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Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

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Lesson Leaders:

James Haymon

Class Leaders:

Inreach: Pat Hester

Deacon: C M Hester

A Justice-Loving God Isaiah 61:8-11; 62:2-4

Lesson Background and Introduction

Isaiah (ministered about 740-680 BC) lived in the days when Israel, the northern kingdom, was struggling against Assyria and was finally exiled from the land. For a time, the northern kingdom sent tribute to Assyria; however, Israel's King Hoshea sought an alliance with Egypt in order to end the nation's vassal relationship to the Assyrian oppressors. The consequence of Israel's rebellion against Assyria was that they were carried away into captivity by the Assyrians in 722 BC (2 Kings 17), never to be restored. The book of Isaiah is typically viewed in terms of two large sections: chapters 1-39 and chapters 40-66. Chapters 40-66 can be read as an ancient play. Imagine a large stage with all the characters present. On one side of the room, there is Heaven with the Lord and the heavenly host present; on the other side, the earth and its inhabitants. Different characters speak, are addressed, or are discussed. The characters are the nation of Israel and the Gentiles. Within Israel there are the righteous and the wicked, the leaders and the commoners, and the servant of the Lord. The Gentile nations are distant but interested observers. Usually they are talked about, whether for future judgment or for blessing. But sometimes they are addressed directly. On two occasions, Cyrus, the future king of Persia, is specifically named (Isaiah 44:28; 45:1-7). Isaiah is at times an actor onstage with the other characters; sometimes he is an offstage narrator to the readers, who are the theater audience. Isaiah 56-66 begins with the prediction of the salvation of the nations (56:1-8). The text then describes the punishment of the wicked of Israel, especially the leaders (56:9-57:21), for their ritual and ethical sins (chap. 58). But the Lord is able and willing to deliver the repentant (Isaiah 59). As a result, Israel will become a light to the nations (chap. 60) and embrace its priestly role (chap. 61).

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

Come Back to God - God called Isaiah to prophesy to the Israelites, to draw them back to God. Though the prophet warned the people of the coming consequences, they did not repent. Isaiah spoke out during a time when Jerusalem flourished physically but stood spiritually bankrupt. God committed Himself to make sure His people eventually changed to have right standing before Him. Therefore, God used Israel's enemies, Assyria and Babylon, as His cleansing tools. Both Israel and Judah were sent into exile. The second half of the Book of Isaiah records the Lord's encouragement to the exiles, saying that their time in captivity would end and restoration would come. After 70 years in exile in Babylon, God allowed the people to return to Jerusalem to rebuild their city and temple. God planned to guide them into prosperity, happiness, and genuine worship of Him.

Sing God's Song - While God intended to bless the remnant that returned to Jerusalem, His promise of blessing and restoration also extended to future generations. The song of joy and celebration could be sung in Jerusalem when the remnant returned, but it also looks forward to a time when Messiah comes and all the nations worship Him. Either interpretation rejoices in the fact that God is exalted.

A New Name - Whether the song refers to the returned exiles or to a future restoration, all praise will go to God, and He will rename His people; they will no longer be called forsaken and desolate. Instead, the restored people will be referred to as His delight. Their nation shall have dominion and continue to exist. God's ultimate desire is to have this kind of relationship not only with His chosen people but with all people. God is a lover of justice and desires for all of humanity to hate unfair treatment of anyone at any time in any culture. This is a reason to praise God and rejoice.

(Adapted from the Echoes Commentary)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

Sin will not ultimately be judged by the way we see it, but by the way God sees it

COMMENT FOR THE WEEK:

God cares deeply about justice, about righting wrongs, and about defending the powerless. In the end, no one gets away with any act of injustice. Nor does God leave unrewarded our work done in faith for Him

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:

By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks

(Heb 11:4 NKJV)

(from "Our Daily Bread", July 10, 2017)

Series: Justice and the Prophets

UNIT: Called to God's Work of Justice

NEXT WEEK

Prophesying Restoration (Zephaniah 3:14-20)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Justice through Renewal (Isaiah 61:8-11)

Renewal through God being just (8)

- God is just because He judges with righteousness (Ps 9:8)
- God is just because He is the only one who justifies (Rom 8:33)
- God is just because He is perfect (Deut 32:4)
- God is just because He loves justice (Ps 99:4)
- God is just because He exercises righteousness (Jer 9:24)
- God is just because He does not fail in His righteousness (Zeph 3:5)

Renewal through prosperity (9)

- Prosperity through well-being (Ps 35:27)
- Prosperity through righteousness (Ps 92:12-14)
- Prosperity through delighting in God's word (Ps 1:1-3)
- Prosperity through remaining in Jesus (John 15:3-5)
- Prosperity into old age (Isa 46:4)
- Prosperity through the fear of the Lord (Ps 128:1-2)

Renewal through salvation (10)

- Salvation promised through the gospel (Rom 1:16)
- Salvation hoped for through faith (1 Thess 5:8)
- Salvation made wise through the Bible (2 Tim 3:15)
- Salvation at the second coming of Jesus (Heb 9:27-28)
- Salvation that is an inheritance (1 Peter 1:3-5)

Renewal through righteousness (11)

- A righteousness that brings eternal life (Rom 5:21)
- A righteousness that we have in Jesus (1 Cor 1:30)
- A righteousness that God made through Jesus (2 Cor 5:21)
- A righteousness that we have faith and hope in (Gal 5:5)
- A righteousness that comes from God through faith (Phil 3:9)

Justice through Vindication (Isaiah 62:2-4)

Vindication through receiving a new name (2)

- A new name that God gives when we get to heaven (Isa 62:2)
- A new name given for overcoming the world (Rev 2:17)
- A new name given because of God's salvation (Isa 62:12)
- A new name because of being a follower of Jesus (Acts 11:26)

Vindication through receiving a crown (3)

- Crown as a reward of being faithful (Rev 2:10)
- Crown as a reward of keeping the faith (2 Tim 4:7-8)
- Crown that lasts forever (1 Cor 9:24-25)
- Crown as a reward for finishing the race God has assigned (2 Tim 4:6-8)

Vindication through not being forsaken (4)

- Not forsaken because of knowing God's Name (Ps 9:10)
- Not forsaken because God is our helper (Heb 13:6)
- Not forsaken because of being faithful (Ps 37:28)
- Not forsaken because of being poor and needy (Isa 41:17)