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My House Will Be Called a House of Prayer for All Nations

56: 1-8

My house will be called a house of prayer for the nations DIG: With the absence of the Temple and the sacrifices that go along with it, how do Jews believe they are saved today? How is the Dispensation of Grace a mystery? Who is the Servant? What two examples are given to demonstrate that a place in the Kingdom will be based on the relationship to the King rather than simply being Jewish? What kind of burnt offerings and sacrifices will be offered in the Messianic Kingdom? If Jesus paid for our sins once for all when He offered Himself (Hebrews 7:27), what is their purpose? How does Isaiah show that the blessings *for* Israel will not be limited *to* Israel?

REFLECT: How do the attitudes and actions of these verses apply to us today? Why are these so crucial to God? How might you act justly and love mercy and walk humbly with your God (Micah 6:8) this week in your family? Your work place? Would you describe your church or messianic synagogue as a gathering place for sinners, or a fortress to protect those “inside” from those “outside?” Why? Try seeing your church or messianic synagogue services from the viewpoint of someone from a totally different background. What “inside” practices or beliefs might prevent outsiders from regarding it as a place for them to meet God? What might you do to help change this? What “outsider” will you befriend this week?

This is a far eschatological prophecy during the Messianic Kingdom, where we see ADONAI's gathering of His people. This section provides an excellent transition between **Chapters 40-55** and **Chapters 56-66**. It is also parallel to ADONAI's gathering of His people in **66:18-24** (see the chiastic structure below). Earlier chapters spoke of the Servant's offer of salvation to the Gentile nations. Now **Isaiah** begins to work out it's implications. Even though it will be a small percentage of the millions and millions of Gentiles multiplying in the Messianic Kingdom (**Revelation 20:7-9**), many will come to **the LORD** by faith. But whether it be **Isra'el** or the Gentile peoples, this **B'rit Chadashah** will not be primarily performance based, but a relationship. That point is made clear here with

its shocking references to **eunuchs** and **foreigners**.

Who is especially pleasing to **God**? Those who carry the bloodline of Abraham and pass it on to succeeding generations of **covenant** people? No! **His** people are those who reveal a living relationship with **Him** in their lives. Although they may have never known Abraham and die childless, **all who received Him, and to those who believe in His name, He gives the right to be become children of God (John 1:12)**. It is not and will not be genealogy, but **faith** that marks the servants of **ADONAI**.

Today, in the absence of **the Temple** and the tribe of Levites to offer the sacrifices on their behalf, Jews believe that prayer, observance of **the Sabbath**, and good works will save them. But the Bible, even the Hebrew Scriptures, reject that faulty theology. The Hall of **Faith, Hebrews 11**, is a testimony that salvation equals **faith**, plus nothing. In other words, we can only be saved on the basis of **faith**, because **without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6)**. However, during **Isaiah's** day, the Jews believed that since they had the revealed Word of **God** in the Scriptures, and they had **the Temple**, that salvation was limited only to **Isra'el**. They were in fact, very racist in thinking that Gentiles were equivalent to dogs. They considered themselves defiled if they even went into the house of a Gentile. Here **Isaiah** will point out that salvation is not limited to **Isra'el**, but to all men (**Gen 12:3**). Thus, there is the announcement of salvation **for all nations**.

This is what the LORD says: **Maintain justice and do what is right (56:1a)**. The advice by **Isaiah** is to mankind to **maintain justice and do what is right**. Jewish teachers have at various times attempted to make collections of different scriptures from the Torah. One of the most remarkable of these was made by Rabbi Samlai. The following is his condensed statement: Moses gave **six hundred and thirteen commandments** on Mount Sinai. David reduced these commandments to **eleven**, which may be found in **the fifteenth Psalm**, in answer to the question: **LORD, who may dwell in your sanctuary? Isaiah** further reduced the eleven to **six**, as may be seen in **Isaiah 33:15**. Then came **Micah** and reduced the six to **three (Mic 6:8)**. Once more **Isaiah** reduced the three to **two (Isaiah 56:1)**. Last came **Habakkuk**, and reduced them all to **one: but the righteous will live by faith (Hab 2:4)**.²³²

The reason is because **God** says: **For My salvation is close at hand (56:1a)**. Like **Peter (Matthew 17:4)**, **Isaiah** and the other prophets expected the Kingdom to be established immediately; however, the Dispensation of Grace (see my commentary on **Hebrews, to see link click Bp - The Dispensation of Grace**), was a **mystery** to them: **And to make plain to everyone that administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept**

hidden in God, the Creator of everything (Ephesians 3:9). A **mystery** in the Bible is different than what we usually think of as a **mystery** - something that cannot be discovered. It is something hidden by **God**, that is now revealed (**Romans 11:25, 16:25; Colossians 1:27**).

And My righteousness will soon be revealed (56:1b). These very expressions were used earlier in **Chapter 55**. These two words, **salvation** and **righteousness**, do not emphasize the concept of **salvation** so much, but **the Person** through whom it would come. That is **the Suffering Servant** (see **Iz - See, My Servant Will Act Wisely, He Will Be Lifted Up and Exalted**). So the final revelation of **the Suffering Servant**, because the time is short, goes out to all mankind in general.

Blessed is the one who does this, the person who holds fast, who keeps the Sabbath without desecrating it, and keeps their hands from doing any evil (56:2). He promises blessings for those who will **maintain justice and do what is right**. He promises blessing for those who believe that **salvation is close at hand and righteousness will soon be revealed**. The person who believes all this is marked by obedience; **holds fast, keeps the Sabbath without desecrating it, and keeps his hand from doing evil**. The future salvation **Isaiah** announces in **verses 1 and 2** will extend to two unique groups, **foreigners** and **eunuchs**, in **verses 3 through 8**.

First, the foreigner. Let no foreigner who is bound to ADONAI say: **The LORD will surely exclude me from His people (56:3a)**. The foreigner who has bound himself to the ADONAI will not be **excluded from His people Isra'el**. First, the term **foreigner** may have a special reference to **Ammonites** and **Moabites**. The Torah teaches that no **Ammonite or Moabite shall enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the assembly of the LORD forever (Deuteronomy 23:3 NKJ)**. Notice how the word **forever** is limited to the **tenth generation**? The Hebrew word **forever** does not mean **forever** as we think of it. The Hebrew word never means eternity as we think of it. It merely means up to the end of a period of time. It could be a person's life, it could be a matter of several generations, or it could mean the end of a dispensational age. David would say: **I will dwell in the House of the LORD forever (Psalm 23:6)**. He meant during his lifetime. When David said: **I reigned in Jerusalem forever**, he did not really reign there **forever**, he actually reigned there for forty years. **The rabbis teach that the Messianic Kingdom is forever**. But **the B'rit Chadashah** tells us that it lasts for a thousand years (**Revelation 20:1-6**). There is no contradiction.

In **Deuteronomy 23** two groups were **excluded from** participating in **the Temple** service. One group was the **eunuch**, and the other group included **Ammonites** and **Moabites** whose origin started with an incestuous relationship between Lot and his two daughters (see my commentary on **Genesis Fb - Let's Get Our Father to Drink Wine, and then Lie With Him to Preserve Our Family Line**). If an **Ammonite or Moabite** accepted the **God of Israel**, he or she would become a believer in that sense but still could not participate in the Tabernacle or **Temple** service **even down to the tenth generation**. But this will not be so during the Dispensation of the Torah (see the commentary on **Exodus Da - Dispensation of the Torah**), but the Dispensation of the Messianic Kingdom (see the commentary on **Revelation Fh - The Dispensation of the Messianic Kingdom**).

Secondly, the eunuch. And let not any eunuch complain, "I am only a dry tree" (56:3b). **The eunuch**, or one who has been emasculated, was not permitted to participate in **the Temple** service. Something in the image of **God** had been destroyed. The **eunuch** could no longer choose to have children with **God's** help. Therefore, the Torah said that worshipers needed to be without any physical defects before **God**, as the sacrifices offered to **God** were without physical defects. **The Ammonites or Moabites** were in the same position. So these two groups under the Torah were unable to participate, but under **the B'rit Chadashah** during the messianic Kingdom they will be able to participate. Although literal, both groups point to an all-embracing inclusiveness. Now **Isaiah** elaborates on both groups.

The eunuch is elaborated on first. It seems that the antichrist castrated many male Jews during the second half of the Great Tribulation. Like Hitler, the antichrist tortured and experimented on them. But this physical handicap did not exclude them from **the B'rit Chadashah**, unlike the First. **For this is what the LORD says: To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, who choose what pleases Me and hold fast to My Covenant - to them I will give within My Temple and its walls a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters. I will give them an everlasting name that will not be cut off . . .** no pun intended (56:4-5). This contrasts with the exclusion of **eunuchs** under the Torah: **No one who has been emasculated by crushing or cutting may enter the assembly of ADONAI (Deuteronomy 23:1).** **Eunuchs** will have a place in **Temple** worship and they will keep **the Sabbath** in the Messianic Kingdom. But even though they will not be able to have children, they will have their very names written upon the walls of **God's** House because of their faithfulness.

Then Isaiah elaborates on the foreigners. And foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD to serve Him, to love the name of the LORD, and to worship Him, all who

keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to My New Covenant (Jer 31:31-34). They too will receive a place in the Messianic Kingdom. **God says these I will bring to My Holy Mountain and give them joy in My house of prayer (56:6-7a).** What is true of **the eunuch** is also going to be true of **the foreigner**. That which was forbidden to them under the Torah will be permitted under **the B'rit Chadashah** because they will **love the name of the LORD and will worship Him.**

Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on My bronze altar (56:7b). (see the commentary on **Exodus Fa - The Build an Altar of Acacia Wood Overlaid with Bronze**). And while their **burnt offerings and sacrifices** were not acceptable under the Torah, they will be acceptable in the Kingdom (see **Db - The Nine Missing Articles in Messiah's Coming Temple**). They will have the privilege of offering sacrifices on the burnt altar that will be viewed as communion because **we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (Hebrews 10:10).** This is what Solomon had envisioned long before (**First Kings 8:41-43**), and what **Malachi** would see as inevitable (**Malachi 1:11**).

Then we see his conclusion. **Adonai ELOHIM, He who will gather the Jewish exiles of Israel** from around the world, says: **I will gather still others to them besides those already gathered (56:8).** Grammatically, **Adonai ELOHIM** stands first in a sentence here and in **1:24**. Here, as there, the purpose of this unusual construction seems to give the sentence a special emphasis. **Isaiah** wants to make it very clear that **God** will not be finished with those outcasts during the Messianic Kingdom. The blessings *for Isra'el* will not be limited *to Isra'el*. The very one who has promised to regather **Isra'el**, will regather **still others to them besides those Jews already gathered.** **God** will gather Gentiles, in particular those Gentiles who could not worship in **the Temple** under the Torah. **God**, speaking through **John**, says: **I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to My voice, and there shall be one flock and one Shepherd (Jn 10:16).**



Indeed, **God** says that **My house will be called a house of prayer for all Gentile nations (56:7c)**. Jesus quoted **Isaiah** when **He** cleansed **the Temple** after **His** triumphal entry into Jerusalem (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ lu - Jesus Entered the Temple Area and Drove Out All Who Were Buying and Selling**). Notice the phrase **will be called** is in the future. It had not happened yet. But it will be true in the Messianic Kingdom although we do have a foretaste of it. Who was both a **foreigner** and a **eunuch** and came to salvation through the book of **Isaiah**? The Ethiopian **eunuch** in the book of **Acts** (see the commentary on **Acts Bb - An Ethiopian Asks about Isaiah 53**). **This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet (Acts 8:26-39)**.

Little has changed today. A Christian worship service is beginning, and two young men come in who are clearly out of place. Their clothes are outlandish and not very clean. Their hair is long and their arms are covered with tattoos. They are clearly not of the evangelical subculture. Are they earnestly seeking salvation? Are they believers who have left all to follow **Christ**? Who knows? Who cares? They don't belong here because they are different from us. So an usher, perhaps tactfully or perhaps rudely, goes up and tells them that they don't belong. And **God** may say to us the same thing **He** said to the returned Israelites, "Don't you dare exclude them from **My** house. They love **Me** more than you do, as you could tell from their lives if you took the time to look. Loving obedience is the only family credentials that matter to **Me!**"²³³

There is a chiasmic structure from here to the end of the book where the first letter is parallel to the second letter, and so on, with the letter **F** being the turning point.

A The faithful remnant will turn to righteousness (58:1-8)

B Rebuke for the wicked and promises to the faithful (56:9 to 58:14)

C Israel confessing her sins (59:1-15a)

D God, the divine warrior (59:15b-21)

E Jerusalem, the Wife of the LORD (60:1-22)

F The Coming of the Messiah and His Kingdom (61:1-11)

E Jerusalem, the Wife of the LORD (62:1-12)

D God, the divine warrior (63:1-6)

C Isra'el confessing her sins (63:7 to 64:11)

B Rebuke for the wicked and promises to the faithful (65:1 to 66:17)

A The faithful remnant will turn to righteousness (66:18-24)