

## A Trek Through Isaiah 75 Overview 55 - 66

Bruce Pike

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### Introduction (from J. Alec Motyer)

A New Testament parallel

- With Christ's birth, the promised King arrived. (Lk 1:31-33)
- With His death and resurrection, the saving work of the Servant was completed. Now He sits enthroned at the right hand of the Father. (Heb 10:12)
- But His kingship is not yet realized on the earth: the world rulers of this darkness are active (Eph 6:12) and His people see Him only dimly (1 Cor 13:12).
- The world awaits the return of the King as Conqueror, when every knee will bow and acknowledge Him as Lord (Ph 2:9-11), and His people will become like Him because they see Him clearly as He is. (1 Jn 3:2)

In Isaiah's prophecy up to this point

- Through Cyrus, Israel has been returned to Jerusalem from Babylon.
- However, they are the same people as when they left.
  - No spiritual transformation
  - They have not taken possession of the Servant's victory.
  - As Isaiah warned them in 48:22: No peace for the wicked
- No Davidic ruler
  - Ruled by local governors under a pagan king.
  - All the royal promises are true but not yet fulfilled.
    - Is 9:1-6
    - Is 11:1-9
    - 32:1-8
    - 33:17-24

In 56 - 66 Isaiah describes the community

- Inadequate leaders 56:9-12
- Spiritually divided (57:1-2; 59:14-15; 65:11-12)
  - On one side, false religion (57:3-13; 65:3-7)
  - On the other, a deep sense of sin (59:1-15) and spiritual longing (64:1-2)

Then he answers the longing with glorious promises

- The LORD Himself will intervene (59:16-19; 66:14-16)
- He will bring healing, peace (57:15-21), provision (65:13-16)
- Zion will become glorious
  - The focal point of all the earth (60; 62; 66:7-13, 17-24)
  - The center of the new creation (65:17-24)

Central to all is the third messianic figure: the coming Conqueror (59:20-21; 61:1-3; 61:10 - 62:7; 63:1-6)

## The ideal and the actual 56:1 - 59:13

### Structure

- The ideal people 56:1-8
- The ideal and actual 56:9 - 57:21
- Ineffective religion 58
- The guilty people 59

### The waiting people 56:1-8

- A wonderful future
  - V1 God's salvation and righteousness revealed.
  - V8 Israel gathered, along with others.
- V1-2 Expectant waiting; resulting blessing
  - God's salvation and righteousness will soon be revealed.
  - Blessed are those who wait for Him
    - Keeping justice and righteousness
    - Holding fast
    - Keeping the Sabbath
    - Separating from evil
- V3-8 All-embracing inclusiveness
  - Two examples: the eunuch and the foreigner
  - The eunuch
    - Who fears having no legacy.
    - He who believes: keeps the Sabbath, chooses the things that please God, holds fast the LORD's covenant.
    - He will be blessed: a place in God's house, a monument, an everlasting name.
  - The foreigner
    - Who fears being separated from God's people.
    - He who believes: joins themselves to the LORD, ministers to Him, loves His name, is His servant, keeps the Sabbath, holds fast His covenant.
    - He will be blessed: brought to God's holy mountain, joyful in God's house of prayer, burnt offerings and sacrifices accepted.
  - V7b-8 Summary
    - God's house will be a house of prayer for all nations.
    - He will gather Israel and others with them.

## The divided people 56:9 - 57:21

- Failure of the leaders 56:9-12
  - V9 The beasts
    - Beasts. Israel's enemies, either external or internal.
    - Called to a feast
  - V10-12 The watchmen
    - Those charged with guarding the flock.
    - Unable: blind, without knowledge, unable to bark.
    - Unwilling: dreaming, lying down, loving to slumber
    - Insatiable appetite: never have enough
    - Selfish: all turned to their own way
    - Complacent: tomorrow will be like this day
- The prostitute's brood and the LORD's household 57:1-21
  - A jumbled passage reflecting the jumble of life in a divided society
  - V1a Society unfriendly to righteousness
    - The righteous man perishes and no one lays it to heart.
  - V1b-2 The peace of the righteous
    - He enters into peace.
  - V3-10 Offspring of adultery
    - V3-4 Mocking the LORD
    - V5-8 Pagan worship
      - Isaiah describes their apostasy using pre-exilic language. These cultic practices did not exist after the exile.
    - V9-10 Politics
  - V11-13a Judgment
    - God held His peace so they would repent, but they did not.
    - Their heritage is their idols, which are nothing.
  - V13b-19 The LORD's people
    - V13b The heritage of the righteous. To possess the land and dwell with God on His holy mountain.
    - V14 Their way prepared.
    - V15 God is with them to revive their heart and spirit
    - V16-19 True healing and peace
      - V19 Peace, peace, to the far and to the near," says the LORD, "and I will heal him.
  - V 20-21 Warning to the wicked
    - Repeats 48:22: "There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked."

### Ineffective religion 58:1-14

- The prophet uses the examples of fasting and Sabbath-keeping to show why Israel's religious practices are ineffective.
- V1 Call to the prophet. Declare to Israel their sins.
- V2 Israel's religious practice: external forms, no internal reality.
- V3-12 Fasting
  - V3a Question: Why is our fasting ineffective?
  - V3-4 What they were doing: seeking their own pleasure, oppressing their workers, quarrelling, fighting wickedly.
  - V5-7 What is acceptable fasting: humility, removal of oppression, helping the poor
  - V8-12 Benefits of acceptable fasting: light, healing, righteousness, guarded by the glory of the LORD, prayer answered, strong bones, like a watered garden, ancient ruins rebuilt, called repairer/restorer.
- V13-14 Sabbath-keeping
  - What they were doing: doing their own pleasure, going their own ways, talking idly
  - What is acceptable Sabbath-keeping: calling the Sabbath a delight, honoring it.
  - Benefits of acceptable Sabbath-keeping: delight in the LORD, ride on the heights of the earth, obtain the heritage of Jacob.

### The guilty people 59:1-13

- The prophet continues the accusation of sin. Then he meets the accusations with a confession of sin and helplessness before God.
- V1-2 The basic problem: separated from God by sin
- V3-8 Description of their sins
- V9-13 Confession of sin and helplessness
  - Change of tense to first person plural. The prophet identifies with his people.

## The promised Conqueror 59:14 - 63:6

Preface: situation and remedy 59:14-20

- V14-16a Summary of the situation
  - No justice or righteousness or truth
  - The righteous man makes himself a prey
  - No one to intercede
- V15b-16a The LORD's reaction
  - Displeased that there was no justice.
  - Wondered that there was no intercessor.
    - Wondered.
      - Heb shamem: to be desolate, astonished, appalled, devastated, ravaged (Vines).
      - Not that God wonders because He did not realize how bad was the condition of His people.
      - May mean that the LORD sees the extent of His people's helplessness.
- V16b-17 The LORD's response
  - The LORD Himself acts.
  - Picture of a soldier dressing for battle.
- V18-20 Results
  - To His enemies: a Conqueror who repays them for their deeds and causes them to fear the LORD.
    - Not true belief.
  - To His people: a Redeemer who saves them.
  - Zion becomes the center of the world.

## The Covenant Mediator and His achievement 59:21 - 60:22

- The first of four passages about the Executor of the LORD's purposes
  - 59:21 Bearer of God's word
  - 61:1-4 The day of favor and vengeance
  - 61:10-11 The garments of salvation and righteousness
  - 63:1-6 The returning Conqueror
  
- 59:21 The Covenant Mediator
  - The LORD speaking to the Covenant Mediator.
    - One who has His Spirit
    - One who has His words.
  - The covenant: God's word will abide forever with His people.
  
- 60:1-22 The universal city
  - V1-3 The glory of the Lord in Zion
    - You. Feminine singular. The city Zion.
    - Darkness covers the world
    - The Lord's glory on Zion gives light to the world.
    - The nations come to the light.
  - V4-9 The world in Zion
    - Sons and daughters come
    - The wealth of the world comes
    - They are accepted at the Lord's altar.
    - Zion is radiant with joy and made beautiful by the Lord.
  - V10-14 The city of destiny
    - Foreigners shall build Zion, calling her the City of the LORD
    - Her gates are open continually to receive the wealth of the nations.
    - Those who will not serve her will perish.
  - V15-22 Zion transformed
    - From forsaken, hated, and shunned to majestic and a joy forever with a Savior.
    - Transformed materially, socially, spiritually.
    - Illuminated by the Lord.
    - People made righteous and a mighty nation.
    - To be accomplished in its time.
    - That the Lord might be glorified.

- 61:1-9 The Anointed One and His transforming work
  - V1-4 First testimony of the Anointed One: transformation
    - The Anointed One speaking
    - Three-part testimony
      - V1a His preparation
      - V1b-3a His task
      - V3b-4 His results: transformation
  - V 5-9 Transformation elaborated
    - V5-6 World community, with willing service.
    - V7a Transformed from shame to a double portion
    - V7b Everlasting joy
    - V8 Brought into covenant with the Lord
    - V9 Under divine blessing
- 61:10 - 62:12 The Savior and His gathered people
  - 61:10 - 62:7 Second testimony of the Anointed One: acceptance of the role of Savior
    - The Anointed One speaking
    - A poem in four sections; two alternating pairs
    - 61:10-11 Joy in the work of salvation
      - Clothed me with the garment of salvation. Prepared for the work.
      - Covered me with the robe of righteousness. God's salvation is accomplished in righteousness.
    - 62:4-5 Joy in transformed Zion
      - No longer forsaken and desolate
      - Delighted in by the Lord
    - 62:1-3 A single Intercessor
      - Continues until the work is completed
      - Zion's righteous and salvation are accomplished.
      - Her glory is seen by all the nations.
      - She is a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord.
    - 62:6-7 A company of intercessors
      - Set as watchmen on the walls
      - To call upon the Lord unceasingly until the work is completed.

- 62:8-12 The Lord's oath, summons, and proclamation
  - V8-9 Oath
    - Secure possession of the harvest.
    - Indicates peace and security.
  - V10 Summons to pilgrimage
    - A way prepared for the people (Israel) and the peoples (the nations)
  - V11-12 Proclamation
    - God's salvation comes
    - His reward...recompense is with Him. The people gathered from across the world.
    - The Holy People. God's people finally perfected.
    - Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken. Zion finally perfected.
- 63:1-6 The consummation of the work
  - With the watchmen on Zion's walls to hear the proclamation of the completion of vengeance, redemption, and salvation.
    - V1 A figure appears in the distance. Question: Who is this?
      - Coming from Edom, Israel's continual enemy.
        - In victory, as David.
      - Splendid apparel. As 61:10 garment of salvation; robe of righteousness.
      - Marching in greatness of strength
    - Answer: It is I.
      - Speaking in righteousness
      - Mighty to save
    - V2 The figure comes closer. Question: Why is your apparel red?
      - Answer: I have trodden the winepress of wrath
        - Trampled the peoples in anger
        - Garments stained by their blood.
        - A day of vengeance and a day of redemption
        - Done alone.
        - Lifeblood poured out on the earth. The work of wrath decisively finished.



## **The new heavens and new earth: prayers and promises 63:7 - 66:24**

### The watcher praying 63:7 - 64:12

- 63:7-14 Remembering who God is
  - V7 His steadfast love
  - V8-9 His commitment to His people
  - V10-14 His ongoing patience with their failings
- 63:15 - 64:12 Asking
  - 63:15-16 Where is Your love?
  - 63:17-19 Why do You remain distant?
  - 64:1-3 Why didn't You act?
  - 64:4-5 You act for those who wait for You. Is it too late to hope?
  - 64:6-7 We have sinned and are helpless before You.
  - 64:8-9 You are our Father; we are your people.
  - 64:10-12 Your city Zion is a wilderness. Will You ignore these things?

### The Lord responding 65:1 - 66:24

- 65:1-12 Reaching out to the peoples and to the people
  - 65:1 Reaching out to the nations
  - 65:2-7 Reaching out to Israel
    - V2-5 Provocations
    - V6-7 Penalties
  - 65:8-10 Recompense for the faithful remnant
    - Preservation
    - Secure dwelling
    - Renewal
  - 65:11-12 Recompense for the wicked
    - Slaughter
- 65:13-16 Contrasting ends
- 65:17-25 All things made new
  - V17 New creation
    - New heavens and earth
  - V18-20 New city
    - Jerusalem a city of joy and gladness
  - V21-25 New society
    - Security of tenure
    - Fulfillment in blessing
    - Nature renewed

- 66:1-24 Judgment and hope
  - V1-2 God's resting place
    - A physical building cannot contain God.
    - He comes to dwell with those who are humble, contrite in spirit, tremble at God's word
  - V3-4 False worship and its end
    - Levitical sacrifices are like idol-worship for those who will not listen to God.
    - For them, harsh treatment is coming. Their fears will come upon them.
  - V5-6 True worship and its end
    - True worship is trembling at God's word
    - True worshippers hope in God but are presently put to shame.
    - One day their hope will be vindicated and their enemies put to shame.
  - V7-14 The coming glory of Jerusalem
    - Brought into being in a day.
    - Those who mourn now over her will rejoice.
    - All that Zion means will be present to be enjoyed to the fullest.
    - She will be a city of peace and comfort
  - V15-17 The Lord's judgment
    - The Lord will come in fire of judgment
    - Those who worship falsely will come to an end.
  - V18-23 the world gathering
    - All nations will be gathered
    - A sign will be set among them. The cross.
    - Missionaries sent to those who have not heard of God's fame or seen His glory.
    - Believers will be brought from all nations as an offering to the Lord.
    - Thus all nations will worship Him.
  - V24 The end of the wicked

For next week:

- The Sabbath people 1 56:1-8
- The divided people (part 1): failure of the leaders 56:9-12

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