

PRESUMPTION, ASSURANCE & DESPAIR

July 22, 2018

Isaiah 56:1-12

“Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the LORD, speak, saying, The LORD hath utterly separated me from his people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree.” Isaiah 56:3

Regarding the salvation of a soul, three conditions appear to exist.

1. Many are presumptuous. They will tell you quickly that they are saved. Yet they love this world-system. Fascinated and swayed by godless popular culture, they manifest little interest in Christ, in holiness or in the kingdom of God, and may sometimes mock those who manifest godly sobriety. Short-lived impulses of the moment regulate their living; their goal is to “keep up with the times.” They live as citizens of this world only, assuming that some past religious action or present religious sentimentality guarantees that they are safe. Being they did, to some religious event or action, as the deciding cause of their salvation. Biblical warnings (Matthew 7:14-27; II Peter 1:5-11; Isaiah 58:1-6) do not arouse their concern, and warnings from true believers are rebuffed as “legalism” or with the retort, “who are you to judge?” Refusing biblical self-examination, they show no desire to be conformed to Scripture. They are lost, yet imagine that they are saved.

2. Some are assured of salvation by the Spirit of God. They receive His witness to their conscience through Scripture (Romans 8:16, 17). When speaking of their salvation, they do not refer to something they did, to some religious experience in which they cooperated. They speak rather of the mercies of God Who saved them and brought them into His kingdom. They look to Christ as the One who saved, knowing that they did not make it happen. Their testimony is, “God’s Word is true. I take its promises as my own. Although every natural impulse moves me against Christ, yet I yearn to persevere with Him by grace. His suffering on the cross is mine, received by my substitute. He received my penalty for sin. His atoning sacrifice is my own; in Him I am resurrected unto spiritual life, and with Him I will be glorified (Romans 8:16, 17, 28-39; II Timothy 1:12; I John 3:1, 2). These desire to live in godly obedience, sanctified from pride-serving, Christ-rejecting cultures of this world.

3. A few despair of ever having eternal life. Our text today is for them.

Hebrew Scriptures excluded “strangers” (non-Jews) and emasculated men from “the congregation of the Lord” (Deuteronomy 23:1-3). Yet they also foretold the zeal of “outsiders” who would desire to join with God’s chosen people. Isaiah focuses upon these.

He speaks of the stranger who has 1) joined himself to the Lord that he might be His servant, who 2) loves the name of the Lord, who 3) keeps the Sabbath and 4) embraces God’s covenant for himself. He speaks of the eunuch who 1) keeps the Sabbaths, who 2) desires to please the Lord and who 3) embraces God’s covenant for himself. To both, he gives full assurance that they will not be excluded from God’s people.

Rather, God will bring them into his great favor. God will make them joyful in His house of prayer. He will accept their offerings (v. 7). He extends to them the New Testament promise, “him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37).