

## EXPOSITION OF ISAIAH

Message #85

Isaiah 57:1-21

Could you imagine a statue in Israel designed to honor Adolph Hitler? Could you imagine the insanity of a bunch of Germans going to Jerusalem and suggesting that they put up a memorial in honor of Adolph Hitler who killed six millions Jews?

This kind of thing is happening right now in the United States. One of the most disgraceful and absurd things I have ever heard, is the movement underway right now to put a Muslim shrine on the very spot where Muslims killed Americans. We actually want to force Americans to go to the spot where Muslims killed them and honor them with a shrine. How in the world did we get to this point? How did America lose its way? Years ago people would say “you are out of your mind.” I am convinced that the answer to that is, in part, found right here in Isaiah; we have lost our way because God has been so mocked in this country that He is letting us get just exactly what we deserve.

We have lost our love for God. We have lost our focus on God. We have lost our dignity. We have lost morality. We have lost a sense of national pride. God was the One who blessed and prospered America, and our own founding fathers said that; but we have thrown God out of things and as a result God has said, “I’ll give you exactly what you deserve.” What is happening right now in our country is exactly what has happened to Israel. No one seems to have a clue as to what is right.

**When Isaiah wrote this chapter, he writes of a time when God’s righteous people who really knew God’s Word would be removed.** According to **verses 1-2**, those that knew God and those who knew the Word of God were removed and taken to their eternal place of rest and that left the world in a disastrous state. What we see in this chapter is this:

**WHEN GOD’S OWN PEOPLE REJECT GOD’S WORD AND GOD’S LEADERS, GOD WILL REMOVE HIS LEADERS AND HIS PEOPLE WILL GET WHAT THEY DESERVE.**

I believe we are nearing the Rapture of the Church and when God finally takes His Church out of here, all you will have left are evil, satanic religious and political leaders. Most leaders in Washington will be here and so will most ministers in churches. What God says to the world is this, “I’ll give you exactly what you deserve.”

But I believe there is also a great application for us to see now. Men of God who know God’s Word and live God’s Word are leaving this world. Men who were skilled and accurate communicators of God’s Word, who knew Jesus Christ and knew what the Scriptures taught, are disappearing.

In my own lifetime, we have lost Lewis Sperry Chafer, Donald Grey Barnhouse, J. Vernon McGee, John Walvoord, James Montgomery Boice, S. Lewis Johnson and John Miles. What we are actually losing are righteous, godly, devout men who knew God and God’s Word at a very precise and deep level.

What we are seeing in most churches are a bunch of shallow simpletons who cannot lead themselves much less anyone else. I just heard of one church in the area that sang so many shallow choruses that they decided to skip the message. What ever happened to men of God who carefully expounded God's Word. They are leaving and the church is in a mess.

In **Isaiah 57**, Isaiah wanted to send a strong message to Israel and it is this: **When you do not have godly, righteous leaders who know God's Word, you have moral chaos.** Israel's religious leadership has led Israel away from God and His Word and God says - "I'll give you what you deserve." There are **three prophetic results** of what will happen after God's righteous people are removed:

**PROPHETIC RESULT #1** – What most people will do. **57:3-10**

In any dispensation, when you take God's Word and God's righteous leaders out, these kinds of things begin to surface. When you take God's Word and God's righteous leaders away, Isaiah says the political and religious society spirals downward. There are five pathetic actions in which God's own people were involved:

**Action #1** - People will become demonic . **57:3a**

God is actually saying to his own people you are "sons of a sorceress." He is calling his own people demonic. The word "sorceress" (anan) particularly has to do with those who practice hidden demonic arts such as magic and sorcery (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 644). Outwardly these people appeared to be very religious, but behind the scenes they were evil and involved in evil things.

**Action #2** - People will become immoral . **57:3b**

Now demonic religion always features immorality. Demonic religion features adulterers and prostitutes (**verse 3**).

With the righteous leaders gone, all you had left was demonic religion and immorality (**verse 3**). Take righteous people out of the world and take the Word of God out of the world and this is what you have left - demonic religion and immorality.

**Action #3** - People will become arrogantly verbal . **57:4**

These are people who make fun of the righteous who stick to the Word of God. They speak up and speak out against authority. They make a joke out of those who stick to the Scriptures (**verse 4**).

I recently read in the paper where a comedian was going to appear in Battle Creek and was asked about making fun of Christians. This comedian said - "I make fun of Christians."

**Action #4** - People will invent their own worship . **57:5-8**

They have their own rituals and their own special places where they worship. These people constructed their own worship sites and sometimes their worship services included the sacrifice

of children (**verses 5-7**). They liked the outdoors. They would go out into the woods or into ravines or under crags so they could be somewhat hidden. But God saw it all. They offered their sacrifices to idols, they killed their children, they indulged in immorality.

When people drift away from God and His Word, there is a perversity and sexual depravity that inevitably surfaces. It surfaces privately and it surfaces publicly.

**Action #5** - People will be very zealous . **57:9-10**

According to **verses 9-10**, they would travel great distances, and even when people died, that did not stop them or prevent them. They are traveling, according to **verse 9**, to align themselves with the king, who is none other than the Antichrist. They will make pilgrimages and sacrifices to embrace this false system of worship.

**PROPHETIC RESULT #2** – What most people won't do. **57:11-13**

**Reality #1** - Most will not worry about God or fear God. **57:11a**

Now keep in mind that when this ultimately is fulfilled, the Rapture of the Church has taken place and yet most people aren't worried about God or fearing God in spite of the fact that He is pouring out His wrath on this world.

**Reality #2** - Most will not remember God or even think about God. **57:11b**

Even though God has been silent, in the sense of doing anything positive, for a long time because of rebellion and sin, people don't even think about this.

**Reality #3** - Most don't realize that their works meaning nothing. **57:12**

God knows all of their works, but their works will not profit them. When you take the Word of God out of the society, people get all focused on their works. They think that by helping each other that this is really going to count with God. It means nothing.

**Reality #4** - Most don't realize their idols are nothing and can do nothing. **57:13a**

People who do not worship the true God of the Bible will end up with nothing. God says cry out to your idols (**verse 13**) for deliverance and you will discover I will blow all of them away.

Let me ask you a question. Who do you first turn to when you have a problem? Who do you instinctively turn to? Do you pick up a phone to call someone? Do you run to a doctor? Do you run for a bottle or pill? Or do you turn to God and seek His Word and will? God should be the first person to whom we turn in any situation or struggle in life because anything we put above God cannot do a thing.

**Reality #5** - Most don't realize that one who turns to the Lord will inherit everything. **57:13b**

Because God was not speaking to such a rebellious nation, most forgot about God. God says, I will fully expose what you think your righteousness is, but it will be to no profit for you.

**PROPHETIC RESULT #3** – What God will eventually do for some people. **57:14-21**

Here is one of the most amazing passages you will ever see. In spite of all of the evil things Israel has done, God will still eventually forgive her and restore her. There are five amazing actions God says one day He will take:

**Action #1** - God will eventually remove every obstacle so My people can have a great life.  
**57:14**

God will bring His people to their land and He will see to it that nothing stops them.

**Action #2** - God will eventually revive a relationship with His humble and contrite people.  
**57:15**

In **verse 15** we see the truth that God is high and exalted. He lives forever on a high and holy place. What God chooses to do is to fellowship with those of a contrite and lowly spirit and He revives the spirit of the lowly. This is a staggering thought. God, who is high and exalted, chooses to have a relationship with us.

**Action #3** - God will eventually remove His anger from His people. **57:16-17**

God says I will not always be angry with you. He will not contend with you forever. We get two stated reasons why God was very angry:

**(Reason #1)** - God was angry because of unjust gain. **57:17a**

**(Reason #2)** - God was angry because of ungodly direction. **57:17b**

He would not turn his heart to the ways of God's Word, but continually turned his heart to his own way.

**Action #4** - God will heal and comfort the one who turns to Him. **57:18-19**

God says I have seen all your evil ways. I have seen everything you have ever done. However, I will heal you. I will comfort you. I will restore you. I will create in you lips that praise Me. People will be at peace with God and peace with themselves.

**Action #5** - God will condemn the wicked. **57:20-21**

There is no peace for the wicked. I read a story of a man who walked into a police station some 50 years after committing a crime because he could not live with himself. When you are involved in wicked things you are not at peace with yourself and you are not at peace with God. You are in a state of constant turmoil with a life full of dirt and mud and refuse. God wants people to turn to Him and find their refuge in Him (**57:13**). If you will, you will find peace.