1-7) in order that Jews and Gentiles alike could worship the Creator.

We should note that Jesus quoted a portion of this verse in Matthew 21:13, Mark 11:17, and Luke 19:46 as He cleansed the temple. In fact, in Mark 11:17, Jesus stated that at some point in the future the temple would *be called a house of prayer for all the nations*. Through Isaiah we understand that this will occur during the Millennium.

Is. 56:8 The Lord God, who gathers the dispersed of Israel, declares, "Yet others I will gather to them, to those already gathered."

God will *gather* the Gentile nations (along with Israel) to enjoy the blessings of the Millennium. This is also confirmed by verses such as Isaiah 60:3-11, 66:18-21, and John 10:16.

Is. 56:9 ¶ All you beasts of the field, All you beasts in the forest, Come to eat.

God brings condemnation upon the leadership of Israel and its people in a majority of Isaiah 56:9-57:21. Because we serve a God of love and grace, there are, as usual, words of comfort inserted as well.

Because verses 10-12 describe the ungodly shepherds (leaders) of Israel, the word "*beasts*" in verse 9 must point to the Gentiles who will consume the flock that has been under the care of these less than desirable shepherds. It is interesting that the leaders of the nation at Jesus' First Coming were similarly described (Matthew 23:1-39).

Is. 56:10 His watchmen are blind, All of them know nothing. All of them are dumb dogs unable to bark, Dreamers lying down, who love to slumber;

The *watchmen* (leaders) of Israel *are blind*; they *know nothing*; they *are dumb dogs unable to bark*; and they are *Dreamers...who love to slumber*—all due to sin.

Is. 56:11 And the dogs are greedy, they are not satisfied. And they are shepherds who have no understanding; They have all turned to their own way, Each one to his unjust gain, to the last one.

The evil *shepherds* are described as *greedy*, never *satisfied*, void of *understanding*, having *turned to their own way*, all in pursuit of *unjust gain*. This lines up well with Isaiah 3, where we find that the Jewish male leadership during the Tribulation will be horrendous, in fact, so passive that they allow their wives and children to lead the nation.

Is. 56:12 "Come," they say, "let us get wine, and let us drink heavily of strong drink; And tomorrow will be like today, only more so."

The unrighteous shepherds are horrible prophets in proclaiming that *tomorrow will be like today, only more so*. In other words, they teach that things will continue to get better when, in essence, they will get worse.