

Gentile Salvation

Isaiah 56

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**BIG BEND
BIBLE
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Isaiah 56:1-8 – A promise to the Gentiles (NIV)

This is what the Lord says: “Maintain justice and do what is right, for my salvation is close at hand and my righteousness will soon be revealed. ² Blessed is the one who does this—the person who holds it fast, who keeps the Sabbath without desecrating it, and keeps their hands from doing any evil.” ³ Let no foreigner who is bound to the Lord say, “The Lord will surely exclude me from his people.” And let no eunuch complain, “I am only a dry tree.” ⁴ 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— ⁵ 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 endure forever. ⁶ And foreigners who bind themselves to the Lord to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant— ⁷ these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.” ⁸ The Sovereign Lord declares— he who gathers the exiles of Israel: “I will gather still others to them besides those already gathered.”

v1 – Why should we keep justice, and do righteousness?

for My salvation is about to come: This prophetic Word is directed to God’s discouraged people, who have slacked in obedience and righteousness.

- They see no reason to repent as long as things look down. God shakes them out of this by calling them to keep justice, and do righteousness in anticipation of what He will do.

v2 – Why should we be obedient to God?

Blessed is the man who does this: There is both the inherent blessing of obedience and the Old Covenant blessing to the obedient.

- And you avoid the consequences of not being obedient.

How may we keep from defiling the Sabbath during this Age of Grace?

The principle: we have a day each week that we set aside to cease from our regular working activities to rest and give special honor to God.

Colossians 2:16-17 – *do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day.*

These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ

Of course, we should honor God every day so having a special day is not required during the Age of Grace, it is a matter of personal conviction.

v3 – What should the foreigner not say?

The Lord will surely exclude me from his people: They may feel like they are utterly separated...from His people, but God promises they aren’t. So, He says to them, “Don’t say that!”

Why shouldn’t the eunuch say he’s a dry tree?

The eunuch is cited as an example of an outcast. Eunuchs were denied full participation in temple rituals as priests (Leviticus 21:17-20). God didn’t want them to accept their feelings of being cast out. Though they may feel that way, God’s word is higher than their feelings.

How can a person overcome feelings of being an outcast?

Often when people feel like outcasts, their feelings become a self-fulfilling prophecy. It is only in refusing to embrace such feelings, and choosing instead to trust in God’s promise, that such feelings can be broken.

- If God says you belong, then you belong.

v4-5 – What will God do for the outcast?

I will give them an everlasting name that will endure forever: For all who walk right and live in obedience, God will honor and bless them with a place and a name in His house.

What is the significance of being given an everlasting name that will endure forever?

There is a new name all believers in heaven will be given...

Revelation 2:17 – *To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.*

The believer's new, secret name will probably reflect the intimate relationship we have with God. When a couple is close, they often have "pet names" for each other. This is probably the same idea.

- Another idea associated with the new name is simply the assurance it gives of our heavenly destination. Your name is there, waiting for you. It is as if your "reservation" in heaven is made.

Is a place and name with God always better than that among men?

Yes, it is. But for many, that isn't good enough. They demand the recognition and honor of men.

- Life is easier and more pleasant when we have a place and a name among men, but we find the most contentment having our place and name with God.

How is this promise connected to the New Covenant?

This prophesies the passing of the dominance of the Levitical order. Clearly, giving eunuchs a place and a name in God's house contradicted the command of Leviticus 21:17-20.

- But under a coming New Covenant, there is a higher principle at work than the shadows of the Levitical law.

v6-7 – What is the promise to the descendants of outcasts?

Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer: Children of believers should have an advantage of being exposed to the gospel. But all people are responsibility to personally accept God's provision and act in obedience to Him. Those who do will be likewise blessed.

Proverbs 22:6 – *Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.*

When would God's house be called a house of prayer for all nations?

God wanted His temple — His house — to not only be a place where the Jewish people would worship Him but to be a house of prayer for all nations.

- Unlike Solomon's temple which was destroyed by Babylon, Herod's temple included a Court of the Gentiles as the outermost courtyard

- It was from the Court of the Gentiles that Jesus, on two occasions (John 2:11–12; Matthew 21:17–23), drove out the money changers, declaring, *"It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you make it a den of robbers"* (Matthew 21:13).

The future Tribulation Temple will also have a Court of the Gentiles:

Revelation 11:1-2 – *the angel stood, saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles.*

Some have surmised that this allows for the temple to be built on the temple mount next to the existing Al-Aqsa Mosque.

The Millennial Kingdom temple will not have a court of the Gentiles because "foreigners" will be as welcome as Jews as long as they are not uncircumcised in heart or flesh (Ezekiel 44:9).

v8 – Who are the other outcasts the Lord will gather?

Because of the pain of exile and captivity, Israel had become intensely self-focused. They believed God only really cared about them, and the rest of the nations (many of whom treated Israel cruelly) did not matter.

- But God wanted to expand the vision of Israel beyond her own borders, so they would know that God loved the perishing world and wanted them to love them also. Jesus reiterated the same thing when He came...

John 10:15-16 – *I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.*

Why does Jesus have such a heart for the outcasts?

He Himself was an outcast. And his people have been outcasts throughout history...

John 15:18-20 – *If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you... Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.*

How is society causing more people to be outcast today?

Social Marxism is dividing people into oppressor and oppressed classes. Critical Race Theory stirs up more racism seeking to counterbalance perceived racism.

- Nobody wants to be seen as an oppressor so those in that demographic are embracing transgender identities to become part of the pampered oppressed class.

Isaiah 56:1-8 – A promise to judge the blind leaders

⁹ *Come, all you beasts of the field, come and devour, all you beasts of the forest!* ¹⁰ *Israel's watchmen are blind, they all lack knowledge; they are all mute dogs, they cannot bark; they lie around and dream, they love to sleep.*

¹¹ *They are dogs with mighty appetites; they never have enough. They are shepherds who lack understanding; they all turn to their own way, they seek their own gain.*

¹² *"Come," each one cries, "let me get wine! Let us drink our fill of beer! And tomorrow will be like today, or even far better."*

v9 – What invitation does God give the beasts?

The LORD God invites the beasts of the field and forest to a great feast — to eat up the corpses of His enemies after they lay on the field of battle.

Revelation 19:17 – *Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great.*

The ultimate wrath of God will be during the Tribulation, all other wars and acts of God causing a lot of death foreshadow that.

v10 – Who are the watchmen that are blind?

The leaders of God's people are blind; judgment is on the way, but they don't see it and are thus unable to warn God's people. They don't fulfill their purpose as watchmen. They are ignorant, like dumb dogs, simply sleeping.

v11 – Who are the shepherds who lack understanding?

These ungodly leaders are a sad contrast to the godly leadership personified by King David in Isaiah 55:3-5. These are unfaithful shepherds, who only look everyone for his own gain.

v12 – What is worse than being ignorant and blind?

Worse than being passively ignorant and blind, is active wickedness trying to escape the reality that is obvious to all with spiritual discernment. As judgment approaches, they simply drink and get drunk.

What attitude is reflected in the rationalization that tomorrow will be like today, or even far better?

Their blind faith in progress that is due to the evolutionary world view has replaced a reasoned faith in God. They are thus ripe for judgment and unprepared for judgment.

- This is not optimism, this is willful blindness

How are our watchmen and shepherds doing today?

There are exceptions but for the most part they are asleep at the wheel, oblivious to the coming wrath of God.

2 Peter 3:3-4 – *scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation*

Humans have a normalcy bias that makes most of our Christian leaders all too willing to ignore the clear signs that the end of the Age is rapidly approaching.

- Amillennialism, replacement theology, & preterism have blinded them to what is really going on.

Why is it important to have a correct view of eschatology (the study of last things)?

- It is a critical part of the full council of God.
- It helps us better understand our Blessed Hope.
- It helps us make sense of the crazy trends in this world.
- Not having a correct view is a symptom of not having a correct view of the Bible and thus can lead to apostasy and heresy.

What is the correct view of Scripture?

2 Timothy 3:16-17 – *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work*

God divinely influenced the human authors of the Scriptures in such a way that what they wrote was the very Word of God.

Does this mean that only the concepts or ideas of the Bible are inspired by God?

The Bible itself claims that every word in every part of the Bible comes from God...

1 Corinthians 2:12-13 – *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

This view of the Scriptures is often referred to as "verbal plenary inspiration." That means the inspiration extends to the very words themselves (verbal)—not just concepts or ideas—and that the inspiration extends to all parts of Scripture and all subject matters of Scripture (plenary).

1 Peter 1:20-21 – *no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*

Even though God used men with their distinctive personalities and writing styles, God divinely inspired the very words they wrote.

Jesus Himself confirmed the verbal plenary inspiration of the Scriptures...

Matthew 5:17-18 – *Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law...*

Jesus is reinforcing the accuracy of the Scriptures down to the smallest detail and the slightest punctuation mark, because it is the very Word of God.

- God is almighty enough to have accurately given us His Word and preserved it through time even using His flawed scribes.

What things are going on today that our watchmen and shepherds should be warning God's people about?

- **Israel** – all indications are God is preparing to begin using them again as His representatives on earth.
- **Economy** – inflation, debt, alternatives to the petrodollar reserve currency (BRICS) indicate a crash is coming... it might be orchestrated to implement CBDCs & socialism
- **Digital Currencies** – the infrastructure for the mark of the beast... currency will be programmable to only be spent on what is approved to buy
- **Geopolitics** – alignment of nations in mid-east is according to Ezekiel 38; all nations are turning on Israel; there are wars and rumors of war; polarization as no other time in history (wheat & tares)
- **Globalism** – Nations are yielding their sovereignty; people are being canceled by banks who don't hold to the globalist orthodoxy; global warming responses will cause famine and totalitarianism
- **AI** – will be used to replace jobs (so we do not need so many people) and control people... will be the technology enabling the image of the beast
- **Society** – true, unbiased justice must give way to social justice which discriminates; people not embracing the new morality will be canceled/destroyed; social credit scores will be implemented
- **Transhumanism** – human DNA will be altered trying to improve on people who are in the image of God; this will trigger God's wrath as with Noah's flood
- **Apostasy** – the church is like the world in so many ways including being oblivious to the coming wrath of God; wokism and universalism is growing in the church

Today's trends are pretty depressing; how can we be joyful in the midst of all that?

Luke 21-28 – *Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.*

Joy is not dependent on our circumstances; it is a fruit of the Spirit. We know the Restrainer of evil is still at work in our world and things will not get really bad until the Tribulation. God is in control... things are not falling apart; they are falling into place (Jan Markell). The Rapture precedes the Tribulation:

Revelation 3:10 – *Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth*

Does the promise in Revelation 3:10 only apply to the Philadelphian church?

No, the Philadelphian church was representative of all who persevered in their faithfulness to Jesus. Just as we are living in the Laodicean church age but we don't have to be Laodicean believers, we can be Philadelphian believers instead. Be a true disciple of Christ, not a fake Laodicean one.

What should we be doing as the remnant who are not blind to the rapidly approaching end of the Age?

- Calling attention to false teaching that deceives God people.
- Taking every opportunity to share God's prophetic Word... seeds of truth are planted or watered that God can use to eventually bear fruit.
- Get on with what God is calling us to do.

What applications come to mind from our discussion?

- God has a heart for the outcast... being a child of God eclipses all feelings of being an outcast.
- Jesus will give us a new name in heaven... strive to make it a good one in the here and now.
- The Bible is the inspired Word of God... know it, believe it, live it!
- Too many watchmen and shepherds are blind... don't be among the deceived and worldly.
- There are many disturbing trends in the world today... chose joy because our redemption draws near!