

**Isaiah 57:13-19 + 58:12-14**

This is the Haftarah reading for **Numbers 26:52 – 27:14** describing the division of the land, and the appeal of the daughters of Zelophehad. Possessing the land and the inheritance is stressed.

**Isaiah 57:13** - "When thou criest, let thy companies deliver thee; but the wind shall carry them all away; vanity shall take them: but he that putteth his trust in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain;"

Rashi - Let the collection of your idols and your graven images [and those who deny the Torah] that you collected, rise and save you when you cry out from your distress. Indeed, wind will carry all of them off, and they will not rise, neither will they be able to save.

**Isaiah 57:14** - "And shall say, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumblingblock out of the way of my people."

Cast ye up = "to pave"

Rashi - So will the prophet say in My name to My people, "Pave, pave a paved highway, clear away the evil inclination from your ways." Remove the stones upon which your feet stumble; they are wicked thoughts.

**Isaiah 57:15** - "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

Rashi - I dwell, and thence I am with the crushed and the humble in spirit, upon whom I lower My Presence.

"contrite" = *dakka'* - crushed down to small dust, destroyed

"humble" = *shaphal* - depressed, literally or figuratively, humble, low, base, cast down

The crushed and the humble live with Him in the high and holy place, where they are revived and healed!

**Isaiah 57:16-18** - "For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made. For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart. I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners."

Rashi- "when a spirit from before Me humbles itself, and souls [which] I have made."

When the spirit of man, which is from before Me, humbles itself, confesses and humbles itself because of its betrayal.

**Isaiah 57:19** - "I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the LORD; and I will heal him."

"Fruit of the lips" in biblical language means praise and thanksgiving. Here God says that he "creates" thanksgiving in us through His salvation and healing.

Rashi - I create for him a new manner of speech.

- **Hebrews 13:15** - "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name."

"peace" = shalom - the absence of inner or outward strife and "againstness," peace, concord, contentment, safety, wholeness, integrity, health and prosperity are included.

"Peace to him that is far off and to him that is near" - the Gentiles are far away, the Jews are near. But also near and far in relation to God, on different ends of any spectrum - age, race, language, abilities.

Rashi - Both are equal; he who is aged and was accustomed to My Torah and My worship from his youth, and he who drew near now, just recently to repent of his evil way. Said the Lord, "I will heal him of his malady and of his sins."

Jesus seems to be commenting on **verse 8** - "Yet will I gather others to him, beside those that are gathered unto him.":

- **John 10:16** - "I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them in as well, and they will listen to My voice. Then there will be one flock and one shepherd."

- **Ephesians 2:17** - "And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh."

To preach peace or shalom is to point to salvation through Christ. When Jesus said "I Am the Way" He meant He is the way to peace, to eternal shalom.

"I will heal him" = *rapha'* - to mend, repair, restore to health

**Isaiah 58** - looks to the fast of Tammuz, which is next Sunday.

The rest of the passage (which we read during every fast) outlines what spiritual healing will look like:

**Isaiah 58:12** - "And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in."

Targum of Jonathan has: "restorer of the wicked to the Torah"

Repairer of the "breach" - *perets* - breach, a breaking forth

In relation to leprosy:

This could be seen as a reference to pulling out the stones of a house infected with leprosy. Since God accomplished this for the Temple with an invading army, according to the rabbis, it might also be reflected in this verse:

- **Isaiah 30:13-14** - "Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant. And he shall break it as the breaking of the potters' vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare: so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal out of the pit."

Any earthenware vessels in a house stricken with leprosy were to be broken and destroyed.

The "breaking" of the walls of Jerusalem then is compared to the breaking of a potter's earthen vessel (infected with uncleanness from leprosy).

A leprous house was to be torn down and the stones deposited in an unclean place. A leprous garment was to be burned (**Leviticus 13:57**). A leprous person was to be cast out of the community. All these things happened to the Temple and to Jerusalem and its inhabitants.

Furthermore, an earthen vessel in which something unclean had entered was declared unclean, and required to be smashed and broken in pieces (**Leviticus 15:12**). This does not relate directly to leprosy, but the principle is the same.

If a house was judged to be leprous, after shutting it up, they would take out the leprous stones:

- **Leviticus 14:42** - "And they shall take other stones, and put them in the place of those stones; and he shall take other mortar, and shall plaister the house."

This could also be touched on in **Ezekiel 13**, where the inhabitants of Jerusalem "build a wall" of false prophecies, and others "daub it with untempered mortar," only to have God destroy it with hailstones and an overflowing flood - the Babylonian army.

- **Ezekiel 13:10** - "Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar:"

i.e. they imitated the process for restoring a leprous house - only it was still leprous.

"plaster" in **Leviticus 14:42** and "daubed" in **Ezekiel 13:10** are the same word - *tuwach*, which is almost exclusively used only in these two chapters.

**Isaiah 58:13-14** - "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it."

Rashi - An inheritance without boundaries, as it is said (Gen. 28:14): "And you shall spread to the west and to the east, etc." Not like Abraham, about whom it is stated (ibid. 13:15): "The land that you see..." And Jacob indeed kept the Sabbath, as it is said (ibid. 33:18): "And he encamped before the city," i.e., he established the Sabbath limits at twilight. So did Rabbi Samson explain it.