

Studies in Isaiah - Part 5

by Harry Ironside

The sermon emphasizes the importance of faith in Jesus Christ and living in a godly way in the present for receiving the blessing of the kingdom in the future.

Duration: 46:12

Scripture: Isaiah 56:1-57, Romans 8:4

Topics: "Expository"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher calls upon people to hear the message of God and invites them to come and receive the gospel without any cost. He emphasizes that there is pure grace in the Old Testament, and God's blessings are available to all who believe. The preacher also discusses the promise of God to never destroy the earth again, just as He promises to never utterly destroy the nation of Israel. The sermon concludes with a reminder to be ready and welcoming for the return of the Lord.

Transcript

Not the crucifix, but the man that died, the son of God, that died, yes, he died for sinners, he died for you. And if you look to him in faith, he'll take you through to heaven. Oh, yes, that I never understood before.

And in a moment or two he closed his eyes, and he was gone. Mr. Parker said, I put the crucifix back in his breast, I knew it couldn't do him any harm now. And he said to me, you know, and he's telling me about it, his face is just radiant, he's such a dear old thing.

He said, I knew that God thinks so much of the work of his son, he'll have everybody in heaven who'll give him the least excuse for getting them there. Because they'll be there to their praise and the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, we never could get through a chapter like this, but I've just briefly gone over it.

And now, will you notice the first word of the next chapter? Have you ever noticed it before? After all the darkness and the gloom and the suffering and the sorrow of the cross, you see what the first word of the next chapter is? What is it? Sing! Yes. Oh, after all that Jesus has done. Sing! Sing! It's the Spirit of God calling upon people to rejoice.

And here, of course, is directly addressed to the remnant of Israel in the last days. Sing, O barren, how that it's not bare. And then he goes on to picture Israel turning to the Lord in that day and being used of God to bring a great multitude of Gentiles, so that the desolate of more children than the married wife has

been set aside for so long.

And the marriage hasn't yet taken place. She hasn't yet been united to her bridegroom, as she will be when gathered back to the land. But still God uses that remnant to bring a great host to the Lord in that coming day.

And all who are ever saved, both in millennial days and now, will be saved through the work of Isaiah 53. Now, the latter part of that chapter is a precious portion I'd like my wife to read. I wish I could carry it all in my memory.

But, you know, I think I've got a wonderful memory to work for me. Begin with verse 4. Fear not, for thou shalt not be ashamed, neither be thou confounded. For thou shalt not be put to shame, for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.

For thy maker is thine husband, the Lord of hosts is his name, and thy regime of the Holy One of Israel. The God of the whole earth shall he be called. For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth when thou wast received, saith thy God.

For a small moment have I forsaken thee, for with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For this was at the borders of Noah unto me, for as I had sworn that the borders of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be rocked with thee, nor reduced to thee.

For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee. What a wonderful promise that is. And remember, this is God's word to Israel.

You know, we Christians are such thieves. We steal so many things that belong to Israel and try to apply them to ourselves. I don't know whether your Bible is like one I used to have.

I think mine was a Bankster Bible. And at the head of so many of these chapters in Isaiah, it would say, Curses on the Jews. Punishments on the Jews.

Judgments on the Jews. And then when it came to the other side, it would say, Blessings of the Church. Glory for the Church.

All the judgment passages were definitely applied to the Jews. But all the glory passages were applied to the Church. But this passage refers to the day of Israel's blessing.

And God is going to bring them back to himself. He'll not keep his fury forever. As the waters of Noah.

He says, This shall be as the waters of Noah unto me. For he promised that never again should the earth be destroyed with a flood. Just as truly he has promised that this nation Israel shall never be utterly destroyed.

That someday a remnant will be saved and that will become a great nation. And Israel shall blossom and bud and fill the face of the whole earth with fruit. Well then we come to the next chapter.

And again it begins with an interesting word. Do you notice what that word is? What is it? Oh yes. It's a call to other people.

My old associate, Dr. Porter, used to preach a great sermon on this, I always thought. I heard him two or three times on it. And he took that ho as hello.

He would always read it that way. He said, This is a telephone chapter. It's a call to send a message all over, calling people to hear.

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters. He that hath no money, come. Buy wine and milk without money and without price.

Tell me there's no grace in the Old Testament. Ho, this is pure grace. Without money and without price.

And it goes on, inviting people to come and receive the gospel message and believe it. And it's a call to the nation of Israel to put themselves in the place where then they appropriate the blessing which God has for them. And it's here, and the nations too are invited to join with them in it.

And so the word comes, Seek ye the Lord while ye may be found. Call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts.

And let him return unto the Lord and he'll have mercy upon him. And to our God he will abundantly pardon. And so the chapter goes on to show how ready God is to take up those who turn to him in confession of sin.

And trust his love. Verse 8. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, though your way is my way, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not silver but water into earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth. It shall not return unto me, Lord, but it shall accomplish that which I fear, and it shall prosper in the things that to you I say. For you shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace.

The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into things, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree, and it shall be to the Lord by name, forever lasting sign that shall not be cut off. What a wonderful passage this is.

No wonder my friend, the Cambridge man, said of Isaiah, how that fellow can swing the language. How beautiful Isaiah's periods are. How his own soul must have been stirred as he gave forth this proclamation.

And what an encouragement it should be for every servant of Christ to remember that God has declared that his word will accomplish that of which he has said it. You know, we sometimes may preach and we get a little bit discouraged and think maybe we're just talking, as it were, against a brazen wall. But God's word is never going to return to him void.

So the prophetic word is going to have a complete fulfillment in God's due time. Remember when the Ethiopian treasurer of Queen Candace was traveling down the Gaza Road on his way back to Ethiopia

from Jerusalem, he was reading in the book of Isaiah when Philip came. And he was reading this very passage, reading it in the Septuagint version.

That, of course, accounts for the slight difference of wording. He was reading it in the Greek version. And when Philip went to the chariot, what he was reading, evidently heard too.

Evidently he was one of these men who have to read aloud. Poor readers always move their lips when they read or read aloud. Good readers read the paragraph.

They don't read word after word. And I'm so thankful that I was a good reader when I had some eyes. Because if I hadn't, I don't know why I do today.

And I hope you'll cultivate the habit, as far as you can, of reading paragraphically. Don't just try to read word by word. You'll never get through.

But grasp, look at a whole paragraph and get to then pass on to the next one. That's the proper way to read. I'm going to stop here today, though it's not the end of the section.

The section goes on to the end of Chapter 57. But we have just three more class hours. And so that leaves us nine chapters with three more hours.

And then you'll have examination on Friday afternoon. And let me say, in view of the examination, that I don't want you to think I'm going to put any cash questions or anything like that. But I hope you'll have some of the outstanding things in mind that we've drawn attention to, like the structure of the book in its three great sections.

You know, you want to get that clearly in mind. And the number of chapters in each section. And then the divisions of the third section in Chapter 40 to 48 and 49 to 57 and what they deal with.

We've taken up all that. And try and get fixed in your mind some of these great Messianic prophecies. Well, probably they are fixed there already.

I'm sure that when the time comes, you'll not have any difficulty in handling the examination. With kind permission, I rather feel sure it will, I want to try to cover synopsically Chapters 56, 57, 58, 59. Chapters 56 and 57 are the concluding chapters of the present section, which gives us God's controversy with Israel concerning their Messiah.

That section, as we have already seen, runs from Chapter 49 through 57. But then the two following chapters, 58 and 59, are the very similar characters to the last two chapters of this section, though they introduce a third section in the last part of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah. These chapters don't require a great deal in the way of perhaps careful comment on an occasion such as this, because they're of such an exceedingly practical nature.

Sometimes, however, we're inclined to look carelessly over a portion like this. Our attention is more likely to be focused upon the passages that speak of great events that are to take place in the future, or maybe some of God's dealings with his people in the past. But as we mentioned the other day, the great object of prophetic ministry is not simply to occupy people with coming events, but it is to bring the truths of the future to so press upon the conscience now as to enable God's people to live now in the light of the predicted future.

It was so with Israel of old, and it is so with us in this church age. You often find a great many people who have an intellectual interest in prophecy, and if you're giving a series of prophetic messages, they'll flock to your meetings, and they're all eager to hear, and all that kind of thing. Well, of course, prophetic messages are very important.

I think any minister loses out a great deal who fails to give attention to the prophetic parts of the word of God. Don't think that so many professed Christians would be lost to orthodoxy if saved preachers--I use the term saved because there are lots of unsaved preachers, you know-- but if saved preachers gave more attention to the prophetic word, people go out into these other systems because they're hungry to know. There's a certain curiosity in regards to the future, and that's how the voice of prophecy feels to so many people who hear it over the air.

A lot of people don't even know that the voice of prophecy is the radio department of Seventh-day Adventism. They listen to what comes over the air, and it sounds pretty good to them, and they get especially thrilled if it has to do with an attempt to open up the future. Then, of course, the way that they really get hold of people is by suggesting now that you write in and take one of our Bible study courses, and people are impressed by the radio messages on prophecy, and so they write in and start in with the Bible study courses, and soon they're right into all the teaching of Seventh-day Adventism.

They never announce over the air that this is the Seventh-day Adventist propaganda. They keep that hidden as closely as they can, and it's not until people get pretty well on in the Bible courses that they begin to see what it really is. But thousands of people all over this country have swept into Seventh-day Adventism annually just because of a certain interest in prophecy.

And if they had been properly instructed in their own churches, they wouldn't have been in the same danger of being carried away. Jehovah's Witnesses work in the same principle. They try to hide their real views until they get people taking some of their courses and their teachers visiting from house to house, and then folk little by little get into it, and they have a great program for the future which they begin opening up, and people who don't know their Bibles readily fall for it.

Now, if people were instructed in the word of God, in the prophetic word, they wouldn't be carried off into things of that kind. Imagine anyone who really had sat under a godly minister who opened up the truth as to the second coming of the Lord, particularly in its two aspects, ever being carried away by the ridiculous teaching of Pastor Ruckel, so-called, and Judge Rutherford, in that the Lord has already come and has been here now since 1874, but is only manifesting himself to those of special spirituality. And if the millennium began in 1914, we're already in a wonderful millennium, isn't it? And so on.

Kind of really began with a new deal, I guess. But who would be carried away by vagaries like that who have been well instructed in clear Bible teaching of prophecy? Now, but on the other hand, when one is teaching prophecy, it's so important that he should incorporate with every message something of an intensely practical character. Because people get carried away with the glowing pictures of the future and the visions and so on set forth in prophecies like Daniel and Revelation, and they can be very careless and indifferent just to their lives.

I remember going to a certain place where I'd been asked to give some addresses in the second coming of the Lord, and the minister sitting beside me mentioned to me, while they were singing, a certain man came in and said, Now there is one of the most godless men in our community, and yet he's always on hand at anyone's lecturing on prophecy. He's so anxious, he's so interested in finding out all about

prophecy. So sure enough, when I got through preaching, he came right up to me.

Well, he said, Brother, I'm glad to know that you hold the second coming. He says, I hold that too. I said, Do you? Does it hold you? He said, What do you mean? Well, I said, You know, it's one thing to hold the second coming.

It's quite another thing to be held by it. The word says every man that hath this hope set on him purifies himself, even as he is pure. Does it have that purifying effect in your heart and life? He says, Who's been talking to you about me? He wants that something is wrong.

So there's lots of people, you know, they want to know all about the horns of Daniel and the beasts of Revelation, but they don't want you to probe their consciences. But now you get prophetic ministry in a sharper proportion in a book like this book of Isaiah. We've already seen how again and again, after giving us pictures of the future, the prophet comes down to the actual condition of the people at the time when he was speaking.

So now if we turn to chapter 56, he begins a very practical section, points out the importance of living in a godly way in the then present, and also that in the future it is as the nations learn to seek after righteousness that the blessing of the kingdom is going to be theirs. This 56 chapter, what's the first verse of it? Just come from my mind. That says, O Lord, keep his judgment and do justice, for my salvation is near to come.

That gives just exactly the principle you see I've been trying to lay down. Keep righteousness, do justice, because these things are soon to take place. In other words, live now in the light of them.

Then he goes on to show that no one need fail of the coming blessing if he is sincere in turning to God. Certain ones were prohibited from having any part in the services of the Lord in the Old Testament times. A eunuch could not have any part in the priesthood, and the stranger had no place there.

But in the future, no matter what one's physical condition or what one's nationality, if there's earnest purpose of heart to seek the Lord and to do the will of God, you'll have the same place in the kingdom that anyone else can have. It'll be open for everybody. So this chapter emphasizes, as you go on through it, the importance of practical righteousness.

Did we select a verse or two I want to read in the latter part? I say, the sons of the stranger that join themselves to the Lord to serve him and to love the name of the Lord, to be with his guidance from believing it and taking hold of my covenant, even them will I bring to my holy mountain and make them joyful in my house of prayer. Their buried offerings and their sacrifices will be called a house of prayer for all people. These are the words you'll remember referred to by the Lord Jesus Christ when he drove the money changers out of the temple.

He said, it's written, my house shall be called a house of prayer for all people, but ye have made it a den of thieves. And so he gives us the key to the practical application of this passage. It was God's word to Israel that he was assuring the Gentiles that they too might come into blessings if they would seek his face and take hold of the covenant.

The covenant, of course, of which they were to take hold was the Abrahamic covenant. In thee and in thy feet shall all nations be blessed. And the observance of the Sabbath, as long as the Jewish dispensation lasted, and I take it in the days of the coming great tribulation and on into the millennium, the observance

of the Sabbath would be the outward sign of allegiance to the Lord.

It would be the recognition of his authority. We today do not recognize the Jewish Sabbath. Why? Well, because it was part of that law which was done away for us in the cross of Christ.

The Lord took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross. And so the word says, let no man therefore judge you of meat or drink or respective and holy days or of the Sabbath, which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ. The light of God of old was shining upon Christ, and Christ cast his shadow before he came.

And the Sabbath was one aspect of this shadow, rest at the end of a six-day period of labor. The Lord Jesus was the glorious fulfillment when he said, Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Now, we have instead of the Jewish Sabbath, the Lord's Day.

I know that there are some who object to applying the term the Lord's Day to the first day of the week, where John in Revelation says, I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day. They insist that the Lord's Day and the day of the Lord are one and the same thing. And we might think so.

We might take it for granted that the two expressions mean the same, the day of the Lord, the Lord's Day. Well, if it were exactly translated, perhaps that would be so. But the term Lord's, as many of you know, is not the possessive case there.

It's not the Lord's Day, but it's an adjective formed from the word for Lord. It's the Lordian Day, just as you have an adjective formed from the word Christ. You see, you have a Christian spirit.

It's a Christian church or a Christian atmosphere and so on. So here, if you tried to make an English word out of it, you'd have to say Lordian. Some have translated it Lordly, but I don't think that gives the thought.

That suggests that it's a superior day to other days. But I don't think that's it. It's the Lordian Day.

It's the day that brings before us the resurrection of our blessed Lord from the dead. And other things being equal, I take it for granted that the early Christians knew better what some of those cryptic expressions meant that are used in the book of Revelation than we might know in the twentieth century if it came to us as something new. And all down through the centuries, from the first day of the week, was recognized by Christians as the Lord Day, the Lordian Day.

In fact, the only name for it that the Greeks have is Puriety, the Lord's Day. The Latins call it the Dominical Day, the Lord's Day, just the same thing. And it's been so known down through the centuries.

Of course, you just take today, if you speak of the chair of the president and the president's chair, the two expressions mean the same thing. If, for instance, we were in the White House and we're looking at the furniture there and the guy says, that is the president's chair, or that is the chair of the president, it would mean the same thing. But if we speak of the presidential chair, then it's something altogether different.

It's not a piece of furniture at all, you see. And so if you speak of the day of the Lord or the Lord's Day, it might mean the same thing. But the Lordian Day is something different.

It's that day which the Christian Church from the very beginning has kept, and gets it voluntarily, voluntarily, in memory of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. It's the very voluntariness of it that gives it value in the sight of the Lord. For instance, now, one of you has a birthday, we'll say, and some

loving friend gives you a birthday present.

Well, what gives that special value to you, gives that special value in your life? Because it was the result of the kindly thought of that friend. If you wrote to that friend and said, on such and such a date, I'm going to have a birthday, and I'll expect a present from you. Well, it would lose all its value, you see.

And so the seven-day Adventists challenge us and say, show us a commandment in the New Testament telling you to observe the first day of the week. We say, there's no such command. We're under grace, not law.

Well, then why do you do it? Because of the gratitude of our hearts to the Lord Jesus, who rose from the dead on the first day of the week. And we find that the first day of the week is given a special place in the Book of the Acts and in the First Epistle to Corinthians, and always have that special place from the beginning of Christianity to the present time. And just as Israel of old, by their recognition of the Sabbath, manifested their love for Jehovah, their reverence for his name, so we, by the observance of the Lord's Day, manifest the same thing.

I think we as Christians should be very careful about the use of the Lord's Day and should never allow ourselves to treat it just as a common day and be indifferent to its claims. Because suppose that we're taken away from it. Suppose that this country ever became like Russia and that every day was a secular day and there were no special privileges such as we now enjoy.

How we would miss them and how bitterly we would rue the memory of ever having treated that day in a careless kind of a manner. So I think we get a spiritual lesson out of this for us, but for Israel of old it was absolutely literal. We're told that the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

By we're dead to the law through the body of Christ, yet every righteous requirement of the law will be fulfilled in us as we walk in the power of the Holy Spirit. Now, was there anything else in that chapter especially wanted? Well, we haven't any food in here, so we don't need to... Now the 57th chapter begins with a word of comfort for those who, while seeking to be faithful to the Lord, suffer at the hands of others even unto death. The... It is always a danger of thinking that those who die before the fulfillment of promises of future blessings have lost out.

The Thessalonians had the same thought. They were concerned because some of their number had died before the second coming of Christ. And so Paul wrote and said, I would not have you to be eaten in, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, but your sorrow not, even as others have no hope.

They went on to show that they were going to have their part in the rapture with the rest and would share in the kingdom when the Lord Jesus Christ descended to take the kingdom. And so here, those in Israel would think, well, the promises are for the future, and one after another they're dying and they're not going to enter into it. And then times of persecution would arise and many would be put to death.

And they would feel, well, now they've lost out. They won't be here for the kingdom at all. Why? He says, the righteous are taken away from the evil to come.

And though they're taken away from here, God has provided something for them. Everyone shall rest in his uprightness before God and have their place of blessing. So that after all, one doesn't need to grieve for those who have gone because they're under the care of the blessed Lord.

They've gone home to be with him. Then in the chapter he goes on to stress the importance of godliness, as we'll see. Verse 16 of chapter 57.

For thus saith the high and lofty one, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to abide the spirit of the humble. I suppose you've all noticed that this is the only place in our English version where we get the word eternity. There are, of course, the Hebrew word that's here rendered eternity is found in many other places.

But this is the only place, for some reason, I don't know why, where our translators have used the word eternity. Thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, that inhabiteth the ages. In the 90th Psalm we'll read from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

And they might have rendered it from eternity to eternity, thou art God. But here we have the word standing out, clear and definite. Thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity.

God dwells in all the ages. And that's what eternity is. Eternity is a succession of ages.

Sometimes preachers, in trying to picture eternity, they speak of it as an unchanging period. Well, in one sense that's true. You know, they use the expression found in the 10th chapter of Revelation, time shall be no more.

And they think of time as embracing the ages through which mankind goes here on earth. And then, when at last one leaves this world, or the ages of time expire, then we go out into eternity where there are no more ages. But that isn't true.

There were ages past before this world came into existence. There have been the ages of time since. There will be the age of the ages and ages of ages throughout all the great day of God, the eternal day of God.

Throughout eternity is just one great age unfolding after another, manifesting deeper and more wonderful things in connection with the wisdom and the grace and the love and the power of our wonderful God. And he inhabits all the ages. He's the God of eternity.

And yet, he dwells in the heart of him that humbled and of a contrite spirit and that trembleth at the word of God. And that's why these prophetic truths to be borne home to the conscience is something that ought to make men tremble, that ought to exercise people before God. Even today, as we preach the truth and the coming of the Lord for his church, it surely ought to exercise every Christian heart and lead to the question, am I so living that I would be happy and glad and ready to welcome the Lord Jesus at any moment? I'm afraid a lot of us allow ourselves to get into things that would be terribly upset if the Lord should suddenly come.

I remember years ago before the First World War, there was a professor, oh, Professor Strasser, S-T-R-O-E-T-E-R, Professor Strasser over in Germany who was a personal friend of Dr. A. C. Goebelheim, was a great prophetic teacher. And he used to go through the country giving prophetic lectures and he had a number of charts that he used to unfold the dispensation. And it happened that his lectures attracted so much attention that the German emperor, Kaiser Wilhelm, who was really, in spite of many of his idiosyncrasies, quite a Bible student, you know, and in fact used to preach in the palace chapel on many occasions when some chaplain wasn't there to take the service.

And so Kaiser Wilhelm invited Professor Strasser to come to his palace. Don't remember which one, whether Potsdam or Berlin, but to come to his palace and give him an idea of what this propaganda was that he was engaged in. And so Professor Strasser came and the Kaiser took him into his library and Professor Strasser brought a roll of his charts with him.

And he spread them out on the library table. And the Kaiser followed him. They were interested.

He pointed out the various things and then on to the coming of the Lord and the kingdom and so on. And after quite a lengthy, lengthy conversation, the Kaiser suddenly said, well now let me see, Professor. Do I get you all right? Do you mean to say that Jesus Christ is coming back literally and that when he comes back all the kingdoms of the world are going to be destroyed and he's going to set up his kingdom or the ruins of them all? Professor Strasser said, exactly, your majesty.

You've got my thought exactly. Oh no, said the Kaiser. I can't have that.

Why, that would interfere with all my plans. Professor Strasser published my plans. Oh yes, that concludes that section of the chapter.

That ends with this note piece that chapters 49 to 57 God's controversy with Israel concerning the Messiah. And that ends with there's no peace set my God to the wicked, goes to chapter 57. Well now the next chapter begins the last section of this book.

From chapter 58 through 66 we have in the main visions of the coming glory of these prophets setting before us the wonderful things that are going to take place at the coming of the Lord. But in the introductory chapters he still dwells very largely upon practical things. A call to the nation to heed the voice of God and get right with him in order that judgment may be averted and blessing may be assured.

And so chapter 58 commences with the words cry aloud and say or not should not emphasize the sins of Israel. And the great thing that he stresses is they're resting upon a mere formal observance of ritual and ceremony when the heart was far from God. He takes up particularly the question of fasting.

Now they had a great number of fasts which they observed very punctiliously. There was a definite fast set forth in Leviticus 23 connection with the appointed times of the Lord. But in addition to these they had brought in other things and added other facts.

But they were just I'm going to have you read me I'm sorry if you have time now. They were resting on the fact that they abstained from food and abstained from drink for certain hours for certain days taking it for granted that this was the thing which pleased God. Whereas he in commanding the fast had done so in order that their minds might be taken away from other things and they might be able to give attention to the things of the spirit.

And so he recruits them for these mere formal fasts. Now you read a little there please. Just one moment.

They used the fast to cover up other offenses you see. As I've heard some people today misuse that text charity covers amongst you the sins. They say well if I give some money to charity that makes up for other things.

That isn't what the Lord meant at all. And so Israel they fasted for strife and debate they covered up other sins or thought they were doing it by the careful observance of the fast. It is sacrificed that I have chosen a

day for a man to afflict his spirit as a bulrush and spread sackcloth and ashes under him which I call this a fast and acceptable day to the Lord is not this the fast that I have chosen to loose the bands of wickedness to undo the heavy burden and to let their preys go free and that they break every yoke.

Is it not to be made our bread to the hungry and that thou bring the poor that are cast back to thy house when thou seest the nature that thou cover him and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh then shall thy light not break forth but remain and thy help shall spring forth speedily and thy righteousness shall go before thee the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward. See what God was calling upon them and was that in these fasts was the recognition of the importance of self-judgment that the fast gave them opportunity to come before God to meditate upon his dealings with them to meditate upon their own failures and sins to confess them to God and then to carry out in a practical way the compassions of God toward those who are needy. In other words it wasn't the mind of God was not simply that they should deny themselves a little food but that they should be constantly living lives of self-denial dividing what God gave them with others caring for the poor and the needy and so on.

You remember how the Lord Jesus speaks of the same thing?

He says when you fast don't go around with a sad countenance Isaiah speaks of it here they fasted and then they went around looking for grub you know they were hungry and all this 3 o'clock yesterday afternoon and the Lord says that isn't the thing he says when you fast give a cheerful countenance God among the people won't let on yet give a cheerful bright happy countenance The Lord promises that if there's reality then the glory of the Lord will rise upon them Well then we come to chapter 59 and in this chapter we have a very very half of it and then the latter half wonderful promises of blessing that is to take place under Messiah's reign He begins the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save nor is ear heavy that it cannot hear but your iniquity has separated between you and

your God and your sins and hid his face from you goes on to explain why when they sought the Lord he didn't seem to answer he didn't seem to hear the point is there was unjudged sin that needed to be dealt with the psalmist has written long before if I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me yet here they were covering up their sins and hoping to please God by observance of outward form and attendance to ritual and all this kind of thing but he says of them that they hatch the cockatrice or the adder's eggs and weave the spider's web read a part of that will you please it's very striking verse before none calls for justice nor any pleaded for truth they trust him to answer speak lies they conceive mischief and bring forth a mischief they hatch cockatrice eggs and weave the

spider's web he that eateth of their eggs die and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper 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 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 hands this portion there is taken up in the third chapter if this was a Roman quick to shed blood and so on you see what he's picturing here's the people who professedly are the Lord they're going on with all the awkward forms of religion attending the service of the temple offering their sacrifices fasting and all this kind of thing and hoping by these means to provide a righteousness

which will be satisfactory to God but he says it's just like hatching out the adder's eggs the preachings the teachings were false they were poisonous and he that eateth of their eggs dieth when people took up with his false teaching and brought ruin eternal ruin to them then he says they weave the spider's web but he

says their webs shall not become garments neither shall they cover themselves with their works then what is the spider's web? well it's just foam and it proceeds from the spider itself but it looks very beautiful he can spin a very beautiful web you know and so many preachers I think are like that they spiders spin the webs out of themselves you know and preachers spin their sermons out of their own heads they don't get them from the word of God and people who are trying to

clothe themselves in their own righteousness are just like those who might be trying to make a garment out of a spider's web but you can't do it the spider's web the hardly touch it it's gone it's disappeared I was thinking this morning what a contrast there is between a spider's web and a silk cocoon now both come out of the creature itself both come from the creature the one from the spider the other from the web and yet the one the cocoon the one the cocoon

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