

The Lord Hath Spoken It

Isaiah 58:4 – 59:21

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~ Our Spiritual Safari rolls on today through a section of Scripture that, frankly, most people simply will not consider. Yes, there is a verse or two in this passage where some will stick in their thumb, and pull out a plum, and say, “... *gee, what a smart little Sunday School boy I am.*” Unfortunately, that’s the puerile, shallow, and unfruitful level of understanding the average Christian possesses. This isn’t a popular section of Scripture when taught properly, correctly, and completely. You’ll never find liberalism dealing with this part of the Bible. Liberalism likes the Sermon on the Mount; so they pick out a few disconnected verses quoted by Jesus, saying, “... *blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.*” That’s about the extent of their thinking in that connection. Sure, that’s lovely – but – you have to actually be merciful to claim that verse – and the liberal is never merciful; they’re far from merciful. So, let’s consider everything God has to say today. Our last two reports have seen Isaiah wax so utterly uncooperative with his kinsmen in the nation Israel, and state such ugly realities about them that, honestly, I didn’t even want to write those previous two reports. This one is even worse. These things, quite honestly, make me question my own relationship with God. If I were not personally commissioned by Him in this so-called safari to bring you the entire Word of God – this is the section I would ignore altogether. In fact, I would stop writing and go do something else with my life.

If you asked one hundred people on the street what the biggest problem in Christianity is today, most would likely answer the same thing: that there are too many rank hypocrites in the church. The world’s observation is that Christian’s say one thing while living a life that bears no resemblance to their words. While that is a very big problem, it is not the number one problem in the church. The *NUMBER ONE* problem in the church is a total and complete ignorance of the Word of God; but, even so, in this report, Isaiah is lodging a complaint about the hypocrites. Isaiah’s fellow countrymen in the nation Israel - who were God’s chosen people - had religion to their fingertips, but their hearts were as far away from the Lord

as they could possibly be. These ultra religious people were dumbfounded as to why God never seemed to hear them anymore as they cried out for help. As a result they, naturally, came to a point where they didn't believe God cared about them anymore; and they didn't even think God was listening – because He wasn't. That led them to the erroneous conclusion that God was neither willing nor able to save anyone.

That may be your question today, too; and Isaiah has God's answer for us. However, to hear Isaiah's honest and correct answer, we're going to have to actually pray for wisdom, judgment, and discernment, and then read and study the Bible all the way through. We'll have to set aside many wrongfully preconceived notions and misconceptions – and re-learn many things – maybe *everything* we thought we knew. The sincere student of Scripture quickly realizes there is no quick, easy way to learn the Bible – because you have to take it all – or you haven't learned anything about Scripture. There is no shortcut. There is no expedited course the Lord offers. Gimmicks and Christian clichés that replace sound doctrine are useless; and understanding the totality of truth is the only way you will ever escape the shear hypocrisy and fraudulent religious lie that constitutes a natural life. Religion is the great cosmetic cover-up for a vast multitude of people.

See, friends, the glory of Jehovah comes one way and one way only: through His suffering servant. As with the people in Isaiah's day, people today answer that statement by saying, *".... what in the world are you talking about, Andrew?"* People say to me *ALL* the time, *".... you criticize sincere saints, who are very religious, who go to church, who give their tithe and just "love, love, love" everyone and everything."* My answer is, the people I criticize don't know the meaning of the Word of God, they don't know the Lord Jesus Christ, and Christ *SURE* doesn't know them. If you receive criticism from Isaiah through me, you can bet your life you have no earthly idea what you are talking about. Does that sound proud, arrogant and boastful? Too bad – that's what God says. If you don't think that's what God says, then go to Him in prayer and ask Him. If you get an answer that differs — by all means, please let me know so I can know the True and Living God doesn't speak to you, okay? Why is God making me so difficult about all of this? – Read on....

LVIII

4 Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high.

5 Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?

6 Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

7 Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

~ God is explaining why He does not accept fasting. Some claim that fasting and religious rituals give them some special acceptance with God; but, in reality, it does exactly the opposite – and alienates you from Him. First of all, God never commanded, or even mentioned, a fast. No, God only ever gave the nation Israel seven feast days. A form of worship that denies the power of God is as useless as a fifth leg on a horse. That backward and meaningless thinking is largely the prevalent condition of our modern churches. I'm not saying this is the condition of your church, because there are many Bible-believing and Bible-teaching churches today. Thank God I just happen to have found one of them, too. However, by and large, these condemnations hold true. I *KNOW* there are many church services that, if Jesus were actually invited to, He would stop them mid-program and say, ***“let's cut this garbage out.”*** The outward veneer of ritual and goodness doesn't bring us closer to God, and it doesn't please Him in any way, shape or form. He despises it – and we know that because He says He despises it right here in Isaiah! Religion only seeks to hide the true condition of the heart, friends; but God sees all the way through.

Verse six is getting down to the nitty-gritty of a harsh reality. If you really want to fast, then listen to Isaiah tell you what God says for you to do. Instead of running around with some self-afflicted pious attitude – stop your sinning! Stop the gossiping. Stop turning your backs on the poor and needy. Stop those wicked, evil things that are in the heart, and try being honest in your dealings with other people for a change; and try being truthful when you say the things you feel like you need to say. Demonstrate all of that through a moral conduct that doesn't even need words to back it up — and the world will know you are a genuine child of God. Many people shun their own flesh and blood. Their religious heart is as cold as the north side of a tombstone in the Arctic Circle in December. My friends, God doesn't care to see us in sackcloth and ashes – He wants to see a satisfied, joyful life that lifts Christ Jesus up! In fact, instead of ashes, God wants us see you get cleaned up and washed pure by His Word. That's when we'll get into reality. That's when we'll develop a heart for God and other people. That's when we'll want to be helpful and a blessing – and that's when we'll drop the phony front that we are putting on. It's time we ALL get things straightened out with God today. Oh, yes, Isaiah gets right down to business here....

8 Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward.

9 Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;

10 And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday:

11 And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

12 And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.

13 If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:

~ Even in extreme judgment, God still expresses concern for His people. He wants them to turn to Him – but it must be done the right way – *HIS* way! God wants to open the windows of Heaven and pour out a blessing, but He cannot, and will not, manifest Himself to or bless a people that practice a phony and false religion. Now, I understand Isaiah sounds like a stuck record at this point; but the repetition reveals the high-level of importance. The only reason the lost world passes by the church today is because they don't believe God is there. In many cases, they're right! In most cases, the church blocks the way to God for the lost man. When Alexander the Great returned from his great conquests, he broke into the home of his teacher, Aristotle – who was taking a bath – and Alexander said, “... *now what can I do for you?*” The philosopher ignored Alexander, so he asked again, “... *what can I do for you, sir?*” Aristotle, without even looking at Alexander, said, “... *you can get out of my light!*” So many people are saying to the Lord today, “... *what can I do for You?*” I'll let you guess what God is saying in response to them.

Interestingly, God is only asking these people to practice *ONE* specific thing in order that He might bless them. God could have picked out a dozen things and made them requirements for blessing – but He only picks out one thing: keeping the Sabbath! That's a peculiar contract God had with the nation Israel. In Exodus chapter thirty-one we read, “... *and the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep the Sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six*

days may work be done; but in the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD: whosoever doeth any work in the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever....”
That’s a specific command to the nation Israel – not to the church.

Today, the church is commanded differently, in Hebrews chapter four we read, “.... let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His Sabbath rest, any of you should seem to come short of it....for he that is entered into His Sabbath rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His.” Well, God didn’t change. He changed us! For the church, that means redemptive rest – and it is to be practiced every second of every minute of every hour of every day of every week of every month of every year of every decade of our lives – not just one day each week. Have you come to the place where you can completely and fully trust that Christ has done everything for you? Or do you have to jump up every two minutes to run around and do something thinking that, if you don’t do those things, God will forget you, and you’ll lose your salvation? The former is the Sabbath rest Christ wants us to enter into today, my beloved. Only when we reach that place will we ever realize the great blessings God has for us. Only in that redemptive rest will an avenue of service open. This realization is what brought Paul the apostle into the realm of missionary writing that now comprises most of the New Testament....

14 Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

LIX

1 Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:

2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

3 For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness.

~ Here we go again with another charge against God's people that should have led them to repentance – but never did. God is spelling these transgressions out letter by letter and explaining that He is refusing to hear the nation Israel because of their iniquities. Many people tell me they have unanswered prayers. What they are really saying is that they don't believe God heard them. Well, there are only two reasons God doesn't hear us, friends; and you can read about them in Psalm sixty-six verse eighteen, which says, "... if I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me." Then, there is James chapter four verse three, which says, "... ye ask and have not because ye ask amiss that you may consume in your own lust." Well, the iniquities and lusts of the nation Israel are referred to thirty-two times in this chapter. Many adjectives are used to describe their iniquity, such as, "sin," "defiled with blood," "lies," "perverseness," "vanity," "mischief," "snakes eggs," "spider's webs," "vipers," "works of violence," "evil wasting," "destruction," "crooked paths," "darkness," "transgressions," "departure from the truth," "oppression of the poor," "revolt" and "conceiving and uttering falsehoods." It's a long, ugly list of charges God is bringing against His people; and Isaiah is the man God chose to deliver His message. This is a discouraging picture of the human family; and it sweeps each and every one of us up in one way or another....

4 None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.

5 They hatch cockatrice' eggs, and weave the spider's web: he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper.

6 Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works: their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands.

7 Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths.

8 The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace.

~ The reason the southern kingdom of Judah was not saved at that time, and were later sent into Babylonian captivity, had nothing to do with God's ability to preserve them with His bared Arm, friends. The reason Israel is as spiritually dead as the dinosaur today is not because of some erroneously perceived weakness of God. Their current state is due to unbelief, disobedience, and rejecting Christ as Messiah. It's not due to some faulty ability of God to communicate with mankind. Men have no intellectual or mental hurdles that they cannot jump over to get to God. It is *NOT* because God is perfect, but we have problems. It's not because He is great, but we are small. It's not because He lives forever, but our life is just a handbreadth. It isn't because of the difference between His omniscience and our ignorance. It's not because He is strong, but we are weak. No, friends, the *ONLY* reason men reject the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior is because there is sin in their lives that they refuse to give up. *NO* other reason whatsoever.

Alright, perhaps that's enough for this leg of our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God; or maybe we need more? Either way, we end this report with the confession of Israel that is coming *IN THAT DAY* — when the redeemer returns to Zion and establishes His Kingdom here on earth. Interestingly, Isaiah changes the pronoun from "*your*" to "*we*" and "*our*." Remember, Daniel confessed his own sins *AND* the sins of the nation; but you'll never be able to confess the sins of the nation until you confess your own. The recognition is now made that religious piosity in Israel has all been a pretense that God hates.

Many people need to make this confession immediately. If you are weary of being a hypocrite, go to the Lord and tell Him that you're tired of your hypocrisy. Let's tell God we want His reality in our lives today. Revival could come for the church *if* we all did that; but confession will have to be specific — and then repudiated. Each and every sin should be labeled and admitted to privately in prayer — in detail. Even so, the whole nation of Israel isn't

going to be saved; because not all Israel is Israel. God's people have always been but a remnant. It's only a remnant in the church in the world today that is actually saved, too. I hope you have read this report extremely carefully, because it just happens to be very, very, very important....

9 Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness.

10 We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noonday as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men.

11 We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves: we look for judgment, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far off from us.

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

13 In transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.

14 And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.

15 Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment.

16 And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him.

17 For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke.

18 According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompence.

19 So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.

20 And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.

21 As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever ~

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