

- C. (1) God's severe rebuke upon the people's iniquity, 59:1-8
- (2) A prayer of repentance in the mouths of God's suffering people, 59:9-15a
- (3) God's answer to the prayer of repentance, and His declaration that with His own hands He will bring salvation and blessing to His people, 59:15b,ff., leading into the great passages of blessing which make up most of the remainder of the book.

A. (1) God's Rebuke upon the Sinful Leaders of His People (Isaiah 56:9-57:13a)

This passage begins dramatically with an invitation to the beasts of the field to come and devour the people who have been left unprotected because of the negligence of their watchman. Those who should be protecting God's people, leading them in the knowledge of God, and keeping them from going astray, have turned aside to personal greediness and drunkenness. As a result the people are at the mercy of the forces of wickedness. In 57:1-2, the prophet points out the failure of the leaders to recognize the fact that when a righteous man dies he is actually fortunate in being taken away from the evil into which their wickedness is inevitably leading the nation. Verses 3-8 point out the particular sins and types of idolatry which were common among the apostate people of Isaiah's day. In verse 9 there is an allusion to the effort of the leaders of Judah to seek protection by sending presents to heathen rulers. It is a rebuke upon all those who seek to gain safety by appeasement of wicked aggressors. Verse 11 contains God's rebuke upon all men of this type, whether it be the Judean seeking peace by appeasement of Assyria (cf. Isa. 7, 8, 28, etc.) or England and France seeking to appease Hitler, or the United Nations seeking to appease the aggressive tyranny and godlessness of Russia today. Men are seeking peace by compromise with wickedness, and such efforts will never succeed. Only by trusting God and seeking to do His will can anything worthwhile be secured. This lesson is stressed over and over in the Book of Isaiah. It is wrong for a nation to make alliances with wicked nations