

Part II, Lesson 29

Isaiah

The Lord is Salvation

Blind
And Helpless
Leaders

Isaiah
56:9-57:2

*Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex
Curriculum*

Isaiah Part II, Lesson 29

Blind and Helpless Leaders

Isaiah 56:9-57:2

Our Scripture for today is the beginning verses of a long attack on the wicked of that day. In the next lesson, we will discuss that attack, but today let's look at a warning to the leaders who were obviously standing by with no interest in helping the people. This is a warning to the religious leaders. Read Isaiah 56:9-12.

The writer uses sarcasm to get his point across. He calls for the beasts, for all the dangerous animals of the fields and forests, to come and get their prey...their victims. We have here a picture of what happened if the shepherd left his flock unguarded. When the shepherd took his eye off the flock, when he fell asleep, when he didn't do his job well, the wild animals pounced on his sheep, killed some, injured others and scattered the whole flock. Is Isaiah really calling for tigers, wolves, snakes and spiders to come get the people? No, of course not. He is giving us another picture to make his point. It makes it more powerful and easier to see than if he said something like, "Hey everyone, this is a good time to hurt the people."

He repeats the invitation to the beasts. Some see this as a way of being more poetic, others see it as a way to emphasize the writer's point. There are always enemies lurking around trying to get to God's people. Satan is always interested in destroying the good.

In Ezekiel 33:2 chosen leaders are called "watchmen." We should be clear, the leaders spoken of here are religious leaders. These are the people who are given the task of guiding others into truth, and protecting them from untruth. Even the strongest Christian can be tempted. The religious leader should always be standing by to encourage and even correct the Christian who strays...gets things wrong.

But, the leaders (watchmen) spoken of here are like dogs...helpless, lazy dogs. Isaiah accuses them of at least five things that make them helpless as leaders.

First, they were blind. There is a verse in First Chronicles that speaks of men who, "understood the times and knew what Israel should do." God's chosen leaders inform themselves, depend on God's Spirit to lead them into true knowledge, and keep that knowledge ready to help. Good religious leaders are helpful...they lead the way.

Second, they were afraid to speak. They should be speaking words of wisdom boldly. The dog barks loudly at the sign of trouble. The dog hears things approaching and gives warning. They don't hesitate to make their voice heard. The same should be true of those who claim to be God's chosen leaders. They should know when danger is coming. They should read the signs of where things are going. They should listen for God's leadership through His Spirit. Then they should proclaim their understanding of all this to the people in words that truly make sense and in a voice that can be heard.

Third, they were lazy. They lie around, they dream, they love to sleep. Wow, what a terrible thing to say

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about a minister. There is also that tendency of some, not only ministers, to keep busy doing things that don't really accomplish anything meaningful. One can stay very busy doing unimportant things and look like they are living up to their calling.

Fourth, they are greedy. Isaiah said, "each seeks his own gain." Now that can mean that they take all the money they can get. There are, seemingly, ministers who get wealthy from their ministry. That is not the pattern we are taught in the Bible. That is not what Jesus was about. That is not what Paul was about. Also, there are those who can never get enough praise. They enjoy being popular and being bragged on by the people in their congregations. That wasn't the way Jesus lived, and it wasn't the way Paul taught Timothy to live and minister.

And, fifth, these ministers got drunk on wine and beer. What a terrible thing to say about a minister. This meant that they were not in control. We know that a person who has had too much wine and/or beer loses control. They don't think straight. They can't even walk a straight line. So, the things that they should be doing either don't get done, or they get done badly.

Some think that these words are from a drinking song, usually sung at the parties and other places where the only goal was to have a good time. "Come,...let me get wine! Let us drink our fill of beer! And tomorrow will be like today, or even far better." Isaiah 56:12.

You might expect that of a person who had no relationship with God, who had no respect for himself or herself, but to hear a minister sing like that, just doesn't seem right. Were there a lot of ministers who behaved like that? Well, we really don't know. However, there must have been some.

So, while these religious leaders are involved in all this corruption, the righteous perish. Read Isaiah 57:1, 2.

There are those who have chosen to love and trust God. These are the righteous who need guidance and encouragement from their ministers. But, the ministers were otherwise occupied. They weren't paying attention, and the people who are living right and seeking God are ignored. These are the ones "who walk uprightly." They are dying. And when they die, they find rest and peace.

This is a picture of what God has promised to all His children: When we die, we can rest from all the troubles on earth and enjoy perfect peace with Him for all eternity.

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

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Scripture Memory: "Those who walk uprightly enter into peace; they find rest as they lie in death." Isaiah 57:2

Lesson Goal: To let students see the sad situation caused by leaders who do not take their job seriously or enter their job with the expectation of wealth and/or popularity.

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Student Worksheet

Listen during the lesson for this information:

1. The leaders spoken of here are _____ leaders. These are the people who are given the task of guiding others into _____, and _____ them from untruth.
2. The religious leader should always be standing by to _____ and even correct the Christian who strays...gets things _____.
3. What five things made the leaders helpless.
4. Who are the ones who are dying? And when they die, do they find rest and peace?
5. This is a picture of what God has promised to all His _____: When we die, we can _____ from all the _____ on earth, and enjoy perfect _____ with Him for all eternity

Page Four

Scripture Memory: “Those who walk uprightly enter into peace; they find rest as they lie in death.”
Isaiah 57:2

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.