

Isaiah

Chapter 58-59

Christ Church

Winter 2026

- In 58-59 the Lord is moving to the new heavens and new earth (Isaiah 65:17-25).
- The Lord has sent His Servant to bear human guilt and justify the ungodly (52-53)
- He pours out His Spirit (32:15; 34:16; 42:1; 44:3-5; 61:1) with tastes of future glory
- He wants His church NOW to serve as a model for what the future is going to be
- What is Isaiah's message
 - It's challenging
 - It's blunt

- 2 Chronicles 16:9

“For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. You have done a foolish thing, and from now on you will be at war.”

- In v. 1 God brings out the ***big gun*** of prophetic confrontation
- He is aiming at the conviction of sin
- Note that they're not trashing the Ten Commandments – v. 2.
- You would probably join a church that v. 2 describes
- Isaiah wouldn't – v. 3a is what they were really thinking



- The topic is ***fasting***
 - There was only one specifically commanded and standing fast in the OT – see Leviticus 16:29
 - The other commanded fast is Joel 1:14; 2:12-15
 - All other fasts were imposed in crises – see II Samuel 12:23; I Kings 21:9; II Chronicles 20:3; Ezra 8:21; Nehemiah 9:1; Esther 4:3; 9:31; Psalm 35:13; 69:10; 109:24; Jeremiah 14:12; 36:6; Daniel 9:3; Zechariah 7:3; 8:19

- They have been fasting and humbling themselves



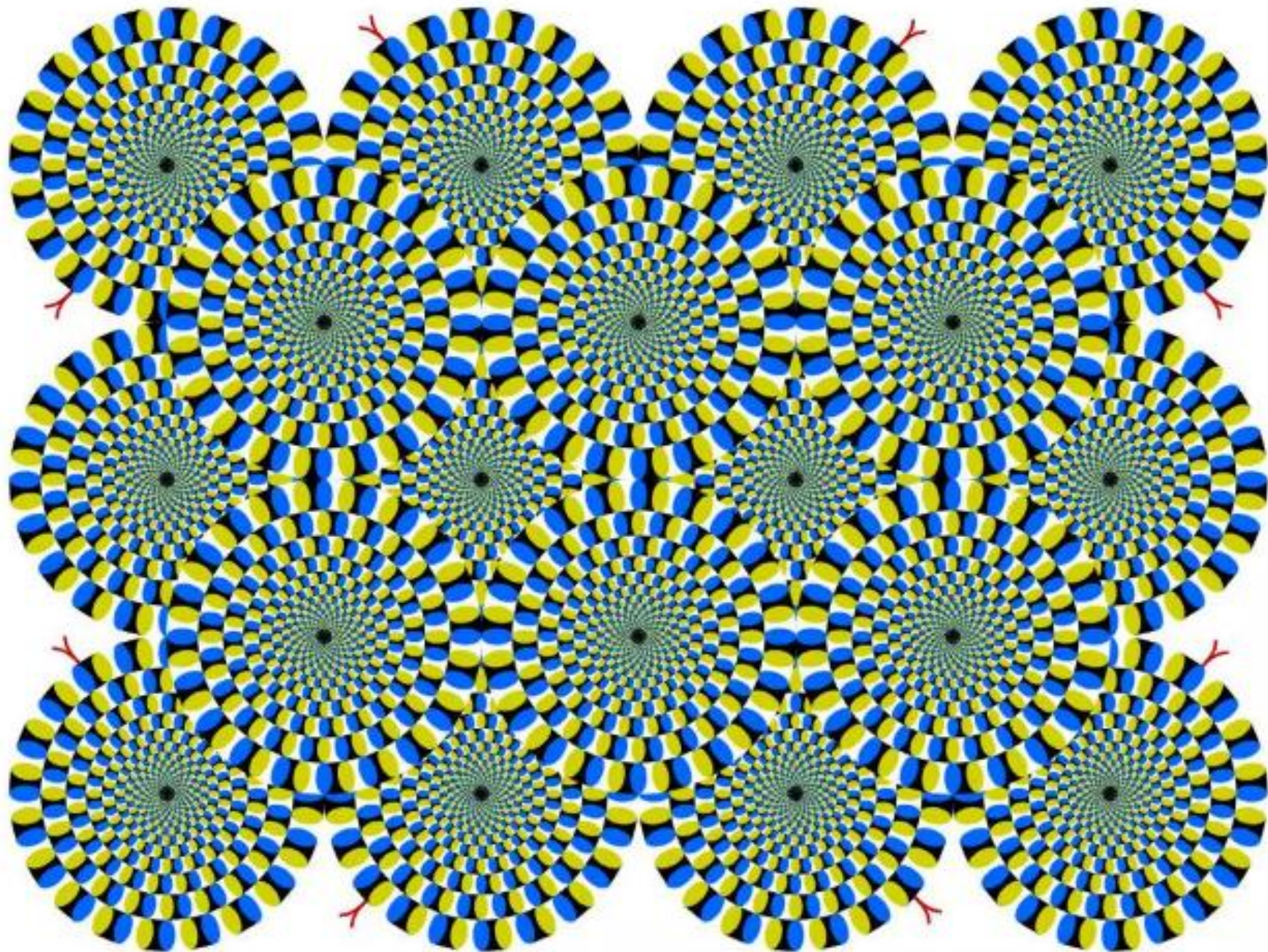
- Their '*Why?*' in v. 3 is not a request for information/instruction

- They are actually dumping their frustration on the Lord
- You can be both pious and angry at God at the same time



- Isaiah is confronting role-playing righteousness – to seek the Lord and to seem **like** people who seek the Lord
- Note where Isaiah discerns their shallowness - vv. 3b-5
- We don't connect the dots between fasting and seeking the Lord. We think in pieces; bits. Our attention span is short
- Illustration – '*saccadic masking*'





- “Can you believe if a person who can completely see is blind almost 40 mins to an hour per day? This phenomenon is called Saccadic Masking, also known as (visual) Saccadic Suppression. It is a visual illusion where the **brain selectively blocks visual processing during our eye movements.**”
- “A saccade is a quick, simultaneous movement of both eyes between two or more phases of fixation points in the same direction. **Humans become effectively blind during a saccade.**”

- We can't compensate for neglect in one area of life by observance in another
- Isaiah takes fasting as his example. God doesn't want us to prove our devotion to Him by making ourselves hungry and miserable while neglecting our duty to the hungry. See James 1:27

- One insight is worth noting: “*Christianity must be deeply internal and personal. But if it stops there, it’s just a spare-time hobby.*” Ray Ortlund, Isaiah, p. 388
- In vv.6,7 we’re reminded of our responsibility to cold, hungry, and suffering people



- True religion gets us busy, doing what we can about poverty, human trafficking, political manipulation, slavery, etc.
- The law is summed in: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ (Galatians 5:13, 14)
- Here is His promise – vv. 8, 9a
- Here is His correction – vv. 9b-10a
- Here is another promise – v. 11
- And another – v. 12
- His expectation – vv. 13, 14

- Isaiah 59:1-11 is a lengthy description of fallen, ***depraved mankind***
 - vv. 1-2 looks back to 58:1-3. “What’s the matter with God”?
 - vv. 3-4 give the evidences of a broken social system – viz. violence and injustice
 - In v. 4 Isaiah gives another one of his famous **graphic illustrations**



- vv. 3ff. This is a ***wasf*** song
- “In *waṣf* love poems, each part of a lover's body is described and praised in turn, often using exotic, extravagant, or even far-fetched metaphors. The Song of Solomon is a prominent example of such a poem, and other examples can be found in the Thousand and One Nights. The images given in this type of poetry are not literally descriptive. Instead, they convey the delight of the lover for the beloved, where the lover finds freshness and splendor in the body as a reflected image in the world. Other varieties of *waṣf* include literary riddles.” Wikipedia

The Song of Solomon Illustrated

"How beautiful you are, my darling,
how beautiful you are!

...Your eyes are like doves behind
your veil...

...Your hair is like a flock of goats...

...Your teeth are like a flock of
newly shorn ewes...

...Your lips are like a scarlet
thread...

...Your temples are like a slice
of pomegranate...

...Your neck is like the
tower of David ... built
with rows of stones
on which are hung a
thousand shields...

...Your two breasts are
like two fawns,
twins of a gazelle
which feed among the
lilies...

...Your lips, my bride,
drip honey ... honey and
milk are under your tongue,

And the fragrance of your
garments is like the
fragrance of Lebanon...

...Your navel is a round goblet...

Your belly is like
a heap of wheat...

...your nose is like
tower of Lebanon
which faces toward
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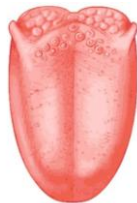
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- In vv.3ff. we have a ***wasf*** parody
- ‘hands’, ‘fingers’ – v. 3
- ‘lips’, ‘tongue’ – v. 4
- ‘feet’ – v. 6
- ‘eyes’ – v. 10
- ‘backs’ – v. 13



- In v. 8 we have a catalogue of words for Isaiah's 'high-way'
 - *'high-way'*
 - *'road'*
 - *'path'*
- As previously observed – the 'high-way' is an extremely important theme in Isaiah. By my count there are 87 references in Isaiah to it
- A sampling – 7:3; 11:16; 19:23; 26:7; 33:8; 40:3; 42:16; 43:16; 49:11; 58:12; 62:10
- No wonder that Jesus uses this theme in His 6th "I Am" in John 14:6

- vv. 12-15a seem to be a ***confession*** of sin. It is a shared confession – 1st person plural.
 - See Isaiah 6:5
 - This isn't a regret over a slip-up. This is a recognition of the incapacity of all mankind to produce 'justice' and 'righteousness'
- Isaiah seems hopeless here, but that is not what he is shooting for. The prophet is showing the need for something more than God's discipline and human's good intentions

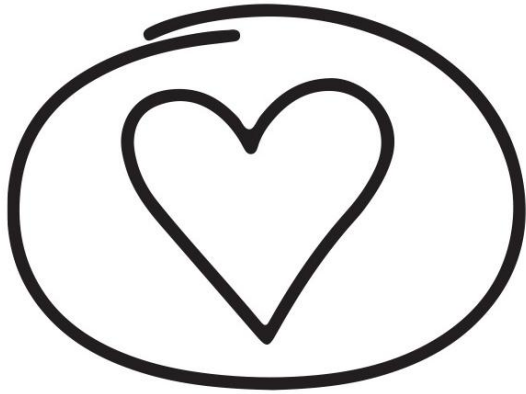
- vv. 15b-21 is a description of God's salvation. It has its own ***wasf*** (of the Lord)
 - 'eyes' (implied) – v. 15b
 - 'arm' – v. 16
 - 'chest' (implied) , 'head' – v. 17

- God will come and do for His people what they're incapable of
 - He will defeat sin
 - He will defeat the power of sin in their lives



- Note that this is an unfolding of the Gospel presentation
- ***Sin – Confession - Salvation***

GOD'S DESIGN



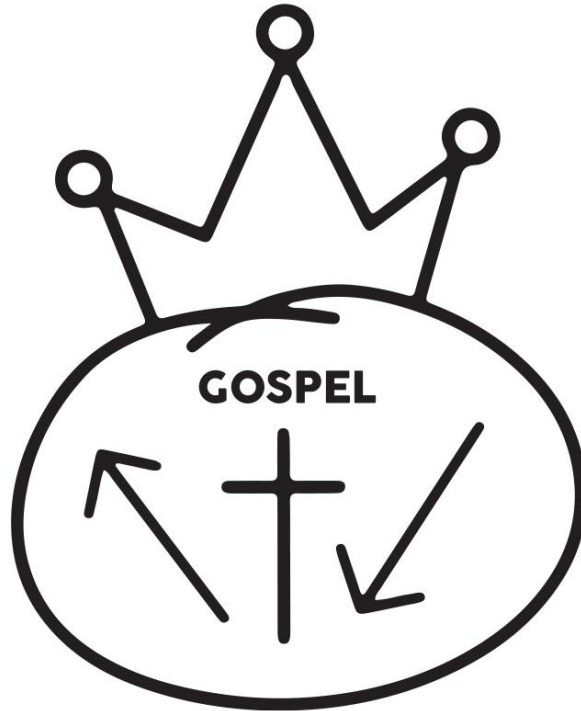
SIN



BROKENNESS



RECOVER & PURSUE



GOSPEL

REPENT & BELIEVE

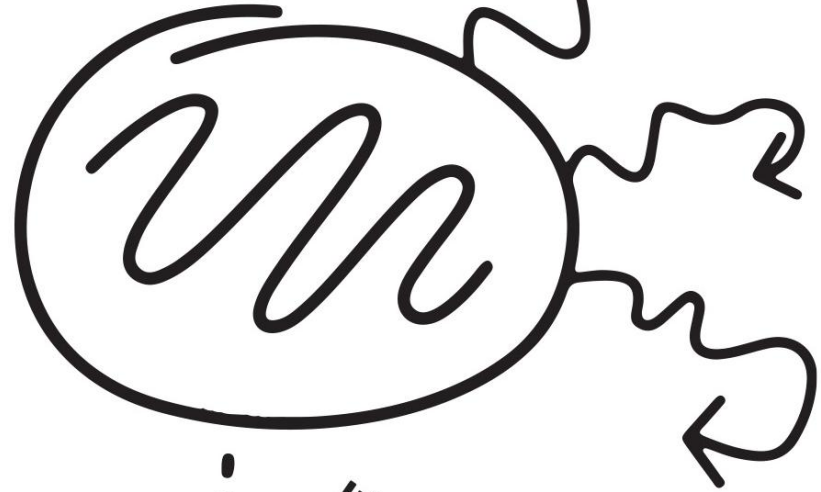


Isaiah 59:1-11

BROKENNESS

GOD'S DESIGN

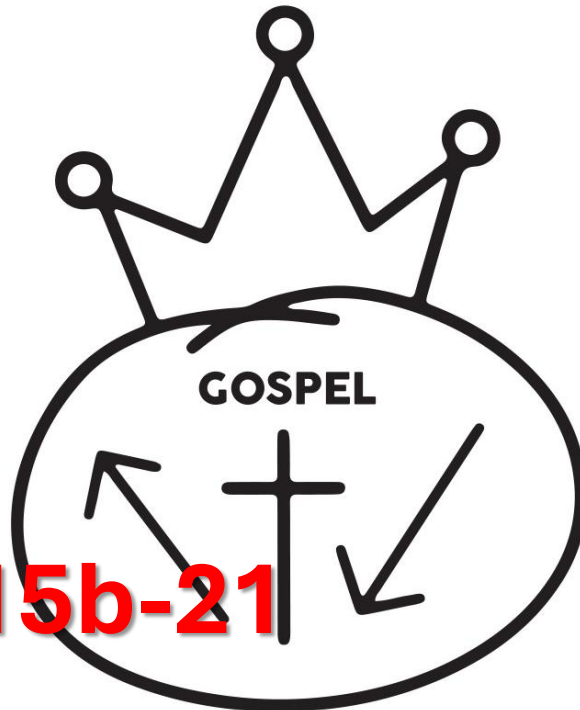
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RECOVER & PURSUE

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GOSPEL



Isaiah 59:12-15a

Isaiah 59:15b-21

- v. 21 concludes all that has been said in Isaiah 56-59
- This is the fulfillment of the 'covenant of peace'. See 54:10; 55:3-5