

Series: Isaiah

Title: Sons of the Sorceress & Sons of God

Text: Isaiah 57: 3-5

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We preach the gospel in a positive way: declaring the gracious, successful works of our triune God for his people. But occasionally we come across passages where God describes false religion. God has nothing good to say about false religion.

As we hear this negative description of false religion, remember, this is God's description. He is speaking directly of the religious rebels in Israel. God gave Israel his law, his prophets, his priesthood, and his temple. But they followed false prophets into gross idolatry and gross iniquity. Yet, all the while they kept the name of Jehovah, claiming to worship God, claiming to look for Christ to come. The same is true of those in false religion in our day or any generation.

**Isaiah 57: 3: But draw near hither, ye sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer and the whore. 4: Against whom do ye sport yourselves? against whom make ye a wide mouth, *and* draw out the tongue? are ye not children of transgression, a seed of falsehood, 5: Enflaming yourselves with idols under every green tree, slaying the children in the valleys under the cliffs of the rocks?**

In these three verses, God declares that those in false religion are exactly what they preach against.

## **SONS OF THE SORCERESS**

First, God says will-workers are children of the sorceress, "But draw near hither, ye sons of the sorceress." (Is 57: 3)

It means they are children of disobedience to God. Disobedience to God is the same as sorcery, witchcraft, devil worship. God declared that through Samuel when he sent Samuel to rebuke king Saul. God sent king Saul to utterly destroy the Amalekites, with all their sheep and oxen. But king Saul came back with the fattest sheep which he intended to sacrifice to God.

1 Samuel 15: 22: And Samuel said, Hath the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey *is* better than sacrifice, *and* to hearken than the fat of rams. 23: For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft,...

Rebellion is as sorcery, witchcraft.

1 Samuel 15: 23...and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry.

To disobey God is idolatry, to worship the work of your own hands, your own sacrifices rather than rest in Christ from all your works.

1 Samuel 15: 23: Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from *being* king.

God is pleased with one offering and one sacrifice, his Son the Lord Jesus Christ. That is how Israel disobeyed the word of God? That is how will-workers in our day reject and disobey the word of God? By rejecting Christ!

## **OBEDIENCE IN PREACHING**

God gives his preachers one charge. God's prophets of old and God's preachers today are sent by God with one means—preaching; and with one message—Christ and him crucified.

Speaking of old testament scriptures given by true prophets of God, Christ said "...they are they which testify of me." (Jn 5: 39) That means every old testament prophet was sent of God to testify of Christ.

On the road to Emmaus, Christ declared what Moses and all true prophets were sent to prophesy of "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." (Lu 24: 27) That shows us that Moses and the old testament prophets were not sons of disobedience. They obeyed God by prophesying of Christ.

Paul began his epistle to the Romans speaking of "Jesus Christ and the gospel of God"—"(Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, made of the seed of David according to the flesh." (Ro 1:1-3) It means the whole old testament is concerning Christ and that message was delivered by God's obedient prophets doing what God commanded them to do with the one message.

The apostle Peter said all true prophets preached Christ—"Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace *that should come* unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into." (1Pe 1:10-12)

Likewise, in this gospel age, Christ's preachers are sent with the same means and message—the preaching of Christ and him crucified—"For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God...For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." (1 Cor 1: 17-18, 21)

## **OBEDIENCE IN HEARING**

Furthermore, all those who hear—then and now—are given one command from God—"Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." (Joh 6:29) John said, "And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment." (1Jo 3:23)

Old testament saints were saved the same way as new testament saints—through faith in Christ. Of Abel we read, "By faith Abel." He came to God in the blood of a lamb. "And obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts" (Heb 11: 4) Abel was made the righteousness of God generations before the law was given at Mt. Sinai. How? By faith in Christ the Lamb.

Of Noah we read, "By faith Noah,...became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." (Heb 11: 7) "The righteousness which is by faith" is the righteousness of Christ given us through faith in Christ.

Of Abraham we read, "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out...obeyed;" (Heb 11: 8) Christ said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw *it*, and was glad." (Joh 8:56)] Four hundred and thirty years before the law was given at Mt. Sinai, Abraham obtained the righteousness of God. How? He

established the law through faith in Christ, “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law...What shall we say then that Abraham...found. For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” (Rom 3: 31-4:2-3)

Moses had the law but how was he made the righteousness of God?—“By faith Moses,...esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt:...” (Heb 11:25-26) Moses was made righteous not by his own obedience to the law but through faith in Christ.

Every sinner saved under old testament were saved by the everlasting covenant of grace—“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth...” (Heb 11: 13) “All the promises of God in Christ are yes, and in Christ amen, unto the glory of God by us.” (2 Cor 1: 20) David said, “The Lord hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure, for this is all my salvation, and all my desire...” (2 Sam 23: 5)

They all heard the gospel of Christ preached, all believed on Christ and all were saved by Christ, like every sinner saved in our day. For that reason he says to believer in our day, “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Heb 12:1-2)

So this is obedience. This is what it is not to be a son of the sorceress. God sends his preacher with one means: preaching; with one message: Christ and him crucified. Those who hear obey God by believing on Christ whom he hath sent and continuing together with his people, under Christ’s gospel, with our hearts knit together in love.

## **OTHER MEANS, OTHER MESSAGES**

So God says in our text the false prophets, like false preachers today, were the sorceress because they used other means and brought a false message other than Christ and him crucified:

Will-workers disobey by preaching another gospel, which is not another. They declare man is not spiritually dead, not helpless in his sins but has a free-will. At some point, they say we are saved in part by our works and obedience to the law. God says natural man is “dead in trespasses and in sins” (Eph 2: 1)

Brethren, it is impossible to preach Christ crucified while declaring sinners have a little life and a little goodness in us; impossible to preach Christ while preaching sinners can obey the law of God; impossible to preach Christ while preaching that sinners can bring themselves to Christ when they will; impossible to preach Christ as the successful Redeemer, while preaching Christ died for all men without exception. The very reason God sent his Son is to do for his people what we can in no way do for ourselves: Christ came to uphold, magnify and honor the law of God for his people.

Will-workers disobey God by using other means such as entertainment, music, and programs. They advertise their alms-giving to attract, advertise missions and church-planting. These are things Christ commands his people not to do. Christ said they do these things, “to be seen of men”, “that they may have glory of men.” And Christ said when they get it, “They have their reward.” (Mt 6: 2, 5, 16) He says the same thing in Isaiah 57 verse 6, “Among the smooth stones of the stream is thy portion; they, they are thy lot.”

Therefore, because they are sorceresses using another means and another message, God says their converts are “sons of the sorceress.” Rather than obeying God by believing and resting from their works in Christ, they trust in their law-keeping, their sacrifices, their offerings, joining with works religion in their orgy of religious disobedience to God. We will see this more as we go through the next several chapters of Isaiah.

Sinner, hear the word of God delivered by the faithful prophet Samuel, “Behold, to obey *is* better than sacrifice, *and* to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee.” Turn from your vain works and believe on Christ.

## **ILLGITIMATE SONS**

Secondly, God says will-workers are not sons of God but illegitimate sons, “the seed of the adulterer and the whore.” (Is 57: 3)

For those truly saved by grace, believers are Christ’s church, his bride and Christ is our faithful Husband. Paul said, “I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” (2 Cor 11: 2) But spiritual adulterers are those who reject our Husband, betraying the marriage union to Christ our Husband by looking to another, even their own works.

Spiritual whores prostitute themselves to others. All freewill, works religion is the religion of the great whore. It only produces illegitimate children.

Revelation 17: 1: And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: 2: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication...4: And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: 5: And upon her forehead *was* a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. 6: And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus:...

Revelation 17: 15: And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

Revelation 18: 3: For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. 4: And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. 5: For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. 6: Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. 7: How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so, much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. 8: Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

Sinner, God says, “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”

## **THE SAME AS THOSE THEY CONDEMN**

Thirdly, false religion boasts against those they condemn. Yet, God says they are exactly the same as those they condemn.

Will-works religion boasts and mock God when they condemn poor sinners—“Against whom do ye sport yourselves? against whom make ye a wide mouth, *and* draw out the tongue?” (Is 57: 4)

God says of those who condemn disobedience and think they are righteous by their obedience to the law, “*are* ye not children of transgression?” (Is 57: 4) It is because they refuse to obey and rest in Christ from their vain works

God says of those who preach against adultery, whoredom and idolatry, “[Are ye not] a seed of falsehood, Enflaming yourselves with idols under every green tree.” (Is 57: 4-5) He is saying, “Are you not the seed of the adulterer and the whore? Are ye not as passionate and zealous over the works of your hands, as literal adulterers and whores are full of lusts.”

God says of the will-worker who preaches against murder, boasting of their children, their converts, “[are ye not] slaying the children in the valleys under the cliffs of the rocks?” (Isa 57:4-5) They were the same as the religious multitude in Christ’s day. Christ said, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.” (Mt 23: 15) Jude said they and their converts are “twice dead, plucked up by the roots.” (Jude 12) It is because they are children dead in sins by their first birth but now dead with a false hope—twice dead, two-fold more the children of hell.

## **CONDEMNING THYSELF**

God’s word in our text is like Paul’s word to the scribes and Pharisee’s. In Romans 1, the apostle gave that list of immoral sins. They thought they were righteous and holy because they never did those things outwardly, “Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.” (Ro 2:1)

They condemned stealing but by thinking they were righteous because they did not steal, they were stealing the glory that belongs to Christ for making his people righteous, “Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?” (Rom 2: 21)

They condemned adultery, but by thinking they were righteous thereby they committed spiritual adultery, “Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery?” (Rom 2: 22) God says in our text, “Are ye not the seed of the adulterer and the whore.”

They condemn physical idols but by teaching righteousness by man’s obedience to the letter of the law, rather than setting forth the truth of Christ our Righteousness, they commit sacrilege, “thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?” (Rom 2: 22)

Be sure to understand. Everything forbidden in the ten commandments is wrong. But if we think we are righteous and holy because we do not physically do those things then spiritually we are guilty of all. The preaching of touch not, taste not, handle not makes man worship and glory in the works of his own hands rather than Christ our Righteousness—idolatry. (Col 2: 20-23)

## **TRUE SALVATION**

How does God save his people from vain religion? Be sure we do not exalt ourselves. By nature, we are sons of the sorceress, seed of the adulterer and the whore. We come forth self-righteous by nature, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Ps 51: 5)

But Christ sends his faithful preacher preaching the gospel of Christ crucified, of God's Son, God's elect, God's delight. God's preachers declare the sinless, holy, express image of God, the fullness of the godhead bodily, who will not share his glory with another.

They preach that God chose his Son to establish his law and make it honorable for his chosen people. Christ came forth made of a woman, made under the law. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. He fulfilled the law on our behalf and satisfied divine justice for his particular people. Now, each one is Christ's purchased possession, bought with the price of his precious blood.

We are not sons of the sorceress, the adulterer and the whore because Christ is our faithful Husband. Through his faithful bride, his church, through the incorruptible seed, his gospel word we preach, he births his child by his Spirit. He circumcises us in the heart in spirit making us hear the law declare us guilty. Christ receives the glory for making us cry out to Christ in faith. God receives the glory for making us behold Christ, the end of our weary labor under the law. Christ our righteousness makes us the very righteousness of God in him.

Then God says, "Draw near hither, ye sons of MINE! Are ye not sons of my Son! Are ye not children of my Righteousness! Are ye not the seed of THE TRUTH! These are my true worshippers, the planting of the Lord, who give God all the glory and all the praise! "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God." (Ro 2:28-29)

**Amen!**