

# **“CRY ALOUD, SPARE NOT!”**

## **Isaiah 58-59**

### Introduction

- 1) Prophets like **Isaiah** were preachers, spokesmen, proclaimers of God’s holy Word and occasionally foretellers of things to come
  - a) Spoke as they were “moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet. 1:21); content was a divine message
- 2) How passionately they spoke likely depended on the urgency and need of the message
  - a) **Isaiah 58:1** – “cry aloud, spare not [do not hold back]; lift up your voice like a trumpet”
    - i) Cp. 2 Sam. 12:7 (“You are the man!”); need a clear sounding trumpet (cf. 1 Cor. 14:8)
    - b) **Ezekiel 6:11** – “pound your fists and stamp your feet” – draw the attention of hearers
- 3) Those who declare God’s word today need to do so by lifting up their voices so as to be clearly heard communicating the precise words of God which will save and judge the hearts of men
  - a) Using only soothing tones and jovial language will not convey the dangers of sin
- 4) **Isaiah 58-59** considers what is true religion and the need to confess our sins to God

### **I) Hypocritical vs. True Religion (58:1-12)**

- A) Isaiah is told to speak loudly and clearly to God’s people about their transgressions (v. 1)
  - 1) Contrast the failed leaders of Israel who were blind, ignorant, slumbering dogs (56:10)
  - 2) Sad condition when needed warnings and rebukes are not given (Jer. 8:8-12)
- B) The people had put on an outward show of being religious – hypocritical, not sincere (v. 2; Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:7-9; Ezek. 33:31)
  - 1) Inward devotion *must* precede and direct outward action to be pleasing to God (Deut. 6:5; Josh. 24:14; 1 Sam. 12:24; Psa. 51:15-17; Joel 2:12-13)
- C) The people wonder why they have fasted and God took no notice (vv. 3-5)
  - 1) The only fast commanded in the Law of Moses was the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:29)
    - a) Individuals could fast on their own for various reasons (2 Sam. 12:16; Neh. 1:4)
    - b) Jews in captivity created four fasts commemorating events of fall of Judah (Zech. 8:19)
  - 2) God informs the people that they had acted wickedly and selfishly during their “fasts” – bickering and fighting, exploiting workers, seeking pleasure (v. 4)
    - a) How could they call that an acceptable day of fasting to the Lord (v. 5)?
- D) God desires fasting to be a spiritual time of repentance, freedom, and benevolence (vv. 6-7)
  - 1) God will bless sincere devotion and obedience (v. 8)
  - 2) When the faithful call, God will answer, because they seek the good of others (vv. 9-10; cf. 1 Pet. 3:12)
    - a) God will bless the faithful, and they will bless future generations with good foundations by repairing breaches and restoring paths (vv. 11-12)
    - b) Those who sincerely seek God first with their whole heart are able to find and enjoy divine blessings that so many others miss due to spiritual sluggishness and blindness

### **II) Proper Observance of the Sabbath (58:13-14)**

- A) If God’s people will honor His holy Sabbath and not their own ways, then they will be blessed
  - 1) God commanded Sabbath-keeping (Ex. 20:8-11; Lev. 19:30; 26:2)
    - a) Defiling the Sabbath was a serious sin (56:2; Ezek. 20:13; 22:26; 2 Chron. 36:21)
  - 2) To obey God, we cannot do our own ways, find our own pleasure, or speak our own words
    - a) We must do God’s work in God’s way, not our work in our way!

### III) **The Rebuke of Israel's Sin (59:1-8)**

- A) The lack of divine attention [ear] and help [hand] was not due to a problem with God, but because of their own sins (vv. 1-2)
  - 1) Sin separates us from God (1 Jn. 1:5-6; Rom. 3:23); man is responsible for his sins
  - 2) God will not hear those who turn from His way (Isa. 1:15; Psa. 66:18; Prov. 28:9)
- B) Their sins (murder, lies, injustice) were like eating viper's eggs (deadly) and spider's webs (unprofitable); run to evil, not know peace, make crooked paths (vv. 3-8)

### IV) **The Confession of Israel's Sin and God's Judgment on His Enemies (59:9-21)**

- A) Isaiah now acknowledges Israel's sins – darkness and blackness (v. 9)
  - 1) Stumbling about like blind people; salvation and justice far away (vv. 10-11)
- B) Confession of multiple transgressions; their sins testify against them (vv. 12-13)
  - 1) Truth is fallen [stumbled] in the streets; godly people are made prey to evil (v. 14)
  - 2) The Lord saw it and was displeased (v. 15)
- C) Lord saw no man to help, no intercessor – God will save by “His own arm” [strength] (v. 16)
  - 1) Breastplate of righteousness and helmet of salvation (v. 17; Eph. 6:14, 17; 1 Thess. 5:8)
  - 2) God will stand against and repay His enemies (vv. 18-19)
- D) God will come to His people in Zion [messianic kingdom] and will put His word in their mouth “from this time and forevermore” (vv. 20-21; cf. Rom. 11:26)

### Conclusion

Those in Zion can enjoy the blessings of God only if they are willing to confess and turn from their sins. God desires the devotion of the heart that shows its faith by obedience. God is gracious and longsuffering to all who come to Him with such a heart of dedicated faith.