

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Isaiah: Jahweh Is Salvation

Part LXVI: God's Warning To The Wicked In Isaiah's Era To Repent (Isaiah 56:9-57:21)

I. Introduction

- A. Though Isaiah had mostly predicted God's Kingdom blessings in Isaiah 49:1-56:8, Israel in Isaiah's era did not want to heed the Lord for blessing, what called for a warning to the wicked; Bib. Know. Com., O. T., p. 1112.
- B. Isaiah 56:9-57:21 provides that warning, and we study it for our insight and edification today (as follows):

II. God's Warning To The Wicked In Isaiah's Era To Repent, Isaiah 56:9-57:21.

- A. God warned the wicked in Israel of His judgment for calloused rebellion against Him, Isaiah 56:9-57:13a:
 - 1. Likening the Gentiles to wild beasts, God called them to devour Israel in punishment for her spiritual insensitivity (Ibid.), for her watchmen, the priests and religious leaders were blind and ignorant like dogs who liked to sleep and eat rather than even keep guard as good watch dogs, Isaiah 56:9-11a.
 - 2. Like shepherds who fail to watch for the welfare of the sheep, these religious leaders each sought their own personal lust gratification, failing to consider God's judgment to come, Isaiah 56:11b-12.
 - 3. Those who lived righteously in Israel had to die in order to find peace. Either their frustration over the evil faced led to their untimely death or the Lord in mercy spared them prolonged frustration by shortening their life spans, Isaiah 57:1-2; Ibid., p. 1112; E. J. Young, The Book of Isaiah, 1974, v. III, p. 399-400.
 - 4. Opposite the upright, the ungodly in Israel had borrowed the pagan practices of the Gentiles around them including sorcery and religious sexual prostitution, Isaiah 57:3-4; Ibid., Bible Know. Com., O. T.
 - 5. Such worship involved not only sexual prostitution but also child sacrifice in attempts to appease the wrath of various pagan gods, Isaiah 57:5-8 (cf. Ezekiel 20:31; Hosea 13:2); Ibid.
 - 6. In the worship of the Ammonite god Molech that was at times accompanied by child sacrifice (2 Kings 23:10; Jer. 32:35), the people of Israel had even sent representatives to Ammon to worship that often resulted in their own deaths where they descended to the grave, but in spite of such risks, they refused to give up their evil ways and renewed their strength to continue in such idolatrous sin, Isaiah 57:9-10; Ibid.
 - 7. In all of this idolatry, Israel's people had forgotten God Himself apparently because He had seemingly seemed silent, so God said He would ironically expose their alleged righteous works to show that they were of no help to them before God's judgment, Isaiah 57:11-12; Ibid.
 - 8. When Israel then faced trouble in judgment only to cry out for help to her pagan gods, they would be so ineffective, it would be as if the mere wind had blown them away, Isaiah 57:13a; Ibid., Young, p. 408.
- B. However, those in Israel who trusted in the Lord would know God's rich blessings, Isaiah 57:13b-19:
 - 1. Those who trusted in the Lord would inherit the land from Gentile dominion and enjoy physical blessings, including access to the temple mount as Israel again possessed it, Isaiah 57:13b; Ibid., B. K. C., O. T.
 - 2. They would see God build up, prepare the way and remove every obstacle to blessing (Isaiah 57:14) because God Who is lofty and inhabits all eternity in His greatness, the Holy God who is separate from evil, not only dwells in His lofty, holy place, but fellowships with the individual who is of a repentant and lowly spirit to revive the spirit of the lowly and the heart of the repentant, Isaiah 57:15.
 - 3. God announced He would not always contend against and be angry with the sinner, for man's spirit would grow faint before Him (Isaiah 57:16), that though He disciplined the wayward (Isaiah 57:17), He would heal all both near and far when they repented, leading, restoring and comforting them, Isaiah 57:18-19.
- C. Conversely, returning to address the unrepentant, God warned them of sure unrest in judgment, Isa. 57:20-21:
 - 1. The wicked who refused to repent were like the tossing sea, relentless in their unrest and in their constant production of evil like the tossing sea that churns up mire and dirt, Isaiah 57:20.
 - 2. Accordingly, there is no peace, no hope of peace, for the wicked, claimed Isaiah's Lord, Isaiah 57:21.

Lesson: *Regardless of the great hope of the Messianic Kingdom announced by Isaiah, many in his day in Israel were relentlessly rebellious against God, so they would experience unrest and divine judgment. However, those in Israel who repented would see their Great God marvelously fellowship with them as He restored them to blessing.*

Application: *(1) If we have sinned, may we confess it to God for restoration to intimate spiritual fellowship with Him, 1 John 1:9. (2) However, if we refuse to repent and stick to our false idols, to our false crutches in place of God, may we be warned that we face sure severe divine discipline and unrest in our lives.*