

Isaiah 57:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And shall say, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumblingblock out of the way of my people.

Analysis

The tone shifts dramatically to gospel promise: "Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, remove the stumblingblock out of the way of my people." This highway preparation imagery appears elsewhere in Isaiah (40:3-4, 62:10), prophesying the removal of obstacles preventing God's people from returning to Him. The repetition "cast up, cast up" emphasizes urgency and certainty. The "stumblingblock" (mikshol) represents whatever hinders relationship with God—whether sin, false teaching, or spiritual blindness. This verse is quoted in connection with John the Baptist's ministry (Matthew 3:3, Mark 1:3, Luke 3:4-6, John 1:23), preparing for Messiah's coming. From a Reformed perspective, this illustrates God's sovereign grace in salvation: God Himself removes the obstacles preventing His people's return. Human effort doesn't clear the way; divine grace does. This is the doctrine of effectual calling—God not only invites but removes every hindrance and draws His elect irresistibly to salvation (John 6:44, Philippians 1:6).

Historical Context

This prophecy had partial fulfillment in the return from Babylonian exile, when God stirred Cyrus to release the captives and they rebuilt Jerusalem (Ezra 1:1-4). However, its ultimate fulfillment is in Christ's coming to remove the barrier of sin and make a way of salvation (Hebrews 9:8-12, 10:19-20). The New Testament sees John the Baptist as fulfilling this preparatory role, calling for repentance to prepare hearts for Christ (Matthew 3:1-3).

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What obstacles in our hearts and minds prevent us from fully trusting and following Christ?
2. How does God's sovereign grace remove the stumblingblocks that we cannot remove ourselves?
3. In what ways are we called to prepare the way for others to hear the gospel?

Interlinear Text

וְאַמְרֶה	וְלֹא	סְלִיל	סְלִיל	פְּנֵי	מִדְבָּר	בָּרֵית
And shall say	Cast ye up	Cast ye up	prepare	out of the way	take up	
H559	H5549	H5549	H6437	H1870	H7311	

מִכְשָׁה	וְלֹא	מִדְבָּר	עַמִּים
the stumblingblock	out of the way	of my people	
H4383	H1870	H5971	

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 62:10 (Parallel theme): Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people.

Isaiah 35:8 (Parallel theme): And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.

Isaiah 40:3 (Parallel theme): The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Jeremiah 18:15 (Parallel theme): Because my people hath forgotten me, they have burned incense to vanity, and they have caused them to stumble in their ways from the ancient paths, to walk in paths, in a way not cast up;

Romans 14:13 (Parallel theme): Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

1 Corinthians 8:13 (Parallel theme): Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

Hebrews 12:13 (Parallel theme): And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

1 Corinthians 1:23 (Parallel theme): But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

2 Corinthians 6:3 (Parallel theme): Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed:

1 Corinthians 8:9 (Parallel theme): But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.