

Israel's Rebels and the LORD's Salvation

Lesson 15: Isaiah 56-59

December 16, 2018

Review

- 1-39 Book of Condemnation
 - 1-5 The Lord Speaks to Isaiah
 - 6 Isaiah is Called and Sent
 - 7-12 **The Coming Assyrian Invasion**
 - 13-27 **The Lord Speaks to the Nations**
 - 28-35 **The Lord Speaks to the Nation**
 - 36-39 **The Assyrian Invasion**
- 40-66 Book of Comfort
 - 40-48 Comfort in the Sovereign God (theology proper)
 - 49-59 Comfort in God the Deliverer (soteriology)
 - 60-66 Comfort in the Kingdom of God (eschatology)

Lesson Outline

Salvation comes to

- 56:1-8 the just who keep the covenant
- 57:14-21 the humble and contrite
- 58:6-14 ones who please God in fasting

59:15b-21 God will come in wrath – and salvation

Judgment comes on

- 56:9-57:13 unjust leaders and idolaters
- 58:1-5 unjust who fast
- 59:1-15a sinful, violent, and unjust

Chapter 56 Outline

- 1-2 Live in light of salvation
- 3-8 All who hold to the covenant will be accepted
- 9-12 The leaders have no understanding

Live in light of
salvation

Isaiah 56:1-3

¹Thus says the LORD,

“Preserve justice and do righteousness,

For **My** salvation is about to come

And **My** righteousness to be revealed.

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.”

³Let not the foreigner who has joined himself

to the LORD say,

“The LORD will surely separate me from His

people.”

Nor let the eunuch say, “Behold, I am a dry
tree.”

- 56:1-2 concludes chapter 55
- The Sabbath was a sign of the covenant
- There is blessing for all who preserve justice and do righteousness
- God will not separate from those who join to Him

All who hold to the
covenant will be
accepted
Isaiah 56:4-6

⁴For thus says the LORD,
“To the eunuchs who keep My sabbaths,
And choose what pleases Me,
And hold fast My covenant,
⁵To 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.
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;

- What the eunuchs must do:
 - Keep God’s sabbaths
 - Choose what pleases God
 - Hold fast God’s covenant
- The blessing for obedience
 - A memorial
 - A name
- What foreigners must do:
 - Minister to God
 - Love God
 - Be God’s servants
 - Keep the sabbath
 - Hold fast God’s covenant

The leaders have no understanding Isaiah 56:7-10

⁷Even 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.”

⁸The Lord GOD, who gathers the dispersed of
Israel, declares,
“Yet *others* I will gather to them, to
those *already* gathered.”

⁹All you beasts of the field,
All you beasts in the forest,
Come to eat.

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

- The blessings for obedience:
 - Brought to God’s holy mountain
 - Joyful in God’s house of prayer
 - Their sacrifices will be accepted
- Foes can easily come when the watchmen are blind

The leaders have no
understanding
Isaiah 56:11-12

¹¹And 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.

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."

- They are not watching because they are greedy
- They are not seeking God's way
- The wicked think God's judgment will never come

Chapter 57 Outline

- 1-2 The righteous perish
- 3-10 The prostitution of the nation
- 11-13 God's threats and promises
- 14-19 Divine salvation for the humble
- 20-21 Punishment of the wicked

The righteous perish Isaiah 57:1-4

¹The **righteous** man perishes, and no man takes it to heart;
And **devout men** are taken away, while no one understands.

For the **righteous** man is taken away from evil,

²**He** enters into peace;

They rest in their beds,

Each one who walked in his upright way.

³“But come here, you sons of a sorceress,
Offspring of an adulterer and a prostitute.

⁴“Against whom do you jest?

Against whom do you open wide your mouth
And stick out your tongue?

Are you not children of rebellion,

Offspring of deceit,

- “taken away from evil”
 - Removed from evil
 - By evil (men)
- Ultimate peace is guaranteed to the righteous
- The wicked mock God

The prostitution of the nation

Isaiah 57:5-7

⁵*Who* inflame yourselves among the oaks,
Under every luxuriant tree,
Who slaughter the children in the **ravines**,
Under the clefts of the crags?

⁶“Among the smooth *stones* of the **ravine**
Is your portion, they are your lot;
Even to them you have poured out a drink
offering,

You have made a grain offering.
Shall I relent concerning these things?

⁷“Upon a high and lofty mountain

You have made your bed.

You also went up there to offer sacrifice.

- They incite themselves to sin
- They make sacrifices, but not to God
- Switch to female pronouns

The prostitution of the nation Isaiah 57:8-10

⁸“Behind the door and the doorpost
You have set up your sign;
Indeed, far removed from Me, you
have uncovered yourself,
And have gone up and made your bed wide.
And you have made an agreement for
yourself with them,
You have loved their bed,
You have looked on *their* manhood.
⁹“You have journeyed to the king with oil
And increased your perfumes;
You have sent your envoys a great distance
And made *them* go down to Sheol.
¹⁰“You were tired out by the length of your
road,
Yet you did not say, ‘It is hopeless.’
You found renewed strength,
Therefore you did not faint.

- Idolatry is often described as prostitution
- All of it is turning away from God
- Even when tired they did not turn from sin

God's threats and promises Isaiah 57:11-13

¹¹"Of whom were you worried and fearful
When you lied, and did not remember Me
Nor give *Me* a thought?
Was I not silent even for a long time
So you do not fear Me?

¹²"I will declare your righteousness and
your deeds,
But they will not profit you.

¹³"When you cry out, let your collection of
idols deliver you.
But the wind will carry all of them up,
And a breath will take *them away*.
But he who takes refuge in Me will inherit
the land
And will possess My holy mountain."

- They feared other things more than God
- They weren't afraid because God seemed silent
- God will reveal their "righteousness"
- There is an inheritance for those who take refuge in God

Divine salvation for the humble Isaiah 57:14-17

¹⁴And it will be said,
“Build up, build up, prepare the **way**,
Remove *every* obstacle out of the way of My
people.”

¹⁵For thus says the high and exalted One
Who lives forever, whose name is Holy,
“I dwell *on* a high and holy place,
And *also* with the **contrite** and **lowly** of spirit
In order to revive the spirit of the **lowly**
And to revive the heart of the **contrite**.

¹⁶“For I will not contend forever,
Nor will I always be angry;
For the spirit would grow faint before Me,
And the breath *of those whom* I have made.

¹⁷“Because of the iniquity of his unjust gain I
was **angry** and struck him;
I hid *My face* and was **angry**,
And he went on turning away, in the **way** of
his heart.

- God is transcendent and immanent
- No one can stand up to God’s continued anger
- God’s means of correction
 - Striking
 - Hiding Himself

Punishment of the wicked

Isaiah 57:18-21

¹⁸"I have seen his ways, but I will **heal** him; I will lead him and restore comfort to him and to his mourners,

¹⁹Creating the praise of the lips.

Peace, peace to him who is far and to him who is near,"

Says the LORD, "and I will **heal** him."

²⁰But the wicked are like the tossing sea, For it cannot be quiet,

And its waters toss up refuse and mud.

²¹"There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked."

- What God will do anyway
 - Heal
 - Lead
 - Restore comfort
- This is only for those who mourn
- Salvation needs to result in praise
- Peace for the mourners, no peace for the wicked

Chapter 58 Outline

- 1-5 Fasting that displeases God
- 6-14 Results of acceptable fasting

Fasting that displeases God

Isaiah 58:1-3

¹“Cry loudly, do not hold back;
Raise your voice like a trumpet,
And declare to My people their transgression
And to the house of Jacob their sins.

²“Yet they seek Me day by day and **delight** to
know My ways,
As a nation that has done righteousness
And has not forsaken the ordinance of their
God.

They ask Me *for* just decisions,
They **delight** in the nearness of God.

³‘Why have we fasted and You do not see?
Why have we humbled ourselves and You do
not notice?’

Behold, on the day of your fast you
find *your* desire,
And drive hard all your workers.

- Israel needs to be told their sins
- The people seem to seek God
- The people did not actually humble themselves when fasting

Results of acceptable fasting

Isaiah 58:4-6

⁴“Behold, you fast for contention and strife
and to strike with a wicked fist.

You do not fast like *you do* today to make
your voice heard on high.

⁵“Is it a fast like this which I choose, a day for
a man to humble himself?

Is it for bowing one’s head like a reed
And for spreading out sackcloth and ashes as
a bed?

Will you call this a fast, even an acceptable
day to the LORD?

⁶“Is this not the fast which I choose,
To loosen the bonds of wickedness,
To undo the bands of the yoke,
And to let the oppressed go free
And break every yoke?

- False fasting
 - To humble oneself
 - To bow one’s head
 - To lie in sackcloth and ashes
- True fasting
 - To loosen the bonds of wickedness
 - To undo the bands of the yoke
 - To let the oppressed go free
 - To break every yoke

Results of acceptable fasting

Isaiah 58:7-9

⁷“Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry
And bring the homeless poor into the house;
When you see the naked, to cover him;
And not to hide yourself from your own
flesh?

⁸“**Then** your light will break out like the
dawn,
And your recovery will speedily spring forth;
And your righteousness will go before you;
The glory of the LORD will be your rear guard.

⁹“**Then** you will call, and the LORD will answer;
You will cry, and He will say, ‘Here I am.’
If you remove the yoke from your midst,
The pointing of the finger and speaking
wickedness,

- True fasting (continued)
 - To divide your bread with the hungry
 - To bring homeless poor into the house
 - To cover the naked
 - To not hide from your own flesh
- The result is blessing
 - Light
 - Recovery
 - Righteousness
 - God’s protection
- Then God will answer

Results of acceptable fasting Isaiah 58:10-12

¹⁰And **if** you give yourself to the hungry
And satisfy the desire of the afflicted,
Then your light will rise in darkness
And your gloom *will become* like midday.

¹¹“And the LORD will continually guide you,
And satisfy your desire in scorched places,
And give strength to your bones;
And you will be like a watered garden,
And like a spring of water whose waters do
not fail.

¹²“Those from among you will rebuild the
ancient ruins;
You will raise up the age-old foundations;
And you will be called the repairer of
the breach,
The restorer of the streets in which to dwell.

- Continuation of blessings of true fasting
- Fasting = humility, walking humbly before God
- The blessing would include rebuilding

Results of acceptable fasting Isaiah 58:13-14

¹³**If** because of the sabbath, you turn your foot
from doing **your own pleasure** on My holy day,
And call the sabbath a **delight**, the holy *day* of the LORD honorable,
And honor it, desisting from your *own* ways,
From seeking **your own pleasure**
And speaking *your own* word,
¹⁴**Then** you will take **delight** in the LORD,
And I will make you ride on the heights of the earth;
And I will feed you *with* the heritage of Jacob your father,
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

- They needed to seek what was pleasing to God
- We honor God by seeking to please Him
- Delight in obedience leads to delight in God

Chapter 59 Outline

- 1-8 God rejects the prayers of the sinful
- 9-15a Confession of sins
- 15b-21 God will bring salvation and justice

God rejects the prayers of the sinful Isaiah 59:1-4

¹Behold, the LORD's hand is not so short
That it cannot save;
Nor is His ear so dull
That it cannot **hear**.

²But your iniquities have made a separation
between you and your God,
And your sins have hidden *His* face from you
so that He does not **hear**.

³For your hands are defiled with blood
And your fingers with iniquity;
Your lips have spoken falsehood,
Your tongue mutters wickedness.

⁴No one sues righteously and no one
pleads honestly.
They trust in confusion and speak lies;
They conceive mischief and bring forth
iniquity.

- God is able to save
- Sin separates us from God
- Sins of the hands and mouth

God rejects the prayers of the sinful Isaiah 59:5-8

⁵They hatch adders' eggs and weave the spider's web;

He who eats of their eggs dies,
And *from* that which is crushed a snake
breaks forth.

⁶Their webs will not become clothing,
Nor will they cover themselves with their
works;

Their works are works of iniquity,
And an act of violence is in their **hands**.

⁷Their **feet** run to evil,
And they hasten to shed innocent blood;
Their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity,
Devastation and destruction are in their
highways.

⁸They do not know the way of **peace**,
And there is no justice in their **tracks**;
They have made their **paths** crooked,
Whoever treads on them does not know
peace.

- Animal analogies of sin
- Sins of the feet and thoughts
- There is no justice or peace in the way of sin

Confession of sins Isaiah 59:9-12

⁹Therefore **justice** is far from us,
And righteousness does not overtake us;
We **hope** for light, but behold, darkness,
For brightness, but we walk in gloom.
¹⁰We grope along the wall like blind men,
We grope like those who have no eyes;
We stumble at midday as in the twilight,
Among those who are vigorous *we are* like
dead men.
¹¹All of us growl like bears,
And moan sadly like doves;
We **hope** for **justice**, but there is none,
For salvation, *but* it is far from us.
¹²For our transgressions are multiplied
before You,
And our sins testify against us;
For our transgressions are with us,
And we know our iniquities:

- Sin brings darkness
- They want justice, but don't practice it
- Sin isn't hidden from God
- Our sins testify against us

God will bring salvation and justice Isaiah 59:13-16

¹³Transgressing and denying the LORD,
And turning away from our God,
Speaking oppression and revolt,
Conceiving *in* and uttering from the heart
lying words.

¹⁴Justice is turned back,
And righteousness stands far away;
For **truth** has stumbled in the street,
And uprightness cannot enter.

¹⁵Yes, **truth** is lacking;
And he who turns aside from evil makes
himself a prey.

Now the LORD saw,
And it was displeasing in His sight that there
was no justice.

¹⁶And He saw that there was no man,
And was astonished that there was no one to
intercede;
Then His own arm brought salvation to Him,
And His righteousness upheld Him.

- The situation: no justice
- Disregarding truth lead to turning from justice and righteousness
- There is danger for those who turn from evil
- God responds

God will bring salvation and justice Isaiah 59:17-20

¹⁷**He put on** righteousness like a breastplate,
And a helmet of salvation on His head;
And **He put on** garments of vengeance for
clothing

And wrapped Himself with zeal as a mantle.

¹⁸According to *their* deeds, so **He will repay**,
Wrath to His adversaries, recompense to His
enemies;

To the coastlands **He will make recompense.**

¹⁹So they will fear the name of the LORD from
the west

And His glory from the rising of the sun,
For He will come like a rushing stream
Which the wind of the LORD drives.

²⁰“A Redeemer will come to Zion,
And to those who turn from transgression in
Jacob,” declares the LORD.

- The Lord’s apparel
 - **Breastplate – righteousness**
 - **Helmet – salvation**
 - **Clothing – vengeance**
 - **Mantle – zeal**
- Vengeance – God establishing justice

God will bring
salvation and justice
Isaiah 59:21

²¹“As for Me, this is My covenant with them,” says the LORD: “My Spirit which is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your offspring, nor from the mouth of your offspring’s offspring,” says the LORD, “from now and forever.”

- The new covenant
- God’s words will be honored

Summary

- Those who join themselves to God will be blessed
- No other fear than the fear of God should influence us
- Just because God is silent doesn't mean He won't act
- We need to always seek and do what pleases God
- We need to delight in the Lord more than in anything
- Sin separates us from God
- There is no justice or peace in the way of sin
- When truth falls, so does righteousness
- Only God can bring salvation