

Isaiah 58–59

Lesson 23

Themes

- The work of a prophet (58:1)
- Going through the motions (58:2–5)
- True devotion (58:6–14)
- Don't build this wall (59:1–8)
- Confession is good for the soul (59:9–15)
- Goodness and severity (59:16–21)

The work of a prophet

- What is one aspect of a prophet's work, according to 58:1?
 - “Cry aloud, spare not (“do not hold back”—NAS); lift up your voice like a trumpet; tell My people their transgression.”
 - Israel's other “watchmen” had failed (56:10).

Going through the motions

- Background to the discussion of fasting:
 - Only one appointed fast day in the law of Moses—Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:29–34; 23:26–32).
 - The expression, “afflict your souls,” is used several times in those two passages, as well as here in this passage in Isaiah.
 - Of course, as the need arose, one could voluntarily fast on other occasions.

Going through the motions

- These Jews of Isaiah's day—did they truly afflict their souls when they fasted?
 - See 58:5.
 - Went through the motions in other ways, too. 58:2.
 - What evidence is offered that their fasting had no impact on their lives? 58:3–4.

True devotion

- If they had truly “afflicted their souls,” how would they have responded?
 - 58:6–7.
- Remember their earlier complaint in 58:3. Would God “see” and “take notice” if they repented?
 - 58:8–12.

True devotion

- How were they to regard the Sabbath day?
 - Not “doing your OWN ways...finding your OWN pleasure...speaking your OWN words” (58:13).

Don't build this wall

- Why had God hidden His face from them? Why were they separated from Him?
 - 59:2; see also 1:15.
 - Does Isaiah leave it with just a general accusation of sin?
 - Specific examples given in 59:3–8.

Confession is good for the soul

- Isaiah speaks on behalf of his brethren in 59:9–15. What is the gist of his speech (confession)?
 - Yes, we are in this mess because of sin.
 - Any who did depart from evil made themselves what? (59:15).

Goodness and severity

- What did the Lord see, according to v. 16?
- Describe the Lord's attire (v. 17).
- To whom will the "Redeemer" come, according to v. 20?
- What about those who don't turn from their transgressions?