

Pentwater Bible Church

Isaiah Message 124

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Moses & Aaron Changing the Nile to Blood by Bartholomeus Breenbergh Cir 1631

Daniel E. Woodhead – Pastor Teacher

Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Isaiah

One-Hundred-Twenty-Four

GOD'S REWARDS FOR OBEDIENCE TO HIM

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Daniel E. Woodhead

Isaiah 56:1–12

¹Thus saith Jehovah, Keep ye justice, and do righteousness; for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed. ²Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that holdeth it fast; that keepeth the sabbath from profaning it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil. ³Neither let the foreigner, that hath joined himself to Jehovah, speak, saying, Jehovah will surely separate me from his people; neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree. ⁴For thus saith Jehovah of the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and hold fast my covenant: ⁵Unto them will I give in my house and within my walls a memorial and a name better than of sons and of daughters; I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.

⁶Also the foreigners that join themselves to Jehovah, to minister unto him, and to love the name of Jehovah, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from profaning it, and holdeth fast my covenant; ⁷even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. ⁸The Lord Jehovah, who gathereth the outcasts of Israel, saith, Yet will I gather others to him, besides his own that are gathered.

⁹All ye beasts of the field, come to devour, yea, all ye beasts in the forest. ¹⁰His watchmen are blind, they are all without knowledge; they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; dreaming, lying down, loving to slumber. ¹¹Yea, the dogs are greedy, they can never have enough; and these are shepherds that cannot understand: they have all turned to their own way, each one to his gain, from every quarter. ¹²Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to-morrow shall be as this day, a day great beyond measure (ASV, 1901).

ENCOURAGEMENT TO RIGHTEOUSNESS

Isaiah 56:1–2

¹Thus saith Jehovah, Keep ye justice, and do righteousness; for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed. ²Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that holdeth it fast; that keepeth the sabbath from profaning it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil (ASV, 1901).

These chapters following 56 to 66 are very practical. One great reason for God giving us His truths of things to come is to impress those truths of the future upon us so as to enable God's people to live in obedience to Him. We are also to live with trust and behavior in the knowledge of the prophesied future. It should comfort and assure us of God's plan when contemporary events seem to be chaotic. It was so of Israel of old and with us, in this present Church age. Many people have a rather intellectual interest in prophecy, and will flock to hear and read these things. Their interest is intellectual or interesting at best. However, if these messages do not draw one closer to the Lord in obedience and trust then they are not fulfilling their intent. Some teachers just want to capitalize on the need for understanding the future and seek to stir up the masses to draw the masses to them.

People are hungry to know the future. Again and again after giving pictures of the future, the Lord through Isaiah describes the actual condition of the people at the time when was speaking. Chapter fifty-six Isaiah begins a very practical godly way in the then present, and also that in the future Messianic kingdom when the nations learn to seek after righteousness that the blessing of the kingdom will be theirs. That gives exactly the same principle. "Keep judgment and do justice" because these things are soon to place. In other words, live now in the light of then.

The preparation to Israel's Kingdom restoration is now being described here in this chapter. Israel is prophetically admonished to maintain a godly witness in the midst of the fearful lawlessness and the horrible persecutions of the Tribulation period that the remnant of the Jewish nation will have to pass through.

The nation is to commanded observe justice, do righteousness, keep the sabbath, and refrain from doing evil (Isaiah 1:17; 33:5; 61:8). The godly remnant, who will make it through the Tribulation in preparation for the Messianic kingdom are commanded to follow in obedience to God, are promised His blessing (Psalms 112:1; 119:1). One command cited specifically is for them to keeping from profaning the sabbath. This was the sign between the Lord and Israel as a perpetual reminder to them of their separation out of the world to God (Exodus 31:13,17). The Sabbath was not commanded to the Church age but will return in the Messianic kingdom. The Scriptures are emphatic that the requirement to keep the Sabbath has been terminated. New Testament data lead to the conclusion that the Law of Moses (with all of its components – including the sabbath) has been abrogated. Paul affirmed that the "law of commandments" was abolished "through the cross" (Ephesians 2:14). Similarly, the "bond written in ordinances" (which contained such things as feast days, sabbaths, etc.) was taken out of the way, having been nailed to the cross (Colossians 2:14-16).

From here in Isaiah and other Messianic kingdom passages it is clear that observance of the sabbath will return in the Messianic kingdom.

Ezekiel 44:24b

24 and they shall keep my laws and my statutes in all my appointed feasts; and they shall hallow my sabbaths (ASV, 1901).

The laws and festival activities will all be regulated by Zadokites, as well as the sanctity of the observance of the "sabbath".

The reference to Sabbath keeping is evidence that the context here in this chapter concerns Israel during the period in which the Lord will once again be leading the nation after the Tribulation and on into the Messianic kingdom.

NO ONE IS TO BE EXCLUDED

Isaiah 56:3–8

³Neither let the foreigner, that hath joined himself to Jehovah, speak, saying, Jehovah will surely separate me from his people; neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree. ⁴For thus saith Jehovah of the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and hold fast my covenant: ⁵Unto them will I give in my house and within my walls a memorial and a name better than of sons and of daughters; I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off ⁶Also the foreigners that join themselves to Jehovah, to minister unto him, and to love the name of Jehovah, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from profaning it, and holdeth fast my covenant; ⁷even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. ⁸The Lord Jehovah, who gathereth the outcasts of Israel, saith, Yet will I gather others to him, besides his own that are gathered (ASV, 1901).

The calling of people by the Messiah is not only on behalf of Israel to regather the scattered nation, but also to be the light and the salvation to the Gentiles. So, at the time of the final restoration of Israel, the Messiah will be manifested in the most complete sense as the light to the Gentiles, and all the kings of the Gentiles will worship Him.

At the time of the setting up of the Kingdom, there may be some feeling among the sheep Gentiles that, because of the exalted position of Israel, the Gentiles will be excluded from receiving the benefits of Millennial Temple worship. But this will not be the case, for the Temple ministry will be open to all Gentiles who are rightly related (regenerated) to the King. Under no circumstances will they be excluded either because they are Gentiles or because they are mutilated as in the case of a eunuch. For Isaiah 56:6–8 points out the fact that this great Mountain of Jehovah's House will become a place of prayer for all peoples, Jews and Gentiles alike will worship the Messiah as known by Simeon who made the following declaration at the time Jesus was circumcised.

Luke 2:29–32

²⁹Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart In peace, according to thy word: ³⁰For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, ³¹Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; ³²A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel (KJV).

It is then and only then that the House of God will be called truly a house of prayer for all nations. This will occur at the time of Israel's final regathering after their national salvation and the Lord's return.

There will be a sacrificial system instituted in the Messianic kingdom that will have some features similar to the Mosaic system, along with some brand-new laws. For that very reason, the sacrificial system of that time is not a return to the Mosaic system. It will be a brand-new system that will have some components of the old and some things new, and will be instituted for an entirely different purpose. This departure from the complete quality of the Mosaic Law caused the Jews to argue about the necessity of incorporating the book of Ezekiel into the Bible. When they finally realized that it was a new iteration of God's Law in the Messianic kingdom the book was accepted and included.

Ezekiel is not the only prophet to be given information regarding the Messianic Temple and sacrifices. Other prophets spoke of these things in a non-apocalyptic context. The Messianic Temple is spoken of in Isaiah 2:3; 60:13; Daniel 9:24; Joel 3:18; and Haggai 2:7, 9. The Messianic sacrifices are mentioned in Isaiah 56:6–7; 60:7; 66:18–23; Jeremiah 33:18; Malachi 3:3–4; and Zechariah 14:16–21 (this last passage speaks of the observance of the Feast of Tabernacles in the Messianic Kingdom, but it required special sacrifices as part of its observance).

PRIOR TO THE NATIONAL REGENERATION OF ISRAEL

Isaiah 56:9–12

⁹All ye beasts of the field, come to devour, yea, all ye beasts in the forest. ¹⁰His watchmen are blind, they are all without knowledge; they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; dreaming, lying down, loving to slumber. ¹¹Yea, the dogs are greedy, they can never have enough; and these are shepherds that cannot understand: they have all turned to their own way, each one to his gain, from every quarter. ¹²Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to-morrow shall be as this day, a day great beyond measure (ASV, 1901).

These verses depict the national salvation by God of Israel that had not yet come. The Lord here describes an unredeemed nation Israel, so careless that the hostile nations, and the of beasts of field and forest, are invited to come and devour them. The reason for Israel's dispersion is described here. The sins of Israel's rulers causing the sins of the people, which caused the Lord's summoning the beasts of the field and forest as well as the idolatrous nations armies under Antichrist hostile to the Jews to chastise His sinning people (Jeremiah 12:7-9; 50:17; Ezekiel 34:5). They all responded to the divine summons and came to devour Israel. The picture presented is the nation of Israel is a flock of sheep. The leaders and teachers are the watchmen whose duty it is to guard that flock, but they are all sound asleep. The beasts of field or forest need have no fear of such, because the watchmen are too stupid and lazy even to alert the population to danger. They are alert enough when it comes to seeking their own pleasure, but as to the flock, they cannot even see the coming dangers. They dream that all is well, and continue to relax. The fact that the animals of the world attack mankind provides the spot on the world's chronology that the Messianic kingdom has not yet started as depicted in these verses.

THE FEAR OF MAN IS IMPARTED TO THE ANIMAL KINGDOM

Genesis 9:2

²And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every bird of the heavens; With all wherewith the ground teemeth, and all the fishes of the sea, into your hand are they delivered. (ASV, 1901)

Before the Flood all animals coexisted with humans in relative peace. After the Flood God put the fear of man within animal nature. He includes “*every beast of the earth.*” “*every bird of the air,*” “*all wherewith the ground teemeth*” (crawls on the ground), and “*all the fishes of the sea.*” The cattle and the domesticated animals are excluded. They would not have an inner fear of mankind. This aspect of the Noahic covenant is necessary since they now became a food source for man, but are not to be needlessly slaughtered. God gives man dominion over the animal kingdom, and man is required to provide responsible stewardship over the creatures of the earth. This relationship with the animal kingdom will continue until the Great Tribulation, when the animal kingdom will turn on mankind in an adversarial relationship. They will assist the Lord in the destruction of twenty-five percent of the world’s human population:

Revelation 6:8

⁸And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and the beasts of the earth. (KJV, underlining added)

Following the Great Tribulation will be the inauguration of the Messianic Kingdom, where the animal-human relationship will revert back to its Edenic state. The knowledge of God will permeate throughout the entire world, causing man and animals alike to all live peaceably together in harmony:

Isaiah 11:6–8

⁶And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. ⁷And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. ⁸And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. (ASV, 1901)

The nation’s leaders who should have been watching out for the people cared more for their own pleasure than the role they should have been carrying out protecting the people. One fact is that the nation’s sins are usually seen most prominently in the leaders. So, it is not just the leaders who are to blame it is also the people who accept the sins and easily follow such leaders.

THE INDICTMENT OF THE FALSE SHEPHERDS

Ezekiel 34:7–8

⁷Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of Jehovah: ⁸As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, surely forasmuch as my sheep became a prey, and my sheep became food to all the beasts of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my sheep, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my sheep; (ASV, 1901)

Our Lord here addresses the wicked shepherds directly with the command to “*hear the word of Jehovah.*” God begins again to stress the situation the wicked shepherds created causing the sheep to scatter and become prey “*to all the beasts of the field.*” The shepherds did not look for the sheep that were scattered. God still calls the sheep “My sheep,” or His own, which obviously means that He has never relinquished His love of the sheep entrusted to the shepherd of the flock. These wicked men were given temporary custody, and this is their indictment; they failed to look after the people of God with whom they were entrusted.

This should be a sober message to anyone who has responsibilities to teach the Word of God. God is very serious about the quality of the teaching of His Word, and will chastise those who cause the sheep to scatter because of poor quality teaching, including denial of essential doctrines necessary for the sheep to flourish. The false shepherds had brought Israel to ruin, and now He would intercede to rescue His chosen people. The fact that God will cause His people to hear the truth and bring the genuine sheep out from under false shepherds cannot be missed. There also is a component of responsibility on the sheep to seek out the truth of God’s Word where it is taught clearly, and to abandon the false teachers. Only the truly saved will seek the truth.

STAY AWAY FROM FALSE TEACHERS AND BAD SHEPHERDS

The following passage clearly describes the shepherds who are given authority to bring God’s Word in the church age, and why they fail:

I Timothy 4:1–3

¹But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, ²by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, ³men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. (KJV)

The source of the apostasy is demons. Apostates have essentially given in to seducing spirits and are preaching a system of doctrine that is a doctrine of demons. Furthermore, they speak lies through hypocrisy, and their consciences have stopped working. We can see how the shepherds through their adherence and interest in demonic activity have been led to teach a whole host of unbiblical requirements. As they turn from clearly teaching God’s Word, and they deny its authority.

II Timothy 3:1–5

¹This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. ²For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, ⁴traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; ⁵having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

This passage from 2 Timothy begins with a description of the general character of false shepherds of God Word. Many of these characteristics are true today. Verse 5 specifically identifies the false front put on by the shepherds. These men have “a form of godliness,” but deny the power of God’s Word. Consider apostate clergy who wear flowing clerical gowns and embrace church hierarchical titles or dress in a manner appearing to be “one of us.” They appear to have a form of “godliness,” but they deny “the power thereof,” for they have denied the true power of godliness. They claim to trust in God, but are actually trusting in worldly methodologies. They bring the world’s attractions into the church to lure the sheep into remaining, even when they stop affirming the authority of God’s Word. This is one aspect of the sheep scattering from the false shepherd that no longer carry’s the voice of God to the sheep. Their same behavior was described by the Lord through Isaiah.

Next message: BEWARE OF FALSE TEACHERS

E-mail: Pentwaterbiblechurch@scofieldinstitute.org Call: 877-706-247