

ADMONITIONS AND APPLICATIONS

TEXT: ISAIAH 56

Introduction:

1. Whenever Christians attempt to study the Bible, or whenever we preachers attempt to expound the Bible, we must first determine the context.
2. The Scofield Bible summarizes Isaiah 56—59 under the title of “Ethical instructions.” Instructions for whom? Obviously Israel.
3. But there are applications for us today as well, and this will be my focus. Context and interpretation are absolutely necessary, but context and interpretation without application is not good Bible preaching.
4. HA Ironside said, “The great object of prophetic ministry is not simply to occupy people with coming events, but so to impress the truths of the future upon the conscience as to enable God’s people to live now in the light of the predicted future. It was so of Israel of old and it is so with us, in this present Church age” (*Isaiah*).
5. Chapter 56 begins with, “Thus saith the LORD, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed.”
6. This “salvation” is referred to in 55:6, 7. And Isaiah also looks ahead to the national salvation of Israel, what we usually call “the restoration of Israel.” It is a major theme of Isaiah and the other OT prophets.
7. This theme is carried over into the NT. John the Baptist preached, “Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:2).
8. Our Lord began His public ministry by preaching the same identical message, “Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 4:17).
9. Only the second coming of Christ can straighten out this wicked, sin-loving world. Isaiah 5:20 says, “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”
10. We are living in a very wicked day and age that calls evil good, and good evil. When we look at what is going on in the world today, we are led to cry out, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Rev. 22:20).

I. WE ARE NOT TO POLLUTE THE SABBATH (56:2, 6).

1. These Scriptures teach us that during the millennial kingdom the sabbath will be restored. The Lord’s Day is only for the church age.
2. There is a distinction between the Jewish Saturday sabbath and the Christian Lord’s Day (Sunday), nevertheless they are very similar.
3. A major difference is the Jew under the Law was commanded to observe the sabbath, whereas the Christian, under grace, voluntarily honors the Lord’s Day.

4. It is the day we honor in memory of our Lord's resurrection from the dead.
5. Next Sunday is Easter Sunday. Some Christians prefer to call it "Resurrection Sunday." I appreciate that, but strictly speaking every Sunday is Resurrection Sunday.
6. The nation Israel had gone into captivity because they had disobeyed the fourth commandment, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8).
7. But they did not keep it holy. They "polluted" it (Isa. 56:2, 6).
8. Exodus 31:13 says, "Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you."
9. God sent the Jews into captivity for 70 years because they did not keep the sabbath, and after they returned from captivity they still profaned it (Neh. 13:15-22).
10. They still did not learn their lesson. But what about America?
11. America has been guilty of profaning and polluting the Lord's Day for a long time. This will surely bring the wrath of God down upon our nation.
12. When I was a child, just about everything was closed on Sunday. Those days are long gone.
13. Keeping the sabbath holy was a sign that the Jews were separate from the heathen. And keeping the Lord's Day holy is a sign that Christians are separate from the heathen.
14. Someone sent me an interesting DVD by Ken Ham (Answers in Genesis). In his message, Bro. Ham says, "Before the last world war, church attendance in England made up a considerable percentage of the population – perhaps as much as 40–50 percent. Now, church attendance is more like 5 percent!"
15. And then Ken Ham says what many preachers have been saying: the USA is following the same path to ruin as England.
16. People go shopping on Sunday. The shopping malls are packed out. They play sports or they watch sports. The parks and stadiums are packed out.
17. They are involved in all sorts of worldly programs (some of these may even be worthwhile – music recitals, Boy Scouts, martial arts, etc.) on Sunday. But they do not seem to care that Sunday is the Lord's Day.
18. Some claim they must work on Sunday. I know this is true for some occupations (e.g., police, firemen, etc.). But most people do not need to work on Sunday.
19. When Nehemiah saw merchants selling their goods on the sabbath, the Bible says he "testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye

- about the wall? if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath.”
20. We need more men like Nehemiah today!
 21. Spurgeon used to preach all the time about Christians profaning the Lord’s Day. So did DL Moody and all of the other great preachers.
 22. Lee Roberson used to say, “It takes three to thrive.” Strong Christians know this to be true.
 23. Let us not forget that God gave the sabbath for man’s blessing and for man’s benefit (Isa. 58:13, 14). Our Lord said in Mark 2:27, “The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.”
 24. D.L. Moody said: “The good effect on a nation’s health and happiness produced by the return of the Sabbath, with its cessation from work, cannot be overestimated. It is needed to repair and restore the body after six days of work. It is proved that a man can do more in six days than in seven.”
 25. Benjamin Disraeli, the great British statesman, said: “Of all divine institutions, the most divine is that which secures a day of rest for man. I hold it to be the most valuable blessing conceded to man.”
 26. Before moving on, let me point out that during the millennial kingdom saved strangers and eunuchs will be welcome in the temple to worship (56:3-8).
 27. Under the Mosaic Law (Deut. 23), Gentiles and eunuchs were excluded. Here we are once again reminded of the grace of God.

II. WE ARE NOT TO DEFILE GOD’S HOUSE (56:7).

1. Our Lord quoted Isaiah 56:7 when He drove the moneychangers out of the temple (cf. Matt. 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46).
2. This was actually the second time our Lord cleansed the temple. The first time is recorded in John 2:13-22.
3. Applying these Scriptures to our day, J Vernon McGee says, “The present-day church is as far removed from its primary objective as the temple. The church has become like a suburban country club...But there are few personal workers bringing the lost to Christ” (*Thru the Bible*).
4. Dr. McGee died 20 years ago. What would he say now with all of this seeker-friendly, purpose-driven foolishness going on today?
5. More importantly, what does our Lord think of it? I think Revelation 3:16 gives us the answer to that question.
6. “So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.”

III. WE ARE NOT TO FOLLOW BLIND WATCHMEN (56:10-12)

1. These Scriptures vividly describe false prophets and worldly, unregenerate religious leaders. They have always been a problem (cf. II Peter 2:1-3).
2. Isaiah has already warned of these religious racketeers (cf. Isa. 30:9, 10).
3. I saw a couple video clips of Senator Obama's pastor, Jeremiah Wright. People were actually standing and shouting and applauding this crazy lunatic.
4. The "beasts of the field" (56:9; cf. Ezekiel 38 & 39; Rev. 13) refers to foreign invaders. The watchman's job was to sound the alarm and to protect the flock.
5. In like manner, the preacher's job is to sound the alarm and to protect the flock but very few preachers are doing this today. They are "blind" watchmen (56:10).
6. Our Lord said, "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matt. 15:14).
7. Joel Osteen has a huge congregation and has the opportunity to speak to millions of people. Osteen was asked by Chris Wallace on FOX News, "And what about Mitt Romney? And I've got to ask you the question, because it is a question whether it should be or not in this campaign, is a Mormon a true Christian?"
8. Osteen replied, "Well, in my mind they are. Mitt Romney has said that he believes in Christ as his savior, and that's what I believe, so, you know, I'm not the one to judge the little details of it. So I believe they are. And so, you know, Mitt Romney seems like a man of character and integrity to me, and I don't think he would — anything would stop me from voting for him if that's what I felt like."
9. Many similar statements have been made by Mr. Osteen, and by Rick Warren and these other popular blind watchmen. Isaiah 56:11 says, "Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter."

CONCLUSION:

1. I have emphasized the importance of honoring the Lord's Day. I hope no one in this room tonight thinks I am advocating legalism. I am not.
2. HA Ironside said, "If some loving friend gives you a birthday present, its special value is that it shows his kindly thought. If you had written to say, 'I am going to have a birthday and will expect a present from you,' it would lose all its value. So the Seventh-Day Adventists challenge us, 'Show us a commandment in the NT telling us to observe the first day of the week.'"
3. "We say, 'There is no commandment. We are under grace, not law.'"
4. "They ask, 'Why do you do it?'"

5. ““Because of the gratitude of our hearts to the Lord Jesus who rose from the dead on the first day of the week.””

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