

True Fasting And The True Sabbath

Dr. Ronnie Wolfe – Isaiah #28
Isaiah 58 – March 1, 2017 – Wednesday

- I. THE WARNING AGAINST FALSE FASTS, 1-5
 - A. The Preaching Of The Prophet, 1
 1. In Isaiah 40:1 God told Isaiah to comfort his people – “Comfort ye my people”
 2. Now he tells Isaiah to “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet”
 3. Show the people their transgression
 4. Show the house of Jacob their sins.
 - B. The Problem With The Fasting, 2-5
 1. The form of their worship seems to be very good, 2
 - a. They seek the Lord daily, 2
 - b. They delight to know the ways of the Lord
 - c. They did righteousness – had a form of godliness – 2 Timothy 3:5 *Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*
 - d. They forsook not the ordinances of God – they went to church and carried out the religious activities of their religion.
 - e. They ask of God about the ordinances of justice – they had a desire to seek God’s justice in keeping the ordinances. They studied the law and prayed to God for guidance.
 2. Their fasting came short of God’s requirement, 3-4
 - a. They fast, but God does not see them, they say, 3
 - b. They have afflicted their souls, and God has not had knowledge of it, 3
 - c. They find pleasure in the act of doing the ordinances
 - d. And they “exact of their labors” (or went to much trouble) to do the fast as they thought it should be done. They were very meticulous as to how they were done and when they were done, etc.
 - e. They fast for strife and debate, 4
 - f. In other words, they fought over what kind, how much, and what pattern of worship they should perform in their fasting–disagreements among them concerning the details of the fast, 4
 - g. Then they would punish those who did not line up with their idea of fasting, their form and their teachings, 4
 - h. Isaiah was to explain to them that they are not to do fast in this way in order to make their voices heard on high, 4
 3. This is not God’s chosen fast, 5
 - a. Not for a man to afflict his soul
 - b. Not to bow down his head as a bulrush
 - c. Not to spread sackcloth and ashes as was the custom then
 - d. Isaiah says, “Wilt thou call this a fast?”
 - e. “Wilt thou call this “an acceptable day to the LORD?”

II. THE WAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, 6-7

A. The Fast The Lord Has Chosen, 6

1. To loose the bands of wickedness, or perhaps unjust judgment given to the poor, or unjust punishment for not keeping the religious activities as men have told them to do.
2. To undo the heavy burdens, which the religious men have put upon the people, to perform their religion according to what man says rather than understanding it from what God has said.
3. To let the oppressed go free and break every yoke. Those oppressed by the yoke of man's orthodoxy sets free the individual soul to see God as he really is, to listen to the true prophets of God and to have a personal joy in serving God the correct way instead of being in bondage to religious bigotry.
4. A false tithe – Matthew 23:23 *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*
5. A false fast – Luke 18:11-12 *The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.*

B. The Fast That Produces Righteous Acts, 7

1. Deal thy bread to the hungry
2. Bring the poor to your own house
3. Cover the naked
4. Do not hide yourself from your own flesh, your own family and kin. This could also, say some, have reference to your close neighbors and friends.
5. The fast is not just a matter of NOT EATING. It is an act of a person's conscience, getting in touch with God in a man's heart and making God ruler in all of life's affairs, having God to dictate our thoughts and actions, being righteous in our acts as the Holy Spirit gives us grace to do so.
6. That is true fasting.

III. THE WORTH OF REPENTANCE, 8-12

A. The Reality Of Repentance, 8

1. As people turn away from man's ordinances and begin to submit themselves to the Lord, they are truly repenting of their acts and following up on new actions and thoughts toward the Lord himself, 8
2. This is true repentance. Yes, believers can and do repent, and we as believers need conversion if we are practicing unbiblical thoughts or actions.

B. The Reward Of Repentance, 8-9

1. When they are turned, or have repented, the light breaks forth as the morning, from the darkness of false worship to the light of true worship.
2. Health will spring forth speedily, which means that the work of God will be in much better health than it is under the rule of man and his ordinances.
3. Their righteousness, which comes from their surrender to God and obedience to his

word, will go before them. Their righteousness is so entrenched in their minds and hearts that the righteousness they have from God will go before them to help them make strong and righteous decisions when it is time to decide whether to worship the Lord or the world.

4. The righteousness is in front of them, going before them.
5. And the LORD will be their *rereward*, which means the rear of them. God will be behind them as they go forward in righteousness. END VERSE 8
6. The Lord will answer their prayers. He will say “Here I am” 9a
7. Now the condition of God’s blessings, 9b-12
 - a. Take away the yoke, man’s ordinances and the religiosity that they have followed.
 - b. Take away the pointing of the finger to those who would not follow man’s rules.
 - c. Take away speaking vanity, the vain prayers that were said and perhaps the chanting that was prescribed by man and not God.
 - d. Draw out the soul to the hungry
 - e. Satisfy the afflicted soul
 - f. THEN “shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day.”
 - g. AND “the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought and make fat they bones; 11
 - h. AND “thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. 11
 - i. AND then the old waste places will be built, not the old buildings and the walls, but the old idea of depending completely upon the Lord and surrendering to him completely in the soul and in the conscience, worshiping and serving him dutifully that peace may come to the soul, 12
 - j. The foundations of many generations shall be raised up.
 - k. Just as many of these ones will go back into Jerusalem and rebuild many things, so many hearts will be mended, and the new covenant of grace will be opened to many who will believe in the Messiah and have eternal life.
 - l. These ones will be called “The repairer of the breach . . .”
 - (1) This, no doubt, first refers to the many works of repair they will do when they leave their captivity from Babylon.
 - (2) But this also has, I think, to do with the coming together of the great breach between the Jew and the Gentile, whereby the great wall of partition is broken down and all have come night unto God.
 - (3) Ephesians 2:14 *For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;*

IV. THE WAY OF THE SABBATH, 13-14

- A. Having now dealt with Fasting, Isaiah now turns to the teaching of the Sabbath, which everyone knows is the most referenced law in the Old Testament.
- B. Obligations To The Sabbath, 13
 1. Do not do casual traveling on the Sabbath. You must turn away from traveling too far or traveling for your own pleasure.
 2. The Sabbath is to be a day of delight, delighting in the word of God and other godly

things we may do on this day.

3. We must consider it “the holy of the LORD.”
 4. We must consider it “honourable” to honor God in it
 5. We are not to do our own ways, to have our own fun, our own will, making capricious decisions, whether we go to church or not go to church, whether we are to worship or not to worship, whether we should go to the beach or worship God in his house.
 6. “Not finding thine own pleasure, or speaking thine own words.”
 - a. That is a great challenge.
 - b. Many have their own opinions and do their own pleasure.
 - c. The Sabbath is not given for pleasure; it is given for worship to God and obedience to God’s word.
- C. The Benefit Of Observing The Sabbath, 14
1. “Delight thyself in the Lord”
 2. “Ride upon the high places of the earth” – nothing shall defeat us on the earth. We are citizens of heaven.
 3. We will feed on the heritage, or the inheritance, of Jacob.
 - a. Titus 3:7 *That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*
 - b. Galatians 3:29 *And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.*
 4. “For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”
 - a. Isaiah 55:11 *So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*