

ISAIAH 56-57

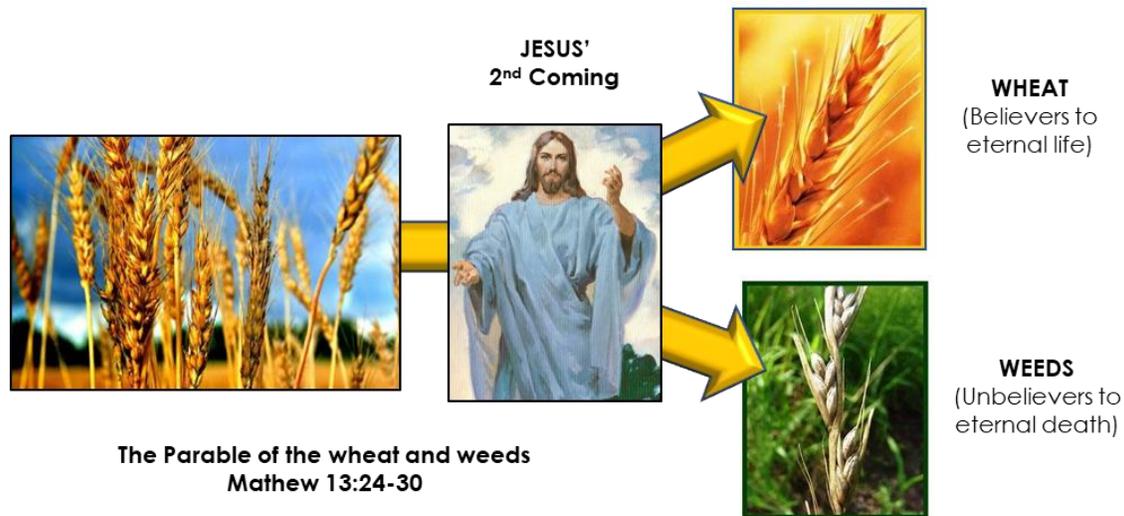
Lesson 46: "The Wheat and the Weeds: Holy Living in a Mixed-up World"

Mike Taylor

www.MondayNightBible.Org

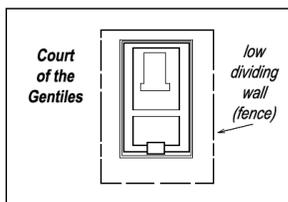
MAIN IDEA

The people of the world are mixed like wheat with weeds; the humble "wheat" will be gathered to live with God eternally; the idolatrous "weeds" will be blown away.



SUMMARY

I. The Wheat: Humble Outcasts Welcomed (56:1-8)



The true people of God who will inherit all of his promises are those who hold fast to his covenant regardless of their outward apparent disqualifications (e.g. eunuchs who were excluded from Israel by the law (Deut. 23:1)). There will be no wall of hostility which separated Jews from Gentiles, in God's coming kingdom.

II. The Weeds: Self-Indulgent Leaders Devoured (56:9-12)

Israel's false prophets and irresponsible leaders. "Beasts...watchmen...shepherds" refers to the wicked ("weeds"). Drunkenness took away all concern that leaders had for their people.

III. The Wheat: Righteous People Rescued by Death (57:1-2)

In contrast to evil leaders, who engaged in debauchery and self-indulgence, were the righteous ("wheat") who were removed from impending divine judgments. The righteous do suffer by

oppression and distress at what is going on around them, but they die in faith and will enjoy their eternal reward.

IV. The Weeds: Idolatrous People Exposed and Blown Away (57: 3-13a)

The locations in verses 7-8 are symbolic of places where Israel committed spiritual adultery by offering sacrifices to Baal and Astarte. God will break his silence by elaborating on Israel's false righteousness. The foolishness of worshipping non-existent gods will become clear when God's judgment comes.

V. The Wheat: God Dwelling with Humbled and Healed Sinners (57:13b-19)

In contrast to the threats of judgment for idolatry (vv. 3-13), verses 14-20 give promise of blessing to the righteous (wheat). The phrase "revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite" (Isa. 57:15 NIV) means that all the years of Israel's sin, backsliding, and punishment, God's grace will prevail and spiritual healing and restoration will come.



VI. The Weeds: God Condemning the Wicked to Endless Restlessness (57:20-21)

In contrast to those people in verse 19 ("wheat"), the wicked ("weeds") enjoy anything but peace. Sin always brings restlessness "like the tossing sea, which cannot rest" (Isa. 57:20 NIV).

LESSON ANALYSIS

1. **WHAT** is God doing in this chapter?

2. **WHY** is he doing it?

3. What does this **teach you** about God?
