

ISAIAH: GOD'S DIRECTIVES TO THOSE TROUBLED AT GOVERNMENTAL APOSTASY
Part XLIV: The Starting Point Of God's Salvation Regarding Group Apostasy
(Isaiah 56:9-57:21)

I. Introduction

- A. Many believers can point to segments of the Church and society to expose apostasy in its various forms.
- B. However, at times there is a "wringing of the hands" as believers wonder where and how a spiritual renewal or awakening can "turn things around."
- C. Isaiah 56:9-57:21 not only points to the evils in Israel as a nation, taking time to expose the sin in her leaders as well as her individuals, but it also reveals the starting point of God's salvation. We study that passage for instruction for discerning the starting point of spiritual renewal in our time as well:

II. The Starting Point Of God's Salvation Regarding Group Apostasy, Isaiah 56:9-57:21.

- A. God called for the Gentiles, referring to them in a metonymy as "beasts", to come to devour apostate Israel for her spiritual wickedness against the Lord, Isaiah 56:9.
- B. Then, referring to Israel's leaders **themselves** as beasts, God exposed their sin and its cause, Isa. 56:10-12:
 - 1. Israel's overseers who were supposed to be protective watchmen to guide their people through life with the light of Scripture knowledge instead had become blind and spiritually insensitive to truth, 56:10a.
 - 2. This state had made them like dogs that, instead of barking out a warning of danger for sin and God's impending judgment, had resorted uselessly to sleeping, Isaiah 56:10b.
 - 3. Such spiritual lethargy had arisen due to their greed for gratifying their lusts instead of focusing on Scripture so as to guide the people of God into God's truth and its resulting blessing, Isaiah 56:11-12.
 - 4. In summary, a preoccupation with the lusts of the world (cf. 1 John 2:15-16) had led these leaders to cease focusing on Scripture, leading to spiritual ignorance, blindness and a resulting inability to guide the people of God away from apostasy to their loss of God's blessing!
- C. Yet, lest we think all the blame rested on Israel's leaders, God took the individual Hebrew to task for personal apostasy as follows (Isaiah 57:1-13a):
 - 1. So rebellious against the Lord were individuals in Israel, Isaiah reveals God was allowing godly people die before He let the Gentiles invade so these godly ones would not experience the invasion; yet, the rest of the people were so evil they didn't see this passing of the godly as a warning sign, Isaiah 57:1-2.
 - 2. Instead, the people delighted in practicing gross immorality in Baal worship, Isaiah 57:3-5a, 6-10.
 - 3. The people of Israel even sacrificed their infants to the god, Molech, Isaiah 57:5b.
 - 4. Indeed, individuals in Israel had abandoned their sense of accountability to God, 57:11. Thus, their works that they felt were upright would be exposed in God's judgment as evil, Isaiah 57:12.
 - 5. Accordingly, God warned that these people would be left crying vainly to their hapless idols when His judgment for their apostasy fell, Isaiah 57:13a.
- D. However, **individuals throughout Israel** who put their trust in God would be saved, Isaiah 57:13b-21:
 - 1. In stark contrast to the judgment announced on the nation for apostasy, God announced the **individual** Hebrew who trusted in Him would experience His blessing, Isaiah 57:13b.
 - 2. Accordingly, God promised blessing and peace for the repentant (Isaiah 57:14-19) while continuing to predict trouble and a lack of peace for the wicked in Israel who did not repent, Isaiah 57:20-21.

Lesson: Though **LEADERS** who are occupied in meeting their lusts and thus fail to focus on Scripture to guide God's people are to blame for the loss of God's blessing on a nation, **INDIVIDUALS** who neglect to heed to God's signals at **THEIR OWN** level of functioning are **EQUALLY** to blame. Thus, the **STARTING** point of spiritual renewal is **INDIVIDUAL** alignment with God's truths that **GOD** is **REVEALING** to **EACH ONE** all of the time and **EACH PERSON'S LEVEL** of life!

Application: (1) If we **LEAD** others in a church or governmental or family institution, may **WE** not love the world to get preoccupied in fulfilling our lusts, but focus on heeding God's will that we might lead subordinates to obey God and be blessed. (2) If we are **INDIVIDUAL** followers in a church or government or family, may **WE** at **OUR** level reject filling our **OWN** lusts that we might **HEED** God's **SIGNALS** to **US** for blessing. (3) If we have failed here, may we **EACH REPENT** for peace with God.