

**How to live until it comes; foreigners blessed**

**1. How to conduct oneself until the deliverance promised by the Lord would come [56.1-2]**

Living in the light of future promises of God's deliverance and future salvation has an effect upon the present living. Just as it is true for the Christian hope of the bodily return of Jesus to the earth to gather his people to himself, so here in the light of the coming deliverance of Israel there is a mighty effect of the future on the present.

For the Jews the things to be doing are to maintain a just way of living, to hold fast to the Sabbath day and to keep it and to not engage in wrong doing.

**The presence of the future effects life lived under such promises**

**2. Foreigners, who have attached themselves to the Lord, should not look at these future promises to Israel as exclusive of them [56.3-7].**

To those sojourners of foreign descent, who have joined themselves to Israel and stand with her as involved in her shared life; they must not take it that these new promises the Lord is making to her do not include them. Just as they have found the ancient promises and covenant with Israel and God to have drawn them into the blessings of shared life with God's people, so these promises include them as well.

Eunuchs, disqualified from participating in so much of Israel's common life through the actions of men upon their bodies and in particular unable to sire a progeny so as to have an inheritance in Israel, need to know that their obedience to the covenant life will bring them something better than sons and daughters. Both eunuchs and foreigners will find they will have a renowned name in the house of the Lord. And their worship will be acceptable to God because his house is a house of prayer for all the nations.

**Traditionally excluded foreigners and eunuchs have an inheritance in these new, future promises**

*New Testament Note: The Cleansing of the Temple [Mt21.12-13, Mk 11.15-17, Lk 19.45-46] reports Jesus as being overwhelmed with righteous zeal for his Father's house. Seeing the commercial exchange of the temple tax money taking place in the Court of the Gentiles, he draws upon this section of Isaiah rebuking the current generation of Jewish leaders around him, scourging them.*

*They had forgotten God's gracious inclusion and provision for the sojourners among them. They had also failed to live in the light of this future promise to themselves of deliverance and restoration. This failure to live in the light of the future promises themselves, found them also excluding the foreigners through using up the space in the temple to satiate their own greed.*

**3. The current blindness of Israel's shepherds [56.8-12].**

A call, ominous to present Israel, is sent out to the wild beasts of the field that they should come and feast on, what is presumed to be, carcasses of men and women.

Then the shepherds and rulers of Israel are seen as blind, in that they perceive nothing, they are dumb in that they have no prophetic word of God. They are pictured as dreaming, asleep on the ground and satiating their greed and intent on their own gain as they swill down strong drink in their stupour.

**A deep stupour of blindness upon present Israel.**

***Exile will be a discipline and so expose Israel's sins***

**1. The righteous perish and no one cares [57.1-2]**

Under the powerful domination of evil, the righteous have no place to live and carry out their obedient life. They are swept away. They can only find solace in their death - looking for that as the way to find release from the evil all around them.

**Such is the onset of evil the righteous are swept away and only find peace when they die.**

**2. Occult mockery of good and a lustful dissolute life of Israel [57.3-11].**

The children of the soothsayers and occult practitioners mock and rubbish what is true and honourable.

Israel, personified as a sluttish woman, is pictured as someone who has lain down with all the gods of the fertility cults around about. She has deserted her God - drawn by her own lust of sleeping with men. She finds herself worn out by this dissolute life, yet rallies and does it some more.

God is asking her, who was it that she feared so much as to have no fear of Him? Indeed, all the time she did this He was silent and looked away.

**The sins of Israel when God did not speak**

**3. The immanent exile will expose the sins of Israel [57.12-14].**

But not so now; God is about to expose her deeds she thought so good as the sins for what they are. As the people are carried off into captivity their idols will not help. Only the person who takes refuge in God will survive.

**Now the exile, her discipline, will expose the sins.**

**4. Yet, God will make a way for humble of spirit in Israel to be saved [57.15-16].**

God is a high and exalted One, yet He shares his life with those of a humble and broken spirit; He revives such people.

The Lord knows that He is at this time, seen as an accusing and wrathful God - calling his people to account.

But He will not always be this way. Not because He will be inconsistent with his own character, but because of the smallness of his creatures, if He kept this up they would faint and could not carry the intensity of his anger and accusations.

So it was for a brief time that He punished her and withdrew his favour. Now He will heal Israel and comfort him in full measure They will have peace.

**A place for the humble and lowly, contrite persons**

**5. The wicked however, will never have peace [57.20-21].**

The intransigent opposition of God to wickedness is maintained, even against the background of the discipline of Israel under his wrath and accusation.

**Wicked are a restless sea.**

***Ministry to the Lord  
for gain is a wicked  
use of intimacy.***

**1. Israel maintains an approach to God while sinful [58.1-2]**

Israel is living under the misapprehension that what she is doing is OK with God. So the prophet is instructed to declare to Israel her transgression.

Israel is looking for God to guide her, thinking that they are delighting in knowing His ways for them. They are speaking how much they delight in God and yet they sin on!

**Israel maintains covenant worship while living in an ungodly way**

**2. Fasting to the Lord while living wrongly [58.3-5].**

Israel betrays her manipulative ways with the Lord in that she fast to gain his attention and to get what she wants. Further, she gets bored with it and will not continue it because she does not see the fast moving God to do what she wants. She thinks of fasting as a mortification and a burden, a humiliating experience. She imposes it upon herself because she thinks it is advantageous to her. She has caught herself up in religious acts unaccompanied by obedience.

**The use of worship as a tool for their own self-serving**

**3. The fast God requires [58.6-14].**

The Lord makes clear that the "fast" He requires is one of an adapted life of obedience to Him, mimicking the way He has shown them to live. If Israel is living a shared life with the Lord in covenant then they following things will be evident in their obedient life:

[a] Cast off the injustices around them and set people free from those situations that oppress them and bind their lives [v.6]; and for themselves, they are not to pervert justice and point fingers at people wrongly [v.9b].

[b] Taking care of the naked, the hungry and the homeless as well as their own families v.7,10a]

[c] Keeping God's sabbaths with a happy joy in the Lord, and not promoting their own interests in a self-referred way [v.13].

**Obedience is better than sacrifice**

If they do these things God's ears will be open to them, their wounds shall be healed, and the glory of God will defend them from their pursuers, their ruins will be rebuilt and they shall ride on the heights of the earth.

**1. It is not that God cannot save them: it is their sins that are the issue [59.1-8]**

Israel's problem is not that God is unable to save them, nor that He does not hear them - it is her sinful life. The Lord details it for her, since He does not accuse in a general, or unclear, way. There are specific matters to be pointed out. They have stained hands with blood [Isaiah 1.13-18].

**Justice and righteousness are far away - a time of moral darkness and lack of clarity**

**2. The darkness when justice is out of reach [59.9-11,14-15]**

In the first person plural, "we", Israel recounts how she experiences the loss of righteousness and justice around her. It is a dark experience, like blind men groping along a wall, feeling their way. There is a loss of moral clarity.

**The sin and guilt of Israel**

**3. The admission of sin and guilt [59.12-13]**

Israel admits that she has rebelled and broken faith with the Lord. This is seen by the prophet as a relapse - a fall from what she has known in intimacy and shared life with God. She knows her lies and treacherous words to Him and to one another.

**4. The Lord takes action Himself for there no one who intervened [59.14-17].**

What does it mean that no one intervened? The Lord is looking at his people and wanting that some person would cry out to Him about the situation but there is no one. This is a situation where the whole people of Israel is caught up in this rebellion and there is no one to help.

**Righteousness, salvation, vengeance and zeal.**

So we have a picture of the Lord as a Warrior-Ruler. He clothes Himself with the characteristic beauty of his personality. *Righteousness* as a breastplate; *salvation* as a helmet; garments of *vengeance* and a cloak of *zeal*.

For his enemies there will be anger and retribution. The result is that his Name will be feared and that his glory will be known.

**5. The redemption of a repentant Israel and a new covenant [59.20-21].**

For Israel, however, this vengeance on the Lord's adversaries becomes an occasion of her redemption. So this is a future passage - taking us long future to the time when the Lord is on Mt Zion and is the redeemer of Jacob.

**Repentant Israel redeemed.**

There is an everlasting covenantal promise made to the redeemed Israel at that time - they shall never fail to have the Spirit of the Lord or his words.

**1. Over Jerusalem the glory of the Lord has dawned [60.1-3]**

Over Jerusalem - and we are now in a long future passage - the glory of the Lord dawns, even though it is also a time of darkness for the earth and the nations. When this wonderful arrival of the Lord for Jerusalem happens, she will find that the nations and their kings will actually come to her light [which is God Himself v. 19].

**The glory of Jerusalem - nations come to her light**

**2. The return of Jerusalem's sons and daughters from afar [60.4-5]**

Just as Israel found she was scattered as the Lord's anger was upon her, so it will be that He will gather all his people back to Jerusalem in this great and final glory which is being described - the joy in Jerusalem over this will be immense.

**The return of the scattered ones**

**3. The wealth of nations pour into Jerusalem - under an iron rule [60.6-12].**

Into the no longer forsaken Jerusalem comes the wealth of the nations, voluntarily brought, and yet aware that not to honour Jerusalem as the City of the Lord would mean that they would suffer. The walls of Jerusalem will be built by foreigners.

**Wealth of nations pour in**

**4. The honoured City of the Lord [60.13-22]**

Jerusalem will be aware of the deliverance of the Lord when He brings it pass at the appointed time [v.22a]. She will see that great reversals have now taken place for her:

- [a] holy sanctuary adorned with honour
- [b] sons of her former oppressors will now pay her homage
- [c] she is no longer deserted or neglected, but a place of supply and joy
- [d] drawing their sustenance from the nations, God is their Deliverer
- [e] peace and righteousness rule in her, no violence or havoc found there
- [f] Lord will be her light and splendour; and end of mourning
- [g] people in her will be righteous and many.

**An honoured city and people of the Lord.**

**The Messiah's 1st  
and 2nd proclamations.**

**1. The servant of the Lord, Jesus of Nazareth, proclaims at his first coming [61.1-2a]**

The fulfillment of this prophecy of Isaiah is stated, as other portions of the Servant songs are in the first person.

*New Testament Note: In the synagogue at Nazareth Luke 4.14.30]  
Jesus, on his return from Galilee and doing many miracles, entered the synagogue and made it clear as He read this section of Isaiah that it had come to its fulfillment as He, himself, read it aloud. It was met with general approval in the light of his miraculous works, but not received as he was a locally known man.*

**2. The servant of the Lord's second proclamation [61.2b-9]**

What we have read of chapter 60, that has already presented to us so many of the elements that appear in this section, the Messiah's second coming will be a time of the day of vengeance of our God [ 2 Thessalonians 1.6-10].

**3. Israel has a response of rejoicing and exulting in God [61.10-11].**

The rest of the chapter gives us an anticipated response of Israel to this amazing day of deliverance that will dawn upon her. She, as a bride, is exulting in her marriage garments of deliverance and victory. She anticipates how the Lord will cause a blossoming of her before all the nations.

**Jesus states his mission - a redeeming of mankind**

**The redemption of Jerusalem on that day.**

**Jerusalem's response**

**1. The prophet cannot keep silent over Jerusalem's future [62.1-5]**

The prophet cannot but speak of the future victory for Jerusalem and he refuses to be silent until it comes to pass. The change will be from Forsaken and desolate to Hephzibah [my Delight is in Her] and Beulah [Wedded].

There will be a marriage of God and Jerusalem's land and as a young man marries a maid whom he builds up so the Lord will rejoice over Jerusalem.

**Impossible to keep  
silent about Jerusa-  
lem's future**

**2. Watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem, appointed [62.6-7]**

These watchmen are not to be silent either; they are to cry out to those who name the Name of the Lord that they should not rest until God makes Jerusalem a theme of praise around the world.

**Watchmen on the  
walls to remind the  
people to take no  
rest until this comes  
to pass**

**3. Never again will others eat what Jerusalem has toiled for [62.8-11]**

Jerusalem will have the deep satisfaction of eating what they have planted and harvested. They shall not be raped or pillaged again, they shall never be ripped off - that experience for them is finished.

**Jerusalem's deep  
satisfaction**

**4. A highway is to be built so that the signal may go out that the deliverance of Jerusalem has come [62.10-12]**

The name of Jerusalem will be Sought out, and Redeemed of the Lord and a city that is not forsaken.

**Jerusalem "Sought  
Out" and  
"Redeemed".**

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**1. The wrath of the Lamb [63.1-6]**

A terrible and fearsome picture of the Lord Himself executing judgment on those nations who deserve his wrath. He has stamped on them in his fury.

**The wrathful judgment of God**

**2. The Lord's unfailing love to Israel recounted and appreciated [63.7-16]**

A long recount of history of the Lord's faithful dealings with his people over a very long time recounting the exodus and the call of Abraham. It celebrates that He has rescued them and redeemed them Himself, even though He had at one time turned hostile to them.

**How God has  
cared for Israel and  
redeemed her and  
constantly rescued  
her.**

**3. Why did God let them wander in the first place? [63.17-19]**

It is almost as if the prophet is recounting how Israel wondered at the freedom she had under the Lord's rule. A freedom to respond voluntarily and to live out of the joy of being his children. Unaware that this freedom is really arising out of the character of God and the freedom He enjoys, she does not see it as sharing in his life: but it seems that she would have even preferred to have had less freedom, in the light of her wayward rebellion that took place.

**The terrible responsibility of freedom.**



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**1. Why did not God just ruthlessly intervene? [64.1-2]**

Israel asks as to why the Lord did not just rend the heavens and come down and deal with the his adversaries in a burst of raw power.

**Could not God just simply intervene?**

**2. The Lord held back so that Israel might learn to wait for Him [64.3-7]**

Even so, Israel sees that God has taken her by surprise with his deliverance. He has sustained his conviction to welcome those who do right. Israel has come to see her sin, and that any righteousness she might claim is really like filthy rags. God had left them in the grip of their sins that they might see this.

**Israel must wait for the Lord.**

**3. They recognise that God is their Father [64.8-12]**

By creation God is their Father, He has made them. May God not let his anger abound - but to look on them as his covenant people. May He not remember their iniquities. Even when they have lost Jerusalem and all that they had, will God still stand aloof and punish them beyond measure?

**The fatherhood of God to Israel implies discipline.**

**1. The Lord answers these questions [65.1-7]**

He points out that He was holding out his hands to them constantly, appealing to them as a rebellious people. Yet they provoked Him by their defiling actions and took a mistaken pride in their supposed holiness.

The Lord makes clear that He will repay their iniquities in full.

**The Lord replies.**

**2. The Lord will save a remnant, for the sake of His people [65.8-10]**

For the sake of his covenanted people God will not destroy all - but will save a remnant of them.

**A remnant will be saved.**

**3. But those who forsake the Lord are heading for destruction [65.11-16]**

The remnant are pictures as "my servants" and the ones who forsake the Lord will have a highly contrasted set of circumstances of life to the former.

**Destruction of those who forsake Him.**

**4. Restoration for Jerusalem under the new heaven and earth [65.17-25]**

The long future, Jerusalem will see a time when:

- [a] the past will not be remembered
- [b] a delight will be in Jerusalem and there is rejoicing
- [c] Weeping and sadness are no more
- [d] Long life and much building of houses
- [e] a time of the absence of toil
- [f] intimacy immediate with God - when they ask He will answer
- [g] the wolf will lie down with the lamb - no more hurt

**New heaven and new earth.**

***Judgment, salvation  
and the new heaven  
and earth.***

**1. The heavens God 's throne: earth his footstool [66.1-2a]**

Since all things belong to the Lord and his Person encompasses both heaven and earth - where will they build a house for Him? Where will his resting place be?

**God is great and spans heaven and earth with his Person.**

**2. The one who reveres God's word is oppressed and rejected[65.2b]**

This picks up the theme we have seen before about the righteous being constantly oppressed when the wicked triumph.

**Those who fear his word currently have no place to live.**

**3. God responds in the light of their wilful, occult practices [66.3-4]**

The Lord will bring on those who engaged in these practices the things that they dread. He too shall be intentional and fixed in his will about what he shall do to them.

**Destruction of those who forsake Him.**

**4. Reverers of God's word encouraged; others not so [66.5-6]**

When the Lord shows his glory it will be wonderful for those who fear his Name; to others it will be a retribution and judgment.

**Contrasting outcomes.**

**5. The wonderful re-birth and future of Jerusalem [66.7-14]**

**Re-birth of Jerusalem**

**6. The terrible whirlwind of judgement of the Lord [66.15-18a]**

**The Lord gathers his people back to Himself.**

**7. The gathering of His people from all over the earth [66.18b-21]**

**New heaven and new earth.**

**8. The new heaven and the new earth [66.22-23]**

**9. The corpses of the eternal death [66.24]**

**The corpses of the slain.**