

**ISAIAH: GOD'S DIRECTIVES TO THOSE TROUBLED AT GOVERNMENTAL APOSTASY**  
**Part XLV: God's Salvation From Empty Worship Experiences**  
**(Isaiah 58:1-14)**

**I. Introduction**

- A. When we gather to worship the Lord in our Church services, we expect to encounter the Lord's evident blessing in the process.
- B. However, we may have experienced an unusual dearth of God's blessing at such times, and perhaps we are wondering what may be missing in our rapport with God in our worship.
- C. Isaiah addressed this need in Isaiah 58:1-14 in a way that speaks a timeless message on proper worship:

**II. God's Salvation From Empty Worship Experiences, Isaiah 58:1-14.**

- A. According to Isaiah 58:2, the people of Israel thought they were conducting themselves well in worship.
- B. However, they had noticed a lack of God's blessing in their worship experiences, Isaiah 58:3a.
- C. For His part, the Lord strongly condemned the people of Israel for sin, Isaiah 58:1; this sin came from violations of true worship in **God's** estimation, and Isaiah 58:3b-4, 9d and 13a,d illuminate this:
  - 1. Though the people went without food in worship to show their dedication to God, they also forcibly held back wages (and its resulting food) owed to employees until it led to marketplace unrest, 58:3b-4.
  - 2. Though they worshipped God with nice liturgy, they talked maliciously about each other, Isa. 58:9d.
  - 3. Though the people fasted, they gratified their pleasures without thinking about pleasing God while fasting, thus violating the whole purpose of these fasts, Isaiah 58:13a.
  - 4. Though the people fasted, they violated the Sabbath day rules about restricted travel, Isa. 58:13b,c.
  - 5. Though they worshipped God in using nice liturgy, the people also spoke vain words on the worship days that did not exalt, making their liturgy hypocritical and thus worthless to God, Isa. 58:13d.
- D. God accordingly recommended the following improvements in the worship practices of the people so He could bless the nation:
  - 1. Besides holding food back from their bodies in religious fasts, God urged His worshippers to address the needs of the financially destitute who had been oppressed so unjustly, Isaiah 58:5-6.
  - 2. Indeed, the Lord suggested specific needs of the oppressed be met -- needs like food, housing, clothing, etc., Isaiah 58:7, 9b, 10a.
  - 3. God claimed He would answer prayers of those who called out to Him in true distress as opposed to answering prayers of hypocrites who said nice liturgy while later speaking vain things, Isa. 58:9a,b, 13d
  - 4. God said He would replace depression and fear with confidence and joy for those who repented of talking with vain words on the Sabbath or speaking maliciously of their neighbor, 58:10b, 14, 13a, 9d.
  - 5. God said He would satisfy the livelihood needs of His true worshippers in times of drought, 58:11b.
  - 6. God claimed He would respond to such true worship by giving better health in the nation's economy so that building construction of new homes on ghost town sites would occur, Isaiah 58:12.

***Lesson:*** *Though God related to Israel under the dispensation of the Law where the Mosaic Covenant's alternate blessing and cursing applied due to Israel's respective obedience or disobedience of God, we know from God's judgment on Corinthian Christians for abusing the Lord's Table in 1 Corinthians 11:29-30 that God takes SERIOUSLY our worship attitude and behavior in the Church services TODAY! We thus do well to pay heed to how we worship God in our Church TODAY!*

***Application:*** *(1) If we lack God's clear blessing or interaction with us in our worship experience today, and we also notice special problems in some realm of our lives, we should examine (among all other areas of life) our WORSHIP attitudes and practices where we worship the Lord: (a) if we find we harbor malicious attitudes or have expressed harmful words toward others, (b) if we have cheated others in some way or (c) if we have focused on personal pleasures or spoken vain words while we were giving the appearance of honoring the Lord, our worship is sinful, and we must REPENT! (2) May we thus LEARN that our PURPOSE of meeting to worship is NOT to impress other people or to please ourselves, but to honor God from the heart: GOD takes note of our thoughts and acts in accord with our lives lived all week long to see if we worship Him in spirit and in truth in Church meetings!*