

ISAIAH

ISAIAH 56:1-8, EUNUCHS & FOREIGNERS

This Scripture was one of the hardest in Isaiah to figure out the time period that is being revealed here. Is it immediately prior to the Tribulation? Is it during the Kingdom? Is it both? There may be elements of both. God expects faithful righteous behavior now, He will expect it immediately before the inauguration of the Kingdom, and these verses begin to describe the lives of redeemed people in the Messianic Kingdom, both Jew and Gentile. Saved people do have a responsibility to live their lives in ways that preserve justice and do righteousness. In this chapter, the people are exhorted to positively respond to God's commands concerning Kingdom life. This involves the fulfillment of the nation's original purpose: "to be to Me [Yahweh] a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:6). All of this is also in keeping with God's doxological purpose for mankind; it will all serve to glorify Him in the sight of Israel and in the sight of the whole world.

In Isaiah 55, the revelation of God's grace that allows unsaved people to experience justification salvation without money and without cost is revealed. If that is true, then of what relevance is Isaiah 56 that commands people to "preserve justice and do righteousness"? If we don't have to do anything to be saved, then why bother? However, these truths are relevant to living life as a child of God. The issue becomes one of sanctification salvation. Justification salvation has occurred and the new birth is no longer an issue. The issue is living life in ways that glorify God by means of fidelity and obedience and that is true in the Kingdom as well. It also has to do with expressing gratitude to the One who paid such a high price on behalf of mankind in total, who have received the benefits of His work for free, that not only should they believe in Him, but they should gratefully work for Him and glorify His name for what He has done.

"If salvation depends on God's grace, do God's servants have any responsibility other than receiving that grace? Simply being a member of the covenant community of Israel and fulfilling the cultic (worship system) requirements of the Mosaic Law might seem to be an adequate response for some Israelites. Isaiah revealed that God had redeemed them so they could demonstrate His righteousness in their lives in the world. This would glorify Him, bring others to Him, and result in Israel's greatest blessing. But demonstrating that righteousness was impossible for them to do by themselves (cf. chs. 1-39). They needed to appropriate His grace as redeemed people—redeemed from captivity (chs. 40-48) and redeemed from sin (chs 49-55)—to become the servants of God that He intended them to be" [Thomas L. Constable, "Isaiah" in *Thomas Constable's Notes on the Bible, Volume IV: Isaiah-Daniel*, 163-164]. While this is true—Israel does have a destiny to fulfill in the plan of God for history—this truth is not restricted to Israel. Gentile presence in the Kingdom is also part of this situation. Isaiah has been making it clear in parts of his prophecy that Gentile salvation is part of God's plan for history, and that is the focus of these verses. I do not believe that the Mosaic Law is the issue either. The Mosaic Law has been abolished in Christ Jesus, the King. There will be a system of Kingdom Law, but we do not know exactly what that will look like. Some of the Mosaic Law may continue, but it will no longer be Mosaic Law; it will be Kingdom Law. It will be an entirely new Kingdom

dispensation which requires a new worldview in a new relationship with the King while living under Kingdom conditions with new Kingdom Law requirements.

Under the Mosaic Law, the Jews thought that simply being born a Jew was all that was necessary to have a right relationship with God, but that was not true then, and it will not be true in the Kingdom. The difference is that in the Kingdom, every Jew will be saved (Jer. 31:33-34), and they will all have a responsibility to serve Yahweh, glorify His name, and fulfill their divine destiny, which they will do. In the Mosaic Law dispensation, they not only did not do that, they actively rebelled against doing that. "But Israel's servanthood is not only for the nations but also to God, and this means that the covenant is not primarily a performance but a relationship ..." [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 455].

Matthew 3:9 "and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father'; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham.

This attitude on the part of the Israelites will no longer be a problem in the Kingdom.

Unger has an interesting understanding of this situation. He believes these commands are to the Jewish remnant during the Tribulation as they prepare themselves for Kingdom entrance. There will be a faithful remnant during the Tribulation and there will be 144,000 Jewish evangelists (Rev. 7:4-8, 14:1-5) working during the Tribulation, but most Jews are not going to be saved until the very end when the King returns to save them from destruction at the hands of the antichrist and his armies. Unger's position then seems to be only partially correct, but it may be an element because the text refers to salvation to come and righteousness to be revealed, but those may be Kingdom elements of life. "But latter-day Israel, approaching the revelation of the Messiah as the Savior and Deliverer of the nation preparatory to Kingdom restoration, comes into view. Israel is prophetically admonished to maintain a godly witness in the midst of fearful lawlessness and persecutions of the Tribulation period that the Jewish remnant is to pass through" [Merrill F. Unger, "Isaiah" in *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1306]. Because this is primarily about Gentile salvation, it could be a reference to Gentile individuals born in the Kingdom who must come to faith. We also have to remember that God's salvation is always near and His righteousness is always on display. The problem is not availability on the part of God; the problem is unwillingness and rejection on the part of man. There has always been a believing Jewish remnant, and the Church is going to prevail in this age which means there will be Gentiles coming to faith from now until the end of history and then on into the Kingdom.

Isaiah 56:1 ¹Thus says the LORD, "Preserve [שִׁמְרֵי] justice and do [עֲשֵׂה] righteousness, For My salvation is about [קָרִב] to come And My righteousness to be revealed.

The following revelation is given the divine stamp of "Thus says Yahweh." Two commands are issued, preserve and do.

Preserve, שָׁמַר, means to keep, to preserve, to watch over, or to be on one's guard. The primary meaning is to keep which refers to causing a state or a condition to remain; to exercise great care over.

Do, עָשָׂה, means to do referring to perform or act out an event. The word is highly generic relating to almost any kind or manner. The sense is to carry out or perform an action or course of action.

They are to maintain what is just which pertains to right decision making in a forensic sense, but the general application of this suggests any decision made by anyone must be right and in accordance with the facts of the matter and with what is right. To do righteousness is to do what is required according to a standard—Yahweh's standard. These things do not result in justification salvation, but they should be the characteristics of a justified person who is living out the walk of a person faithfully pursuing sanctification salvation. Justice may be said to be the application of what is righteous. Interpersonal relationships among believers are important, and God expects them to be maintained according to His standards.

Near, קָרִיב, means near, close or close by, i.e., pertaining to being in close, or in very close, proximity to an object. It represents nearness in time or space and indicates that something is about to happen and is near at hand. "For near is My salvation to come ..." (YLT).

The one who does these things will be blessed. Again, we know this cannot be pertaining to justification salvation, because that is granted without cost and without money, that is, no amount of preserving justice and doing righteousness will bring justification salvation about. Even the unsaved can perform things that look like the things believers do, but they cannot earn justification salvation by doing them. This is a reference to preparation for the inauguration of the Messianic Kingdom. "This will be the time when God's victorious 'righteous deeds' will become evident, when he vindicates his people and faithfully fulfills his promises. Thus it is logical for the prophet to encourage the people of God who desire to be with God in that future kingdom to exhibit righteous behavior toward others now. God's past acts have already demonstrated his faithful and consistent pattern of righteous works of salvation toward all mankind, so it is appropriate for his people to mirror his righteousness" [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 530].

Isaiah 56:2² "How blessed [אַשֶׁר] is the man [אֲנוּשׁ] who does this, And the son of man who takes hold of it; Who keeps from profaning the sabbath, And keeps his hand from doing any evil."

I have mentioned that the Mosaic Law has been done away with, so what is with this sabbath business anyway? As I also mentioned there will be a new Law that is in a new format with new directives as Kingdom Law that people will be subject to obeying. The answer then is that under Kingdom Law, the sabbath will be back in service. In every dispensation, some laws are done away, some laws are continued, and some new laws are instituted. The dispensation of the Messianic Kingdom will be no different. "Sabbatar-ians have used this verse to maintain that Gentile believers today are required to keep Israel's Sabbath while some, having moved the Sabbath requirement to Sunday, still use

it to argue for a renewed Christian Sabbath. However, the Sabbath was a sign of the Mosaic Covenant (Ex. 31:12-17) and is not commanded of believers in the Church. Nevertheless, this verse indicates that Sabbath requirements will be renewed in the messianic kingdom" [Michael Rydelnik and James Spencer, "Isaiah" in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, 1093]. We also know that, under Kingdom Law, there will be a Temple (Ezek. 40-48), a Levitical priesthood of the order of Zadok (Ezek. 40:46, 43:19, 44:15, 48:11), and animal sacrifices (Ezek. 40:42, 44:11), which are facts a lot of theologians want to deny.

The Sabbath was not a day of worship for the Israelites; it was a day of rest. What we do not know is whether or not the Sabbath day will be a day of worship, a day of rest, or both in the Kingdom. Apparently, both Jew and Gentile will observe the Sabbath at that time. "It is important for these same people (Israelites and non-Israelites in 56:1-8) to understand how they both will be guided by the same just behavior patterns and enjoy the same worship privileges in God's future kingdom. Neither group (Hebrews or people from the nations) should violate the holy nature of that day or defile the holy temple where they would come to worship" [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 531].

This is where Unger got tripped up in his understanding of this verse. He equates the sabbath with the Mosaic Law, which cannot be present in the Kingdom. "The reference to Sabbath-keeping is evidence that the context concerns Israel during the period in which the LORD will once again be involved with the nation during the Tribulation (after the rapture of the church)" [Merrill F. Unger, "Isaiah" in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, 1306]. I don't think Unger—along with many others—even considered the fact of Kingdom Law being in effect during the Kingdom. Ezekiel makes a very strong case for that.

One of the things we have to remember about pre-Kingdom Israelites, with the exception of the believing remnant, is that they went through the motions of obeying the Law, but God was far from them in their hearts and minds. There were a lot of unbelieving Israelites obeying the Mosaic Law; therefore, observing the Mosaic Law, in whole or in part, was not proof and is not proof that any individual Israelite is a justified, born-again Israelite. During the Kingdom, the Israelites in particular will willingly and faithfully follow Him, obey Him, be in conformance with Kingdom Law, and never rebel against Him again. Many Gentiles will do that as well, but by the end of the Kingdom, a multitude of them will be willing to follow Satan's leadership and rebel against God again on a widespread scale (Rev. 20:7-10). This is all another indication to me that we are dealing with the Kingdom rather than with a pre-Kingdom period of time.

Blessed, בָּרֵךְ, means to be happy or to be blessed referring to a heightened state of happiness and joy, implying very favorable circumstances and enjoyment. The sense is one of being highly favored or fortunate as by divine grace. It may be referred to as being in a state of bliss. This word is always used of people and never used of God. This is not necessarily a description of life in the *diaspora*, and it is certainly not a description of life during the Tribulation. It is, however, a description of Kingdom life. Gentiles are not living the kind of blessed life this word describes either, but during the Kingdom, they will also enjoy the kind of life this word is describing.

The state of happiness this word describes is not limited to men although the text may make that appear to be the situation. Man, אָנוּשׁ, is a reference to mankind which, of course, includes women. This refers to a human being and, collectively, to people.

The blessing is applicable to those justified people who do not profane the sabbath and who keep from wrongdoing. One is specific to religious ritual, and one is specific to interpersonal relationships and not so specifically to a broad range of righteous societal behavior in general. Behavior and relationship are not divorced one from the other.

The inclusion design of God's plan for history is the subject of verses 3-8.

Isaiah 56:3 ³Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD say, "The LORD will surely separate [בָּדֵל] me from His people." Nor let the eunuch say, "Behold, I am a dry tree."

This is a message of hope for those who are not born Israelites; God's plan for history is all-inclusive. This is in contrast to the fact that under the Mosaic Law (Dt. 23:1-8) eunuchs and some foreigners were not allowed into the assembly, which was probably a reference to the Tabernacle and Temple. In the future, everyone who believes will be able to be adopted into the family of God; however, the Israelites will always be a distinct people. The Mosaic Law was, in part, designed to keep the Israelites separate from the rest of the world. If that had not been done, they would have been absorbed into the world's population long ago. Furthermore, they will remain a distinct people in the Kingdom even though Gentiles will participate in worshiping the King alongside them (cf. Zech. 14:16-19). Throughout the nation's history, there were several classes of Gentile proselytes who could participate in the life of Israel in various ways [cf. Merrill F. Unger, s.v. "proselyte," *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, 1044-1046]. There was a "mixed multitude" and "strangers" who left Egypt with the Israelites (Ex. 12:38, 48-49). Rahab was a Gentile Canaanite woman from Jericho (Josh. 2:8-13, 6:17, 25) who eventually became an ancestor of the Lord (Mt. 1:5). Ruth was a Moabite (Ruth 4:10) who married Boaz and also became one of the Lord's ancestors (Mt. 1:5). Uriah the Hittite was apparently a proselyte (2 Sam. 11:11). Sojourners among the Israelites were allowed to offer burnt offerings alongside the Israelites (Num. 15:14-16).

"God never before asked the Gentiles to join the Jews in keeping the Sabbath, but here He does so. He calls the very people He prohibited from entering His covenant nation: foreigners and eunuchs. This is another picture of the grace of God. The invitation is still 'Everyone come!' It applies to sinners today, but it will apply in a special way when Israel enters her kingdom, the temple services are restored, and the Sabbath is once again a part of Jewish worship" [Warren W. Wiersbe, "Isaiah" in *The Bible Exposition Commentary: Old Testament: Prophets*, 65].

They are assured that once they join the family of God, they will not be taken out from among His people. Many theologians attempt to relate this truth to the book of Nehemiah wherein exclusion was mandated (Neh. 13), but that ignores the eschatological nature of this prophecy that is well beyond the return from Babylon and gets right to the end of history as we know it. "Neither the foreigner nor any other Israelites should think that God would keep the converted foreigners or eunuchs in some special category that

would exclude them from regular worship in Zion. Thus [Isaiah] 56:3 would not be reporting an existing problem but aimed at heading off a potential misunderstanding in the future" [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 533].

Separate, *בָּדַל*, means to dismiss, that is, to cause another to leave an area. The verb form is causative. The foreigner is concerned about being forced out of the presence of God's people. This is very emphatic; the word "separate" is used twice. It is an infinitive absolute form followed by an imperfect verb form which is a grammatical signal of emphasis, *הַבָּדֵל יִבְדִּילֵנִי*, literally: "to exclude [separate] he will exclude [separate] me."

It is uncertain what it means for the eunuch to be considered a "dry tree." Perhaps the irreparable impotent nature of his condition is meant, or perhaps as a dry tree is discarded and burnt, the eunuch is afraid that he will be excluded and destroyed. But that will not happen; those who are physically deformed even in this manner will be welcomed into God's Kingdom family.

Deuteronomy 23:1-8 specifically excluded specific people from the Tabernacle and the worship practices of Judaism, but they will be included in the Kingdom. This confuses many theologians who are not dispensationalists and/or who do not believe in a literal Kingdom. They fail to understand what they see as a contradiction between one Scripture and another. For dispensationalists this is not a problem; the change in dispensations always ushers in a change in the requirements governing stewardship of the new dispensation. The Mosaic Law is gone now and it will not return once the Kingdom begins, but Kingdom Law, which will allow those formerly excluded to come in, will be instituted. Dispensational theology is the only theological system that can make sense of that situation.

Yahweh directly answers the concerns of the eunuch. The eunuch who, by faith commits to Yahweh, will, in turn, have Yahweh commit to him.

Isaiah 56:4-5 ⁴For thus says the LORD, "To the eunuchs who keep My sabbaths, And choose what pleases Me, And hold fast *[הִחַזְקוּ]* My covenant, ⁵To them I will give in My house and within My walls *[הוֹצֵא]* a memorial *[זֵכָר]*, And a name better *[טוֹב]* than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name which will not be cut off.

While it does not need to be said, after all, God's Word as revealed through the prophet is sufficient, this proclamation is reinforced by the definitive and authoritative "thus says the LORD." Eunuchs, who were once prohibited from engaging in the activities of the Temple, will be able to worship with everyone else on an equal basis, so says Yahweh. This is not some vaguely worded maybe this will happen, maybe it will not happen statement; this is a guarantee from Yahweh that his will one day happen.

The requirements to be met by the eunuch are the same requirements others have to make. First is justification salvation, without which any commitment to the sabbath and to adherence to covenant stipulations is impossible, and second is sanctification salvation, which is adherence to the sabbath and to the covenant stipulations whatever they may look like in the Messianic Kingdom.

During the Kingdom, this will not simply be rote religious activity. Keeping the sabbath, desiring to honor God by means of a faithful walk, and obedience to whatever covenant stipulations are in force at that time are indications that one is committed to the King who saved him.

The Israelites, living under the fulfilled stipulations of the New Covenant, will all be faithful believers and servants of the King. Gentiles, at least at the beginning, will all be believers as well; however, each Gentile baby born in the Kingdom must come to faith just as Gentiles must come to faith in this dispensation.

Hold fast, *קָיָה*, means to be strong, to strengthen. This verb form means to take hold of by grasping and seizing. In this context, it "means that people will submit their will to his will, be firm in their commitment to serve him, and consistently praise him. Holding on strongly indicates a firm conviction about continuing a relationship with God" [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 534].

I think it is worth acknowledging that the Kingdom is a new dispensation, the Messianic Kingdom dispensation, and it will be a law economy, but it will be Kingdom Law rather than the Mosaic Law, which has been nullified for nearly 2,000 years. The King will rule with a rod of iron (Rev. 2:27, 12:5, 19:15). Grace will still be operative, and everyone will have to experience the new birth to be saved, which has always been standard operating procedure.

This is clearly a Messianic Kingdom prophecy. Eunuchs were kept out of the Tabernacle and the Temple in the past. There has been no Temple since the *diaspora* began, there is no Temple now, and there will be no Temple until the King returns to assume His throne in Jerusalem. That means that this has not been an issue for about 2,000 years, but it will be an issue in the future, and this Scripture reveals the resolution to the problem identified in Deuteronomy 23:1-8. "My house" and "My walls" identify a Temple and a Temple compound, possibly also the holy city, Jerusalem. It does not seem to be clear whether "the walls" refers to the Temple compound, the holy city, or both, although the context seems to suggest the Temple compound.

Wall, *חוֹמָה*, primarily refers to a wall around a city. It is generally used to refer to the wall of a town, and is rarely used to refer to the wall of a building. It could be a reference to a wall around the Temple compound or around the holy city, Jerusalem or both.

Either way, the Millennial Temple and the holy city will be places where formerly prohibited people will be allowed to enter. In terms of justification, the only requirement will be faith; in terms of sanctification the requirements will be keeping the sabbath, doing that which pleases the King, and holding fast the covenant.

The childless nature of the eunuch's lifetime is mentioned here which was certainly a source of shame and ostracism for a eunuch in society at that time. The promise is that they will have a memorial in the future Temple of God which will be something better than the legacy of having children. It only takes two or three generations for people to

lose sight of the identities of their ancestors. The legacy they will have by believing in the Lord will be far superior to the lesser legacy one's posterity would have provided for them.

One example of a lasting legacy that was provided to a eunuch was the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:26-39. He is memorialized in the eternal Word of God, and we obviously read about him and his faith filled encounter with Philip. That is a far more lasting legacy than if he had not been a eunuch and actually fathered children, but remained faithless and unknown.

I do not think that this is suggesting that being childless is a favorable condition. It is suggesting that those who were formerly barred from participating in the religious life of Israel due to this particular physical condition, will be, unlike in the past, welcomed as participants, based on faith, in all aspects of the nation's religious activities in the Millennial Kingdom.

Memorial, זָכָר , means a monument, referring to a construction which is for a memorial of a person or an event. The word also means hand. The text actually reads, זָכָר וְשֵׁם , "a monument [hand] and a name." The Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem has this name, *Yad Vashem*. "A monument, trophy (*a hand* being that which points and marks)—of victory, sepulchral.... This name in Hebrew for a monument may be connected with the ancient custom of sculpturing on *cippi* [plural of *cippus*, (in classical architecture) a stele] or sepulchral columns, an open hand and arm" [H.W.F. Gesenius, s.v. " זָכָר ," *Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*].

"The symbolic significance of the Hebrew phrase 'a hand and a name' is less than obvious.... 'monument' fits the context much better. God's act of giving them a 'name' fits in with a 'place, monument' since both provide a memory of the eunuchs for future generations. If this refers to erecting a stele [or stela], one would expect the verb 'set up, establish' rather than 'give,' so possibly this describes an inscription in the honor of the eunuchs rather than setting up a stone stele. This memorial will be even better than having many children who may or may not remember the names of their forefathers" [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 534].

The remembrance that Yahweh promises the eunuchs is eternal. God will give them some degree of posterity they would not have otherwise been able to have, and which is better. Better, טוב, means good, well-pleasing, fruitful, morally correct which pertains to having good value. The sense is that of having desirable or positive qualities, especially those suitable for a thing specified.

To sum this up: "This is another way of expressing co-equal (not second-class) participation. To them the Lord grants access to his presence (*temple ... walls*), personal acceptance (*memorial ... name*), more than abundant recompense (*better than*) and eternal security (*everlasting ... not cut off*)" [J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*, 351].

Amillennial theologians have to spiritualize this Scripture because they do not believe there will be a literal Messianic Kingdom with a literal Temple.

"The *house* and *walls* of God do not specifically refer to the Temple in Jerusalem, nor does this verse teach that the eunuch will possess a material monument in the Temple. It is as representative of a particular class, namely the helpless and weak, who have no claim to righteousness, that the eunuch is mentioned. Even those who are so unworthy as to be 'dry trees' will receive a blessing from God, for they will dwell in His house forever. Does the glorious salvation of the Lord and His coming kingdom mean no more to the eunuch than that he should have a tablet erected to his memory in the Temple yard? What comfort would this be? Furthermore, what warrant would Isaiah have had for declaring that eunuchs could have memorials erected to them in the Temple precincts? This would indeed have been an innovation, and one wonders what led the prophet to think that he had the right to make any such promise. If this is all that the present prophecy means, how barren it is! ... The words *house* and *walls* ... refer to the household or family of God" [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, vol. 3, 3:391-392].

The house and the walls do refer to a Temple in Jerusalem, they do not refer to the household of family of God, and the text clearly reveals that the eunuch will have a memorial there. I do not know exactly the reasons for it, but I do know what the text reveals. Eunuchs do not symbolize the helpless and the weak; they are a specific class of people that had previously been excluded from the nation's religious observances. Isaiah had every reason to write these words; they were the product of divine revelation preceded by "thus says the LORD." My question would be why does this theologian not understand the inspiration and inerrancy of the Word of God?

Foreigners will also be accepted into the house of the Lord in the Kingdom.

Isaiah 56:6–7 "Also the foreigners who join [לָנוּחַ] themselves to the LORD, To minister [שָׁרְתוּ] to Him, and to love [אָהַבּוּ] the name of the LORD, To be His servants [עֲבָדוּ], every one who keeps from profaning the sabbath And holds fast My covenant; ⁷Even those I will bring to My holy mountain And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable [רְצוּנוֹ] on My altar; For My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples."

The same justification salvation requirement for foreigners will be in effect, and similar sanctification salvation requirements for them will be in effect. These foreigners will be characterized by six things: join to Yahweh, minister to Yahweh, love the name of Yahweh, serve Yahweh, refrain from profaning the sabbath, and hold fast Yahweh's covenant.

Join, לָנוּחַ, means to join, to accompany referring to attaching oneself to someone or something. The verb form here means to be joined, to be attached, or to be bound to one in a relationship. The sense is to be or become attached to another person socially implying a very close, friendship, relationship, or affection. This is clearly a reference to justification salvation, which is a volitional choice made to join to Yahweh.

These people are said to minister to Yahweh. Minister, שָׁרַת, means to minister, to serve, to attend referring to serving deity by doing various commanded religious practices, especially rites and ceremonies. This word describes priestly service, but no one but a man

from the tribe of Levi, a descendent of Aaron, may serve as a priest in the Temple. We also know that the Kingdom priesthood will be from the line of Zadok who was David's faithful priest.

Ezekiel 44:15 ¹⁵“But the Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok, who kept charge of My sanctuary when the sons of Israel went astray from Me, shall come near to Me to minister to Me; and they shall stand before Me to offer Me the fat and the blood,” declares the Lord GOD. (cf. Ezek. 40:46, 43:19, 48:11).

While the nature of this ministry to Yahweh is not specified, we can safely say that these people cannot be ministering in the role of priests. Only descendants of Aaron in the lineage of Zadok will fill the Kingdom priestly role. Some theologians do believe the ministry to Yahweh is a reference to the priesthood, but that is not possible.

Those who join with Yahweh do so with the result that they minister to Him, they love His name, and they become His servants.

Love, אָהַב, simply means to love referring to an affection based on a close relationship. In this verse, love is linked with the covenant. “... the reciprocal love of men and women should likewise be conceived as consisting essentially in acceptance and faithful execution of the covenant obligations. This is why this reciprocal love is thought of in the first instance as a commandment, indeed as *the commandment* in an absolutely basic sense, one that is most intimately connected with the service of God and the keeping of the rest of the precepts of the covenant-law.... [Love] can only be fulfilled by those who have the necessary inner renewal and the spiritual power to which the commandment refers.... Human love for God is therefore far from being expressed merely in sheer *legalism* or *external observance* of the cult; on the contrary, it engages the *whole person*, with all his/her powers; it must come from one's whole heart and must lead to a cleaving to God that is living and dynamic....” [Willem A. VanGemeren, gen. ed., s.v. “אָהַב,” *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, vo. 1, 1:285-286].

Servant, עֶבֶד, means a servant or a slave, with the emphasis on slave, but in the context of the Messianic Kingdom, servant is more appropriate. The duties of these servants is not explained.

The sanctification requirements of observing the sabbath and therefore refraining from profaning it and holding fast the covenant are in effect for the foreigners in the same way they will be in effect for the eunuchs.

The “holy mountain” is probably a reference to Zion, or at least Jerusalem, and “My house of prayer” is a reference to the Millennial Temple. The burnt offerings and the altar confirm the presence of the Millennial Temple. This truth cannot be theologically whitewashed and denied. There will be a Temple with priests, an altar, and sacrifices. It will be known as a “house of prayer,” and it will be open to “all the peoples.” “All” means “all;” everyone, totality, no exceptions. Unlike the previous Temples, foreigners will be welcomed to participate in the activities that take place there; they will be acceptable.

Acceptable, רָצוֹן, means pleasure, delight, acceptance. "When attributed to God, the term expresses the divine goodwill which He extends to humanity as He sees fit. In passages pertaining to the offering of sacrifices, offerings, or fasting in worship, the word designates the favorable reception of the worshipers (and thus their worship) by the Lord" [Baker and Carpenter, s.v. "רָצוֹן," *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament*, 1074].

Isaiah 56:8 ⁸The Lord GOD, who gathers the dispersed of Israel, declares, "Yet *others* I will gather to them, to those *already* gathered."

When Yahweh gathers, out of dispersion, all Israel for the second and final time into the land of Israel for the inauguration of the Messianic Kingdom, He also has a host of Gentiles who will be saved during the Tribulation who will survive to enter the Kingdom and populate the world.

Non-dispensational theologians cannot recognize this situation as a reference to a geographical dispersion; they spiritualize it to mean a spiritual departure from God. "Exiles: (lit.) 'scattered ones', alluding neither to Babylonian exile, nor geographical dispersion, but to those scattered from the Lord" [J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*, 351].