

**The Greatest Week in History – Part II**  
**A Place for All Nations**  
Spilman Memorial Baptist Church, Kinston NC  
Dr. H. Powell Dew, Jr.  
February 25, 2024

Text: Isaiah: 56:1-8, Luke 19:45-46

Purpose: God has opened the door of His House of Worship to all that come with sincere hearts and live in obedience to His word. Even though God chose Israel as His chosen people, His invitation extends to everyone – “to the Jew first, and also the Greek.” We now can have a place in God’s family, open to all people of all nations.

Three aspiring psychiatrists were attending their first class on emotional extremes.

"Just to establish some parameters," said the professor to the student from Arkansas, "What is the opposite of joy?"  
"Sadness," said the student.



"And the opposite of depression?" he asked of the young lady from Oklahoma.  
"Elation," she said.

"And you sir," he said to the young man from Texas, "How about the opposite of woe?"  
The Texan replied, "Sir, I believe that would be giddy up."<sup>1</sup>



About ten years ago, I had the opportunity to go to Israel to see the various places Jesus walked. I was able to stand on the top of the Mount of Olives and see the panoramic view of Jerusalem. From that vantage

point you can see the Temple Mount, various tombs lining the Mount of Olives, the Garden of Gethsemane, and numerous other buildings dedicated to God on that Holy piece of real estate.

One of the buildings we stopped and looked at was the **Church of All Nations**.<sup>2</sup> It stood at the foot of the Mount of Olives and is said to be built over the rock on which Jesus is believed to have prayed in agony the night before He was crucified. It is built beside the Garden of Gethsemane which is home to about eight ancient olive trees dating back to the days of Jesus. It is a place of incredible peace when you consider the significance of the place and what transpired the night of Jesus' betrayal and arrest.

The church is also known as the **Basilica of Agony**, which was completed in 1924. What we see today is the third church built on that site. There is even a portion of the original mosaic flooring (currently under glass) which was found during its construction. What they found was used as a pattern for the floor for the current renovation. This Roman styled church was made of 12 small domes on the interior giving it an Eastern character. It also has a triangle shaped mosaic at the top of the façade making it a special Jerusalem landmark. In the center of the building



there is a huge flat rock surrounded by a low fence which appears to look like a crown of thorns.



There are three large mosaics which depict the betrayal of Jesus by Judas, Jesus in agony as He prayed with an angel standing nearby, and Jesus' arrest later that night.

The reason this building is called the Church of All Nations is because many countries contributed to its construction.

There are 12 national symbols in the ceiling domes. Those countries include Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, England, France, Germany, Italy, Mexico, Spain and the United States of America. The mosaics were donated by Hungary, Ireland, and Poland. The iron work was donated by Australia.

What a beautiful building built over the place of such a significant event. How fitting for someone so long ago to realize what happened in this place and to construct a building emphasizing this was a place where Jesus had prayed.

What happened there was a prayer by Jesus for all people, in all places, among all the nations of the world. Jesus knew His hour was near and His death was coming. It was in this place, with sweat drops of blood, He yielded His life to the Father so all that call upon His name, no matter what race, nationality, creed, or color, would not perish but have everlasting life.



This week we are examining the second sermon in a seven sermon series entitled *The Greatest Week in History*. We are looking at the last seven days prior to Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. Each week we are examining an Old Testament passage of Scripture and then seeing it fulfilled in a New Testament passage.

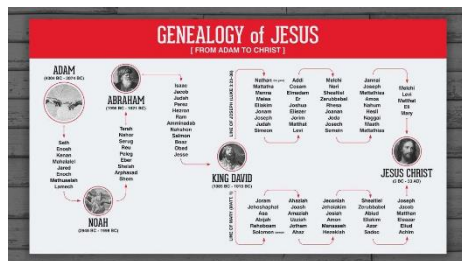
## Isaiah 56:1-8 – God Has a House for All Nations

The passage of scripture we examined earlier was from Isaiah 56:1-8. Throughout the Book of Isaiah, we see the Lord revealing to the people of Israel that God was going to send them a Messiah, a Savior. This Messiah would be the one that would come from the line and lineage of King David. He would once again bring peace to a land torn by war and conquer.

Israel knew all too well they were a chosen people. Over and over in the Old Testament they were reminded they were offspring of Abraham, how God led them through the wilderness, how God guided them into the Promised Land, and He gave them a land and made them a people. The Israelites were handpicked by God and they knew it.

JUDAH (From David to Zedekiah)				ISRAEL (From Jeroboam to Zedekiah)			
King	Reign	Start Date	End Date	King	Reign	Start Date	End Date
David	40 years	1000 BC	960 BC	Jeroboam	42 years	908 BC	866 BC
Joash	40 years	843 BC	803 BC	Nadab	2 years	843 BC	841 BC
Jeroboam II	41 years	800 BC	750 BC	Baasha	26 years	841 BC	815 BC
Shallum	1 year	750 BC	749 BC	Elah	2 years	815 BC	813 BC
Zechariah	6 months	749 BC	748 BC	Zimri	7 days	813 BC	813 BC
Shallum	1 year	748 BC	747 BC	Oseai	5 years	813 BC	808 BC
Menahem	10 years	747 BC	737 BC	Joash	40 years	808 BC	768 BC
Hezekiah	29 years	727 BC	698 BC	Jeroboam II	41 years	788 BC	748 BC
Manasseh	55 years	698 BC	643 BC	Shallum	1 year	748 BC	747 BC
Amon	2 years	643 BC	641 BC	Zechariah	6 months	747 BC	746 BC
Jehoiakim	11 years	609 BC	598 BC	Shallum	1 year	746 BC	745 BC
Jehoiachin	3 months	598 BC	597 BC	Jeroboam II	41 years	788 BC	748 BC
Zedekiah	11 years	597 BC	586 BC	Shallum	1 year	746 BC	745 BC

Because they were protected by God, often the leaders, as well as the Kings of Israel,



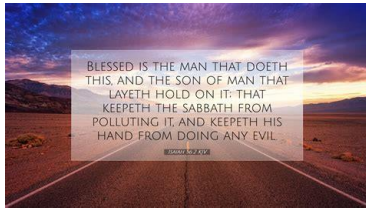
abused their standing with God and often openly sinned against God.

Their cycle of sin, judgment, punishment, and repentance occurred year after year, decade after decade, and King after King, until God's punishment finally came in 586 B.C. The people of Jerusalem were sent into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar. They would remain there for 70 years before being allowed to return and rebuild the city once again.

During Jesus' day, the Pharisees and Sadducees were careful to observe everything written in the Law. They wanted to make sure they did not face the wrath of God for failure to keep the Law as given to them by Moses and the Prophets. But that nationalistic pride, that self-righteous pride that so many religious people exhibit, was alive and well in Jesus' day.



Those individuals that were outside their faith were looked upon with scorn and derision. Those that were not born in the family of Abraham's descendants were excluded from participating. The religious leaders looked at everyone that was a Gentile, a foreigner, an outsider as unclean, unworthy, and despised by them. I believe that is why when the early church began including people outside the Jewish faith, there was so much tension. Old prejudices die hard.



Isaiah 56 was written to remind Israel that it is obedience that God desires. It is your faithfulness to God that makes you right with God. It doesn't matter about your

past, your family of origin, the color of your skin, the amount of education you have, how much money you make, what your status in the community is, or the style of clothes you wear.

Isaiah 56 says it this way, *“Thus says the Lord: Keep Justice and do righteousness, For My salvation is about to come, and My righteousness to be revealed. Blessed is the man who does this, and the son of man who lays hold of it; Who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, and keeps his hand from doing evil.”*

It is about obedience to what God teaches. Our walk needs to match our talk.

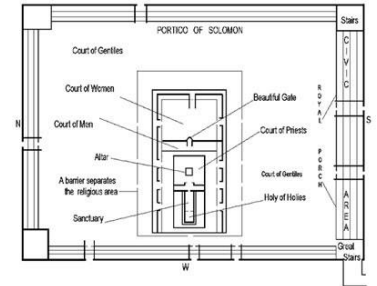
Isaiah goes on to encourage the foreigner and eunuch that they can be accepted by God. *“Do not let the son of the foreigner who had joined himself to the Lord speak saying, ‘The Lord has utterly separated me from His people;’ nor let the eunuch say, ‘Here I am, a dry tree.’*

When God established the Temple in Jerusalem, there were several divisions which separated individuals from one another. The space outside the temple was known as the Court of the Gentiles. This was an area where anyone – Israelite or Gentile, Male or Female, could enter.



Once you enter into the temple area, the first space was known as the Court of the Women. That is where all Israelites, including women could enter. If you were not an Israelite, you could not enter this place. You were excluded and kept out.

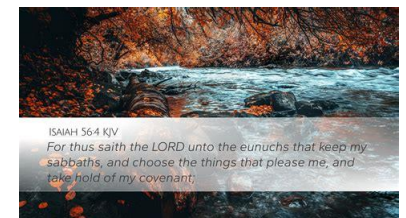
As you move further into the Temple, you entered the Court of Israel. Only Jewish men could enter this place. The women were not allowed in this area.



As you pass through into the next area, you enter into the Court of Priests. Only the priests could enter this area and present the offerings of the people before the Lord. Then, once a year, only the Chief Priest would be allowed to enter into the Holy of Holies and present an offering for himself and the nation of Israel.

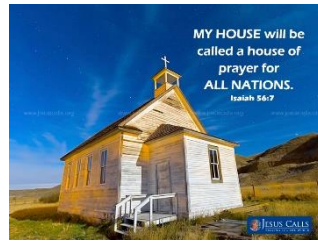
When Isaiah wrote a word of encouragement to the foreigner and eunuchs in their midst, he was actually saying something amazing. God promised them that He would receive their offering and promised them a place in the family of God. They were no longer considered outcasts and undesirables.

Isaiah said, *“For Thus says the Lord: 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.”*





Isaiah also has a word of encouragement to the foreigner in their midst. He said in verse seven, *“Even them I will bring to My holy mountain and make them joyful in My house of prayer. For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations. The Lord God, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, says, ‘Yet I will gather to him others besides those who are gathered to him.’”*

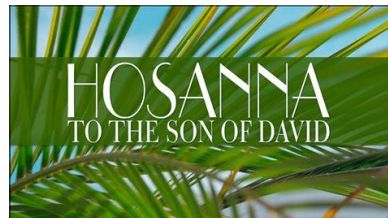


Isaiah was telling the people of Israel that the Lord wanted them to know that all that call upon the name of the Lord and were obedient to what He taught them would be accepted in the house of the Lord. It is not a matter of your family pedigree, your financial status, your gender, or the color of your skin, the Lord God of Israel was sending a Messiah that would call all nations to Himself.

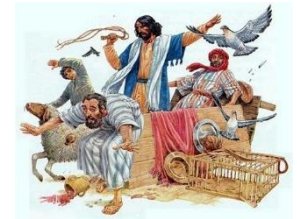
The central theme of this passage reminded the people of Israel that God was more concerned about our inner relationship with God, our prayerful connection with God, than the circumstances we find ourselves in. To worship God involved meeting God in prayer. The house of the Lord was to be a house of prayer for all nations.

### **Luke 19:45-46 – Jesus Re-affirms the Purpose of God’s House**

The second passage of scripture we read this morning comes from Luke 19:45-46. Jesus has just ridden into Jerusalem and the crowds were shouting *“Hosannah to the Son of David!”*



*Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the Highest!”* The crowds were swelling and the people were excited about the entrance of Jesus, riding on a donkey.



When Jesus entered Jerusalem and came to the Temple area, He began to set His Father’s house in order. In the outer court, the Court of the Gentiles, it had been transformed into a marketplace. People were coming from all around and were purchasing animals for sacrifice, and exchanging money to offer the temple tax. It was a regular market place of buying and selling.

In Luke, it says *“And He entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold.”* Matthew says Jesus *“overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those that sold pigeons.”*

It was then that Jesus declared and quoted what we read in Isaiah 56, *“It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer; but you make it a den of robbers.’”* The phrase *“den of robbers”* was quoted from Jeremiah 7:11: *“Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of thieves in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen it,” says the Lord.”*



The people corrupted what God intended once again. God intended the place there on the Temple Mount to be a place where sincere worshippers would come and lift their voices in praise and prayer. It was to be a place where offerings were given and received. Instead, it degraded what was

holy and made it simply a place of commerce – of buying and selling – of profit and gain – of corruption and greed.

When Jesus came in and drove the profiteers out, you know that did not set too well with the established way of doing things. You know you can mess with a lot of things, but don't mess with someone's business and money. This situation was no different.



Jesus' actions put Him on a collision course with the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people. Jesus would enter the Temple area

daily over the next week, teaching and preaching, calling people to repentance. While Jesus openly taught in the Temple, they secretly plotted how they could get rid of Jesus of Nazareth. But you know what; they could not touch Him until the time God allowed.

All the people came to hear this man named Jesus. This person that healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, raised the dead, turned over the tables of the moneychangers – this person was changing the old order of things.

Jesus of Nazareth called Himself the Son of Man because He could identify with us. But He was also the Son of God who had come into the world by way of Bethlehem – the birthplace of King David – to establish once and for all – that God loves all that call upon His One and only Son. God receives all that repent of their sins and walks in obedience to what He taught. Jesus may have come first to call Israel to repentance, but His

**Jesus  
Son of God,  
Son of Man**

offer of Salvation is extended to all people, all races, all genders, all socio-economic levels, all nations.

Jesus did not come to give us another religion of rules and rituals. Jesus came to offer us life in Him and allow us to enter into a personal relationship with Him. All that

receive Him – receive His Holy Spirit within us. When we come and worship God, whether it is at home or in a sanctuary like this, God meets us there in prayer. Since our bodies are the Temple of the Holy Spirit, we can commune with God wherever we are. We are called to worship God in Spirit and in Truth. We need to know that God has provided a way for all to come unto Him.



Maybe you are at a place in your life where you feel you don't belong anywhere. There is a disconnectedness to many of the things you do every day. Maybe the pressures of work, or health related issues, or a general lack of clarity in life has caused you to question God or life. God has provided a place of rest for all that call upon the name of Jesus.



Missionary Lillias Trotter wrote a little pamphlet over a hundred years ago. In 1918, Helen Lemmel read that small pamphlet and a quote in it jumped out at her. It said, "*So then, turn your eyes upon Him, Look full in His face, and you will find that the things of earth will acquire a strange, new dimness.*"

Helen took that seed thought and wrote a hymn that has touched millions of people and drawn them closer to God.

## Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus (#320)

(Words and Tune by Helen H. Lemmel)



O soul, are you weary and  
troubled?  
No light in the darkness you see?  
There's light for a look at the Savior,  
And life more abundant and free!

*Chorus:*

Thro' death into life everlasting,  
He passed, and we follow Him there;  
Over us sin no more had dominion  
For more than conquerors we are!

*Chorus:*

His word shall not fail you – He promised;  
Believe Him, and all will be well;  
Then go to a world that is dying,  
His perfect salvation to tell!

*Chorus:*

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,  
Look full in His wonderful face,  
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,  
In the light of His glory and grace.

## LET US PRAY

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Pictures and information about the *Church of All Nations* was taken from  
<http://www.seetheholyland.net/church-of-all-nations/> on Feb. 19, 2024

<sup>2</sup>Mickey's Funnies, A Psych Funny, Feb. 19, 2024