

## ISAIAH 57 | *Shalom, Shalom or No Shalom*

### *Righteous Taken Away*

1 The righteous man perishes, and no one lays it to heart. Devout men are taken away, while no one understands. For the righteous man is taken away from calamity. 2 He enters into peace (שְׁלוֹם). They rest (נוח) in their beds who walk in their uprightness.

### *Sons of the Sorceress*

3 But you, draw near, sons of the sorceress (בְּנֵי עַגְבָּה), seed of the adulterer and the loose woman (זָרַע מְנַאֲף וְתַזְנוּנָה). 4 Whom are you mocking? Against whom do you open your mouth wide and stick out your tongue? Are you not children of crime (יְלִדֵי פֶשַׁע), the seed of deceit (זָרַע שֶׁקֶר), 5 you who burn with lust among the oaks, under every green tree, who slaughter your children in the valleys, under the clefts of the rocks? 6 Among the smooth stones of the valley is your portion. They, they, are your lot. To them you have poured out a drink offering. You have brought a grain offering. Shall I relent (נחם) for these things? 7 On a high and lofty mountain you have set your bed, and there you went up to offer sacrifice. 8 Behind the door and the doorpost you have set up your memorial. For, deserting me, you have uncovered your bed, you have gone up to it, you have made it wide. And you have cut [a covenant] for yourself with them, you have loved (אהב) their bed, you have looked on the penis (דָּ). 9 You journeyed to the king with oil and multiplied your perfumes. You sent your envoys far off, and sent down even to Sheol. 10 You were wearied with the length of your way, but you did not say, It is hopeless. You found new life for your strength, and so you were not faint.

### *Collection of Idols*

11 Whom did you dread and fear, so that you lied, and did not remember (זכר) me, did not lay it to heart? Have I not been silent (חשה), even for a long time, so that you do not fear (ירא) me? 12 I will declare your righteousness (צְדִיקָה) and your deeds, but they will not profit you. 13 When you cry out, let your collection of idols/gods (קַבּוּצִין)<sup>1</sup> deliver you! The wind will carry them all off, a breath will take them away. But he who takes refuge (חסה) in me shall possess the land and shall inherit my holy mountain [Zion].

### *Shalom, Shalom or No Shalom*

14 And it shall be said, Build up, build up, prepare the way, remove every obstruction from my people's way. 15 For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell (שכן) in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a crushed/humiliated (דָּבָא)<sup>2</sup> and humble (שָׁפָל)<sup>3</sup> spirit (רוּחַ), to revive (חיה) the spirit of the

<sup>1</sup> “[S]uggested explanations include...your collection of gods, your pantheon; ...idols, really “acquisitions”...; more specifically “collected things”...; ...your collection of idols” (HALOT, 1061).

<sup>2</sup> Ps 34:18 18 Yahweh is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.

<sup>3</sup> Ps 138:6 6 For though Yahweh is high, he regards the lowly, but the haughty he knows from afar. Pr 29:23 23 One's pride will bring him low, but he who is lowly in spirit will obtain honor.

humble (שָׁפֵל), and to revive the heart of the crushed/humiliated (דָּכָא). 16 For I will not contend forever, nor will I always be angry. For the spirit would grow faint before me, and the breath of life (נְשֵׁמָה) that I made. 17 Because of the sin-guilt (עֲוֹן) of his unjust gain I was angry. I struck him. I hid my face and was angry, but he went on backsliding (שׁוֹכֵב) in the road of his own heart (בְּדַרְךוֹ לְבָבוֹ). 18 I have seen his roads (דַּרְכָּו), but I will heal (רפא) him. I will lead him and restore comfort (נְחֻמִּים) to him and his mourners, 19 creating the fruit of the lips. Peace, peace (שְׁלוֹם שְׁלוֹם), to the far and to the near, says Yahweh, and I will heal (רפא) him. 20 But the wicked (רְשָׁעִים) are like the tossing sea. For it cannot be quiet, and its waters toss up mire and dirt. 21 There is no peace (שְׁלוֹם), says my God, for the wicked (רְשָׁעִים).

## Commentary

### 1. Righteous Taken Away (Is 57:1-2).

- a. **Is 57:1-2** 1 The righteous man perishes, and no one lays it to heart. Devout men are taken away, while no one understands. For the righteous man is taken away from evil/wickedness/misfortune/calamity/disaster (רָעָה). 2 He enters into peace (שָׁלוֹם). They rest (נוח) in their beds who walk in their uprightness.
- b. Righteous men are taken away, but no one cares or understands why (v. 1a).
  - (1) When a nation turns from God, righteous people begin to disappear. As a nation rushes towards evil, God removes the righteous from it.
    - (a) **Ge 7:7** 7 And Noah, his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives with him went into the ark to escape the waters of the flood.
    - (b) **Ps 12:1** 1 Save, Yahweh, for the godly one is gone, for the faithful have vanished from among the children of man.
    - (c) **Mic 7:2** 2 The godly has perished from the earth, and there is no one upright among mankind. They all lie in wait for blood, and each hunts the other with a net.
  - (2) The *quantity* and *quality* of believers diminishes. This has taken place in the United States and New Zealand over many decades.



NEW ZEALAND CENSUS			
	2006	2013	2018
Christian	49%	43%	37%
No Religion	31%	38%	49%
Other religions	7%	7%	7%
Undefined	13%	12%	7%

- (3) When the righteous are removed, it is a sign severe discipline is at hand.
  - (a) “Evil has become so rampant in the society and its end is so near that God in his mercy is removing the righteous from it. Thus the disappearance of the righteous from the society should be a signal to everyone that the critical stage has arrived and that the moment for drastic corrective action is at hand.”<sup>4</sup>
  - (b) Illustration: when France drove out the Huguenots, France suffered absolute despotism under Louis XIV, the bloody French revolution, and more despotism under Napoleon Bonaparte. France still suffers from its persecution of the Huguenots.
- c. The reason righteous men are taken away is to:
  - (1) Avoid evil/disaster (v. 1b).
    - (a) רָעָה: evil/wickedness/misfortune/calamity/disaster.
    - (b) God often removes the righteous before judgement on the wicked begins.
      - 1) **Ge 5:24** 24 Enoch walked with God. And he was not, for God took him.

<sup>4</sup> John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 470-471.

- 2) **Ge 7:7** 7 ...Noah, his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives with him went into the ark to escape the waters of the flood.
  - 3) **1 Ki 14:12-13** 13 ...All Israel shall mourn for [the child] and bury him, for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found something pleasing to Yahweh, the God of Israel, in the house of Jeroboam.
  - 4) **2 Ki 22:20** 20 ...I [Yahweh] will gather you [Josiah] to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace (שְׁלוֹמִים), and your eyes shall not see all the disaster that I will bring upon this place [Jerusalem].
  - 5) **Jn 14:2-3** 2 In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I [the Bridegroom] go and prepare a place for you [the bride], I will come again and will take (παραλαμβάνω) you [in close association] to myself, that where I am [heaven] you may be also [for seven years during the tribulation].
  - 6) **1 Th 1:9-10** 9 ...They themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, 10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who rescues/saves/delivers/preserves (ρύσονται) us out of the coming wrath (ἐκ τῆς ὀργῆς τῆς ἐρχομένης).
- (c) "It is a sign that God intends war when he calls home his ambassadors."<sup>5</sup>
- (2) Enter into shalom and rest (v. 2).
- (a) "The righteous will be taken away from the fragmented and evil society in which they live to a condition of harmony, serenity, and completeness. ... [T]hose who have been righteous and faithful as being taken from this world to a better place where the unnoticed lives they lived here will be rewarded."<sup>6</sup>

## 2. Sons of the Sorceress (Is 57:3-10).

- a. **Is 57:3-10** 3 But you, draw near, sons of the sorceress (בְּנֵי עֲוֹנָה), seed of the adulterer and the loose woman (זָרָע מְזֻנָּה וְתֹנְנָה). 4 Whom are you mocking? Against whom do you open your mouth wide and stick out your tongue? Are you not children of crime (יְלִדֵי פְשָׁע), the seed of deceit (זָרָע שָׁקֶר), 5 you who burn with lust among the oaks, under every green tree, who slaughter your children in the valleys, under the clefts of the rocks? 6 Among the smooth stones of the valley is your portion. They, they, are your lot. To them you have poured out a drink offering. You have brought a grain offering. Shall I relent (נָחַם) for these things? 7 On a high and lofty mountain you have set your bed, and there you went up to offer sacrifice. 8 Behind the door and the doorpost you have set up your memorial. For, deserting me, you have uncovered your bed, you have gone up to it, you have made it wide. And you have cut [a covenant] for yourself with them, you have loved (אָהַב) their bed, you have looked on the penis (דָּ). 9 You journeyed to the king with oil and multiplied your perfumes. You sent your envoys far off, and sent down even to Sheol. 10 You were wearied with the length of

<sup>5</sup> Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 914.

<sup>6</sup> John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 471.

your way, but you did not say, It is hopeless. You found new life for your strength, and so you were not faint.

b. Warning.

(1) Isaiah is talking about “the madness of apostasy from God” and uses “the most revolting traits and images” available to him.<sup>7</sup> Warning: viewer discretion advised.

(2) Isaiah compiles a “collection” (v. 13) of all the worst features of pagan religion. He speaks of its fertility worship (vv. 5a, 7-8), its child sacrifice (v. 5b), its animism (v. 6), and its ceaseless demands (vv. 9-10). His purpose is to catalogue all the pagan offences together and leave nothing out.<sup>8</sup> It is a religion of works, in which the worshiper by performance tries to manipulate the world.<sup>9</sup>

c. The sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer, must draw near (v. 3).

(a) They are also children of crime and the seed of deceit (v. 4b).

(b) Isaiah describes Israel’s real ancestry not as faithful Abraham and Sarah (51:2) but as a sorceress/witch/prostitute and an adulterer.<sup>10</sup>

1) **2 Ki 9:22** 22 What peace can there be, so long as the whorings and the sorceries of your mother Jezebel are so many?

(c) Jesus disputes with the Jewish leaders about who their father really is.

1) **Jn 8:37-38** 37 I [Jesus] know that you [Jewish leaders] are offspring of Abraham, yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. 38 I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your *father*. 39 They answered him, Abraham is our *father*. Jesus said to them, If you were Abraham’s children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, 40 but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. 41 You are doing the works your *father* did. They said to him, We were not born of *sexual immorality*. We have one Father—even God. 42 Jesus said to them, If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God, and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. 43 Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. 44 You are of your *father* the devil, and your will is to do your *father’s* desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

(2) They mock (the righteous) and stick out their tongue (v. 4a).

(3) They burn with lust among the oaks and under other trees (v. 5a).

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<sup>7</sup> Alexander, quoted in John N. Oswalt, [The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66](#), The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 475.

<sup>8</sup> John N. Oswalt, [The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66](#), The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 478.

<sup>9</sup> John N. Oswalt, [The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66](#), The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 475.

<sup>10</sup> John N. Oswalt, [The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66](#), The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 476.

- (a) This describes a sort of sex and fertility/nature worship. The people felt that sexual activity in the shade of these trees would partake of their fertility.<sup>11</sup>
- (b) Sexual immorality and worship of nature often go together.
  - 1) **Hos 4:12** 12 For a spirit of whoredom has led them astray, and they have left their God to play the whore.
- (4) They slaughter their children in the valleys under rocks (v. 5b).
  - (a) They seem to believe sacrificing the next generation will somehow preserve of their own generation.
  - (b) The Canaanites widely practiced child sacrifice, as confirmed by archaeology.<sup>12</sup>
  - (c) Interestingly, in the post-Christian, pagan West, fertility worship and child sacrifice are ascendant.
  - (d) Our generation seems willing to destroy the next generation in order to gratify its lusts.<sup>13</sup>
    - 1) On average, there are 35 abortions per day in New Zealand.
- (5) They bring offerings to the smooth stones of the wadis (v. 6a).
  - (a) It seems every unusual geographical feature could become a site for worship sooner or later.<sup>14</sup>
    - 1) Human beings are experts at creating God-substitutes.
    - 2) For me, leading a successful ministry or church can be an idol.
  - (b) When people make creation their creator, they choose creation as their lot, and God lets them have it.<sup>15</sup>
    - 1) **Ro 1:-25** 21 For although [men] knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man, birds, animals, and creeping things. 24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.
    - 2) When man exchanges the Creator for creatures, the Creator gives them up to sexual impurity.
- (6) They set their bed on a high mountain and go up to offer sacrifice (v. 7).

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<sup>11</sup> John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 477.

<sup>12</sup> John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 477.

<sup>13</sup> John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 477.

<sup>14</sup> John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 477.

<sup>15</sup> John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 478.

- (a) This language is both literal and figurative. They have sex on high mountains and also worship idols there. “The heavily sexual orientation of the Canaanite religion meant that ritual prostitution was a fundamental part of worship.”<sup>16</sup>
- (7) They set up a memorial behind the door (v. 8a).
  - (a) It is God’s word that is supposed to be on Israel’s doorposts.
    - 1) **Dt 6:9** 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.
    - 2) **Dt 11:20** 20 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates....
  - (b) But instead they have installed some sort of pagan object.<sup>17</sup>
  - (c) Are there any pagan objects set up as memorials around our home? Our internet devices have become objects of worship for many of us.
- (8) Deserting Yahweh, they uncover their bed and make it wide (v. 8b).
  - (a) Israel has turned her back on God and gone to bed with other lovers.<sup>18</sup> She is indiscriminate. She’ll make love to anyone. Her life revolves around sex.
  - (b) This describes our sex-saturated culture, where sex is the pinnacle of what it means to be human. For many, sex is ultimate purpose in life.
- (9) They cut (a covenant) with their lovers and stare at their male genitals (v. 8c).
  - (a) The “cutting” is possibly some sort of ritual mutilation.<sup>19</sup>
  - (b) The Hebrew term “hand” is a euphemism for “penis.”<sup>20</sup>
    - 1) **Eze 23:20** 20 ...And lusted after her lovers there, whose members were like those of donkeys, and whose issue was like that of horses.
  - (c) Just as sex was a major priority for the Canaanites and Israel, so sex has become a major priority in our culture.
- (10) Their envoys journey far to the king with oil and perfumes, even to Sheol (v. 9).
  - (a) This may be a reference to making political alliances with other nations and then worshipping their gods with them.
  - (b) The term “king” may be a reference to the Canaanite god Melek.<sup>21</sup>
  - (c) “The people have gone to the trees, the wadis, and the mountains looking for lovers with which to prostitute themselves, but that was not enough. They must seek out lovers from far away.”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 478.

<sup>17</sup> John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 479.

<sup>18</sup> John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 479.

<sup>19</sup> John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 480.

<sup>20</sup> John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 480.

<sup>21</sup> John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 480.

<sup>22</sup> John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 480.

- (d) Today, when sexual immorality doesn't satisfy, men and women seek out greater and greater sexual thrills. There seems to be no limit of what humans can think up in the matter of sex. Outside of marriage, sex becomes more and more degrading, like a downward spiral. It is addictive and very difficult to escape from.
- (11) They grow weary from seeking new lovers, but they won't give up (v. 10).
- (a) One lover is not enough. Israel must have more and more lovers.<sup>23</sup> She is now addicted.
- 1) **Is 56:12** 12 Come, they say, let me get wine. Let us fill ourselves with strong drink, and tomorrow will be like this day, great beyond measure.
- (b) Sex and other addictions offer us satisfaction, but they never satisfy us. They end up exhausting us. Yet we often persevere in those addictions. Then the law of diminishing returns takes over. The gratification grows steadily less and less. There is less and less thrill. To admit the quest is hopeless would force us back to God, but most of us are unwilling to submit to God. So our addictions and dissatisfaction grows even worse. It is a vicious, downward spiral.
- d. Yahweh will not relent (from judgment) for these things (v. 6b).
- (1) **1 Co 6:9-10** 9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the *sexually immoral*, nor *idolaters*, nor *adulterers*, nor men who practice *homosexuality*, 10 nor thieves, nor the *greedy*, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.
- (2) **Re 21:8** 8 But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for *murderers*, the *sexually immoral*, *sorcerers*, *idolaters*, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulphur, which is the second death.
- (3) I have been sexually immoral. I have been an adulterer. I have been an idolater. Probably you have been, too. This is sin, and it is serious. But there is help in Jesus Messiah!
- (a) **Jn 4:28-30** 28 So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, 29 Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Messiah? 30 They went out of the town and were coming to him.
- (b) **Jn 8:10-11** 10 Jesus stood up and said to her, Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you? 11 She said, No one, Lord. And Jesus said, Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on sin no more.
- (4) For help with addictions, see Setting Captives Free, <https://settingcaptivesfree.com>.

### 3. Collection of Idols (Is 57:11-13).

- a. **Is 57:11-13** 11 Whom did you dread and fear, so that you lied and did not remember (זכר) me, did not lay it to heart? Have I not been silent (חשה), even for a long time, so that you do not fear (ירא) me? 12 I will declare your righteousness (צדקה) and your deeds, but they will not profit you. 13 When you cry out, let your collection of idols/gods (קבוצת) deliver you! The wind/Spirit (רוח) will carry them all off, a breath (נְפִילָה)

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<sup>23</sup> John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 480.

- will take them away. But he who takes refuge (חסה) in me shall possess the land and shall inherit my holy mountain [Zion].
- b. These “sons” lie, forget Yahweh, and ignore consequences (v. 11a).
    - (1) These are Israelites who have broken their covenant with Yahweh.
  - c. Because Yahweh has been silent for a long time, they do not fear him (v. 11b).
    - (1) **2 Pe 3:3-4** 3 ...Scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. 4 They will say, Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.
    - (2) **2 Pe 3:9-10** 9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.
  - d. But their “righteousness” and “deeds” will not profit them (v. 12).
    - (1) **Is 64:6** 6 We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.
    - (2) Man’s pseudo-righteous works will be of no value when judgment comes.<sup>24</sup>
  - e. When they cry for help, their collection of idols will have to save them (v. 13a).
    - (1) “[S]uggested explanations include...your collection of gods, your pantheon; ... idols, really “acquisitions”...; more specifically “collected things”...; ...your collection of idols” (*HALOT*, 1061).
  - f. Unfortunately, the wind/Spirit will carry off their collection of idols (v. 13b)
    - (1) In comparison to the glory/weight/reality/significance of God, our collections of idols are a chimera/vapor. They will vanish like wind-driven chaff. A breath will whisk them away. The vast intellectual and physical effort that went into creating man-made worldviews will be shown to be a monumental waste. Their creators (Rousseau, Shelley, Nietzsche, Marx, Darwin, Freud) will be naked in the terrible, bright glory of the Creator.<sup>25</sup>
  - g. But he who takes refuge in Yahweh will possess the land and inherit Zion (v. 13c).
    - (1) Taking refuge in Yahweh is synonymous with believe in Jesus for salvation.
      - (a) **Ru 2:12** 12 Yahweh repay you [Ruth] for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by Yahweh, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!
      - (b) **2 Sa 22:31** 31 This God—his way is perfect. The word of Yahweh proves true. He is a shield for all those who take refuge in him.
      - (c) **Ps 2:12** 12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.
    - (2) Jesus offers refuge to wicked people, including nature worshippers, sex addicts, adulterers, and idolaters.

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<sup>24</sup> John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 482.

<sup>25</sup> John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 482-483.

#### 4. Shalom, Shalom or No Shalom (Is 57:14-21).

- a. **Is 57:14-21** 14 And it shall be said, Build up, build up, prepare the way, remove every obstruction from my people's way. 15 For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell (שכן) in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a crushed/humiliated (דָּכָא) and humble (שָׁפָל) spirit (רוּחַ), to revive (חיה) the spirit of the humble (שָׁפָל), and to revive the heart of the crushed/humiliated (דָּכָא). 16 For I will not contend forever, nor will I always be angry. For the spirit would grow faint before me, and the breath of life (נְשָׁמָה) that I made. 17 Because of the sin-guilt (עוֹן) of his unjust gain I was angry. I struck him. I hid my face and was angry, but he went on backsliding (שׁוֹבֵב) in the way of his own heart (בְּדַרְךְוּ לִבּוֹ). 18 I have seen his ways (דַּרְכָיו), but I will heal (רפא) him. I will lead him and restore comfort (נְחָמִים) to him and his mourners, 19 creating the fruit of the lips. Peace, peace (שְׁלוֹם שְׁלוֹם), to the far and to the near, says Yahweh, and I will heal (רפא) him. 20 But the wicked (רָשָׁעִים) are like the tossing sea. For it cannot be quiet, and its waters toss up mire and dirt. 21 There is no peace (שְׁלוֹם), says my God, for the wicked (רָשָׁעִים).
- b. Yahweh commands that an unobstructed highway be built up for his people (v. 14).
- (1) The roadbed is to be raised above the countryside with an adequate foundation. All the bumps and potholes are to be removed so nothing stands in the people's way. Those who humble themselves will find a perfectly smooth road by which to come and dwell with God.<sup>26</sup>
    - (a) God makes it easy for us to approach him. He rolls out the red carpet for us. He gives us the "red carpet" treatment.
    - (2) This is a theme in Isaiah.
      - (a) **Is 40:3** 3 A voice cries: In the wilderness prepare the way of Yahweh. Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
        - 1) John the Baptist rolled out the red carpet for Jesus.
      - (b) **Is 62:10** 10 Go through, go through the gates. Prepare the way for the people. Build up, build up the highway. Clear it of stones.
        - 1) God will roll out the red carpet for Israel.
- c. Yahweh:
- (1) Is high and lifted up (v. 15a).
    - (a) God is transcendent. He is not part of this world or its processes. He created it as something other than himself, and he stands over against it, both to judge it and to save it. He is wholly other. The Creator is distinct from his creation. See *God's Transcendence*.
      - 1) **1 Ki 8:27** 27 Will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you. How much less this house that I [Solomon] have built!
      - 2) **Ps 113:4-6** 4 Yahweh is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens! 5 Who is like Yahweh our God, who is seated on high, 6 who looks far down on the heavens and the earth?
    - (2) We should remember Isaiah's vision in Is 6.

<sup>26</sup> John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 486.

- (a) **Is 6:1** 1 In the year that King Uzziah died I saw Yahweh sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up....
- (3) Inhabits eternity (v. 15b).
- (a) See *God's Eternity*.
- 1) **Ge 21:33** 33 Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba and called there on the name of Yahweh the Everlasting God (בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה אֵל עוֹלָם).
  - 2) **Dt 33:27** 27 The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms.
  - 3) **Job 36:26** 26 Behold, God is great, and we know him not. The number of his years is unsearchable.
  - 4) **Ps 41:13** 13 Blessed be Yahweh, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting! Amen and Amen.
- (4) Is holy (v. 15c).
- (a) See *God's Holiness*.
- 1) **Ex 3:5** 5 Yahweh said [to Moses], Do not come near here. Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.
  - 2) **Ex 15:11** 11 Who is like you among the gods, Yahweh? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in praises, working wonders?
  - 3) **Is 6:3** 3 Holy, holy, holy is Yahweh of armies. The whole earth is full of his glory!
  - 4) "Where there is nothing sacred, there is nothing."<sup>27</sup>
  - 5) "For we have proven in this century, if not before, that the universe cannot save itself. We must have Someone from beyond who is holy enough to save us."<sup>28</sup>
- (5) Dwells in a high and holy place (v. 15d).
- (a) God dwells in the third heaven, beyond the physical universe.
- 1) **2 Co 12:2** 2 I know a man in Messiah who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows.
- (6) Also dwells with him who is of a crushed and humble spirit (v. 15e).
- (a) **Ps 34:18** 18 Yahweh is near to the brokenhearted and saves the *crushed* in spirit.
- (b) **Ps 138:6** 6 For though Yahweh is high, he regards the *lowly*, but the haughty he knows from afar.
- (c) **Is 53:10** 10 Yet it was the desire of Yahweh to *crush* [his Servant]. He has put him to grief.
- (d) **Is 66:1-2** 1 Thus says Yahweh: Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? 2 All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares Yahweh. But this is the one to whom I will *look*: he who is humble, contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word.

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<sup>27</sup> Philip Rieff, *Deathworks*.

<sup>28</sup> John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1–39*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986), 541.

- (e) **Mt 28:20** 20 Behold, I [Jesus] am *with you* always, to the end of the age.
- (f) See *God's Immanence*.
  - 1) To condescend means “to descend to a less formal or dignified level” or “to waive the privileges of rank.”
  - 2) God’s transcendence does not rule out his immanence.
  - 3) God can and does intervene in our lives (*e.g.*, Aslan).
- (7) *Revives* the spirit of the humble and the heart of the crushed (v. 15f).
- d. Yahweh will not contend forever or always be angry toward Israel/man (v. 16a).
  - (1) God’s anger has a terminating point. He is eternal, but his anger is not eternal.<sup>29</sup>
  - (2) See *God's Mercy*.
    - (a) **2 Sa 24:14** 14 David said to Gad, I am in great distress. Let us fall into the hand of Yahweh, for his *mercy* is great, but let me not fall into the hand of man.
    - (b) **Ne 9:31** 31 Nevertheless, in your great *mercies* you did not make an end of them or forsake them, for you are a gracious and *merciful* God.
    - (c) **Ps 30:5** 5 For his anger is but for a moment, but his *grace* is for a lifetime. Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.
    - (d) **Hos 1:7** 7 But I will have *mercy* on the house of Judah, and I will save them by Yahweh their God. I will not save them by bow, by sword, by war, by horses, or by horsemen.
    - (e) **Hab 3:2** 2 Yahweh, I have heard the report of you, and your work, Yahweh, do I fear. In the midst of the years revive it. In the midst of the years make it known. In wrath remember *mercy*.
    - (f) **Lk 1:50** 50 And his *mercy* is for those who fear him from generation to generation.
    - (g) **Ro 11:32** 32 For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have *mercy* on all.
- e. If Yahweh did contend forever, the spirit of Israel/man would grow faint (v. 16b).
  - (1) In other words, our life would extinguish like a candle flame.
    - (a) **Ge 2:7** 7 ...Then Yahweh God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים), and the man became a living creature.
    - (b) **Ge 6:3** 3 Then Yahweh said, My breath (רוּחַ) shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh. His days shall be 120 years.
  - (2) We are creatures totally dependent on or Creator.
- f. Yahweh was angry because of the sin-guilt of Israel’s/man’s unjust gain (v. 17a).
  - (1) Israel’s rich took advantage of Israel’s poor.
    - (a) **Is 56:11** 11 The dogs have a mighty appetite. They never have enough. But they are shepherds who have no understanding. They have all turned to their own way, each to his own gain, one and all.
    - (b) **Jer 6:13** 13 For from the least to the greatest of them, everyone is greedy for unjust gain. And from prophet to priest, everyone deals falsely.
      - 1) It is not gain that God hates, but *unjust* gain.
      - 2) Unjust gain was a major problem in Israel, just as it is in ours.

<sup>29</sup> John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 488.

- (2) See *Greed*.
- (a) **Pr 16:8** 8 Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues with injustice.
  - (b) **Mt 6:19-21** 19 Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
  - (c) **Lk 6:24** 24 Woe to you who are *rich*, for you have received your consolation.
  - (d) **Lk 11:39-41** 39 And the Lord [Jesus] said to [the Pharisee], Now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of *greed* and wickedness. 40 You fools! Did not he who made the outside make the inside also? 41 But give as alms those things that are within, and behold, everything is clean for you.
  - (e) **Eph 5:3-6** 3 But sexual immorality and all impurity or *covetousness* must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. ...5 For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is *covetous* (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Messiah and God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.
  - (f) **Col 3:5** 5 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and *covetousness*, which is idolatry.
  - (g) **1 Ti 6:9-10** 9 But those who desire to be *rich* fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the *love of money* is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.
  - (h) **James 5:1-5** 1 Come now, you *rich*, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. 2 Your *riches* have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. 3 Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days. 4 Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. 5 You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.
- g. Yahweh struck Israel/man (in discipline) and hid his face from him (v. 17b).
- (1) See *Divine Discipline*.
  - (a) Leviticus 26 outlines the five cycles of discipline that will happen to Israel if she turns her back on Yahweh. This is the context for the book of *Isaiah*.
  - (b) **Dt 31:16-18** 16 And Yahweh said to Moses, Behold, you are about to lie down with your fathers. Then this people [Israel] will rise and whore after the foreign gods among them in the land that they are entering, and they will forsake me and break my covenant that I have made with them. 17 Then my anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and *hide my face* from them, and they will be devoured. And many evils and

troubles will come upon them, so that they will say in that day, Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us? 18 And I will surely *hide my face* in that day because of all the evil that they have done, because they have turned to other gods.

- (c) \***Job 5:17-18** 17 Behold, blessed is the one whom God *reproves*. Therefore despise not the *discipline* of the Almighty. 18 For he wounds, but he binds up. He shatters, but his hands heal.
- (d) \***Pr 3:11-12** 11 My son, do not despise Yahweh's *discipline* or be weary of his reproof, 12 for Yahweh *reproves* him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights.
- (e) \***2 Ti 3:16-17** 16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for *reproof* (ἐλεγμός), for *correction/improvement* (ἐπανόρθωσις), and for *discipline* (παιδεία) in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.
- (f) \***Heb 12:5-11** 5 And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? My son, do not regard lightly the *discipline* (παιδεία) of the Lord, nor be weary when *reproved* by him. 6 For the Lord *disciplines* the one he loves, and *chastises* every son whom he receives. 7 It is for *discipline* that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not *discipline*? 8 If you are left without *discipline*, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. 9 Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who *disciplined* us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they *disciplined* us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he *disciplines* us for our good, that we may share (μεταλαμβάνω, aor.) his holiness. 11 For the moment all *discipline* seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.
- (g) \***Re 3:19** 19 Those whom I [Jesus] love (φιλέω, pres.), I *reprove* (ἐλέγχω, pres.) and *discipline* (παιδεύω, pres.). Therefore be zealous and change your mindset (μετανοέω).
- h. But Israel/man went on backsliding in the way of her own heart (v. 17c).
  - (1) **Pr 29:1** 1 He who is often *reproved*, yet stiffens his neck, will suddenly be broken beyond healing.
  - (2) In Israel's case, the announcement of the word of God has produce hardening of heart, not repentance. The announcement of imminent destruction by the prophets did not turn Israel back to God.<sup>30</sup>
  - (3) Jesus described Israel's unrepentant attitude in the parable of the tenants.
    - (a) **Mt 21:34-36** 34 When the season for fruit drew near, [the master] sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit. 35 And the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. 36 Again he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same to them.
- i. Yahweh sees Israel's/man's ways, but he will:
  - (1) Heal him (v. 18a).

<sup>30</sup> John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 490.

- (a) **Is 6:10** 10 Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.
  - (b) **Is 19:22** 22 And Yahweh will strike Egypt, striking and healing, and they will return to Yahweh, and he will listen to their pleas for mercy and heal them.
  - (c) **Is 30:26** 26 Moreover, the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day when Yahweh bandages up the brokenness of his people, and heals the wounds inflicted by his blow.
- (2) Lead him (v. 18b).
- (3) Comfort him (v. 18c).
- (4) Create the fruit of his lips in praise and rejoicing (v. 19a).
- j. Abundant *shalom* and healing is for believers far and near (v. 19b).
- (1) The duplication of the word *shalom* indicates total peace/well-being.
  - (2) See *Peace*.
  - (a) \***Nu 6:24-26** 24 Yahweh bless you and keep you. 25 Yahweh make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. 26 Yahweh lift up his countenance upon you and give you shalom (שָׁלוֹם).
  - (b) \***Ps 119:165** 165 Great shalom (שָׁלוֹם רַב) have those who love your Torah. Nothing can make them stumble.
  - (c) \***Is 26:3** 3 You keep him in shalom shalom (שָׁלוֹם שָׁלוֹם) whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.
  - (d) **Is 53:5** 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.
    - 1) The cross of the Servant is absolutely necessary to unlock these blessings.
  - (e) **Is 57:1-2** 1 ...The righteous man is taken away from calamity. 2 He enters into shalom. They rest in their beds who walk in their uprightness.
  - (f) **Is 66:12** 12 ...Behold, I will extend shalom to [Jerusalem] like a river, and the glory of the nations like an overflowing stream.
  - (g) **Eze 34:25** 25 I will make with [Israel] a covenant of shalom (שְׁלוֹמִית) and banish wild beasts from the land, so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods.
  - (h) **Mic 5:4-5** 4 ...[Messiah] shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of Yahweh, in the majesty of the name of Yahweh his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. 5 And he shall be their shalom (שָׁלוֹם).
  - (i) **Hag 2:9** 9 The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, says Yahweh of hosts. And in this place I will give shalom, declares Yahweh of hosts.
  - (j) **Lk 2:14** 14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace (εἰρήνη) among those with whom he is pleased!
  - (k) \***Jn 14:27** 27 Peace (εἰρήνη) I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

- (l) **Jn 20:19-21** 19 On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, Peace be with you. 20 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again, Peace be with you.
- (m) **Jn 20:26** 26 Eight days later, [Jesus'] disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, Peace be with you.
- (n) **\*Ro 5:1** 1 ...Because we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Messiah.
- (o) **Ro 8:6** 6 ...To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.
- (p) **Ro 15:13** 13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.
- (q) **\*Eph 2:13-17** 13 But now in Messiah Jesus you who once were far off [Gentiles] have been brought near by the blood of Messiah. 14 For he himself is our peace (εἰρήνη), who has made us [Gentiles and Jews] both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility 15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace (εἰρήνη), 16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. 17 And he came and preached peace (εἰρήνη) to you who were far off [Gentiles] and peace to those who were near [Jews].
- 1) Through Jesus, four types of peace are established: peace with God, peace with ourselves, peace with one another, and peace with nature.
- (r) **\*Php 4:6-7** 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Messiah Jesus.
- (3) This blessing is for believers near and far.
- (a) **Ac 2:38-39** 38 And Peter said to [the Jews], Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Messiah for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God [specially] calls to himself.
- k. The wicked, by contrast, are like a sea tossing up debris and mud (v. 20).
- (1) “Stillness is not in us, and we cannot produce it no matter how hard we try. Peace is only to be found when we give ourselves away to the will and ways of the one who is beyond change.”<sup>31</sup>
- l. There is no shalom for the wicked (v. 21).
- (1) **Is 48:22** 22 There is no shalom, says Yahweh, for the wicked.
- (2) **Mt 10:34** 34 Do not think that I [Jesus] have come to bring peace (εἰρήνη) to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

<sup>31</sup> John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 492.

## 5. Application.

- a. Be a righteous person (v. 1) by believing in Jesus and living by the Holy Spirit.
- b. Don't commit adultery against God (vv. 3-10).
- c. Don't collect idols (v. 13).
- d. Be contrite and lowly (v. 15).
- e. When God strikes (in discipline), don't go on backsliding (v. 17).