

DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

Our Mission: Reaching Out to Leaders Who Can Change the World.

Nov 2016

Isaiah

Holy Living

Lesson # 16 God's Plan

INTRODUCTION

If human sexuality is part of God's plan, why is it so often depicted as evil and immoral?

OBSERVATION/INTERPRETATION

Note: Jesus obediently finished His work on earth; and today He is at work in heaven, interceding for God's people (Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:34). But what are the consequences of His sacrifice? What difference does it make that He endured all that suffering? To Israel, it means restoration (Isa. 54:1-17); to the Gentile nations, it means an invitation (55:1-56:8); and to rebellious sinners, it means an accusation (56:9-59:21), a warning from the Lord that they need to repent.¹ Isaiah suggested that the land would be "too small for the inhabitants," with an abundance of children seeking land for themselves. Ezra 2 indicates that only about 50,000 people returned from the Babylonian exile, so the land of Palestine (Judah) was hardly over-populated at that time. The dramatic changes in nature and in people's hearts, and the inclusion of foreigners suggest that this was a prophecy about some future fulfillment of the kingdom of God. Another possibility was the use of a dramatic, exaggerated word-picture on the prophet's part to underscore the certainty of the Lord's redemptive action in days to come.²

Read Isaiah 54:1-8

1. Isaiah uses the imagery of a marriage to describe God's (the husband's) relationship to Israel (the adulteress wife). Children were considered a wonderful blessing to Israelite women. How would you describe the nation's restoration? **Vs 1**
2. Why is it significant to compare this to Abraham and Sarah? **51:2-3; Gal 4:27**
3. Why did God take her back? **1 Jn 1:9**

Read Isaiah 55:1-11

Note: In the east, water is precious and an abundance of water is considered a special blessing. Water and wine are often symbols of the Holy Spirit. Jn 7:37-39; Eph 5:18 Jesus referred to himself as the bread of life. Jn 6:32-35

4. Who is given the opportunity to enjoy the water, wine and bread?
5. Why would God extend his invitation beyond his chosen people (the Israelites)?
6. If God's ways and thoughts are so different, how can we ever expect to understand Him? **Vv 8-9**
7. How will God call his people? **Vv 10-11. Isa 40:8; Lk 8:11**

Read Isaiah 57:9-13

Note: Molech was an Ammonite god worshipped with human sacrifice. When the Israelites had strong spiritual leaders like Kings Hezekiah and Josiah, they stayed away from idol worship. When the leaders were weak, the people turned back to false gods.

8. What's wrong with trusting political alliances rather than God?
9. What did Isaiah say would happen to those who trust idols during times of trouble? **Vv 12-13** To those who trust God? **Vs 13; 59:21**

APPLICATION

Where do you instinctively turn when you have a problem or need help?

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *Be comforted*. An Old Testament study. (140). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

² Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J., & Powell, D. (2007). *The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith* (1060). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.