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# The Shabbat Covenant & Righteousness #1

*By Jim Myers*

### Continued from Issue #45

Shabbat underwent a significant transformation as we travel from Genesis 2 to Isaiah 56. In Exodus 31 the Shabbat Covenant was exclusively for the children of Israel. Isaiah 56 revealed the Shabbat as also a sign for foreigners who held fast to it. Isaiah made another important modification by connecting the Shabbat with TZEDAQAH (righteousness) in chapter 58. This theme would continue to reverberate throughout Judaism, including the teachings of the historical Jesus.

1 "Cry loudly, do not hold back; Raise your voice like a trumpet, and declare to My people their transgression, And to the house of Jacob their sins. 2 "Yet they seek Me day by day, and delight to know My ways, as a nation that has done righteousness, And has not forsaken the ordinance of their Elohim. They ask Me *for* just decisions, They delight in the nearness of Elohim. 3 "Why have we fasted and You do not see? *Why* have we humbled ourselves and You do not notice?' Behold, on the day of your fast you find *your* desire, and drive hard all your workers. 4 "Behold, you fast for contention and strife and to strike with a wicked fist. You do not fast like *you do* today to make your voice heard on high. 5 "Is it a fast like this which I choose, a day for a man to humble himself? Is it for bowing one's head like a reed, and for spreading out sackcloth and ashes as a bed? Will you call this a fast, even an acceptable day to Yahweh? 6 "Is this not the fast which I choose, to loosen

the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke? 7 "Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into the house; when you see the naked, to cover him; and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?

Jesus said very little about eternal salvation in the Synoptic Gospels. However, in one discourse he does address the subject with words that echo the earlier words of Isaiah. This message is recorded in Matthew 25:

31 "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. 32 "And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; 33 and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. 34 "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 'For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; 36 naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me. '

Both Isaiah and Jesus call the above acts of charity and alms giving -- **righteousness**.

Isaiah 58 continues:

8 "Then your light will break out like the dawn, and your recovery will speedily spring forth; and your righteousness will go before you; the glory of Yahweh will be your rear guard.

Compare this with Matthew 25:37 --

"Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You drink?'"

Now notice how Isaiah connects man's performance of acts of righteousness with Yahweh's deliverance (salvation).

9 "Then you will call, and Yahweh will answer; You will cry, and He will say, 'Here I am.' If you remove the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, 10 and if you give yourself to the hungry, and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then your light will rise in darkness, and your gloom will become like midday. 11 "And Yahweh will continually guide you, and satisfy your desire in scorched places, and give strength to your bones; and you will be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters do not fail. 12 "And those from among you will rebuild the ancient ruins; you will raise up the age-old foundations; and you will be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of the streets in which to dwell.

Jesus expanded Isaiah's salvation message by connecting acts of righteousness with eternal salvation.

46 "And these (those who did not do acts of righteousness) will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Notice the phrase "your light will rise" in Isaiah 58:10. Jesus recalls Isaiah's words in his teachings found in Matthew 5:

14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 "Nor do *men* light a lamp, and put it under the peck-measure, but on the lamp stand; and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Jesus uses the very familiar Hebrew parallelism structure to define the meaning of "light."

- (1) Let your light shine.
- (2) They may see your good works.

Jesus continued this theme in his famous discourse found in Matthew 6:

19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; 21 for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. 22 "The lamp (light) of the body is the eye; if therefore you have a good eye, your whole body will be full of light. 23 "But if you have an evil eye, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

In Israel during the time of Jesus, the two idioms – **good eye** & **evil eye** -- were very common; as a matter of fact they are still in use and very familiar to the Hebrew speakers today. A person with a "good eye" is a "generous person;" and, a person with an "evil eye" is a "stingy person." Now let's take another look at the words of Jesus:

The light of the body is the eye: if therefore you are a **generous person**, your whole body shall be full of light. But if you are a **stingy person** your whole body shall be full of darkness. **BHR**

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