

Part II, Lesson 28

Isaiah

The Lord is Salvation

God's Grace
Is For
Everyone

Isaiah
56:1-8

*Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex
Curriculum*

Isaiah Part II, Lesson 28

God's Grace Is For Everyone

Isaiah 56:1-8

There are many who want to be different, that is, like no one else. We have clubs of which only certain people can be members. People want to be the first to be chosen. We want to have secrets with some people. That is not too much different than the nation of Israel. They saw themselves as a special nation, a nation that God loved more than He loved others. A nation that God chose as His "special" friends. They were an exclusive club. They had secrets about God which they would not share.

But now, they had been dragged away from their home in Judah. Their lives had been changed dramatically. Their confidence was gone. Read Isaiah 56:1-2.

Our God wants what is best for us. In these verses we are instructed to do at least three things. First, He said, "Maintain justice." The two other commands are to "keep the Sabbath" and to "keep his hand from doing any evil." So, they were to be sure that everyone was treated fairly (justice), they were to be sure to do on the Sabbath what was expected of them, and to avoid doing bad things.

It seems that there was a strong emphasis on keeping the Sabbath during the time that Judah was being held captive in Babylon. That may have been because they were away from home...away from the Temple in Jerusalem. Strongly encouraging everyone to keep the laws of the Sabbath was a way to keep them reminded of God and their need to worship Him. The Sabbath began on Friday night and ended at sundown on Saturday. That day was a day of fasting and prayer. Many rules applied to that day, such as what kind of sacrifices were to be offered to God, how you should behave toward others and how things were to be taught to their children. If you broke any of the rules, you were not "keeping the Sabbath."

This might be something that people today should think about. Sometimes when we are away from home, we forget to live as we should and we forget to participate in worshipping God like we do at home.

God pronounced blessing on those who lived up to those three things. We can also see it as a promise that if we are working at making sure that everyone is treated fairly, that we are staying close to God in worship, and avoiding all evil, we will be living life in God's will and that, in itself, is a blessing.

We can be pretty sure that the people were happy to hear all that God had said through Isaiah to this point. But now God was going to change His words to a subject with which they would not be so ready to agree. Read Isaiah 56:2-8.

"Wait, wait," they might have said. "Did we hear you say foreigners? Did we hear you include the eunuchs in this invitation? What is going on here? We are your chosen people. We are the club members. They don't have a club membership card and they don't know the password. They don't have an embossed invitation!" But God said, "I will give them an everlasting name..."

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From our point of view, it might seem a little strange to think that someone would be denied the worship of God for any reason. However, the Israelites based their discrimination on Old Testament teachings that were given to those wandering in the desert after escaping from Egypt. They had been told not to welcome people who had been physically altered, or deformed, and not to welcome those who were from other nations, which worshipped other gods.

We can be pretty sure that many Israelite men had been mutilated by their Babylonian conquerors (eunuchs) so that they could be trusted to serve in their homes and palaces. Some of these, if not all of them, had been barred from worship because of the old rules. Now, it seems like God is making new rules.

But, there had already been a new interpretation of the old rules, and many of the Hebrews supported this. They were hearing God say that no one was to be excluded. Now they were going back to Jerusalem and when there, they would rebuild the Temple. On that day, they were to understand that the God who was represented by the Temple and who occupied the Holy of Holies, would welcome anyone who came in faith.

The eunuchs, who could not have children, would be honored with a memorial and a name to carry on their name that would be "better than sons and daughters." Their name would never die, but would last for eternity.

He also promised that foreigners, who chose by faith to serve Him, would be welcomed into Jerusalem (God's holy mountain), and would find joy in the Temple. Their offerings would be accepted.

What did the eunuchs and foreigners have to do to demonstrate their faith? They had to keep the Sabbath rules and live up to the covenant that God had with Israel.

An amazing and inclusive statement is made in verse seven: God said, "My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations." Up until this time, there had been very strict rules for visiting the Temple. There was even a place designated, and separated by a wall, called the court of the Gentiles. Foreigners were treated like tourists, looking but not participating. Now, God was saying that things were going to be different.

Did that really work, well, not so much. The Hebrews continued their exclusiveness, even though God said that He would gather people other than the Babylonian exiles to His place of worship.

There is a very important lesson here for us today. It is a lesson proven over and over in the New Testament. God loves and wants to bless everyone. And anyone who comes to Him in faith will be welcomed with open arms.

*Underlined words and phrases are to be used in completing the Student Worksheet.

Page Three

Scripture Memory: "For my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations." Isaiah 56:7

Lesson Goal: To encourage students to see God as the one who calls, saves, and provides for all people. There is no difference in people of faith in God's eyes.

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God's Grace Is For Everyone—Isaiah 56:1-8

Student Worksheet

Listen during the lesson for this information:

1. How did the people of Israel see themselves as compared to others?
2. What three things were the people of God instructed to do in verses one and two?
3. What two groups were the people of God to avoid, according to the way some interpreted the Old Testament?
4. How were the eunuchs to be honored by God?
5. What did the eunuchs and foreigners have to do to demonstrate their faith?
6. What amazing statement did God make in verse seven?

Page Four

Scripture Memory: “For my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.” Isaiah 56:7

How to begin a Personal Relationship with God:

First, believe that the God of the Bible is the true God.

Second, believe that Jesus, God's Son, was sent to earth to die so that you can have a relationship with God.

Third, ask God to forgive your sins in Jesus' name. Jesus' death on the cross paid the price of every sin you commit.

Fourth, ask Jesus to be your Savior and the Lord of your life.