I. INTRODUCTION

A. 40-55 picture the discouragement and disheartenedment, which occurred before the return to Jerusalem in 536.

B. 56-66 picture the new hope that was generated, along with new temptations, after the rebuilding of the temple. These would involve:

1. Taking God for granted
2. Feeling independent and self-secure
3. Substituting externals in religion for genuine repentance and spirituality
4. Mistreatment of poor

II. SABBATH OBSERVANCE AND GODLY LIVING, 56:1-8

A. The prophet, using messenger speech (“thus says the Lord,” 1, 4, 8) addresses Eunuchs (3, 4) and foreigners (3, 6)

B. These two groups discouraged perhaps because they were denied fellowship of the worshiping community.

C. The Lord declares his acceptance of them (2, 4, 6).

D. God demands both right worship and godly living.

III. CONDEMNATION AND PROMISES, 56:9-57:21

A. The prophet, using messenger speech (57:15, 19, 21), addresses three groups: leaders (56:9-57:2), idolaters (57:3-13c), and the penitent (57:13d-21)

B. Leaders, 56:9-57:2:

1. Major responsibility for leaders is to warn people of disaster
2. Many of leaders of the returned exiles were too involved in personal affairs.
3. The figures used to describe this behavior:
   a. Are like blind watchmen on the wall who cannot see a threat, 56:10a-b
b. Are like dogs that are too lazy to bark at approaching danger, 56:10c-11b

c. Are like shepherds do not defend the flock, 56:11c-12

4. When the wicked rule, the righteous perish, 57:1-2

C. Idolaters, 57:3-13c:

1. “But you” marks a transition to another audience.

2. Some identify this new audience with the Samaritans, while others choose the descendants of the Jews not exiled.

3. Willis (439) opts for the returned exiles who began to worship idols.

4. They are condemned for:

   a. Practicing sorcery, 3b, 5a-b, 7-8
   b. Ridiculing the righteous, 4
   c. Sacrificing their children to Molech, 5c-d, 9a
   d. Offering sacrifices to foreign gods, 6-7
   e. Failing to reverence Yhwh, 11
   f. Pretending to be righteous (12) while serving idols, 13a-c

D. The Penitent, 57:13d-21:

1. God’s purpose in punishment is not to destroy them, but to bring them to repentance.

2. He will heal those who have repented.

IV. REBUKE OF ISRAEL’S HYPOCRISY, 58-59

A. Exposure of those who feigned religion.

B. Are condemned for fasting (58:1-2) and observance of the Sabbath (58:13-14) while practicing injustice toward fellow man (59:1-21)

C. The changes in speakers is sometimes difficult to ascertain.
1. **Yhwh** charges the prophet to show the people their sins despite their efforts to hide them, 58:1-2

2. **The People** ask “Why have you not answered us though we fasted?”, 58:3a-b

3. **Yhwh** replies he has not answered because their fasting is only an outward show of piety and fails to care for the poor and oppressed, 58:3c-7

4. **The prophet** declares that if they will help their fellowman Yhwh will help them, 8-12

5. **Yhwh** promises if they truly honor he will give them the land, 13-14

6. **The prophet** declares that their sins have kept Yhwh from answering them, 59:1-8.
   a. **NT Usage:** 59:7-8; Rom 3:15-17

7. **The prophet** then turns to God, confessing these sins, 59:9-15b

8. **The prophet** then explains to the people that Yhwh will punish the nations and redeem penitent Israelites, 59:15c-20

9. **The prophet** closes by relating Yhwh’s covenant that his word would not depart from Israel, 59:21
   a. **NT Usage:** 59:20-21; Rom 11:26-27

**V. RESTORATION OF THE FAITHFUL IN ZION, 60-62**

A. Subject matter is the theme introduced in 59:17-21

1. That is, the returned exiles who remain faithful will be restored.

2. That restoration will involve the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple

3. Historical situation envisioned is after the rebuilding of the temple and the city walls, 60:10, 18; 61:4; 62:6-7
B. Speakers and hearers alternate.

1. The prophet summons Jerusalem to allow God to shine through her to all the nations, 60:1-6

2. Yhwh affirms he will accept the sacrifices and promises that foreigners will help rebuild Jerusalem, 60:7-18

3. The prophet affirms that God will be Jerusalem’s light, 60:19-20

4. Yhwh promises that the righteous will possess the land, 60:21-22

5. The prophet declares that the Lord’s anointed will bring these glad tidings, 61:1-4

6. Yhwh promises that the nations will serve God’s people who will enjoy the wealth of the nations, 61:5-9

7. Jerusalem rejoices in God’s blessings, 61:10-11

8. The prophet announces that Yhwh will vindicate Zion, 62:1-5

9. The prophet calls for others to ask the Lord to protect Jerusalem, 62:6-9

10. The prophet charges the returned exiles to prepare for more of their brethren, 62:10-12

   a. NT Usage: 62:11; Matt 21:5

VI. DESTRUCTION OF ISRAEL’S ENEMIES, 63:1-6

A. As Zion is restored in the previous chapters, so here are her enemies destroyed.

B. Structure:

1. A watchman calls out, “Who is this?,” 1a-d

2. The one coming responds, “I am the vindicator,” 1c

3. The watchman asks, “Why is your clothing red?,” 2
4. The one coming replies, “It is stained with the blood of people I have trampled,” 3-6

C. “The context makes it clear that the approaching warrior is Yahweh (cf. 42:13; Exod. 15:3), not Judas Maccabeus, Michael the archangel, or the Messiah, as various scholars have suggested. His slaughter of Israel’s foes is like treading grapes, whose juice stains the garments of the treader (vss. 2-3, 6). The same figure is used in the NT of the destruction of the enemies of the church (Rev. 14:18—20; 19:13)” (Willis, 460).

VII. CONFESSION OF SINS AND APPEAL FOR HELP, 63:7-64:12

A. Though some commentators believe the prophet is the speaker because of the 1st person singular in 63:7, 15, the recently returned Exiles are probably the subject, due to the fact 1st person plural is used otherwise throughout

B. The setting is probably before the rebuilding of the temple in 520.

C. Structure:

1. Rehearsal of God’s dealings—they were rebellious, but because of his love he rescued them from Egypt, led them through the wilderness, and gave them the promised land, 63:7-14

2. They pled with God to be compassionate in spite of their hardened hearts, 63:15

3. They confess that the exile was just punishment and beseech the Lord to restore them, 64:1-12

4. NT Usage: 64:4; 1 Cor 2:9

VIII. JUDGMENT AND SALVATION, 65-66

A. In these chapters the prophet recounts Yhwh’s message in the 1st person singular, though in three brief passage (65:15-16; 66:5-8, 14-16) he does so in the 3rd

B. Theme: Returned exiles (536?)—Yhwh distinguishes between the righteous and wicked among them.

C. Structure:
1. Though the wicked had abandoned him, the righteous had sought him, and thus Yhwh would bless his people, 65:1-16
   a. **NT Usage:** 65:1-2; Rom 10:20-21

2. Yhwh will enable the penitent to make a new start as Adam and Eve in Eden, 65:17-25

3. Yhwh will punish the disobedient who still bring him offerings, 66:1-4
   a. **NT Usage:** 66:1-2; Acts 7:49-50

4. He will protect his true servants, 66:5-17

5. Nations will come and see his glory, will depart and tell other nations, then bring these nations as well, as people added to God’s people