

# God's Disobedient

Isaiah 57:11-21

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**BIG BEND  
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## Isaiah 57:11-21 – Dealing with God's disobedient people

<sup>11</sup> *“Whom have you so dreaded and feared that you have not been true to me, and have neither remembered me nor taken this to heart? Is it not because I have long been silent that you do not fear me?”* <sup>12</sup> *I will expose your righteousness and your works, and they will not benefit you.* <sup>13</sup> *When you cry out for help, let your collection of idols save you! The wind will carry all of them off, a mere breath will blow them away. But whoever takes refuge in me will inherit the land and possess my holy mountain.”* <sup>14</sup> *And it will be said: “Build up, build up, prepare the road! Remove the obstacles out of the way of my people.”* <sup>15</sup> *For this is what the high and exalted One says— he who lives forever, whose name is holy: “I live in a high and holy place, but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.”* <sup>16</sup> *I will not accuse them forever, nor will I always be angry, for then they would faint away because of me—the very people I have created.* <sup>17</sup> *I was enraged by their sinful greed; I punished them, and hid my face in anger, yet they kept on in their willful ways.* <sup>18</sup> *I have seen their ways, but I will heal them; I will guide them and restore comfort to Israel's mourners,* <sup>19</sup> *creating praise on their lips. Peace, peace, to those far and near,” says the Lord. “And I will heal them.”* <sup>20</sup> *But the wicked are like the tossing sea, which cannot rest, whose waves cast up mire and mud.* <sup>21</sup> *“There is no peace,” says my God, “for the wicked.”*

### v11 – Why didn't God's people fear Him?

*And of whom have you been afraid, or feared, that you have lied and not remembered Me:* Here, the LORD confronts the fact that His people do not fear Him, and thus they must fear someone or something else.

*Nor taken it to your heart:* Their superficial relationship was connected to a low view of God, and their lack of respect for Him.

### What role did God's silence play in their not fearing Him?

God had showed mercy and did not punish their sin immediately. They made a crucial error, common to fallen

humanity: they mistook God's mercy and forbearance for weakness or lack of resolve.

### v12-13 – What would God expose?

He would expose the fact that His people didn't trust in Him, and the things they did trust in — themselves, and their idols could not help them. Their idols were so weak and helpless that a breath will take them (good “luck” with that).

### How would God bless those who were faithful to Him?

*He who puts his trust in Me shall possess the land, and shall inherit My holy mountain:* This is the contrast to those who turned away from God. Trust in the LORD makes a person secure, while trust in one's self or in idols ends in ruin.

- For faithful Israel, the promise is the land forever
- For the individual, the promise is His holy mountain, heaven

### v14 – What road is this?

This is the Millennial Kingdom road to Jerusalem that was previously prophesied...

*Isaiah 35:8 – A highway shall be there, and a road, and it shall be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for others.*

### What are the obstacles that need to be taken out of the way of God's people?

Whatever gets in the way of our getting right with God must be taken out of the way. In the following verses, the LORD deals with those obstacles.

### v15 – What should we know about God?

To be right with God, the first thing to do is to understand His great majesty. The LORD introduces Himself to His people with titles reflecting His great majesty and expects His people to respond to Him as such a glorious God.

### Why is the *high and exalted One* also *contrite and lowly in spirit*?

*To revive the spirit of the humble:* Though God is the High and Lofty One, and lives in the high and holy place, at the same time He will live with men — with him who has a

contrite and humble spirit. This is the second thing to being right before God: being contrite and humble before the God of great majesty.

### **v16 – Why will God not accuse Israel or be angry with them forever?**

*for then they would faint away because of me:* The Lord is merciful to His people promising to relent and not be angry forever. Though God disciplined His people, He now says, I have seen his ways, and will heal them, lead them, and restore comforts to them.

### **v17 – What caused God to punish His people?**

*I was enraged by their sinful greed:* Greed is a strong and selfish desire to have more of something, most often money or power. There are many warnings in the Bible about giving in to greed and longing for riches.

Luke 12:15 – *Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions*

Greed refuses to be satisfied. More often than not, the more we get, the more we want. Material possessions will not protect us—in this life or eternally. Jesus' parable of the rich fool in Luke 12:13–21 illustrates this point well.

### **What is the real problem with wealth and money?**

Having money or wealth is not a problem. The problem is our attitude toward it.

1 Timothy 6:10 – *the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

When we place our confidence in wealth or are consumed by an insatiable desire for more, we are failing to give God the glory and worship He deserves.

- We are to serve God, not waste our time trying to become rich (Proverbs 23:4).
- Our heart's desire should be to store up riches in heaven and not worry about what we will eat or drink or wear (see Matthew 6:25-34).

### **Why did the Israelites continue their willful ways even when God punished them?**

Some repented. The nation of Israel has a rebellious nature that will be expressed until God pours out His Spirit on them during the time of Jacob's Trouble.

### **v18 – Why would God heal Israel despite their sinful ways?**

Because He promised to. Because He is merciful and He loves them.

### **Why does God save those He saves?**

Because He loves us and all who believe Him and trust in His provision will be saved. This mortal life is an opportunity to exercise our free will to respond in faith to the revelation God has given everyone.

- The only revelation some will have is the fact that since there is a creation, there must be a Creator.
- Many will have the testimony of a believer by word or deed planting a seed or watering (reinforcing) a seed. Sadly, most will exercise their free will to reject the provision of the Creator for eternal life (Matt 7:14).

### **Why do so many people reject the provision of God for eternal life.**

- In their pride, they want to make their own way of salvation (salvation-by-works).
- They trust in human reasoning as being superior to revelation from God... this is deadly.
- The gift of eternal life seems so fantastic to them they don't believe it is even possible (naturalism).
- They are so invested in their idols (like science) that they reject any conflicting message.

### **v19 – To whom does God offer peace?**

*Peace, peace, to him who is far off and to him who is near:* In His mercy, God invites all men to peace — both him who is far off and him who is near. Each one can receive God's shalom, which is more than the absence of hostility; it is the gift of precious well-being.

Ephesians 2:17 – *He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near.*

Him who is far off refers to the Gentiles, while him who is near is the Jewish man. Both can come to peace through receiving God's gift through Jesus.

### **v20 – Why are the wicked like the tossing sea?**

In contrast to those who return to God, the wicked are still without peace. God's great mercy is held out to man — but it must be received.

### **v21 – Why is it there can be no peace for the wicked?**

Their minds are restless, being perpetually hurried and tormented with their own lusts and passions, and with the horror of their guilt, and the dread of Divine vengeance due to them, and ready to come upon them.

### **What applications come to mind from our discussion?**

- Don't confuse God's mercy and forbearance for weakness or lack of resolve.
- We should be contrite and humble before the God of great majesty.
- Don't have confidence in wealth, it is idolatry.
- No peace for the wicked... know God, know peace!