

Handout: Isaiah Lesson 22

Through His prophet, God calls His people to be examples of repentance and righteousness in 58:1-14. Isaiah will focus on three aspects of being examples of true righteousness:

1. They must live in the joy and obedience of true discipleship (Is 58:1-2).
2. They must demonstrate the discipline of fasting combined with acts of charity (Is 58:3-12).
3. They must be obedient to the Sabbath obligation (Is 58:13-14).

The prophet contrasts the people's insincerity in fasting and their five selfish and unfeeling deeds in verses 3b-5 with the change of heart that God desires in verses 6-8:

1. righting injustice by freeing the oppressed
2. sharing food with the hungry
3. sheltering the homeless poor
4. clothing the naked
5. aiding family members in distress

The blessings that Isaiah lists for a truly repentant people in 58:9-12:

1. The Lord's divine presence and the light of His glory will surround them.
2. God will answer their prayers.
3. Their spiritual darkness will be displaced by God's light and the Lord will refresh their souls.
4. They will rebuild their long abandoned cities.
5. God's presence with His people will allow them to accomplish all His plans for them.

There are two necessary characteristics of true Sabbath observance that Isaiah describes in 58:13-14:

1. True Sabbath observance meant giving up the ordinary routine of the other six days.
2. True Sabbath observance meant finding joy in worshiping the Lord on the one day set aside from all other days as a day of worship in communion with the Holy One of Israel and putting God above all other things in one's life.

The result of the people's sins is a gulf between God and His people. God has turned away from them and does not hear them. Isaiah lists their sins and describes them as involving the entire body in Isaiah 59:1-8:

1. Their hands and fingers are stained with the blood of the innocent.
2. Their lips and tongues speak lies and wickedness.
3. No one speaks with truth and sincerity.
4. They place their trust in their lies that cause trouble and yield a web of evil.
5. Their feet run to do evil.
6. Their thoughts are sinful.
7. Their acts produce havoc and ruin.
8. They have rejected walking the path of peace.
9. They are incapable of making fair judgments.

The unrepentant people place their trust on themselves and their "empty words" or "empty arguments." Their lives were devoid of any spiritual substance. → over

Compare Ephesians 6:14-17 with the imagery Isaiah uses in 11:5; 49:2; 52:7 and 59:17:

Belt of truth	Ephesians 6:14	Isaiah 11:5
Breastplate of righteousness	Ephesians 6:14	Isaiah 59:17
Gospel of peace	Ephesians 6:15	Isaiah 52:7
Helmet of salvation	Ephesians 6:17	Isaiah 59:17
Sword of Spirit/Word of God	Ephesians 6:17	Isaiah 49:2

Chapter 60 can be divided into three parts:

1. The glory of Yahweh's "Light" will be revealed to the nations (60:1-3).
2. Yahweh's blessings on Zion/the Church (Is 60:4-16).
3. God's special blessings upon His covenant people (60:17-22).

The "Light" is Jesus Christ (Jn 1:9; 8:12; 12:46).

Compare Isaiah's vision in 60:1-20 with John's vision in Revelation 21:23-27 and 33:5.

Isaiah	Revelation
<i>No more will the sun give you daylight, nor moonlight shine on you, but Yahweh will be your everlasting light, your God will be your splendor (Is 60:19).</i>	<i>...and the city did not need the sun or the moon for light, since it was lit by the radiant glory of God, and the Lamb was a lighted torch for it (Rev 21:23).</i>
<i>Arise, shine out, for your light has come, and the glory of Yahweh has risen on you ... Yahweh is rising and over you his glory can be seen. Nations will come to your light and kings to your dawning brightness... the wealth of nations come to you (Is 60:1-5).</i>	<i>The nations will come to its light and the kings of the earth will bring it their treasures (Rev 21:24).</i>
<i>Your gates will always be open, never closed, either day or night... (Is 60:11).</i>	<i>Its gates will never be closed by day—and there will be no night there (Rev 21:25).</i>
<i>I shall make Peace your administration and Saving Justice your government (Is 60:17).</i>	<i>Nothing unclean may come into it: no one who does what is loathsome or false (Rev 21:27).</i>
<i>... for Yahweh will be your everlasting light (Is 60:20).</i>	<i>And night will be abolished; they will not need lamplight or sunlight, because the Lord God will be shining on them. They will reign forever and ever (Rev 22:5).</i>

Isaiah's point is that life as experienced in the first Creation event with a sun and moon to regulate time will cease as God brings His people into a new Creation!

In Isaiah 60:17-22 the prophet announces a three-fold blessing for God's people:

1. The administration of the new Zion will be built upon righteousness (verses 17-18).
2. The spiritually endowed people will be blessed with God's "everlasting light" (verses 19-20).
3. God will bless His righteous people, and their numbers will increase until they are a mighty nation/kingdom (verses 21-22).

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