

Debase Thyself Even Unto Hell

Isaiah 57:5 – 58:3

++++++

~ The last leg of our Spiritual Safari became repulsive by the time we concluded the report; but, in this report, Isaiah is going to be so extremely ugly in speaking for the Lord, and so mind-numbingly harsh with His message, that you might want to take a tranquilizer before reading it – or, perhaps, just not read this report at all. I am almost positive that *NONE* of you dear readers have ever heard a sermon from or had a Sunday school lesson on – and may have never even read – this section of Scripture at all. As we near the end of the prophecy of Isaiah, we are seeing ethical instructions that follow the salvation of Jehovah. If you have not read our last three reports, I highly suggest you go back and do so now. Actually, if you have not been with us through the entirety of Isaiah, you might want to go back and start at the beginning.

Beginning in chapter fifty-three, where we saw the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus, we began moving down through time; which has now led us to the end of the age, where a righteous man finds comfort and peace in his heart – but the unrighteous man finds condemnation and desolation in God’s pronouncement of damnation. In our last report, we began examining the contrast between the righteous and the wicked. Death, for the righteous man, means he is removed from the evil to come during the Great Tribulation period; and delivered into the eternal presence of Christ. As for the unrighteous man, well, his eternal existence of suffering and terrors is depicted by Isaiah; painting disturbingly vivid word pictures. To say Isaiah’s picture of the wicked isn’t pretty is an understatement....

LVII

5 Enflaming yourselves with idols under every green tree, slaying the children in the valleys under the cliffs of the rocks?

6 Among the smooth stones of the stream is thy portion; they, they are thy lot: even to them hast thou poured a drink offering, thou hast offered a meat offering. Should I receive comfort in these?

~ Isaiah is pronouncing condemnation by God to those who have turned their backs on Him; and their crime is gross immorality and murder. These people, who once had the lineage of King David ruling over them, would now worship anything and everything — from the leaves of a tree to the rocks in a river. Everything except the Living and True God, that is. Even so, if you had said the things Isaiah was saying to Israel at this time, the people would have laughed at you. They might have stoned you. They would have told you they were worshipping the same God Isaiah was worshipping. They were going to the temple. They were bringing sacrifices. They had the ritual perfected. They performed the ceremonies every day — and all of that was true; but their hearts were as cold and as indifferent as a stone-cold killer. The real problem is they were uber-proud of what they deemed within themselves as valuable to God; and they commended themselves to be a people that had exclusive access to the Lord....

7 Upon a lofty and high mountain hast thou set thy bed: even thither wentest thou up to offer sacrifice.

8 Behind the doors also and the posts hast thou set up thy remembrance: for thou hast discovered thyself to another than me, and art gone up; thou hast enlarged thy bed, and made thee a covenant with them; thou lovedst their bed where thou sawest it.

9 And thou wentest to the king with ointment, and didst increase thy perfumes, and didst send thy messengers far off, and didst debase thyself even unto hell.

~ In recent modern history, sin was just as prevalent as it is today. The difference is: people used to commit their sins secretly — because they were ashamed of their sins. Today, not only are they not ashamed of their sins, but they are brazen about sinning openly in the middle of the day — and right in the face of anyone and everyone. Actually, mankind flaunts his immorality, and exhibits his degenerated status in such an arrogant way

that it has become laughable; laughable if it weren't so tragic, that is. When confronted with the truth of the Word of God, they say it is Y-O-U who is immoral for loving the Lord Jesus Christ!

The atheist will not hesitate to manufacture lies and hateful propaganda towards *ANYONE* that deigns calls them a sinner. If you hate homosexual perversion, they deem you one who hates people, in general. If you support law and order, in the form of capital punishment, they deem you to be one who is a blood-thirsty killer. Well, it is easy for even the most filthy and egregious sins to become a way of life. Before we know it, we can literally become steeped through and through in wickedness. When that happens, their standards are *ALL* lowered to the point where there simply is no morality. There just happens to be a definite distinction between righteousness and unrighteousness, friends. The One Who determines the standards of right and wrong – good and evil – truth and lies - is none other than God Almighty. Today, the wheat and the tares are growing together – just as the Lord Jesus said they would....

10 Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way; yet saidst thou not, There is no hope: thou hast found the life of thine hand; therefore thou wast not grieved.

11 And of whom hast thou been afraid or feared, that thou hast lied, and hast not remembered me, nor laid it to thy heart? have not I held my peace even of old, and thou fearest me not?

12 I will declare thy righteousness, and thy works; for they shall not profit thee.

13 When thou criest, let thy companies deliver thee; but the wind shall carry them all away; vanity shall take them: but he that putteth his trust in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain;

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

15 For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

~ Man is a feeble, temporary creature that needs constant, continual comforting by the eternal High and Lofty One – the Lord Jesus Christ. God promises to those who do not trust in themselves – but who place their trust in Him – that He will carry them, and cover them with His wings as an eagle protects her chicks during the storm. We should all be able to find peace and security in these truths. In the days in which we currently live, we need reassurance constantly, friends; at least, I do. Of course, Isaiah is looking into the future — even beyond our day today — to the Great Tribulation period and end of the age; but God has a wonderful spiritual message for His children tucked away neatly here in the midst of His judgment....

16 For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.

17 For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart.

~ I guess God felt the need to explain Himself and His judgment; and He begins by reminding us that the wicked are covetous. Modern idolatry is covetousness – and God hates it more than anything else we can think of. God hates pride and covetousness more than adultery and murder, quite frankly. Proud, covetous people continue in rebellion. We have a whole lot of church members in that condition today – and God says He has to put a stop to it — someday. Any reasonable, thinking person knows God must bring these things to an end, and punish those who have continued in it. Personally, I cannot see any other way God can bring justice to the poor man unless these judgments are brought about swiftly and decisively. Only those who will confess their sins, and make their thinking right through a proper, correct and complete study of His Word, will He heal, friends. You might want to write that down....

18 I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners.

19 I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the LORD; and I will heal him.

20 But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

~ The wicked man is like the raging sea. They never have rest in their lives. As we have learned, when we see “water” in the Word of God, it speaks spiritually of Scripture. These people muddy it up and make it dirty; usually while trying to teach and preach it. Those people push through life like fugitives looking for deliverance – but never find it. They never find it because God alone can speak peace to the heart of the sinner when the sinner confesses their sins. Isaiah is condemning those who refuse to acknowledge sin. These are the ones who are incessantly demanding that they are “kings” down here — or claim to be children of the King. My friends, let me tell you this: if you espouse Jesus is King Daddy to you, then He isn’t your Savior – because that would be impossible. If you have not recognized and confessed your sins, you are an evil outcast and wicked orphan. You can talk about Jesus all day long but, until you make the realization of these axioms of truth in your life, you do not know Him – and He does not know you. These are immutable laws that work just as surely as the law of gravity works....

21 There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.

LVIII

1 Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.

2 Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God.

~ So, we come to the glory of Jehovah and the glory of His Kingdom. This glory only comes through the suffering servant of Christ. Outward religious form, while harboring inward wicked ways, delayed the grace and glory of God for Israel at the time in which we are studying. These things harm the cause of Christ more than anything else in the world. Religious men who, for example, curse like sailors, are dishonest in business, are immoral in their social lives, yet talk about how valuable they are to Jesus, and how they are good enough to be saved, because God needs their love, and they meet God's standard — and they love everyone — so much pretentious foolishness — are absolutely contradicted by God at every turn.

We're talking about people who are supercilious to the core. They actually, without understanding it, question the actions of God. They literally sit in judgment upon God Almighty. There are more people doing this today than we might imagine. Most people, in spite of their outward profession of perfection, indulge in the most wicked and heinous evil that can be dreamed up. We're going to see this same spirit manifested again in Israel after the Babylonian captivity; proving that the Lord bringing them back into the land didn't cure them of idolatry, and being released from slavery meant nothing to them. Malachi said, "*.... your words have been stout against Me, saith the Lord, yet ye say, 'what have we spoken so much against Thee?' Ye have said, 'it is vain to serve God and of what profit to us is it that we have kept His ordinances or that we walk mournfully before the Lord of Hosts?'"*

These people were saying, in effect, "*.... we're so lovely and religious, but God doesn't respect us.*" These people were going to the temple; which was a brazen effrontery, and revealed an audacity that was beyond those in unbelief. That's the spirit of the natural man who finds religion, friends. That veneer is nauseating to the Lord Jesus Christ. These are the people in the same condition as the church at Laodicea. They're not saved. This is the attitude that is rife in churchianity today. The message of the prophet who points out the sins of men is always unpopular. If you stand for God on this basis, you'll quickly discover you are standing alone. Isaiah did. Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and the rest of the prophets will make that discovery later. Only a very brave man will jump into the crowd and pronounce such a caustic invective on a group of people such as the super-duper saint crowd.

The basic weakness of liberalism today is a relentless desire to please the natural man. They hide the truth about their fatal spiritual disease from them. Frankly, the medical profession would be guilty of criminal malpractice if they followed the same procedure the liberal church follows. Well, God has given this Spiritual Safari a commission to tell certain people they are dying. Many church members erroneously believe they are saved, and laugh at Isaiah telling them they are going to be plunged into an eternity of death, torment and damnation; where they will be separated from Him forever. Verse two contains biting sarcasm. For those who constantly over-spiritualize the Old Testament, this is one place you and I can agree. These are people that went to church every Sunday. They went through the ordinances punctiliously. Their form of worship was followed meticulously. They love going to church, but their lives bear no resemblance whatsoever to the Christianity they profess. It was true in Isaiah's day – it's true today, too.

Living in a proud and pious religious manner will *ALWAYS* lead to petulant complaints with God. If we live like that then, one day, we will wake up and wonder why God doesn't take notice of our work. These are the types of people that make fasting a showpiece in their ritual — except God never gave Israel any commands to fast. God gave them feast days. The only afflicting of souls was in connection with the Great Day of Atonement; when their sin was brought out in the open. Fasting is nothing in the world but a form that ministers to the ego. I see people actually boasting of the fact that they are fasting all the time. I'm not saying not to fast – but it is a private and personal matter between the soul and God – it's not a public display of your self-perceived goodness. Even Jesus condemned the Pharisee's for abusing the fast. Saith Jesus, *“when ye fast, be not like the hypocrites of a sad countenance, who disfigure their faces that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward.”* That reward was that they wanted to be seen of men – well, they were seen alright. There's nothing else for them to expect from God because they were doing this thing for their own selfish reasons. That's Matthew chapter six, by the way.

Jesus went on to say to those who are His own, *“but thou, when thou fast, anoint thine head and wash thy face that thou appear NOT unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret. Then thy Father that seeth thee in secret shall reward thee openly.”* See, religion is not man at his best; no, religion is man at his absolute worst! The genuine article that constitutes a child of God maintains a personal relationship as secret and private as a man and a wife in the bedroom. Any man that tells others of his private and intimate relationship with his wife is a pervert. We witness for Christ, of course; but we do not reveal such personal matters to *ANYONE!* Boasting of your affiliation with a certain group, or that you have been through a certain ceremony, is shameful. Look around and you will see this base and disgusting ritualistic nonsense running rampant. Look, don't blame me. I'm just telling you what Isaiah said. We desperately need a dose of reality of the Lord Jesus Christ in our lives today....

3 Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours ~

++++++