

1. Before I begin, if you've been with me throughout this book, realize we're almost to the end. As I look back at all I've written on Isaiah I've been realizing what a roller coaster of a ride Isaiah is, as we've covered what seems like every major theme the bible discusses in one book. We're close to the end of the book. What's left is Isaiah's discussion of our eternal future. Let's be honest, Isaiah is a "mini-bible", due to its big size, and since it gets into most of the important bible topics in this one book. I'd like to express my gratitude for all of you who've gone through this book with me. I'm hoping it's been as much as a blessing to you as it has been to me. I wanted to start this lesson with that little speech because effectively God is "standing back to give us the big picture" here in these two chapters as we transition to the final chapters of the book.
  - a) A shorter version of what I'm saying is "it's all worth it". It's worth all the time and effort to live out our lives for God. It's worth whatever suffering we go through in this life, as it is relatively nothing compared to all of eternity. The best use we can make of the time God has given us is to use it for His glory and make a difference for Him.
  - b) I know I'm preaching to the choir to use one of my favorite clichés as of late. However it's very easy for each of us to get our focus off that goal as we can easily get distracted by all the things we would like to accomplish in life that aren't eternal, but are still necessary for us to live out our lives.
  - c) The reason I've started this lesson this way, is not just to get reflective on what I've said so far, but also to realize that's what this lesson is all about. In these chapters God effectively tells us what a waste of a life it is to try to please Him based on our efforts. My point is all we are called to do as Christians is to accept the fact that God loves us just because He does, and He wants us to use our lives to make a difference for Him, not to earn His love, but as a form of gratitude for what He's done for us. That's the Gospel message in one sentence.
  - d) OK John, assume we know all of that, why should we study these two chapters? Because they remind us of what a waste of a life it is to live for things other than God. We should constantly remind ourselves of that fact, as it's too easy to get our focus off of Him. After that we transition into the final section of Isaiah where He describes the great future we'll experience as believers when Jesus rules over this world.
  - e) In summary, the life we get now is "temporary" at best. The life we'll live in His presence is eternal. It's about keeping our eye on the prize of eternity with God as that's what will matter for all of eternity, so we might as well prepare for it now. That's why I'd like you to read through these two chapters with me, as they encourage us by reminding us what a waste of life this one can be if we don't use it properly and what glories we will receive if we do use this life for His glory. In short, "it's all worth it" which if you haven't figured it out by now, is my lesson title.
2. With that speech out of my system, let me discuss where we left off and why it transitions well to these two chapters. We left off with Isaiah giving us practical examples of how the Israelites could use their lives to make a difference for God. That leads to the question of "why bother?" If we're to live a life, as God desires we live why bother? That's why it's necessary for Isaiah to remind us of the reality of this present life and the reality of the eternal life we'll all be a part of one day. All I'm saying is if one desires that one's life has meaning then one should use it for His glory. Again I'm aware I'm "preaching to the choir" again, but all of us need the reminder that it's all worth the effort as we easily get distracted and we easily get turned away from how God desires we live as a living witness for Him.
  - a) Suppose we're already doing something to make a difference for God. I'm not here to say you're wrong or not doing enough. I'm just trying to remind us that it's worth the effort as the short time we get to live is effectively nothing compared to eternity.

- b) Think of this lesson as an encouragement. It's an encouragement that we've almost made it to the end of the book. It's an encouragement that whatever effort we've made for God is worth the time and trouble. It's also a vivid reminder of what a waste of a life it is to use it for anything other than God's glory. Finally it's an encouragement to realize what'll be the blessings we get for using our lives for His glory.
  - c) Think of the lesson this way. A good portion of what we've studied so far in this book is a lot of predictions about the future. If Isaiah's been perfectly accurate in all his predictions about history to date, why shouldn't we trust him in giving us predictions over what will occur in the future of Jesus' returning? The reason we can trust this will occur is because we can see how accurate Isaiah's been "to date", and he's trustable to describe our future.
3. Finally before I begin, let me say a few words to those of you who feel like you have wasted your life to date. I want to address those of you who feel like you either have done nothing for God or feel like you haven't done enough. The first obvious thing to say is we can't change our past, just learn from it and make better decisions for the future. One of the great hobbies to develop is just to ask God, "OK, what is it you want me to do right now, or say for the next 30 minutes?" If we're developing good biblical habits like seeking Him regularly and reading His word, the answers to that type of prayer will amaze you. The other recommendation is to do what one enjoys doing as a way to make a difference for God. For example, I recently met a person who likes to hike. He'll take people with him and get a chance to talk to God about them on such long hikes. Whatever it is we enjoy, it doesn't have to be anything fancy. A classic Christian expression is that God is not looking for ability, God's looking for availability. My point is if one allocates time to be available for God, He'll find a way to use it for His glory. To combine that availability with something we already enjoy or something we're good at is a great way to making a difference for Him.
- a) As I said, what one discovers if we make that difference it's all worth it, as the title of my lesson states for this week. With that stated, let's study in more detail "what is worth it" as we go through the text of Isaiah Chapters 59 and 60.
4. Verse 1: Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear.
- a) One of the prime rules of studying the bible is never to read it out of context. The last few lesson talked about practical ways of seeking God. The final few verses of Chapter 58 say that if we keep the Sabbath, (pick one day out of seven to rest in Him as opposed to trying to make more money every day or work every single day toward some other goal), at that point, you will find joy in God. The idea of joy is to appreciate life and all the good things in life no matter what the situation. I define happiness as based on one's circumstances. If we just got good news we would be happy. Joy is deeper. Joy is realizing we are blessed no matter the situation. Joy is about our attitude through whatever we're dealing with at any given moment.
  - b) Believe it or not, that little encouragement speech leads to Verse 1 of Chapter 59. The text is reminding us that God wants to be the source of that joy. To state the obvious since He is everywhere, He can be prayed to at any place at any time. This verse is the reminder of the fact that not only can we pray to God at any given time, but He's "big enough" that He will help us through whatever situation we're in. The best way that I've heard of how He helps us is, "God is not a genie in a bottle to grant our every wish. He is however, willing to provide the rope to pull us out of a our pit and guide us in the direction He wants us to go in life." One of the great truth's of life is God wants to guide our life for His glory. We are to seek Him to guide our life. That's effectively what this verse is saying.
  - c) I've actually met people who've made statements like, "I'm afraid to set foot in a church as the walls might come down. I've lived my life to a point where God would never want me to be one of His." As I said earlier, God's not looking for ability, He desires availability. If you read this verse again, it's a reminder that no one is beyond God's help. That's why we are called to reach out to all people as we never know who will respond to the message of the Gospel and when they will respond in a positive way.

- d) For us Christians reading this verse, realize it's a good starting point to talk to strangers of how one can have a relationship with God. It's the simple reminder that anyone can pray to Him at anytime and anyplace and He's more than willing to listen to us if we're willing to approach Him on His terms and His way. That surprisingly leads me right to Verse 2.
5. Verse 2: But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.
- a) If you think the Gospel message is only stated in the New Testament, you obviously have never read Isaiah. Here in Verse 2 one can show someone from the Old Testament why is it that God hasn't helped someone to date. Think of the classic response we can get as to why someone doesn't seek God: He's never done anything for me to date. If God is that powerful why did He allow that person I care about to die so horribly? As to the question of why God allows tragedies, the answer is this world is cursed by sin, and because we're allowed free choice, the consequences of sin are played out in this world every day. I have had a few close relatives die from cancer who were strong believers. During the pain they had to endure their faith grew stronger and that faith gave them the strength to face all of that horror till the end.
- b) OK enough of "why does God allow the innocent to suffer" (to give them a chance to give Him the glory through that suffering), the other issue is why doesn't God help us more as we are? The answer is Verse 2. God has a zero tolerance policy for sin. In my last lesson, I discussed the fact that if God is perfect, that means He's perfectly angry at all sin all the time as well as perfectly loving to those who seek Him. From our perspective it can seem like God is say angry or happy at any moment based on the circumstances, but we need to realize He's "bigger than that" and among His perfect aspects, He perfectly hates all sin all of the time. My point is if one is talking to a nonbeliever about why they can't draw close to God, they need to be told that their sins have separated them from God.
- i) That's why we got the Gospel preached to us back in Chapter 53. It's the reminder that since God Himself has paid the full price for our sins, we are now free to come to Him by accepting that free payment. That's the point of these two verses: We're free to seek God at any time, but we have to accept His complete sin payment as to approach Him in the first place.
- c) There is one more way to study Verse 2 and it's worth bringing up here for a moment. At the time Jesus was on the cross, He felt forsaken by God the Father. It was the only time in history when they were "separated" by not having a close connection to each other. What I am saying is because Jesus was paying the price for our sins, God had to "turn His back" on Jesus at that moment as God cannot tolerate any sin whatsoever as this verse states. I just want you to see Verse 2 as a reason why God the Father had to separate Himself from the Son at that key moment in history. OK, with that heavy point made, time for Verse 3.
6. Verse 3: For your hands are stained with blood, your fingers with guilt. Your lips have spoken lies, and your tongue mutters wicked things. <sup>4</sup> No one calls for justice; no one pleads his case with integrity. They rely on empty arguments and speak lies; they conceive trouble and give birth to evil.
- a) From Verses 3 through Verse 8, Isaiah gives examples of sins we can be committing before God. I've actually heard people say, I've never confessed any sins before God because I've got nothing to confess. The idea is not so much to make us feel guilty about our sins, but to realize how bad we've separated ourselves from God in the first place based on how we have lived our lives. Let me explain that with an illustration.
- b) Suppose we say that we've never killed anyone, which is what Verse 3 implies. To give an example, if we're aware of abortion, but never made an effort to help stop that practice we too can be considered guilty of having blood on our fingers. Another example is if we go see a bloody movie based on some real life horror, and we are entertained by that fact, we can be considered "guilty of blood" as we benefit from that horror.

- c) All I'm saying is I want us to think "outside the box" to realize how imperfect all of us are before God and we could spend eternity realizing how sinful we are.
  - d) Of all things, these verses remind me of the classic story of Martin Luther and what he did before He trusted in Jesus. He would go to church so often to confess whatever sin he did think of, the priest finally said to him, "Go away and don't come back until you have a sin worth confessing." Then the priest told him of Habakkuk 2:4b, which says, "The just shall live by faith". In other words, we don't have to go through life trying to confess every sin we could think of, but have faith that Jesus has paid the complete price for our sins so we don't have to work ourselves to death trying to please God to earn His love.
    - i) I should add some balance to this. If we are aware of a sin, we do need to confess it so we stop worrying about it. I'm positive God forgives us the moment we do realize it was wrong and God's way is right. God may still allow us to suffer the consequences of that sin as to realize that "sin hurts". Still, the issue is to realize we are forgiven once we confess that sin, which is my point here.
  - e) OK, I've only warmed up describing ways we've sinned against God. What else is listed in these verses is a little more obvious, so I can go through it quickly: God loves justice in all situations as these verses implies. He can't stand lies as we use them to harm others.
  - f) Even the idea of evil begins with thoughts that are wrong and then carried out. For us to be a lover of God is also to be a hater of all that's evil. God not only wants us to love what He loves, which is to draw close to Him, but He wants us to hate what He hates, all acts of sin and acts of evil, which is sin carried out to hurt others. I'm aware I'm preaching to the choir again, but it never hurts to remind us exactly what it is that God loves and He hates, which is evil acts.
    - i) Remember why we modify our behavior in the first place. It's not to earn His love but because it's the best way to live out our lives. God calls us to live as a witness for Him. We do that not only by seeking Him, but by living differently enough for us to stand out as a witness for Him. People should learn we are Christians not by the way we dress, but by our actions. That's why the sins listed here are things to be avoided at all costs. Speaking of sins, we have a few more verses to go.
7. Verse 5: They hatch the eggs of vipers and spin a spider's web. Whoever eats their eggs will die, and when one is broken, an adder is hatched. <sup>6</sup> Their cobwebs are useless for clothing; they cannot cover themselves with what they make. Their deeds are evil deeds, and acts of violence are in their hands. <sup>7</sup> Their feet rush into sin; they are swift to shed innocent blood. Their thoughts are evil thoughts; ruin and destruction mark their ways. <sup>8</sup> The way of peace they do not know; there is no justice in their paths. They have turned them into crooked roads; no one who walks in them will know peace.
- a) Now that I've given you a flavor of the tone of these verses about sin, we can go through the rest of them fairly quickly. To understand these verses, realize that Isaiah likes to use colorful "metaphor's" to make his point. That just means he likes to exaggerate his point to emphasize what he's trying to say. As I explain it, it should be more obvious:
    - i) In Verse 5, Isaiah compares sin to a bunch of eggs hatched by poisonous snakes. It is not meant as literal, but is a colorful way of saying, "Those that want to do harm to others, plan their attacks and they take delight in hurting others."
    - ii) Verse 6 compares cobwebs to clothing. The point is one can see right through any cobweb, and it's obvious to God what they are doing. The underlying point is God is very aware of their actions. One may or may not suffer in this lifetime for doing harm to others. One of the reasons I believe in God, is life would be very unfair to all of us if He never existed. I can sleep at night knowing that there's a God who'll judge all people who refuse to trust in Him.
    - iii) Does all this mean that we can live a horrid life, confess it as sin at the last moment and be saved? Yes, but what kind of life is that as a witness for God?

- iv) I could go on to describe the rest of the verses and how they describe acts of evil against other people and against God as He cares for people. However, it's pretty obvious as one reads these verses that the key point is God's aware of all sin. That means we don't get away with anything. I spoke in my introduction about people who've messed up their lives to date and feel like God would never accept them as they feel like they are beyond help. This chapter is a reminder to all people that as long as we're breathing, it's never too late to turn to Him and begin to use the time we have left to live to make a difference for Him.
  - b) Do these verses make you feel guilty about something you did, or something you failed to speak out about? That's part of the idea. The other part is God doesn't want us to hang on to that guilt, but just to confess it and accept that God's way is the best way to live out our life and what we did or ignored doing that was in opposition to that will was wrong. This is why confession of sin is so important, not to right the wrong but to let go of any guilt in our lives so we are free to experience the joy of a relationship with God as the price for the sin we confess is covered. To be aware of our sin and giving that guilt to God helps us to draw closer to Him as we can now let go of that guilt. By the way, often it takes time and a lot of prayer to let go of guilt or our anger over something. That's why prayer is such an important part of our relationship with God. I know most of us know this, but it won't for me to remind all of us of that obvious point to keep it fresh in our minds.
    - i) I said when I started this lesson how the book of Isaiah covers most issues we can think about in our relationship with God and dealing with sin is a prime example.
8. Verse 9: So justice is far from us, and righteousness does not reach us. We look for light, but all is darkness; for brightness, but we walk in deep shadows.<sup>10</sup> Like the blind we grope along the wall, feeling our way like men without eyes. At midday we stumble as if it were twilight; among the strong, we are like the dead.
- a) One has to remember that Isaiah's describing people who refuse to trust in God. Verse 1 stated with the point that one can turn to God at any time. Verse 2 stated that one's sins are separating us from God. Verses 3 to 8 are examples of what are sins. Verses 9 and 10 describe in colorful ways what it's like to live without God.
  - b) I remember reading about a very devout bible scholar who every now and then likes to go remind himself what it's like to live without God. He'll get just enough of a flavor of what it's like to live that way to remind himself why we choose to live for God. I was reminded of that person as these verses describe what it's mentally like to live for things other than God as the center of our lives. For example, such people have no interest in seeing justice done. Those who have been wrongly hurt and then take justice into their own hands is an example of those not interested in doing the right thing. As I stated earlier, all of us must live with the idea that a just God will eternally deal with the injustices of this life and it is not our job to fix all bad situations. Of course we should all do what we can as to stop evil from occurring. I'm talking about taking the law into our own hands to attempt to fix the wrongs of this world.
  - c) The reason I'm getting all "hot and heavy" here, is we're reading about those who have no interest in doing what's right but only doing what they can to maximize the enjoyment of their own life even at the expense of others. Verse 10 compares such people to those who act as if they are walking in the darkness in mid-day or living as if they are blind. The idea is that such people have no idea about doing the right thing, only living for what can be of benefit to them.
  - d) I remember an old movie line where a criminal was asked, why did you steal that "thing"? He responded, "Because I wanted the money". While we may laugh at that line, the point is people are willing to do whatever feels right to them without considering the cost to the person or group they are harming. The underlying point is sin hurts the innocent even if we don't realize how we are hurting other people.

9. Verse 11: We all growl like bears; we moan mournfully like doves. We look for justice, but find none; for deliverance, but it is far away.
- a) Again remember that Isaiah's describing those people "stumbling around" as they refuse to acknowledge God for the forgiveness of sins. This section ends here in Verse 11. Such people look for help, but find none. The idea of growling like a bear or quietly making a small sound like a dove are both expressions if "I'm trying to find satisfaction, but I'm not getting any." For those of us who trust in Jesus, we realize there is a satisfaction to fulfill by worshipping Him that one can't get completely fulfilled by any works based religion.
    - i) Let me explain this two ways: If any of you ever work with someone who's rich or famous, there is an unhappiness to it as one realizes there is never enough. As Bob Dylan wrote many years ago, "It's either fortune or fame, but neither of them are to be what they claim." Working in Southern California all my life, I've had to deal in a few situations with those who don't have God as the center of their lives, but are in the "rich and famous" category. I can tell you from first hand experience, that it is a feeling of "it's never enough". Let me add that God gives some that gift to be a famous person or financially successful in life. The world needs entrepreneurs so as to provide jobs for others. I'm not condemning success. All I'm saying and all this verse is saying is that "success" doesn't satisfy our spiritual need by itself.
    - ii) That's why you'll often see celebrities take up political causes, as there is a lack of satisfaction to what they've already achieved.
    - iii) Let me also address this concept "biblically". Jesus once spoke to a Gentile woman about the issue of spiritual satisfaction. He told her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." (John 4:10). My point and Jesus point is that He is the one who provides a spiritual satisfaction that one doesn't get from the world.
  - b) Next, let me address "justice" quickly. As I've already beaten the point to death in the last few pages, God is a God of justice and often people don't get justice in this world. To put this second sentence in context of the first one, I suspect Isaiah's saying in light of the fact one can't get a sense of satisfaction from whatever the world has to offer, one feels like we never get a sense of "justice" of getting what we desire from whatever this world offers us.
  - c) With all that said, we end this little section with Verse 12, which takes us "full circle":
10. Verse 12: For our offenses are many in your sight, and our sins testify against us. Our offenses are ever with us, and we acknowledge our iniquities: rebellion and treachery against the LORD, turning our backs on our God, fomenting oppression and revolt, uttering lies our hearts have conceived. <sup>14</sup> So justice is driven back, and righteousness stands at a distance; truth has stumbled in the streets, honesty cannot enter. <sup>15</sup> Truth is nowhere to be found, and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey.
- a) Remember that Verse 2 stated that our sins have separated us from God. Here in Verse 12 it effectively says the same thing: That because we are sinful creatures by nature God has to effectively turn His back on us. This comes back to the idea that God is perfect and one who is perfect cannot tolerate any "imperfections" whatsoever. Let me put it this way, for us to be with a perfect God forever, we must be perfectly forgiven which is why He had to pay for our sins by Himself. That's how He reconciles being perfect in justice with perfect in forgiveness. Yes I know that's the basics, but that idea is being preached here.
  - b) For us to be forgiven of our sins, first we have to realize we need to be forgiven in the first place. That's the idea of this section of the text. Yes, I'm aware I'm preaching to the choir again, but since a few chapters back we covered the Gospel message in Isaiah, he is taking it one step further to remind us why we need forgiving in the first place.
  - c) Then from the second part of Verse 12 through Verse 15 we get a few more examples here of just how "imperfect" we are in God's eyes. They discuss rebellion against God, stating lies to others and then we complain, "Hey how come we don't get justice in our lives?"

- d) Of course God is very aware we're imperfect creatures. God doesn't expect perfection. At the same time, God doesn't expect us to give up and say, "since I'll never be perfect, I won't try to be a better person." There has to be an effort on our part to live as He desires, not to earn His love, but out of gratitude for what He's done for us, we should live as He desires we live as well as the fact living as He desires makes us a good witness for Him.
  - e) That little speech leads us back to Verses 12-15. They list ways sin can separate us from a healthy relationship with God. He wants us to live as He desires to be that witness. When we fail to live that way, we can be separated from God by the fact it grieves Him when we are not living as He desires. It grieves God because He wants us to be the type of witness that He desires we be. That's why the bible goes to a lot of trouble to list all behavior that is not pleasing to Him. Examples of bad behavior are here in these verses. They include any and all effort of treachery against God. That's the idea of turning to other things for help other than to God Himself. Then of course, we get ashamed of what we do is wrong so we lie to cover up our sins even more.
  - f) Then the text says there is a "lack of justice" due to those sins. Ever stop to wonder why it is we may be suffering at the moment? I'm not talking about a sickness or a disease, but a lack of justice in a situation. Yes there is a connection between sin in our lives and things that may be going wrong. I've learned a long time ago when I'm dealing with a problem, the first thing I do is take inventory of my relationship with God. If I'm doing something that is not pleasing to God, I confess it as sin and turn away from it. I realize that sin may be the root cause of a problem and I want to eliminate that possibility. That never means life will suddenly get better if we do that. However, it'll always improve our relationship with God when we turn from sin to live, as He desires.
  - g) The whole point here is that there is a connection between sin in our lives and things that may be happening in our life at the moment. That's why it's essential to take inventory of ourselves in tough situations to see if there is something we must confess to Him prior to taking other actions to deal with our problems.
  - h) OK, enough guilt for these verses, time to move on.
11. Verse 15b: The LORD looked and was displeased that there was no justice. <sup>16</sup> He saw that there was no one, he was appalled that there was no one to intervene; so his own arm worked salvation for him, and his own righteousness sustained him.
- a) The good news is this chapter is not all one big guilt lesson on the fact we'll never be good enough to please God based on our efforts. Here we get the reminder that since nobody is capable of pleasing God based on efforts, God intervened on our behalf. Of course that is the Gospel message that "God saved us from our sins all by ourselves and there is nothing we can do to add to that salvation work". That's Verse 16 in a nutshell.
  - b) This verse also gets us back to the idea that God provides us with the power to live, as He desires. That's the role of the Spirit of God. My favorite illustration on this principal is of a man trying to push a car up a hill. Then the man remembered the car has an engine. He got in the car and drove it up that hill." The point of that story is God provides the engine so we can be obedient to Him. That's what we call the Holy Spirit living within us. What that means is if we pray for His will to be done and ask Him to guide us, He'll lead us on a path that He desires we go. It doesn't mean we'll be perfect, but I've found that when I rely upon His will I do a lot better in life than when I try to fix problems without Him.
  - c) Believe it or not the next few verses help to illustrate how God works in our lives. Before I touch those verses, I need to remind us of the "armor of God". That's a list of items we're told to wear as we go make a difference for God. Those items we're to wear are found in Ephesians Chapter 6. It's not a prayer we need to pray daily, but an occasional reminder of the fact that in order to make a difference for God, we are to rely upon His power and the weapons He's given us in order to make that difference for Him. To explain it better, let me move on to the next verse:

12. Verse 17: He put on righteousness as his breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on his head; he put on the garments of vengeance and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak.
- a) The reason I gave that introduction to this verse before this verse, is I wanted you to see the similarity between the "Armor of God" (Ephesians Chapter 6, which speaks of how we are to "dress" in preparation for living the Christian life) and this verse. In both Ephesians and this verse, we are told to put on "righteousness" (the right way to live) as if we are to put on a breastplate (think bullet proof vest today) before a battle. We're to remember we are saved not based on our behavior but strictly based on what Jesus has already done for us. That's the "helmet of salvation" as taught here and again in Ephesians 6. Then the text says the "garments of vengeance" and "zeal" as a cloak. Let me take on those last two:
  - b) To state the obvious, God doesn't expect us to take revenge on those who've hurt us. That is His job to defeat the spiritual enemies that fight us. The similarity between parts of the "Armor of God" items of Ephesians Chapter 6 and the first sentence here remind us of the fact that God wants us to prepare the same way Jesus will defeat the spiritual enemies we have to fight. The second sentence reminds us that He will do what we can't do.
  - c) What I'm getting at is the reminder that the "real war" we fight as Christians is against the world of demonic forces we can't see. The only way we can defeat such "dark forces" is to remember the Ephesians 6 "armor of God" and trust that the God we trust in is far greater in power than any and all spiritual resistance we may face.
  - d) Let me explain this one more way, and then I'll move on. Jesus said, "This type of demon can only go away by fasting and prayer". My paraphrase of Matthew 17:21 or Mark 9:29. My point is I'd be thinking, what do you mean this kind? You mean more than one kind of demon exists? What Jesus meant is demons have "ranks" like an army has soldiers and leaders over that soldiers and some demons are higher in rank and have more power. Still the power of God is greater than whatever rank is out there. By trusting in His power we can defeat any spiritual resistance we face because His power is greater than all of them.
13. Verse 18: According to what they have done, so will he repay wrath to his enemies and retribution to his foes; he will repay the islands their due.
- a) Verse 18 is the "outcome" of that battle. It's essentially saying that when we trust God will give us victory over whatever dark forces we battle, we can have assurance He will win in that battle, so we can trust that by preparing to live a life as a witness for Him (again that's putting on the "Armor of God" as taught in Ephesians 6) we rely upon Him to defeat what we must battle in this world we can have assurance that He will win in the long run.
  - b) OK John, I've never seen a demon and I suspect neither have you. How do you know they exist and don't say because the bible says so! The best way I can describe them is to make an effort to tell others about Jesus and notice how things just happen that cause resistance to that effort. Use one's life to make a difference for Jesus and notice how problems start to occur to resist that effort. That's my proof that such dark forces exist and are real.
  - c) Before I move on, let me explain the word translated "islands". It is translated lots of ways in different versions. I believe the point is simply that even the most far away places from where Israel is located God will defeat the forces that prevent us from being His witness.
14. Verse 19: From the west, men will fear the name of the LORD, and from the rising of the sun, they will revere his glory. For he will come like a pent-up flood that the breath of the LORD drives along.
- a) Let's start by remembering the sun rises in the east. Therefore my rough translation of the first sentence is simply, people will come from all directions to revere God. This sentence is a prediction of all the non-Jewish people who will worship the Israelite God. Realize all the multitudes who've become Christians over the ages. That verse has literally come true as we non-Jewish people worship the God of the Israelites.
  - b) Notice the "he" of the second sentence. I'm convinced it refers to the Holy Spirit who leads us to realize that Jesus is God and want to worship the God of the bible.



- c) I say that because "He" is like a big flood that's "pent up" behind a dam and then comes to overflow an area. One has to admit that after Jesus rose from the dead, within a short time the growth of Christianity did come like a flood. Since this verse is referring to foreigners who are seeking the God of Israel, one can see how this verse literally came true centuries after it was written.
15. Verse 20: "The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins," declares the LORD. <sup>21</sup> "As for me, this is my covenant with them," says the LORD. "My Spirit, who is on you, and my words that I have put in your mouth will not depart from your mouth, or from the mouths of your children, or from the mouths of their descendants from this time on and forever," says the LORD.
- a) One has to admit, this final part of Chapter 59 reads a lot exactly how the early Christian did grow. That leads to the other key moment that has yet to occur in history. I'm taking about Jesus return to rule over the world and lead those of us who've turned from sin so as to let Jesus rule over lives. That's what Verse 20 is describing.
- b) By the way if you think I was way out in left field comparing the previous set of verses to the Holy Spirit guiding over the lives of believers, notice the Spirit is mentioned by name in Verse 20. This is an Old Testament reminder that once we have the gift of the Spirit of God within us (what we call the Holy Spirit), that gift is permanent.
- c) OK, time for a quick lesson on the Holy Spirit since I'm in the neighborhood. The purpose of the Spirit is to draw us closer to God. We don't pray directly to the Holy Spirit because His function is to lead us to God the Father. However, He's the one who guides us how to pray and to help us discern God's will for our lives. I'm convinced we can grieve the Spirit if we ignore God, but that gift is always part of the believer and guides us if and when we do turn back to Him. Obviously there's a lot more to the Spirit, but that's the basics.
- d) I give this little lecture here as the text reminds us that His spirit will be a part of the life of the believer from the time He first comes into all believers until the time Jesus returns. He will also remain a part of our "being" forever as part of our eternal existence.
16. Chapter 60, Verse 1. "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. <sup>2</sup> See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you. <sup>3</sup> Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.
- a) I admit I was debating between just covering Chapter 59 in this lesson or trying to quickly sneak in Chapter 60. I decided with the latter, as this chapter continues the same theme of realizing how God is working in the life of believers. Besides we are quickly approaching the end of this book, and I'm trying to make a run for the finish line of this marathon!
- b) Verse 1 addresses believers. It's essentially saying, since we realize that we're now to use our lives as a witness for God, and now that we realize we have God's power working in us (Holy Spirit), don't just sit there, but use our lives as a witness for Him. That's what is being said in Verse 1 when it says, "Arise....your light as come...glory of the LORD rises upon you...LORD rises...his glory is upon you." Of course this verse speaks of Jesus, as He'll rule over this world. I also see it as applying to believers as well.
- c) Let me explain this principal another way. When we look at the moon, we don't see it as a source of light, but we realize it's reflecting the sun's light upon the moon. That's how we are to see Jesus. Think of Him as the source of the light and think of believers as reflecting that light unto the world. That's how these verses describe what Jesus does with the Spirit of God upon Him and that's what we do as believers "reflecting" that light on the world.
- d) Let's face it, we are the nations "coming to that light" and even kings and leaders through all of history will one day be forced to acknowledge that Jesus rules over the world even if they don't want to let Him be in charge of their lives! That's why Paul says that there will be a day when all people will either acknowledge Jesus by free will or by force. Paul said this in Romans 14:11 and Philippians 2:10 to give some examples.

17. Verse 4: "Lift up your eyes and look about you: All assemble and come to you; your sons come from afar, and your daughters are carried on the arm.
- a) It's best to read this line as if Jesus is standing in Jerusalem as a victor over the world. At that future day in history, masses of people will come to see Him. As my regulars know, I am convinced that when we're resurrected, we'll exist in more than three dimensions. We will all be able to get close to Jesus because we'll exist that way. Traveling and travel cost will not be an issue as those who trust in Jesus will be able to approach Him in that day.
  - b) That's what this verse is saying. The reason that's here is to remind us that despite what we may have to deal with at the moment, it helps to keep the big picture in mind, that He will win in the end and He will lead us to overcome whatever we're dealing with now.
18. Verse 5: Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy; the wealth on the seas will be brought to you, to you the riches of the nations will come. <sup>6</sup> Herds of camels will cover your land, young camels of Midian and Ephah. And all from Sheba will come, bearing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the LORD.
- a) Let's start with the word "you". Yes of course I believe it refers to Jesus when His Second Coming occurs. I admit I'm fascinated by "your heart will throb and swell with joy". Will Jesus have a physical heart when He returns? Will our eternal bodies have real hearts to pump blood? Don't know. I just know that Jesus will always be human as well as being fully God forever and we'll be like Him. Whether that line is a metaphor or literal, either way it's saying Jesus will be filled with joy as He will have the privilege of spending all of eternity with those of us who trust in Him and want to draw close to Him.
  - b) That leads me to the rest of Verse 5 and all of Verse 6. The point is that people will bring expensive gifts to the Messiah when He returns. My question here is, "If God is God, and He has no need of anything, why do we have verses describing people bringing all sorts of gifts to Him in these verses? One can say it's from "our perspective" so that we realize we are honoring Him as God and bringing valuable things to Him. I also suspect it's here so that the Israelites will realize their land will be the center of lots of gifts being brought there to honor the Messiah when He returns. I don't think it's so Jesus can then sit there and say, "Look how rich I am from these gifts!" It's so those of us who are trusting in Him can look forward to this eternal relationship and realize we'll never have need of anything as where Jesus will be located will be a place of riches.
  - c) So in our modern world of cars and airplanes, will camels literally bring gold and incense to Jesus? Don't know. Since cars didn't exist in those days, camels were a word people do understand as a form of transportation of items. I could give you some history about the history of Midian, Ephah and Sheba, but let's just say they are ancient names for land that are associated with having lots of stuff. (Google those words/ places if interested in them.)
  - d) So why single out gold and incense? Why not a fancy car or even clothes? Realize that in the bible the word "gold" is associated with royalty as it's something precious. It's always had significant value throughout history. Incense is associated with priests. It's used as a way to communicate closeness with God. It's the idea of the smell of incense rising up to the sky, symbolically speaking of rising up to heaven. The point is gold is associated with the "royalty" of God and incense is associated with "priesthood". That's why the wise men brought baby Jesus, gold, incense and myrrh. We don't read of myrrh here, as that was an embalming substance associated with death. Since Jesus rose again, we don't need that in the Second Coming.
  - e) The final aspect of things brought to Jesus at His Second Coming is praise. Yes of course, we should be grateful when this "utopia" of a leader will rule over the world. I'd like you to consider for a moment, why do we praise God? Is it to boost His ego? Of course that is not it. Is it to whoop and holler and be heard by those around us? No. The issue isn't just that there will be a lot of noise when this occurs, it's all of us who're saved expressing our gratitude that God will bring His justice over a world that's corrupted by sin.

19. Verse 7: All Kedar's flocks will be gathered to you, the rams of Nebaioth will serve you; they will be accepted as offerings on my altar, and I will adorn my glorious temple.
- Yes I can explain to you where Kedar and Nebaioth are located. What's important is these are places where animal flocks were commonly kept in Isaiah's day. It'd be like saying, all of us know where those animals are kept. Sheep and rams will be taken from those places to be sacrificed.
  - John that's confusing. If all of the animal sacrifices in the Old Testament pointed to Jesus, why will there be sacrifices when Jesus returns? The last few chapters of Ezekiel also get into that issue. The short version is it'll be done as a remembrance of what Jesus did. It is a way to show our gratitude for what He did, and as usual, not a way to earn His love.
20. Verse 8: "Who are these that fly along like clouds, like doves to their nests?"
- Remember that Isaiah's trying to paint a word picture of the events that will occur at what we Christians call Jesus Second Coming. Now he's trying to describe "things" that appear to be flying in the sky? Some think this refers to angels. Others believe it refers to those of us who are saved. This is one place where people argue we have wings one day. I lean to the angel theory, but it's all speculation. The important point is that one way we can know of Jesus return is that the event will be filled with things that have never happened before in history.
21. Verse 9: Surely the islands look to me; in the lead are the ships of Tarshish, bringing your sons from afar, with their silver and gold, to the honor of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendor.
- When I see the word translated "islands" (King James uses "coastlands") I tend to think of a "far away land" from Israel's perspective. It's a way of saying people will come from all over the place to welcome the Messiah when he arrives.
  - If you look up Tarshish on "Wiki", there are all sorts of theories as to where it was. What we do know is the exact location has been debated for millenniums. Realize it is another "far away place" as to show that people will come from all over when Jesus returns.
  - Notice how the Messiah will be honored, as represented the God of the bible. There will be no doubt as to whom He is and whom He represents.
  - Again, we get references to valuable gifts given when Jesus return. Again, realize he does not need them, they are given as signs of gratitude. It also shows how wealthy Israel will be as a nation when all of this occurs.
22. Verse 10: "Foreigners will rebuild your walls, and their kings will serve you. Though in anger I struck you, in favor I will show you compassion.
- The "Jesus Praise Fest" ends in the middle of Verse 10. That first sentence here shows us other ways foreigners will honor Him when he comes.
  - That leads to the second sentence. To expand that idea, "Even though I (God) allowed all sorts of horrible things to occur to the Jewish nation (including twice being kicked out of that land, and the Holocaust as obvious examples), I (God) still am going to bless them as a nation not because they're better people than others, but only because I promised to give this land to them and Jesus will rule the world from that land.
  - As I love to state, why do you think the world hates Israel so much? I'm positive demonic forces are behind that hatred because if the nation of Israel doesn't exist, the Messiah can't reign from there when He returns.
23. Verse 11: Your gates will always stand open, they will never be shut, day or night, so that men may bring you the wealth of the nations-- their kings led in triumphal procession.
- The final verse of this book (I read ahead) also states that from one Sabbath to the next, all mankind will come bow before Him. We get a similar statement to that final verse here as we're being told how the old city gates of Jerusalem will never be shut. It's a way to tell us that when all of this occurs, we will never have to worry about a foreign army attacking.
  - It's the idea that when the Messiah returns, being attacked will no longer be a real fear!

24. Verse 12: For the nation or kingdom that will not serve you will perish; it will be utterly ruined.
- a) Speaking of no fear of being attacked by a foreign army, verse 12 tells us what'll happen to tries to attack say Israel after Jesus returns. To state the obvious many people do not want Jesus to rule over their lives. Here we learn what happens to groups that attempt to overthrow Him after He returns. Short version, "Don't mess with God, you'll lose!"
25. Verse 13: "The glory of Lebanon will come to you, the pine, the fir and the cypress together, to adorn the place of my sanctuary; and I will glorify the place of my feet.
- a) To the Israelites of Isaiah's day, "Lebanon" was the closest typography of "forests". It had a lot of trees. Going back to the days of Solomon, a few hundred years before Isaiah, logs were cut from Lebanon to make Solomon's palace. Little did I realize that those trees used to make his home were a model of the materials used to build Jesus home to worship Him when He returns. Remember that Jesus in His eternal state will always be man as well as being God. All I'm saying is when He returns to set up that eternal kingdom, He'll need a place to "hang his hat" and in the mind of the Israelites living back then, the best wood to make such a palace came from Lebanon.
  - b) Of all things, remember my lesson title: "It's worth it". We're reading examples of why it's worth the trouble of being one of Jesus' followers as all these verses in Chapter 60 give us previews of what life will be like when He returns. Previous verses discuss how safe we'll be as part of that kingdom and the riches that will flow there. Here we learn that the best materials are used to make this sanctuary to glorify Him.
26. Verse 14: The sons of your oppressors will come bowing before you; all who despise you will bow down at your feet and will call you the City of the LORD, Zion of the Holy One of Israel.
- a) Speaking of living "safely", this verse tells us that those who despite the idea that Jesus is God and don't want Him to rule over their lives will bow before Him. They'll be forced to honor Jesus as God whether they like it or not. Here's where probably where Paul got the idea that every knee will bow to Jesus whether they realize it or not. The important point is "we're betting on the winning horse, so we might as well appreciate it now!"
27. Verse 15: "Although you have been forsaken and hated, with no one traveling through, I will make you the everlasting pride and the joy of all generations.
- a) The big question here is the "who". Most likely it refers to Jesus Himself. Even though He was rejected by His own people and most Israelites don't consider Him to be the Messiah, He will still be the "pride and joy" of all generations that seek Him eternally.
  - b) Again, it's an example of us "Betting on the winning horse" and the benefits of it.
28. Verse 16: You will drink the milk of nations and be nursed at royal breasts. Then you will know that I, the LORD, am your Savior, your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.
- a) Verse 16 has an illustration that we don't use today. Just as a baby is nursed with milk as to grow up, so we will drink the milk (material blessings) of nations by our trust that He's the Messiah who will rule over the world.
  - b) Let me ask the "is it worth it" question a different way? How do we know all of this will be true? How do we know Isaiah didn't eat some spicy food and then have weird dreams of this future? The answer is his accuracy of history to date. He predicted the Babylonian rise and fall centuries before they were a player. A few chapters back he described details of Jesus death and resurrection centuries before it occurred. My point is if he's accurately described history to date, we can trust Isaiah to be a true prophet of God with the future.
  - c) Meanwhile we still have six more verses to go to prove to us "It's all worth it" and we are betting on the winning horse to use two of my favorite clichés in this lesson.
29. Verse 17: Instead of bronze I will bring you gold, and silver in place of iron. Instead of wood I will bring you bronze, and iron in place of stones. I will make peace your governor and righteousness your ruler.
- a) This verse simply tells us that Jesus will have the best materials we can think of to make a place for Him and us. He will rule the world with peace and righteousness.

- b) Most people know that Jesus said there are many mansions in "eternity". Since He'll have the best materials available I suspect building those mansions aren't an issue. (John 14:2 is that reference.) Again, the big picture idea is that we should take comfort in the fact that a trust in Jesus has eternal blessings and security beyond anything we can imagine.
30. Verse 18: No longer will violence be heard in your land, nor ruin or destruction within your borders, but you will call your walls Salvation and your gates Praise.
- a) By this time, I'm running out of adjectives to describe this. The key point throughout this section is simply that we won't have to worry about anything anymore, when we become a part of this glorious future. A good question to ponder is, if we no longer have to worry about anything, what's the challenge? What'll we do all day? One thing I'm sure of is that eternity won't be boring. This text's reassuring us we'll never have to worry on any issue, as such things as enemies are taken care of and supplies are taken care. We will be free to enjoy a relationship with Jesus without worries. So besides singing praises all of the time, what do we do there? Don't know all the details but I suspect it involves service and we'll have joy in our hearts as we're part of that service. I suspect we will never get tired of that service or have need of rest. It'll be an eternity full of joy. That's the big picture idea of the last dozen verses or so. OK, almost there.
31. Verse 19: The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you, for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. <sup>20</sup> Your sun will never set again, and your moon will wane no more; the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of sorrow will end.
- a) One of the things we haven't discussed in this eternal future is a source of light. Isaiah is telling us that won't be an issue. God Himself will be that physical light. Back when the world was first created, "Day 1" mentioned light shining upon it. The sun itself wasn't a part of that creation until Day 4 if my memory is correct. All I'm saying is "God's light" is a part of creation and will be our eternal light for us.
- b) The last part of Verse 20 is also a great reminder to us, "our days of sorrow will end". I've no idea what causes you to be sorrowful, but this eternity will end all sorrow as we won't have to worry about anything anymore.
32. Verse 21: Then will all your people be righteous and they will possess the land forever. They are the shoot I have planted, the work of my hands, for the display of my splendor. <sup>22</sup> The least of you will become a thousand, the smallest a mighty nation. I am the LORD; in its time I will do this swiftly."
- a) I realize I've gone through much of this chapter pretty quickly. I wanted all of you to see the big picture of how all of this is "worth it", and the benefits of trusting Jesus will be for all of eternity. Notice the word "forever" at the end of the first sentence. The way God is using our lives now for His glory will benefit us for us forever. Even the "least of us" will be a "mighty nation". Back in my introduction I talked about people who worry they have wasted their lives do date and haven't done much for God? This section ends by telling us that even the "least" of us will be a mighty nation. Again, I'm not sure what He'll have us doing for all of eternity, but I'm pretty positive we'll never be bored or without joy.
- b) Finally, let me talk about "swiftly". Let's be honest, Isaiah wrote this over 2,700 years ago. Where is the "swiftness"? Remember God lives in a world outside of time. No matter how long we get to live, this life is very short. Before we know it, it'll be over quickly and next we will be a part of this eternal life. OK, that's enough "It's all worth it" for one lesson!
33. Heavenly Father, We thank You that You've picked us to be a part of this eternal plan. We don't know why You choose us, but we show our gratitude to You now and for all of eternity as we do commit our lives to make a difference for You. Help us to realize that no matter what we have to deal with in this life, it is "nothing" compared to the glorious future we have by trusting in You to guide our lives for Your glory. Help us to trust in Your power as we use our lives for Your glory. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.