

The Millennium Forecast

The Book of Isaiah

Text

Isaiah 56:1-8

Topic

Jesus takes us on a tour of the Millennial Temple, His House of Prayer, and surprises us with a few details we weren't expecting.

Title

"My House, My Rules"

"Are we there yet?"

Script writers know that they can elicit a response by having a character ask, but since it is so over-used, they must be creative about it.

One of the best exchanges ever is in *Avengers: Infinity War*. On the way to Nidavellir, Thor responds to "I am Groot" with "You'll know when we're close."

The disciples of Jesus were constantly wondering, **"Is it here yet?"**

They meant the Kingdom of God on Earth:

☞ "At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, 'Who then is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?' " (Matthew 18:1).

☞ "Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest" (Luke 22:24).

✍ Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him. And He said to her, "What do you wish?" She said to Him, "Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your Kingdom" (Matthew 20:20-21).

✍ When Jesus ascended into Heaven, "They asked Him, saying, 'Lord, will You at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel?' " (Acts 1:6).

Let's be fair to the disciples. *It was Jesus' doing.* In Acts 1:3 we read, "To whom [Jesus] also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days **and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.**"

If I told you that Jesus used the word "Kingdom" 50 times in the Gospel of Matthew, would you believe it? If I told you He used it 75 times? 100 times?

The count in the NKJV is 158 times in 150 verses.

- In the Old Testament God promised the nation of Israel that a King from the line of David would rule over a future Kingdom from Jerusalem.
- John the Baptist came preaching "the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."
- Jesus preached that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand.
- When Jesus sent out His disciples, He told them to preach that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand.

Jesus came offering the Kingdom to His own, to Israel. They violently refused Him as their King.

The apostle Paul told the leaders of Israel, in the last chapter of the Book of Acts, "**No Kingdom for you!**"

Not in the first century that is. There still *must* be a real, physical, on-the-Earth 1000 year Kingdom. It is coming, and Jesus is bringing it with Him.

Kingdom life is on display in our text. I'll organize my comments around two points: #1 Jesus Gives You His Blueprint For Waiting, and #2 Jesus Shows You His Blueprint For Working.

Let's take a look at the blueprint for waiting in verses one & two.

L Isa 56:1 Thus says the LORD: "Keep justice, and do righteousness, For My salvation *is* about to come, And My righteousness to be revealed.

This is a prophecy of an event over 200 years in Isaiah's future. The Southern Kingdom of Judah is going to be attacked by Nebuchadnezzar. Three times. God uses Babylon as His instrument of discipline against His wayward children.

When Isaiah quotes the LORD saying, "My salvation is about to come," he is referring to being delivered from Babylon after their captivity. When the LORD says "My righteousness," He is referring to both the captivity and their release as the right way of dealing with their sin.

Of course we believe that God is righteous in all of His ways. On paper, that is. In our experiences it can seem otherwise.

Moses would serve God faithfully for a total of 120 years. At one point in his leading the children of Israel through the desert, God told him to speak to a rock. Moses was angry, and so he struck the rock. For that momentary lapse, God told him he could see the Promised Land, but he could not go in.

You are going to have moments like that in your life. You might even have a life like that in your life if you get my meaning. God is righteous in all His ways, **and** His ways are above our ways.

The Lord is talking about a "righteousness" that you "do." Right behavior towards Him and towards one another. Know what is right and then do it.

When you don't "do" righteousness, you are to be held accountable for your actions by "justice."

Isa 56:2 Blessed *is* the man *who* does this, And the son of man *who* lays hold on it; Who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, And keeps his hand from doing any evil."

"The man" and "the son of man" is like our saying "any man and every man." "Lay hold on it" is to do it.

They were set free, forgiven, to "do" the Sabbath, and to eschew "evil." Seems simple enough.

The Sabbath is prominent because it had a lot to do with their discipline.

The sixth century Jews went into captivity for defiling the Sabbath.

Yes, the Jews committed idolatry and practiced child sacrifice and ritual prostitution. But they also defiled the Sabbath and, in fact, that sin is what dictated the precise 70yr length of their captivity.

The Jews were told to farm their land for six years. On the seventh year were to let the land get a rest. The Jews were to trust God's provision by not farming for an entire year.

For roughly 490 years, they disobeyed this Sabbath rest. *Thus they 'owed' God 70 year-long Sabbaths!*

If you've never seen it, you've got to watch a skit with comedian Bob Newhart about counseling. Search YouTube for Bob Newhart Stop It. He tells the client he can solve her issue in just five minutes. She reveals that she has a fear of being buried alive in a box. He diagnoses her as claustrophobic. He then says he has two words for her. He leans over the desk and yells, **"Stop it!"**

"Stop defiling the Sabbath!" God said. Period; problem solved.

Jesus used this approach with great success:

- When He dealt with the woman caught in adultery, Jesus told her He did not condemn her, and to "Go, and sin no more." Five words.
- When Jesus wrote to the church in Ephesus, He told them to "repent and do the first works." Six words.
- He used this approach in a modified way with the rich young ruler who asked what he must do to have eternal life. Jesus answered concisely, "Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor" (Mark 10:21).

Is there something you need to deal with? **"Stop it!"** There is no condemnation from Jesus. Repent... Return... "Go and sin no more... Get back to obedience."

Maybe you feel like the man with the withered hand. Jesus told him to "stretch out your hand" (Matthew 12:13). He simultaneously *could not* and *could* stretch out his

hand. God's Word is His enabling. What He tells you to do He enables & empowers you to do.

Let's take a look at the blueprint for *working* in verses three through eight.

In a classic line from *The Wizard of Oz*, Dorothy says, "Toto, I've a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore."

While reading the Bible, especially prophecy, it's not unusual for the writer to suddenly jump into the future.

In the remaining verses the LORD mentions eunuchs, foreigners, and outcasts. He says of eunuchs, "To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, And choose what pleases Me, And hold fast My covenant, Even to them I will give in My house And within My walls a place and a name Better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name That shall not be cut off."

You and I expect that kind of grace from God. A Jew who knew the Law of Moses would be stunned. In the Book of Deuteronomy Moses wrote, "He who is emasculated by crushing or mutilation [i.e., a eunuch] shall not enter the assembly of the LORD. One of illegitimate birth shall not enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the assembly of the LORD. An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the assembly of the LORD forever" (23:1-3).

Eunuchs, foreigners, and outcasts who were excluded will be welcomed, even sought out. It seems to be a modification of the Law of God. *That's because Isaiah is describing the Law of God as it will be applied in the Millennium.*

Isa 56:3 Do not let the son of the foreigner Who has joined himself to the LORD Speak, saying, "The LORD has utterly separated me from His people"; Nor let the eunuch say, "Here I am, a dry tree."

Isa 56:4 For thus says the LORD: "To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, And choose what pleases Me, And hold fast My covenant,

Isa 56:5 Even to them I will give in My house And within My walls a place and a name Better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name That shall not be cut off.

Eunuchs could not produce children. The LORD said that He would do something "better" for them. If there is something, or someone, that's is being withheld from you, don't take matters into your own hands.

Isa 56:6 "Also the sons of the foreigner Who join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him, And to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants - Everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, And holds fast My covenant -

Isa 56:7 Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices *Will be* accepted on My altar; For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations."

Isa 56:8 The Lord GOD, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, says, "Yet I will gather to him *Others* besides those who are gathered to him."

"Gathered" refers to dispersed Jews returning to Israel. They were dispersed in AD70. The gathering started happening when Israel became a nation in a day, May 14, 1948. It continues and will continue into the future Time of Jacob's Trouble.

The Lord says "My Sabbaths... "My covenant"... "My house"... "My walls"... "My holy mountain"... "My house of prayer"... and "My altar." It reads like He is giving us a tour of the Millennial Temple and some of its rituals.

Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the 1st Temple, built by Solomon. When the Jews returned and built the 2nd Temple, they did not call it "My house of prayer for all nations." Neither did nations flock there. This is future, Millennial.

Super quick Temple facts: When Rome occupied Jerusalem, Herod the Great remodeled the Temple. It was still considered the 2nd Temple. It was again destroyed around AD70. From then forward, the Jews have had no Temple.

Two more Temples are predicted:

1. A Temple will be built during the first half of the future time of great tribulation known to Jews as the Time of Jacob's Trouble. It is the Temple that will be defiled by the antichrist.
2. The prophet Ezekiel describes the Millennial Temple, occupying chapters 40-48 of his book.

You obviously noted the mention of the Sabbath and burnt offerings. This is where it gets sticky. Those who come to the Lord in the Millennial Temple will, in fact, keep the Sabbaths and offer animal sacrifices.

Why? The Millennial Kingdom will initially be populated by mortal believers who survive the Great Tribulation. They will have children, and their children will be like them - human with a sin nature. Over time, there will be multiplied millions of people.

It seems very odd to us, but these mortals will still be under the Law of God. Jesus said, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till Heaven and Earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the Law till all is fulfilled" (Matthew 5:17-18). According to the Book of the Revelation, *Heaven and Earth do not pass away until the Millennium ends.*

Something really important: The Old Testament sacrifices **did not save**. They made it possible for sinful men to approach a holy God. They acknowledged sin & the need for a Savior.

The Millennium is going to be great; but it's not going to be perfect. It can't be - not as long as there are sinners in it. There will be law-breaking and law-enforcement:

- Zechariah 14 tells us that any nation that refuses to come annually to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles will have no rain. They instead shall receive a plague.
- In the Revelation we learn that a huge number of unbelievers alive at the end of the Millennium will rebel against the Lord. Fire comes down from God out of Heaven and devours them.

Three times the Revelation says Jesus will rule "with a rod of iron." *You don't need a rod of iron to rule unless there is unruliness.*

These Millennials are hardcore unbelievers. They see the risen Lord in His glory. They see us in His glory, having received our glorified bodies at the pre-Tribulation rapture. The OT saints & Tribulation martyrs are on Earth in their glorified bodies. The Earth is as good as it's gonna get before the new creation. **They rebel!** They need more than an altar call to salvation. They need to shed the blood of substitutes.

If their unbelief seems unbelievable, in one sense they will be no different from anyone today who rejects Jesus. He did tons of miracles proving He was King.

Should **we** expect to keep Sabbaths & offer sacrifices? That's an emphatic, **"NO!!"**

Zane Hodges writes, "As believers who have been united with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection, [the Church has] passed out of the sphere to which the Law applies. Mark this well; removal from the Law's sphere affects only those who have been baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ. Thereby they have been co-crucified with Christ and raised to live a resurrection life in Him. Just as soon as the Church is removed by the Rapture, the Law will again be in force for God's people. First it will be in force for the believing Jews of the Tribulation period, as Jesus makes clear in Matthew 24. After His Kingdom is established, it will be in force for the whole world."

Think of it this way: Do we not love the Sermon on the Mount? It is God's code of conduct, His Law, for Kingdom living.

If the 1st century Jews had received the King, He would have established the Kingdom.

Don't even ask. All I can say is that everything would have worked out. For example: The Bible teaches that Elijah will come before the Day of the Lord (Malachi 4:5). Jesus told us, "And if you are willing to receive it, [John the Baptist] is Elijah who is to come" (Matthew 11:14).

It is not a cop-out to realize we cannot explain everything in the Bible. Returning to Isaiah 56:3-8, think of it as potential ministry we might be involved with in the Kingdom:

- We will present a message of hope & healing, telling those who have previously been excluded that they are now included. We already do that, or want to. Our delivery and compassion will be elevated in the Millennium.
- Since the Millennial Temple is a House of Prayer, we will lead prayer meetings and teach unbelievers about prayer. We will need to adapt to, "Thy Kingdom came!"
- We will assure those who seek the Lord with their whole hearts that their sacrifices will be acceptable. Today we can assure unbelievers that Jesus' sacrifice was acceptable. There is still time to be baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Church.

I feel like I'm always pointing out the dark underbelly of the Millennial Kingdom. It isn't Heaven, and it is full of sinners. But Jesus will rule with His rod of iron, enforcing righteousness and implementing justice.

And we, the Church, co-rule: "For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him. If we endure, We shall also reign with Him" (Second Timothy 2:11-12).