

THE SAVIOUR'S MESSAGE TO THE HYPOCRITES: GUILTY OF DECEPTIVE, PHONY BEHAVIOUR ISAIAH 58:01–14

Introduction

A hypocrite is a person who pretends, puts on a show, acts out something he or she is not. Many people are hypocrites:

- => They act as though they believe and love God, yet they do not truly trust or obey God's holy commandments.
- => They pretend to be seeking God, but their hearts are in reality seeking recognition, esteem, position, power, fame or wealth.
- => They act humble and helpful; nevertheless, they are full of pride, envy, selfishness and covetousness.
- => They show a concern for the things of God at the same time their hearts are set on the things of the world.
- => They profess to know and believe God's Word, but they add to or take away from His Word at their own discretion and live as they wish instead of obeying God's Word.

In the present Scripture, God spoke directly to the hypocrites of Isaiah's day. What He said is applicable to every generation. This is, *The Saviour's Message to the Hypocrites: Guilty of Deceptive, Phony Behaviour*; Isaiah 58:1-14.

- I. The deceptive behaviour of religious hypocrites (vv. 1-5a).
- II. The specific behaviour demanded by God (vv. 5b-7).
- III. The results of righteous behaviour: God's promises (vv. 8-12).
- IV. The importance of keeping the Sabbath day holy (vv. 13-14).

I. Isaiah 58:01–05 Hypocritical Behaviour of the Religious

Hypocrites must be told their behaviour is phony, hypocritical. They are guilty of dangerous transgression and sin. God instructed Isaiah to address this message to the *house of Jacob*, which is Israel. But God also said that the message was addressed to *my people*. This makes the message applicable to every generation of believers. This message is very important. It is so significant that the prophet was to shout it aloud, raising his voice like a trumpet: "Spare not. Do not hold back from proclaiming the truth," God says. Make sure everyone hears the message and that they hear the truth. They are guilty of dangerous transgression and sin. By *transgression* is meant rebellion. God's people are deliberately rebelling against Him, turning away from His holy commandments. Although they professed to know the LORD and to be following Him,

they lived hypocritical lives. They were living dangerous lives that could doom them to the judgment of God:

1. The devious behaviour of hypocrites is sad, for in most cases they do not see their own sins. They have actually deceived themselves. Despite being guilty of terrible sin, they continue their regular religious activities in the belief that God accepts them. They believe they are good enough and do enough good works that, in the final analysis, God will never reject them. No matter how deeply sin is rooted in their lives, they still believe they are acceptable to God. They are convinced that they are *eternally secure*. Many religious hypocrites can make some strong pious claims because they are consistently faithful to their religious beliefs despite their sinful behaviour. God says that some hypocrites can even make the following four claims:
 - => They seek God daily; that is, they have a daily devotional or worship time, either in their home or worship centre (v. 2).
 - => They are eager to learn God's ways, to study His Word so they will know how to live righteous lives and please the LORD.
 - => They pray for guidance, seeking to make right and just decisions in their behaviour toward others.
 - => They worship and seek the LORD on a regular basis throughout the day, drawing near to Him in fellowship and communion.
2. But note what Scripture says: these are deceptive claims, for the hypocrites have forsaken the commandments of God and are not living righteously. Their hearts and day-to-day behaviour are a far cry from what God requires (vv. 3b-5). God demands a *personal relationship* with and *obedience* from His true followers. Hypocrites, however, confuse the issue. They substitute religion or church membership for a personal relationship with the LORD; and they equate *good works* with obedience to His commands. For the most part, hypocrites believe that good deeds are what make them acceptable to God. Therefore, they feel they can do what they wish just as long as they do enough good deeds.

Seeking God daily, being eager to learn His Word, praying and drawing near to the Lord throughout the day are all necessary to maintain a strong spiritual life and relationship with the LORD. But engaging in these worshipful activities while neglecting to behave righteously is hypocritical. This was the indictment of God against many of the Jews in Isaiah's day. And it has been God's indictment against many down through the centuries. They "have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof" (2 Tim 3:5). Their hearts are far from God, and their daily behaviour does not conform to the commandments of God. The prophet Isaiah described how they act. Note the feeble Behaviour of hypocrites:

- a. Some hypocrites complain to God that He has not noted their fasting or prayer, not met their needs or blessed them (v. 3). When trials or crises arise, they seek the LORD

- for help, even to the point of fasting. But they think God appears disinterested in their needs and seems to be ignoring their prayers. Thus, they question God, asking why He had not heard their cries. What they are overlooking is the importance of simply obeying God, for God considers obedience even better than offerings and sacrifices (1 Sam 15:22).
- b. Many hypocrites live selfishly (v. 3). Using fasting as an example, they will set aside a day to fast, but instead of spending the day in prayer, they selfishly go about their regular daily routines and activities. Professing to be followers of the LORD, many people faithfully participate in religious services, rituals and ceremonies. However, directly after the religious activity, they return to their selfish ways. They live as they want, indulging the flesh and becoming entangled with the sinful pleasures of the world. Ignoring the commandments of God, they seek to please themselves and do their own thing, regardless of what God says.
 - c. Other hypocrites are guilty of exploiting those who work under their supervision (v. 3c). One moment they proclaim to know the LORD, and the next they are like slave drivers who abuse the people working under them. In certain cases, they are even guilty of extortion, stealing from their workers or employees by paying them low wages or shorting them hours worked or wages paid. Cheating their workers and being overbearing in their demands, these hypocritical employers or managers forget the commandments of God (Col 4:1).
 - d. A number of hypocrites are divisive (v. 4). The picture being painted by Scripture is tragic. Some were arguing and fighting even after fasting and as soon as they walked out of worship. Think how many families every week walk out of worship and quickly return to their divisive behaviour, quarrelling and treating each other coldly. Despite living under the same roof, they shut one another out and live what amounts to separate lives. This is phony and insincere. Think also about church members who are divisive within the church, who fuel or initiate heated discussions that at times, regrettably, lead to a split within the church. This is hypocritical behaviour at its worst.
 - e. Most, if not all, hypocrites expect God to bless them despite their sinful, wicked behaviour (v. 4). Nevertheless, God is very clear in this passage: “You cannot fast [pray, seek God] as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high” (v. 4 NIV). God will not bless hypocrites. He will not answer their prayers until they have confessed and repented of their sins. No matter how religious they are or how many good deeds they do, God will not accept people who continue to live wickedly and disobey His commandments.
 - f. Hypocrites are themselves deceived, for they think the LORD will accept their religious behaviour (v. 5a). Again the example given is that of fasting, for fasting is considered above and beyond “normal” religious activity. And the picture is that of religious people, those who confess the LORD, attend worship services faithfully, and perform good deeds. But these people do even more. When difficult times come

or a crisis arises, they set aside a day or more for fasting and seeking the LORD in prayer. They humble themselves, bow their heads, and even put on sackcloth and ashes. Because of their commitment to religion and their religious activity, they feel confident that the LORD will accept, bless and look after them. But God is clear: as important as it is to attend church and do good deeds, these activities are not His first demand. What God demands is given in the next point (point 2).

Thought 1. Throughout the Holy Scriptures God has much to say about hypocrisy and false religion. Take note of just a few references:

Mat 15:7-9 *“You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: ‘These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.’”*

Mat 23:13 *“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men’s faces. You yourselves do not enter; nor will you let those enter who are trying to. (see vv. 14-33).*

Mat 23:28 *“In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.”*

Mat 24:48-51 *“But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, ‘My master is staying away a long time,’ And he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

Mark 7:6 He replied, *“Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: ‘These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.’”*

Luke 6:46 *“Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?”*

Luke 12:56-57 *“Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky. How is it that you don’t know how to interpret this present time? Why don’t you judge for yourselves what is right?”*

Rom 2:21-22 *You, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? (See also vv. 17-29. see outline and notes, Rom 2:17-29).*

Rom 16:17-18 *I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people.*

1 Tim 4:1-2 *The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.*

Titus 01:15-16 *To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.*

Ezek 33:31-32 *My people come to you [the prophet, the preacher], as they usually do, and sit before you to listen to your words, but they do not put them into practice. With their mouths they express devotion, but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain. Indeed, to them you are nothing more than one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays an instrument well, for they hear your words but do not put them into practice.*

II. **Isaiah 58:05b–07 Behaviour Demanded by God**

The specific behaviour demanded by God is spelled out (v. 5b-7). The prophet must explain God's demands as well as the phony behaviour of hypocrites. Hypocrites must understand exactly what they must do to become *truly acceptable* to God. Five specific behaviours are discussed.

1. Hypocrites must become humble (v.5). *Humbling oneself* or *afflicting one's soul* means to acknowledge the LORD and one's total dependence upon Him. It is not enough for people to set aside one day a week to seek the LORD through worship or fasting. God is to be acknowledged seven days a week. If people profess the LORD, they are to humble themselves before Him, acknowledging that He alone is to be worshipped and served. As LORD, He is to be obeyed. His holy commandments are to be kept. People are God's *subjects*, created for the very purpose of worshipping and serving Him. None of us have the right to act as though we were *lord*, living as we please and doing whatever we want. To the contrary, all people must walk humbly before the LORD day by day, acknowledging that He alone has the right to dictate how life is to be lived.

Luke 18:16-17 *But Jesus called the children to him, and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them: for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."*

2 Cor 7:10 *Godly sorrow [humility] brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.*

Psa 34:18 *The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.*

2. Hypocrites must continually bow their heads, seeking and praying to the LORD (v. 5). Again, it is not enough to set aside one day for fasting and prayer. True believers pray continually throughout the day, offering up praise to the LORD for His great salvation and blessings. Moreover, when they spend a daily time in worship (devotions) or

sense the need to set aside a special time for seeking the LORD, they do it privately, in secret, without attracting attention. Understanding the richness of God's salvation and the preciousness of His fellowship, they have a very special place where they meet with the LORD in their daily devotions. Whether in a prayer garden, a private closet or elsewhere, they fellowship and commune with the LORD on a daily basis as well as on special occasions. Communing and fellowshiping with the LORD are an ongoing, continuous experiences for believers. When their minds are not focused upon their work or another essential activity, they take moments here and there to acknowledge and praise their Saviour. What a contrast between true believers and hypocrites!

Mat 26:41 *“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”*

John 16:24 *“Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.”*

Rom 8:26 *In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.*

Eph 6:18 *And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.*

1 Th 5:17 *Pray continually.*

3. Hypocrites must make every day acceptable to the LORD by obeying Him (v. 5c). Seeking to make one day a week pleasing to God is not enough, not to the LORD. Every day is to belong to the LORD. Every day is to be a day of prayer, a day of seeking His guidance and protection. God is not interested in people just one day a week. God loves and cares about what happens to us all the time — seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day. He also cares about what we do every moment of every hour of every day. Obeying God is a continual demand. It is never optional. We cannot choose which of the commandments we want to obey and when we want to obey them. God's commandments are to be the pattern of our lives, determining how we behave and conduct ourselves. A day becomes acceptable to God when we follow His holy commandments and live righteous and pure lives.

Mat 7:21-23 *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, I never knew you. Away from me, you evil doers!”*

John 14:21 *“Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.”*

John 14:23 *Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him."*

Titus 1:16 *They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.*

4. Hypocrites must be just in their dealings with everyone (v. 6). To God, a true fast is living an honourable and equitable life, treating others as we wish to be treated (Mt. 7:12; Lk. 6:31). The chains of unrighteousness and injustice must be broken. Every yoke of bondage must be removed. Any control or restraint that subjects or enslaves must be loosened, untied. The oppressed and exploited must be set free. Mercy must be shown to all who suffer and are burdened. It is only the merciful who will be blessed by God. Only the merciful will receive the mercy of God (Mt. 5:7). Think about people down through history and in everyday life who oppress other people (dictators, world leaders, criminals, employers, next door neighbours, even family members). Yet many of them profess to know the LORD and are faithful in their worship and religious activities. "Hypocrites," God says. "Cry aloud! Shout it aloud!" They are hypocrites. Unacceptable. Even though they worship God and go to church, when they manipulate or mistreat others in any way, they are hypocrites. No matter what they proclaim or what religious activity they engage in, they are unacceptable to God.

Mat 07:12 *"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."*

Mat 22:39 *"Love your neighbour as yourself."*

John. 15:12 *"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."*

Rom 12:9 *Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.*

Rom 12:10 *Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves.*

1 Cor 13:4 *Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.*

Eph 4:32 *Be kind and compassionate to one other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*

Col 3:12 *Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.*

Deu 24:14 *Do not take advantage of a hired man who is poor and needy, whether he is a brother Israelite or an alien living in one of your towns.*

Prov 14:31 *He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker; but whoever is kind to the needy honours God.*

5. Hypocrites must minister to the needy (v. 7). The only behaviour acceptable to God is feeding the hungry, providing shelter for the homeless, and clothing the poor (Gal 6:10). Turning a blind eye to the needs of others is clearly disgraceful, furthermore,

a person must not turn away from helping a family member who truly needs help. Note this fact: the LORD talking not only about making a gift to meet the needs of the poor but also about *sharing* one's own food, shelter and clothing if needed.

Luke 10:30-36 *In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he travelled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper: 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"*

John 21:16 *Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."*

Acts 10:38 *How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.*

Rom 13:10 *Love does no harm to its neighbour. Therefore love is the fulfilment of the law.*

Ga1 6:1-2 *Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.*

Ga1 6:9-10 *Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time he will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.*

James 1:27 *Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.*

III. Isaiah 58:08–12 God's Reward for Righteous Behaviour

The hypocrite must be challenged with the results of righteous behaviour (vv. 8-12). God makes some wonderful promises to the hypocrite who will repent and do the specific behaviour He has spelled out above. Seven wonderful promises are given:

1. Hypocrites who repent will receive *light and healing* from the LORD. This refers to salvation, the light that broke forth and the healing that was provided with the coming of Christ, the promised Messiah (v. 8).

John 1:4 *In him was life, and that life was the light of men.*

John 8:12 *When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

2 Cor 4:6 *For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.*

Eph 5:14 *This is why it is said: "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."*

2. Hypocrites who repent will receive the righteousness and protection of God (v. 8b). Righteousness is the result of salvation. Once people turn to the LORD, God covers them with His own righteousness. As a result, they appear righteous in His eyes. Amazing! In addition, they are guaranteed the presence and protection of the LORD.

Mat 5:20 *"For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven."*

2 Cor 5:21 *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

Heb 13:5-6 *Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"*

2 Chr 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."*

Psa 34:7 *The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.*

Isa 41:10 *So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

Isa 43:1-2 *But now, this is what the LORD says he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze."*

3. Hypocrites who repent will have their prayers answered. When they call upon the LORD, He promises to hear and answer. But hypocrites must turn absolutely away from their oppression and mistreatment of others. They must also stop pointing fingers at people and engaging in wicked talk such as malicious gossip and profanity.

Luke 11:9 *"So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."*

John 14:13-14 “And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.”

John. 15:7 “If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.”

1 John 3:22-23 And receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him. And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.

4. Hypocrites who repent will become a light, a strong witness to people in their dark hour of personal need (v. 10). When true believers minister to those in need, all the darkness and gloom surrounding their lives will be swept away by the light of their witness.

Mat 5:14 “You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.”

Eph 5:8-11 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light. For the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth. And find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.

Phil 2:14-16 Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labour in vain.

5. Hypocrites who repent will receive God's guidance and strength (v. 11a). And God promises that His guidance will be *permanent*. He will faithfully direct those who have truly repented and who turn to Him in faith and obedience.

John 16:13 “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.”

Psa 25:9 He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.

Psa 48:14 For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end.

Psa 73:24 You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory.

6. Hypocrites who repent will receive the provision and strength of the LORD to meet every need (v. 11). In fact, God will give them *abundant* provision and strength. Even in the drought of a sun-scorched land, the LORD will provide whatever believers need to strengthen them as they walk through trials and hardships. The reference to a well-watered spring that never fails indicates that God will provide for every need, both physical and spiritual.

Phil 4:19 And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

Heb 2:17-18 *For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.*

Heb 4:15-16 *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

1 Pet 5:7 *Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.*

Deu 33:27 *The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. He will drive out your enemy before you, saying, 'Destroy him!'*

Psa 23:1-6 *The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.*

Psa 31:19 *How great is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you, which you bestow in the sight of men on those who take refuge in you.*

Isa 41:10 *So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

Isa 46:4 *Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.*

7. Hypocrites who repent will receive an honourable name (v. 12). Although this is a direct reference to the Israelites, it is applicable to every generation of believers. Isaiah predicted that when the Babylonian exiles were set free and returned to Judah, the nation would still be lying in ruins due to the Babylonian invasion. It would therefore be necessary for the exiles to rebuild their nation. While carrying on the construction of the city, the Israelites would be called the *Repairer of the Breach*, or the *Restorer of Streets to Dwell In*. That is, they would receive honourable mention as a people who were committed to the reconstruction of their nation. So it is with all hypocrites, with all people who repent and turn to the Lord. Immediately upon receiving God's salvation, new believers begin to rebuild the ruins of their lives. They become *Repairers* of the broken walls and lives that their sins have destroyed. They begin to rebuild their paths and lives with the structure of righteousness.

John 1:4 *In him was life, and that life was the light of men.*

John 8:12 *When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

John 12:26 *"Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honour the one who serves me."*

2 Cor 4:6 *For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.*

Eph 5:14 *This is why it is said: "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."*

Rev 3:12 *Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name.*

Psa 91:15 *He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honour him.*

Isa 62:2 *The nations will see your vindication, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will bestow.*

IV. Isaiah 58:13–14 Importance of Keeping the Sabbath Day Holy

Hypocrites must know the importance of keeping the Sabbath day holy (vv. 13-14). They must not break the Sabbath by doing as they please. Rather, they must keep the day holy by setting it apart as a day of worship and rest (Exo 20:8-11). The Sabbath was intended to be a day when people took delight in the LORD, honouring His Name and His law (Holy Word). The purpose for the Sabbath was not to do one's own thing, but to worship and honour the LORD. No business transactions were to take place on the Sabbath. People were not even to engage in idle, useless talk. The focus was to be upon the LORD and His Word. Three wonderful promises were given to those who kept the Sabbath day holy:

⇒ They would be filled with the joy of the LORD.

⇒ They would ride or be victorious over the high places or enemies of the earth and receive great honour from the LORD.

⇒ They would receive a full share of the inheritance promised to Jacob, the promised land itself (a symbol of heaven).

Thought I. Keeping the LORD's Day is the clear commandment of God. God recognizes man's need for both spiritual and physical renewal. Thus spiritual nourishment and physical rest are essential. Without worship, man's spirit dries up; and without rest, man's body breaks down. Listen to what God's Holy Word says about being faithful in weekly worship with other believers.

Luke 4:16 *He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read.*

Acts 20:7 *On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight.*

I Cor 16:1-2 *Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.*

Heb 10:25 *Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

Exo 20:8-11 *Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labour, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns, for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. ■*