

FASTING

and you shall be like a watered garden,
 like a spring of water,
 whose waters do not fail.
 12 And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
 you shall raise up the foundations of many
 generations;
 you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
 the restorer of streets to dwell in.

Promise to the Faithful

13 If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath,
 from doing your pleasure on my holy day,
 and call the Sabbath a delight
 and the holy day of the LORD honorable;
if you honor it, not going your own ways,
 or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly;
 14 then you shall take delight in the LORD,
 and I will make you ride on the heights of the
 earth;
 I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your
 father,
 for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

Evil and Oppression

why prayers are not answered

59 Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it
 cannot save,
 or his ear dull, that it cannot hear;
 2 but your iniquities have made a separation,
 between you and your God,
 and your sins have hidden his face from you
so that he does not hear.

11b) the image of blessing where water is plentiful. In the region of the Middle East this is a dream of a perfect life where water never runs out. Here is a picture of a promise of abundant care and resources. Here the mercy and grace is provided w/out restraint for the believer.

12) THAT WHICH HAS BEEN DESTROYED BECAUSE OF SIN CAN BE REBUILT & RESTORED BY THE FASTING OF THE RIGHTEOUS. Here will be a new beginning that will last for generations. THE ACTIONS OF THOSE WHO TURN BACK TO GOD EXTEND FAR BEYOND THEMSELVES. THEY ARE PREPARING THE WAY FOR OTHERS TO SERVE AND WORSHIP GOD.

13-14) This chapter on fasting has been a warning against false worship and a promise to those who do so as true worshippers of God. THESE LAST TWO VERSES ARE A PROMISE TO THOSE WHO RESTORE GOD IN THEIR HEARTS TO HIS RIGHTEOUS PLACE. "YOUR PLEASURE" REFERS TO SEEKING SELF-SATISFACTION W/OUT GOD. THOSE WHO SEEK GOD REPRESENTED BY THE SABBATH OBSERVANCE DISCOVER TRUE "DELIGHT" THROUGH WORSHIP AND SERVICE TO GOD AND HIS STATED MISSION OF REDEMPTION AND SALVATION. THIS TURNING FROM SELF TOWARD GOD WILL BRING THE BELIEVER TO NEW HEIGHTS OF LIVING, WORSHIP, AND FELLOWSHIP. AS GOD HAS BLESSED IN THE PAST (JACOB) HE WILL AGAIN TO THOSE WHO DISCOVER THE TRUE FAST, TRUE WORSHIP, AND OBEDIENCE TO A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD OF JOY AND HONOR (THE SABBATH.) Here again is the conditional "IF"-THEW" phrase of action and reaction. IN VSS 9-10 IT WAS ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER MEN. HERE VSS 13-14 IT IS ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. THERE IS NO RELATIONSHIP THAT IS NOT TOUCHED BY GOD FOR THE BELIEVER.

1) Here Isaiah uses language he also used in Isa. 50:2. He is explaining why the people's prayers are not answered. It is not because God cannot reach them. He can certainly do that. It is also not because He cannot hear them.

2) but the reason nothing is happening and God is not helping them rest with the people's choices. THEIR INIQUITIES (plural) are like a layer that stands between them and God. God cannot look on their sins. This figurative expression shows how much God hates sin. He has to turn away and in a form cover His ears because He must block it from His mind.

The people have put up the barrier that separates them. Yet, it will be God who will reach out to them in His love.

- 3 For your hands are defiled with blood
and your fingers with iniquity;
your lips have spoken lies;
your tongue mutters wickedness.
- 4 No one enters suit justly;
no one goes to law honestly;
they rely on empty pleas, they speak lies,
they conceive mischief and give birth to iniquity.
- 5 They hatch adders' eggs;
they weave the spider's web;
he who eats their eggs dies,
and from one that is crushed a viper is hatched.
- 6 Their webs will not serve as clothing;
men will not cover themselves with what they
make.
Their works are works of iniquity,
and deeds of violence are in their hands.
- 7 Their feet run to evil,
and they are swift to shed innocent blood;
their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity;
desolation and destruction are in their highways.
- 8 The way of peace they do not know,
and there is no justice in their paths;
they have made their roads crooked;
no one who treads on them knows peace.
- 9 Therefore justice is far from us,
and righteousness does not overtake us;
we hope for light, and behold, darkness,
and for brightness, but we walk in gloom.

Their Prayers Are Not Answered

The lives of the wicked revealed.

- ③ Here is why God cannot answer or even hear their prayers. Every-thing they do is sinful. The hands they pray with are defiled. The voice they use to cry out to God mutters wickedness. Lk 6:43 a tree is known by it's fruit. Here evil men cannot pray and expect God to answer.
- ④ Here the people are dishonest even in going to court. They lie to get judgment in their favor. They use the courts as a weapon against each other. Their justice is merely another way to sin. Every-thing they do is evil. Another reason God will not help or answer.
- ⑤ The plans of the wicked are all aimed at advancing evil. They bring forward plans that will kill like the venom of a poisonous snake. They find ways to trap others like a spider spinning its web. Their evil is so complete that everything they produce will be sinfully deadly. Even when their plans fail and the eggs are crushed evil results and sin is spread to kill more & more.
- ⑥ Though the spiders web is spun out like silk it cannot be used to cover their sinful lifestyle. Their plans & schemes are all designed from evil hearts and will all have evil results.
- ⑦ Life is often depicted as a path we walk, but evil people run toward sin w/out thought of what the results will be. Their actions many times hurt innocent people. They devise new ways to sin in their minds. Everything they touch is corrupted.
- ⑧ There is no peace in the world of the wicked. Here SHALOM is used to show that life is filled with turmoil and w/out Shalom. The justice of God is pure But theirs is used to benefit their sinful desires and their perversion of the law removes hope. Isa. has spoken of God leveling paths for the righteous, but here the wicked are the one who choose a crooked path, and any one who travels w/ them on these crooked paths are denied Shalom.
- ⑨ Here we see the sinful world from the people's point of view. They live in a world or society that has collapsed. True Justice is gone replaced w/ man's perversion of it. Even where there is righteousness in some it does not break through or cause the masses to change. The people hope for better days. They would want righteousness but the darkness of sinful men prevail as they held the positions of leadership, justice, and social order.

10 We grope for the wall like the blind;
 we grope like those who have no eyes;
 we stumble at noon as in the twilight,
 among those in full vigor we are like dead men.

11 We all growl like bears;
 we moan and moan like doves;
 we hope for justice, but there is none;
 for salvation, but it is far from us.

12 For our transgressions are multiplied before you,
 and our sins testify against us;
 for our transgressions are with us,
 and we know our iniquities:

13 transgressing, and denying the LORD,
 and turning back from following our God,
 speaking oppression and revolt,
 conceiving and uttering from the heart lying
 words.

★ 14 Justice is turned back,
 and righteousness stands far away;
 for truth has stumbled in the public squares,
 and uprightness cannot enter.

★ 15 Truth is lacking,
 and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey.

The LORD saw it, and it displeased him
 that there was no justice.

16 He saw that there was no man,
 and wondered that there was no one to intercede;

The lives of the wicked revealed

God Fights to Redeem man

10 The people w/out God are lost, unable to find their way. They cannot find God or righteousness because their sinful ways have blinded them to spiritual truth. They are the walking dead. Already condemned but still stumbling through life. Even with the clear light of God's truth before them they cannot find their way. Sin blinds a person in small stages till they wake one day blind to God's truth and stumble thru life till they face Him in Judgment and Justice.

11 Their lives are filled w/misery which produces only the sound of someone or something in pain. Even as they live sinful lives there is within each person a knowledge and longing for justice and the freedom of salvation. A deliverance from a painful life into one of freedom from guilt and oppression. Yet, this is not to be found because of the barrier of Sin between the people and their God.

12-13 There is w/in each person a basic knowledge of right and wrong. People are aware of their sins and that God does not want this for them. Even so they sin more and more, raising the barrier between them and God. Their sin habit becomes an addiction that eventually takes control of their life and rejects God. They deny God not because they do not believe. They deny Him because they do believe and what to forget what is coming. They lie to themselves because they enjoy sin too much and only seek justice for themselves while punishing others unfairly.

14 Everything evil has taken over and all righteousness is now banned. Good or righteous men are rejected from leadership and serving as guides of truth. Righteousness is outlawed and can be a punishable offense.

15a The truth of God is replaced w/the wisdom of man. This is a way to legislate sin as acceptable. Good men are punished for the very acts of righteousness called for to be a follower of God. Evil will not tolerate righteousness. It will always seek to crush those walking in God's light to preserve the darkness of sin. The Righteous are hunted by the animals of sin.

15b God is not blind to what is happening. To cause God displeasure is no small matter. THAT JUSTICE IS NO LONGER AVAILABLE causes Him to prepare TO RESPOND.

16 God sees that no one standing and defending Justice. There is no one to stand between sinful man and God to intercede.

then his own arm brought him salvation,
and his righteousness upheld him.

- 17 He put on righteousness as a breastplate,
and a helmet of salvation on his head;
he put on garments of vengeance for clothing,
and wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak.
- 18 According to their deeds, so will he repay,
wrath to his adversaries, repayment to his enemies;
to the coastlands he will render repayment.
- 19 So they shall fear the name of the LORD from the west,
and his glory from the rising of the sun;
for he will come like a rushing stream,
which the wind of the LORD drives.

20 "And a Redeemer will come to Zion,
to those in Jacob who turn from transgression,"
declares the LORD.

21 "And as for me, this is my covenant with them," says the LORD: "My Spirit that is upon you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your offspring, or out of the mouth of your children's offspring," says the LORD, "from this time forth and forevermore."

THE CHURCH & THE ETERNAL CITY OF GOD

- 60 Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.
- 2 For behold, darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;

- (168) MAN could not do this, but God can. Only God can fix what is wrong. His righteousness (Here Justice w/out prejudice) is seen as the answer to man's sin problem. God can save and restore where no one else can.
- (17) Here God is pictured as if preparing to go to war against evil. He wants to help those who will respond as His righteousness and salvation will be offered. At the same time any who do not respond will be dealt with. Vengeance here is part of Justice or dealing w/ the sinfulness of man. God ZEL shows NOTHING will stop Him from the task of salvation for some and Justice for the rest.
- (18) God's actions are not arbitrary. This is repayment for sins & rejections of men. This applies to them no matter where they are.
- (19) Here the rejection of evil sweeps the earth as His Justice is revealed. Much like an unstoppable stream or wind He will cover the earth w/ His glory.
- (20) THE REDEEMER IS AGAIN PROMISED. AFTER HAVING LISTED ALL THE ways man HAS TURNED AWAY FROM GOD we see He is still willing to accept any that turn from sinful ways (transgressions) and turn to Him FOR HELP. God will provide A Redeemer to pay the full price TO RESCUE MAN FROM HIMSELF.
- (21) Here God who went to WAR AGAINST EVIL TO RESCUE ALL who would REPENT establishes a 'COVENANT' with them. Here is the joining of God w/man by way of the Holy Spirit. This is an eternal covenant for all generations to accept and become a part of. This is more than a physical salvation, it is a spiritual regeneration.
- (1) Here we see the spiritual change that come when God's redeeming power is delivered to mankind. The sinners are told to stand. Much like the man at the pool for 38 years w/out hope (Jns) the command to stand is w/in His power. To Rise from sin and be free from the corruption of injustice not by our might but by His Redeemer who is the light that shines in the darkness.
- (2) Here we see the way sin spreads and places man in a state of perpetual darkness. THIS IS THE REASON God is sending His light into the world. He is offering a light to follow for all of those willing to stand in obedience to the call of the Redeemer.