

# Isaiah

## “The Evangelical Prophet”

### VII. Isaiah’s *Discourse* on the **Servant of God**, the **Messiah** (49:1-58:14)

- A. The *Calling* of God’s **Servant** (49:1-12)
- B. The *Consolation* of **Zion** (49:13-26)
- C. The *Conditioning* of God’s **Servant** (50:1-11)
- D. The *Comforting* of the **Righteous Remnant** (51:1-52:12)
- E. The *Chastening* of God’s **Servant** (52:13-53:12)
- F. The *Confirming* of God’s **Future Promises** to **Israel** (54:1-17)
- G. The *Call* for a **Repentant People** (55:1-13)
- H. The *Conferring* of **Blessings** upon the **Righteous Gentiles** (56:1-8)
- I. The *Corrupt Condition* of **Israel** (56:9-57:21)

### J. The *Cry* for “**True**” **Religion** in **Israel** (58:1-14)

#### 1. A *Decrying* of their **Religious Hypocrisy** (58:1-2)

**58** “**Cry loudly**, do not **hold back**;  
raise your **voice** like a *trumpet*,  
and declare to **My people** their **transgression**  
and to the **house of Jacob** their **sins**.”

<sup>2</sup>“Yet they **seek Me** day by day and *delight* to **know My ways**,  
as a **nation** that has done *righteousness*  
and has **not** **forsaken** the **ordinance** of **their God**.”

They **ask Me** for **just decisions**, they *delight* in the **nearness of God**.

#### 2. A *Denunciation* of their **Practice of Fasting** (58:3-4)

<sup>3</sup>“*Why* have we **fasted** and **You do not see**?  
*Why* have we **humbled ourselves** and **You do not notice**?”

Behold, on the day of **your fast** you find **your desire**,  
and **drive hard** all your **workers**.”

<sup>4</sup>“Behold, you **fast** for **contention** and **strife** and to **strike** with a **wicked fist**.  
You **do not** **fast** like *you do today* to make **your voice heard** on high.”

3. A *Divine Priority* “**absent**” from their **Fast** (58:4-9)

<sup>5</sup>“Is it a **fast like this** which I choose, a **day** for a man to **humble himself**?

Is it for **bowing one’s head** like a reed  
and for spreading out **sackcloth** and **ashes** as a **bed**?

Will you call this a **fast**, even an **acceptable day** to the **LORD**?

<sup>6</sup>“Is this not the **fast** which **I choose**,  
to **loosen** the **bonds of wickedness**,

to **undo** the **bands** of the **yoke**, and to let the **oppressed go free**  
and **break every yoke**?

<sup>7</sup>“Is it not to **divide your bread** with the **hungry** and **bring**  
the **homeless poor** into the **house**;

When you see the **naked**, to **cover him**;  
and **not to hide yourself** from your **own flesh**?

<sup>8</sup>“Then **your light** will break out like **the dawn**, and **your recovery**  
will **speedily spring forth**; and **your righteousness**  
will go **before you**; the **glory** of the **LORD** will be **your rear guard**.

<sup>9</sup>“Then **you will call**, and the **LORD will answer**;  
**You will cry**, and **He** will say, ‘**Here I am.**’

4. A *Declaration* promising **Revival** and **Restoration** (58:9b-12)

If you **remove the yoke** from **your midst**,  
the **pointing** of the **finger** and **speaking wickedness**,

<sup>10</sup>and if you **give yourself** to the **hungry** and **satisfy** the **desire** of the **afflicted**,  
then **your light** will **rise in darkness**  
and **your gloom will become** like **midday**.

<sup>11</sup>“And the **LORD** will continually **guide you**,  
and **satisfy your desire** in **scorched places**,  
and **give strength** to **your bones**;  
and you will be like a **watered garden**,  
an like a **spring of water** whose **waters do not fail**.

<sup>12</sup>“Those from among you will **rebuild** the **ancient ruins**;  
you will **raise up** the **age-old foundations**;

and you will be called the **repairer** of the breach,  
the **restorer** of the **streets** in which to **dwell**.

5. A *Directive* concerning the **Sabbath** (58:13-14)

<sup>13</sup>“If because of the **sabbath**, you **turn your foot** from doing your **own pleasure** on **My holy day**,

and **call** the **sabbath** a **delight**, the **holy day** of the **LORD honorable**, and **honor it, desisting** from **your own ways**, from **seeking** your **own pleasure** and **speaking your own word**,

<sup>14</sup> Then you will **take delight** in the **LORD**, and **I will make you ride** on the **heights** of the **earth**;

and **I will feed you** with the **heritage of Jacob** your **father**, for the **mouth of the LORD** has **spoken**.”

## *Teachings* from the **Text—Isaiah 58** A **Summary**

1. **Tonight we read** that the **Lord commanded Isaiah** to “**cry loudly**,” and **declare** to **Israel** their **transgression** and their **sins** (58:1-2). And **to whom** were these accusations **specifically** directed towards—**those** who were **deeply religious**:

*Who* had **sought the Lord**, and **delighted** in **knowing His ways** (58:2a),  
*Who* were a **nation** that had “**done righteousness**” and had **not forsaken** the **ordinance of their God** (58:2b),  
*Who* had **asked God** for “**just decisions**,” and **delighted** in **His nearness**, being in a **covenantal relationship** with **Him** (58:2c).

→ **Key Teaching** — According to the **text**, one can be **religious**, “**righteously**” following in **God’s ordinances**, **delighting in Him** and yet, still be **committing transgression** and **sin** (58:1).

2. **Tonight we also read** how that **religious Israel** had **fasted** and **humbled** themselves **before God** and yet, they complained that **God** had **not seen** or **noticed** their **acts of devotion**. **The Lord** responded by declaring that **during the time** of their **fast**, they had **harshly treated** their **workers**, and that they had displayed **contention**, **strife**, and even **physical abuse** towards **them** (58:3-4).

Having revealed this, the **Lord** continued to admonish them and declared that the **fast** was indeed a day for **humbling one’s self**, **solemn prayer**, and acts of **contrition**, which they apparently **practiced**. However the **fast** that **God** would “**choose**,” and be **acceptable to Him** would **prioritize acts of justice, mercy**, and **love** towards **the people** (58:5-10). The **fast** that **God** would **choose** would be:

To **set free** those who **wicked men** had **enslaved** (58:6a)

To *undo* the **heavy burdens** upon the people, and let the **oppressed go free** (58:6b)  
To *feed* the **hungry**, and be **hospitable** to the **poor** (58:7a)  
To *provide* for the **physical needs** of their **fellow man** (58:7b)  
To *remove* the scornful **finger-pointing** and **wicked speech** towards others (58:9b)  
To *feed* the **hungry**, and **satisfy** the “**desire to the afflicted**,” (58:10a)

→ **Key Teaching** — According to the **text**, the **fast** that is **acceptable to God** involves both a **humbling** of one’s self, as well as the of doing **righteous acts** of *justice, mercy, benevolence, kindness, and love* towards **others** (58:6-10). In essence, it would be to follow the **great command** to “**love your neighbor as yourself**.” (Matthew 22:39)

3. **Tonight we read** that if **Israel** would **obey God’s commands**, and observe their **fasts** with both **humility** and **righteous acts** towards their **brethren**, that **God** would indeed **respond** to **them** (58:9a), and that **light** would “**break out**,” and it would be a time of *righteousness, refreshment, and restoration* (58:10-11). →

→ “Then **your light** will **break out** like the **dawn**, and your **recovery** will speedily spring forth; and your **righteousness** will go **before you**; the **glory of the LORD** will be your **rear guard**...

...then **your light** will **rise** in **darkness**  
and your **gloom** will become like **midday**.

“And **the LORD** will continually **guide you**,  
and **satisfy** your desire in **scorched places**,  
and give **strength** to your **bones**;  
and you will be like a **watered garden**,  
and like a **spring of water** whose **waters do not fail**.

“Those from among you will **rebuild** the **ancient ruins**;  
you will **raise up** the **age-old foundations**;  
and you will be called the **repairer** of the **breach**,.. (58:8, 10b-12a)

## Closing Comments

### The *Priorities* of **Righteousness** and **Love** over **Religious Ritual**

“Woe to you, **scribes** and **Pharisees**, hypocrites!  
For you tithe **mint** and **dill** and **cummin**,  
and have **neglected** the **weightier provisions** of the **law**:  
**justice** and **mercy** and **faithfulness**; but these are the things  
you **should have done** without neglecting the **others**. (Matthew 23:23)

If anyone thinks himself to be **religious**,  
and yet does **not bridle his tongue** but **deceives** his *own* heart,  
this man’s **religion** is **worthless**.

**Pure** and **undefiled religion** in the sight of **our God** and **Father** is this:  
to **visit orphans** and **widows** in their **distress**,  
*and* to keep oneself ***unstained*** by the **world**. (James 1:26-27)

But whoever has the **world's goods**,  
and sees his **brother in need** and **closes his heart** against him,  
**how** does the **love of God** abide in him? (I John 3:17)