

# An Adulterous Generation

*Book of Isaiah*

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**Bible Text:** Isaiah 57:3-12

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...with me in Isaiah chapter 57 and I want to read for you from verse three down to verse 12 and speak with you about an adulterous generation. If you were to take and look up the word adultery in the dictionary you would find a number of different applications as to being unfaithful and to departing from one to whom you are committed. That would be the general sense. And most people think of it in terms of physical adultery. And yet we know that our Lord said to the Pharisees there in Matthew chapter five if a man so much as look on a woman to lust after her, that he has committed adultery already with her in his heart. And so I find that many that would stand up and take and preach a message against adultery themselves stand condemned in what they preach. And all of us would have to plead guilty in that regard as we stand before a holy God.

But here in this particular portion of Scripture it is speaking of another type of adultery that many don't consider and that I find many preachers in our day who would stand up and condemn physical adultery would be guilty of themselves just in their manner and message that they proclaim. In other words, they themselves are spiritual adulterers. It is used in the Scripture to describe any that come to God in any other way than through the Lord Jesus Christ alone. And that is a very sobering charge when we read about it in Scripture. But it was true in Isaiah's day and it is especially so in our day. The problem isn't the proliferation of churches. This world is full of so-called churches or congregations, places of worship. And yet the question is: is it true worship or is it adultery? You shock people when you tell them that if that preacher is not declaring the exclusive glory of the Lord Jesus Christ alone and his death accomplished for sinners, that he is no better than somebody who would be running a brothel or a prostitutes house. You hear people gasp. No, you can't say it is that bad. Yeah, it is. That is what we see here in Isaiah 57 beginning with verse three.

“But draw near hither, ye sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer and the whore.”<sup>1</sup>

Strong language. So of whom is he speaking here? Well, verse four.

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<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 57:3.

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, Enflaming yourselves with idols under every green tree, slaying the children in the valleys under the clefts of the rocks? Among the smooth stones of the stream is thy portion; they, they are thy lot: even to them hast thou poured a drink offering, thou hast offered a meat offering. Should I receive comfort in these? Upon a lofty and high mountain hast thou set thy bed: even thither wentest thou up to offer sacrifice. Behind the doors also and the posts hast thou set up thy remembrance: for thou hast discovered thyself to another than me, and art gone up; thou hast enlarged thy bed, and made thee a covenant with them; thou lovedst their bed where thou sawest it. And thou wentest to the king with ointment, and didst increase thy perfumes, and didst send thy messengers far off, and didst debase thyself even unto hell. Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way; yet saidst thou not, There is no hope: thou hast found the life of thine hand; therefore thou wast not grieved. And of whom hast thou been afraid or feared, that thou hast lied, and hast not remembered me, nor laid it to thy heart? have not I held my peace even of old, and thou fearest me not? I will declare thy righteousness, and thy works; for they shall not profit thee.<sup>2</sup>

So as I have just read this particular portion, I don't know what the Lord brought to your mind and heart, but as I read it I have the visual of false worship today, of people that just like we are, are meeting even now in places of worship and yet it is nothing but a spiritual adultery. So a warning and it is important for us to enjoy the blessings of Scripture, but also to heed the warnings.

We read and understand and heard last time in Isaiah 57:1-2 how at times it pleases the Lord to remove the righteous. He raises up a witness for a time and then he removes the candlestick. And you say, "Well, when the candlestick is removed, what is left?"

Well, what I have just read for you. If you just let people live their lives as they would, it continues, as we read here, into hell. They will continue to debase themselves even unto hell. And you take away a witness, you take away a John the Baptist who was a voice in the wilderness and you take away the Lord's disciples that he raised up to go and preach for while and raise up some congregations, but then the candlestick removed. It is those men that he raises up for a season, even some of us here. I know if you are like me you are thinking, why don't more people, as long as we have been here, join us? Why don't they rejoice as we rejoice in this message that does nothing but exalt the Lord Jesus Christ? Well, it can only be said for one reason. It is because they have not been taught of the Lord. He has not been pleased to open their eyes as he has been pleased to open ours. And I don't know what he has purposed. I just know for now the light is on. And the door is open. The welcome mat is out. That sign is out there for cars that drive by. And it declares everything that is the reason why we come together and meet.

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<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 57:4-12.

But could we continue to be satisfied in worship if this is as big as it gets and if that from here forward he did nothing but make it smaller and smaller, take one out here, one out there, one out here, one out there to where in his time lock that door, turn the lights out and put a for sale sign on the front.

It may be. I don't know. We can't presume.

Or it might be that the Lord be pleased yet to bring in a great number. And if he does, it will be in his time. The raising up of his people and the testimony from generation to generation that he raises up is his doing. The Scriptures say:

“Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.”<sup>3</sup>

He is going to have his harvest, but even as we read in Amos chapter eight it might please him at the same time to remove the light, to remove the testimony that he has raised up in one particular place or through his people just as Isaiah 57:1 says:

“The righteous perisheth.”<sup>4</sup>

The Lord takes him out.

“...and no man layeth it to heart.”<sup>5</sup>

Then what is there? Well, it is to say we stand in stark contrast to what is going on in religion. And it is not anything new. This is something that even in Isaiah's day was predominant.

I often wonder who Isaiah had to fellowship with. There must not have been many, because he himself asked the question.

“Who hath believed our report?”<sup>6</sup>

This is not a popular message, but it is a vital message. The gospel which we know and believe is not one that men readily receive, particularly because of portions of Scripture like this. It is a message that honors and glorifies Christ alone. And when you come and preach that to a group of people that are pretty much used to having full reign and do what they want to do and have been doing it for years, you are going to be an enemy. It is kind of like mom and dad showing back up at the house and they hadn't been there in a while and the kids didn't know they were coming home and they are just running wild, you know. And their thinking is, how come you had to show up and ruin the party when

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<sup>3</sup> Matthew 9:38; Luke 10:2.

<sup>4</sup> Isaiah 57:1.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Isaiah 54:1.

you start telling them that is not the way it is done. Let's reign this thing in. Let's shut this down. This is the way it is. They will fight you.

But here in this particular portion of Scripture, again, an adulterous generation. We see the title that the Lord himself uses to describe false worship, because that is really what is being described here in verse three. You know, some people see the word sorceress and hey think, ah, that is witchcraft. And they start thinking New Orleans. They start thinking voodoo. They start thinking Haiti. They start thinking third world, over there. That is those people.

Well, this is a word that he addressed to the people of Israel. This was a nation that had the temple, had the priesthood, had informed, if you will, all that had been instituted in the wilderness with Moses. And yet it had devolved into something else. And you can see the parallels. It is not that these congregations don't have Bibles. They still call it Bible school, you know, vacation Bible school. They will even encourage you to bring your Bible. They will send you to a preacher's school. They call that a Bible school. But the question is: What kind of message is being taught? What kind of God is being declared? If it is not the God of Scripture, if it is not Christ as set forth in truth, then it is witchcraft. It is just that simple.

Paul, if you will hold a hand here in Isaiah 57 and look over in the book of Galatians, that is the same word that the apostle Paul used in writing to the Galatians. Look in Galatians chapter three and verse one.

And, again, these chapter divisions were put here by the editors. If you read back in verse 21 of Galatians two there is a very clear, strong statement there.

“I do not frustrate the grace of God.”<sup>7</sup>

The word frustrate means to mix it. I don't preach a mixed message is what Paul was saying, Galatians 2:21.

“...for if righteousness come by the law...”<sup>8</sup>

In other words, man's obedience to it or a man can, in essence, make himself righteous by what he does, he said:

“...then Christ is dead in vain.”<sup>9</sup>

If man somehow by what he does could work out a righteousness, then I wasn't necessary for Christ to come. The truth is that man in his sin and fall could not ever satisfy a holy God and therefore it was necessary that Christ come and fulfill the law and pay the debt. And so that is verse 21. And read on now to chapter three and verse one.

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<sup>7</sup> Galatians 2:21.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

“O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?”<sup>10</sup>

Who hath put you under a spell? What kind of sorcerer—because that is when you think of bewitched that is what you think of, sorcerer—what kind of sorcerer has come and put you under a spell?

Now who was he talking about? He was talking about preachers after he had specifically gone through this region of Galatian declaring the gospel of Christ, declaring the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, these came along and began to sow a seed and preach another gospel, just like in the parable of the field where while they slept the enemy came and sowed a seed in Matthew speaks of that. That is the language that he uses here.

“O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?”<sup>11</sup>

See, most people reason, well, we obey truth. That is not what it says, “That you should not obey the truth.”

Therein is the fight with sinners and therein their rebellion is manifest. When you boil it down just to one truth. And I will tell you this, dear friends, it is not even the doctrines of grace. There are many who embrace what they call the doctrines of grace who do not obey the truth. They have never been taught the truth. Scripture doesn't know anything of doctrines in the plural unless it is false doctrines. John his second epistle very specifically spoke of those who come and do not preach the doctrine of Christ, just like here, the truth. What is the truth? It is not a system of doctrines, it is a person. I am the way, Christ said, the truth and the life.

So for someone in any way to deter your eyes from him or begin to do so by any other type of teaching or doctrine whether it be to preach up man's will or to preach up his works, preach up a ceremony, somehow make you feel that the person and work of Christ alone is not sufficient for your hope and comfort and joy and salvation and peace and pardon and justification, to that degree that your eyes begin to be removed from him, you are being bewitched. That is the word. These are sorcerers. And they are hypnotists. I am talking about spiritually. They can get a crowd going and if you don't believe it, that a lot of it is just crowd psychology, I remember going to... we used to go every year to Independent Stadium, then I figured out, you know, for the football game every year. And then I figured out it was a whole lot more comfortable sitting at home watching it on TV and, you know seeing the replays, sit out there in those elements, it is like whoa. But we went to a game where we didn't... we sat with one team in the stands and we didn't have any favorites. We were just there, but by the end to the game, because we were sitting with the people from that school—and I won't say the name of the school—but they thought we were alumni. They thought we were a part of the school. And every time they would score they would turn around and high five you and you would high five back. And I am sitting there thinking, What are we getting so excited about? We have got

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<sup>10</sup> Galatians 3:1.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

nothing in this game, but crowd psychology. And that is sadly what is going on in religion. People will... leaders will get people whooped up into a frenzy to where they don't even know what they are excited about, but they are going to say amen, hallelujah, God be praised and even if it goes on long enough, start rolling in the aisles. That is a bewitching. It is a sorcery. It is a distraction. And I would say that is on the extreme side.

Where we need to be wary and be careful is the other side where a man stands up and opens his book and he is going down verse by verse and interpreting this scripture for you in a very logical and straightforward manner to where you are thinking, "Man, he is a Bible teacher. This man is serious about what he does." And yet again he is not pointing you to the Lord Jesus Christ alone and to that finished work alone.

Sometimes that is the more subtle form of sorcery. It is when you are being lulled away and don't realize it, just because he is a good speaker or, as they say, a good expositor of the Scriptures. There is many a good expositor of the Scripture that has led people into hell, because Christ alone has not been their message.

And so coming back here to Isaiah 57 this is that which Isaiah addresses as directed by the Spirit of God. This is that adultery. And that is the last part of the verse explains the first in verse three.

"...the seed of the adulterer and the whore."<sup>12</sup>

Strong language, but, again, what is the role of—here in this case—an adulterer and a whore? And you stop and think about it, a prostitute. Well, it is to lure. It is to draw aside. And those that are drawn aside here in this case were people that had the oracles of God. They had the temple. They had the priesthood. They had the sacrifices, everything that we have here and yet they were drawn aside. And that is what the apostle Paul said was his concern when he was writing to the Corinthians.

Look with me over in 2 Corinthians chapter 11. I am just trying to give you some examples here of how subtle this is. You know, I have mentioned to you before, a man can stand up and talk about God. He has talked about Christ. He can talk about salvation. He can talk about redemption. Talk about the cross. You will hear preachers. They use these terms. Talk about the grace of God. It is difficult not to open this book the Bible and read it and speak from it and not come across these terms, even election. But it is not so much that they use these terms, it is how they use them. It is what they mean. It is how they interpret it for you. And you sit and listen long enough and to an eloquent speaker and pretty soon you are not taking what the Scriptures have to say about these things. You are taking their word. And I find some that are just ready with pen in hand. Ok, how did you say that again? It is not how a preacher says it. It is how God says it that is vital. And that is why we need to always read these Scriptures in their context.

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<sup>12</sup> Isaiah 57:3.

But you can see Paul's concern here in 2 Corinthians 11 beginning with verse one. And this is... what I am showing you here is the scriptural interpretation of what it is to be drawn aside, to be lured aside by these preachers, the adulterers, the whores, ok?

2 Corinthians 11:1.

Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me. For 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.<sup>13</sup>

Now just take that particular language already.

“I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”<sup>14</sup>

Chaste how? Well, chaste in his righteousness, chaste in that one righteousness that he worked out and that God imputed upon completion of his death. That is why he came. And you cannot be any more holy than you are already in him. That is what he has done for sinners. That is what he has done for his people. And yet he says, verse three:

“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve...”<sup>15</sup>

The serpent whored Eve. He drew her aside, away from that one exclusive tree, the tree of life which represented Christ. And all it took was getting her eyes off of it to look on this other tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil.

You stop and think about the knowledge. Isn't that what people love? And maybe there is something we are missing here. We don't want to get too closed minded. I have heard people say that. Your gospel is pretty narrow. Let's don't get too narrow here.

Well, I want to be as narrow as what this verse describes and that is being espoused to one husband and being that chaste virgin unto Christ. Apart from that, I don't want to know of any other experience, you see. But Paul says:

“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”<sup>16</sup>

See, that is where it began in the garden with Satan.

“Yea, hath God said...”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> 2 Corinthians 11:1-2.

<sup>14</sup> 2 Corinthians 11:2.

<sup>15</sup> 2 Corinthians 11:3.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Genesis 3:1.

That is how the serpent began to beguile Eve.

“Yea, hath God said...”<sup>18</sup>

And that is how it begins in the mind. You see, this is where it starts. When you start trying to reason and usually what happens is you begin to look at all these other people out here and you begin to think, “How could they all be wrong?” So maybe I am being a little too narrow. Maybe I do need to broaden my horizons a little bit. Maybe I need to be a little more inclusive. And thereby the whoredom has started. The alluring has started. Your eyes are now off of the one husband and when did Christ espouse his people to himself? It was there at the cross. He paid the price, the greatest price you could ever pay with his own blood. And to say that somehow apart from that blood, apart from that work that he accomplished that there can still be people that will be saved anyway, you have been allured. You have been drawn aside. You have been bewitched. The spirit of adultery has taken you and in that you have denied the Lord. That is what Paul is saying here, the simplicity that is in Christ.

I can't state it any more simply than what it is and that is that you are the sinner and I am the sinner. I don't know how complicated that is and that we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God in Adam. And therefore the trial is over. There is not a trial yet to see whether or not we will be proven innocent or not. It is over. Left in that state of condemnation, none would be saved. But then we hear of this glorious message that God in his grace from eternity purposed to save such sinners. How? By himself providing the Lamb. By himself sending his Son to come, live, die and rise again, to pay the sinner's debt, those that he purposed to save. And that is what he did. There on the cross the sin of his people was put to the charge and the account of the Lord Jesus Christ. And that righteousness that Christ came and fulfilled worked out was put to the account of the sinner. That is the simplicity that there is in Christ. Don't try to broaden it. Don't try to make it any wider than that. To do so is to be beguiled. And this is what Paul said in 2 Corinthians 11 verse four.

“For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.”<sup>19</sup>

Now you might say, “Well, what does he mean you might well bear with him?” He is really saying, “Why do you bear with him?” These that are coming are preaching another Jesus. Why? Because there is only one truth. So any that does not fit his character, any that do not fit exactly who he is, it is another Jesus. Have you ever gotten yourself mixed up with somebody else that had your same name? Well, sometimes you get junk mail. It might look like it is for you and you just throw it out. Sometimes you get an official document and it looks like some report and you look at the name and they sent it to the

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> 2 Corinthians 11:4.



person with the same name, but the wrong... it is not you. When it is that case, you make sure they do get the right one, don't you? Straighten this one out in a hurry. It is vital.

You know, as we sit and listen—and this is not being judgmental. It is being discerning. Is the Christ that that man is preaching, does he line up with the record that God has given of his Son? If he doesn't, it is another Jesus. And he is to be denounced as such.

Or if you see another spirit. See, people say, “Well, there is a spirit there. The Spirit of the Lord.” There is a spirit, but we know that the Spirit does not speak of himself. Christ said, “When the Spirit comes he will not speak of himself, but he will take of those things which pertain to Christ and reveal them unto you.” That is what is missing. It is not that there is not a spirit in these gatherings, but the question is: Is it the Spirit of Christ? And he says here, “Or another gospel.”

You know, this is something people get offended over whenever you begin to talk about another gospel, but back here in Galatians, again, chapter one, if you look at it. This is the allurements. This is the whoredom. What does it take for it to be another gospel? Well, Galatians chapter one verses six and seven Paul declares it. He says:

“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel.”<sup>20</sup>

It is not like there is two gospels and so here is one and here is one, but the word another means another kind of. It is a different breed. And he explains it further verse seven:

“Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.”<sup>21</sup>

If you take and tweak anything with regard to the gospel of Christ and try to add to it or take from it, you are perverting the gospel of Christ. And that is that allurements. That is that drawing aside. I don't care what you add to it. You add your experience. You add your will. You say, “Well, it depends on my will.” You add some work. I would say if you even add some grace to it to where you are looking to that grace, God gave me the grace to believe and therefore that grace becomes comforting to me, do you see how subtle it can be? Even that is getting your eyes off of the giver onto the gift. It is subtle. We dare not. May he ever keep our eyes on him, you see. He is the truth. And yet this is... in Isaiah 57 this is where the apostasy ended up to where the Lord gave this nation up because of their idolatrous worship, their character. He had but one thing to say about them and that is that they are sorcerers. They are adulterers. They are whores, strong language. But that is what is described there.

And you can see how it reveals itself in their attitude. And there is much more here. We will come back to it, but I want you to see at least four today and then we will come back to this, but he says:

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<sup>20</sup> Galatians 1:6.

<sup>21</sup> Galatians 1:7.

“Against whom do ye sport yourselves?”<sup>22</sup>

You thought maybe the word sport was a modern term or word. Here it is all the way back in the Old Testament, to sport yourselves. It just means to make light of. We talk about sports. It is supposed to be entertaining. It gets a little bit more serious today than that and, you know, the way people look at it, it becomes an idol, but the whole idea of sporting is the idea of making light of, literally to mock and that is, when you think about it, isn't that what sports is? You have got one team mocking the other team. You know, spectators. They are all going at it. It is sport.

It is one thing when it deals with things of physical activity like that that are designed for entertainment, but not when it has to do with the gospel, not when it has to do with the glory of God or the glory of Christ. And that is the question that is asked here. Notice not against what do you sport yourselves, but against what? Whom?

“Against whom do ye sport yourselves? against whom make ye a wide mouth, and draw out the tongue?”<sup>23</sup>

That is just like laughter. People, their mouths get big and wide and their tongue hangs out when they are laughing. Who are you laughing against here?

“...are ye not children of transgression, a seed of falsehood.”<sup>24</sup>

You know, the most serious business that we ought to be about, just like Christ when they found him in the temple there at age 12 and Mary and Joseph were asking him, you know, why he was there. What did he say? Don't you know that I must be about my Father's business?

When we are gathered for worship as we go through life and the Lord enables us to consider our own need, our soul need, well, there is nothing sporty or light about it. We are made to realize that if we don't have Christ, we perish. We die. But there are a lot of people that don't have that attitude. They go... they meet for worship and have a good time. They don't want to think too much. Don't make me think, too much, preacher, about this.

Well, you know, if God by his grace does not interrupt our plans and arrest our hearts and minds and cause us to see our desperate need of the work of Christ, if he should in justice let us go the way we would go, then as verse nine says there will be nothing but a debasing of ourselves even unto hell. That is a pretty serious end, a pretty serious end.

I pray that week in or week out as we have the opportunity of hearing the Word—and it is the Word. It is not me. It is the Word. My prayer is that I can somehow stand up here and

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<sup>22</sup> Isaiah 57:4.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

declare it and get out of the way. This is the Word that you have to deal with right here. Take it with you. Go back and read this portion. Read some of these other Scriptures that I have pointed you to. And the Lord will direct you to others to teach your heart of the need that is there for Christ and Christ alone. That is his grace when he does that, but it is a judgment when he just leaves us to ourselves. And if he does, then this will be our end. This will be our lot.

All right.