

**First Reading: Isaiah 56:1, 6-8**

<sup>1</sup>Thus says the LORD: “Keep justice, and do righteousness, for soon my salvation will come, and my righteousness be revealed.”

<sup>6</sup>And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants, everyone who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it, and holds fast my

covenant — <sup>7</sup>these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.” <sup>8</sup>The LORD God, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, declares, “I will gather yet others to him besides those already gathered.”

This chapter has a title of "Salvation for Foreigners". The pericope planners again leave out a most important verse here, verse 5. God gives the foreigners who join His family or a house a name as good as son or daughter. They are fully members of God's family not an add on piece.

1. Who are those who can join God's family according to Isaiah?
2. God's holy mountain, Jerusalem, shall be a house of prayer for whom?
3. While God is gathering the diaspora, the Jews run out of Israel, who else will He gather?

**Second Reading: Romans 11:1-2a, 13-15, 28-32**

<sup>1</sup>I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. <sup>2a</sup>God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. ...

<sup>13</sup>Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry <sup>14</sup>in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them. <sup>15</sup>For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?

<sup>28</sup>As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. <sup>29</sup>For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. <sup>30</sup>For just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, <sup>31</sup>so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy. <sup>32</sup>For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.

1. Why does Paul ask the question, "Has God rejected the Jewish people"?
2. Why are those Jews who reject Jesus disobedient? Why are they still the elect?
3. Why are the calling and gifts of God irrevocable?
4. What attitude should we have towards the people of the Promise but do not accept it? Why should we have this attitude?

### **Gospel: Matthew 15:21-28**

<sup>21</sup>Jesus went away from {Gennesaret} and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon. <sup>22</sup>And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon." <sup>23</sup>But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, "Send her away, for she is crying out after us." <sup>24</sup>He answered, "I was sent only to the lost

sheep of the house of Israel." <sup>25</sup>But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." <sup>26</sup>And he answered, "It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." <sup>27</sup>She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." <sup>28</sup>Then Jesus answered her, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed instantly.

We hear the story of the Canaanite woman and her daughter, who is plagued, severely oppressed by a demon. The disciples and Jesus are in the region of Tyre and Sidon.

1. Who were the Canaanites? What was their great sin over the centuries?
2. Is Jesus surprised by this "enemy" woman calling out to Him? Is Jesus supposed to exclude her? Are we to exclude people from the blessings of God?
3. By what title does the Canaanite woman call Jesus? What is the meaning of this title? Do you suppose she had heard of Jesus and His healing ministry?
4. Why does Jesus ignore her? What kind of point of determination or irritation did the scene come to? Why does Jesus say "I was only sent to the lost sheep of Israel"? What is He after, what is He trying to get out of the woman for her own sake?
5. How harsh is Jesus' statement about not "throwing the children's food to the dogs"? Why is Jesus so exclusive? What is He teaching her?
6. What does she finally appeal to?
7. Does Jesus answer her requests because of her wisdom about "even the dogs get the crumbs" or because of her faith?
8. How is faith expressed in this real event?