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AMA With Jim Staley

The Real Meaning of Isaiah 58:13

0:00-2:52

Some say Isaiah 58 13, which says that you should turn yourself away from doing your own pleasure on the Sabbath means that you have to not do anything that's pleasing on the Sabbath. I'm going to contend otherwise, and I'm going to prove it right after this. Hello everyone, I'm Jim Staley, Passion for Truth Ministries, and we're going to dive deep into Isaiah 58 13.

This is a very misunderstood scripture by a lot of people, especially those who keep the Sabbath. What does it mean when it says to turn your foot from keeping the Sabbath by doing your own pleasure? What does it mean to do your own pleasure? Are we to believe that you cannot do anything that pleases you? Well, what if my pleasure is to read the Word of God? What if my pleasure is to spend time with my children or my wife or to take a walk or a nap? Am I only allowed to read the Word of God and go to church all day? That doesn't sound real pleasurable to me, to be quite honest, and I'm a Bible teacher, and I love the Word of God. But I'm telling you right now, as we go back to the original language, as we go back to the documents of the first century and get into some of the Qumran community writings, you're going to find what I found, which is the word pleasure means something completely different.

So let's read the Word itself and discover what the English says, and then we'll convert it over to the original language. It says here in verse 13, If you turn your foot away from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord honorable, and shall honor him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words. Well, what does this work? What does this mean? What does this mean to not do your own pleasure? The only way that we can find this out, because the Hebrew itself, when you actually talk about speaking your own words, the words your own are not found in the original language.

So what the actual Hebrew is saying is you're not allowed to speak words. So are we to believe that the Creator is telling us that we're not allowed to speak any words, period? I don't believe that. I don't believe that's what he's saying at all.

I think there's context involved here. And as a matter of fact, there's a great amount of context. The entire chapter is about Yahweh telling his people to stop pushing down people and lift them up, lift up the widows, lift up the orphans, feed the hungry.

He says, stop making your people work on the Sabbath. Where does he say that? Well, we back up to the very beginning of the chapter, and we read this in verse three. He says, why have we fasted, they say, and you have not seen? Why have we afflicted our souls and you've taken no notice? In fact, in the day of your fast, you find pleasure.

2:52-9:57

And then he defines what the pleasure is. You exploit all your laborers. My friends, this is as clear as it gets, is that the Bible makes it clear in Isaiah chapter 58, verse three, that the word pleasure in context is defined as work, which makes perfect sense because the Bible, the commandment to keep the Sabbath all revolves around you can't work, you can't buy anything, you can't make anybody else labor for you.

And so it would make sense that this is what they were doing. They were breaking the Sabbath, but they were fasting at the same time while their workers were working on the Shabbat. And God's saying, look, this is not how this works.

You're making people work on the Shabbat. And the whole purpose of me creating the seventh day was to give people rest. And so I'm going to prove that in just a moment.

And here's how we're going to do it. We're going to go back to what's called the Septuagint. Now, this is a fantastic way to study.

We simply go to the Septuagint, which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew that was done around 250 BC or so. And in that process of them converting the Hebrew into Greek, they had to translate this into Greek, which gives us, in some cases, extraordinary clarity in what they believed a particular scripture meant. And in this particular scripture, we do have it in Greek, and it is 250 years before Christ.

And this is what it says. It says in the Septuagint, Isaiah 58 13 is read actually this way. If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, so that's the same as the Hebrew, so as not to do your own pleasure on the holy days, that's the

same, and shall call the Sabbath delightful, holy to God, that's the same, you shall not lift up your foot to work.

Now, the English says you shall not do your own pleasure, but they interpreted the word pleasure in context the way they should have, because it's defined already in verse 3 as work. They defined the pleasure as work, if you shall not lift up your foot to do work, nor speak a word in anger out of your mouth. So they defined not speaking words as words of wickedness and anger.

Why? Because that's exactly what the scriptures say in Isaiah 58, if I can find it real quick. In verse 9, it says, if you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness. So it defines what kind of speaking that the creator does not like, and so the interpreters or the translators of the Hebrew into Greek decided to choose that this is what Yahweh must have meant.

So for all the Jewish people, including Yeshua, Jesus, in the first century, they would have understood that Isaiah 58 13 was talking about not doing your own pleasure, was talking about work, and not talking was not talking about things in anger. Is there any other way that we can prove this? Yes, we most certainly can. The subtuagent is not the only resource that we have.

We have the Damascus document, which is a parallel document to the Dead Sea Scrolls. It's a community similar to the Qumran community. They reference the Qumran community.

It's written during the same period of time, and they render Isaiah 58 13 this way, and on the Sabbath, let no man speak a vile and empty word. He shall not demand any payment from his fellow. He shall not enter into a dispute concerning money or profit.

He shall not speak about matters relating to work and labor that need to be done on the following morning. So the Damascus document tells us that the way that the early Jewish people in the Qumran community as well interpreted Isaiah 58 13 was that you're not allowed to work, you're not allowed to talk about work, and you're not allowed to speak anything in anger. So we see this over and over and over again.

When you even get to the Targums, the Targum says this. It renders the part about speaking idle words as speaking words of wickedness. That comes right from Alex Jassen, a scripture in law in the Dead Sea Scrolls from Cambridge University.

You can look that up as a resource if you'd like and get more information on it. But these scholars from all over the world who deal with these ancient documents all agree with the early understanding that the scriptures in Isaiah 58 13 are talking about work and they're talking about speaking things out of anger. But the Targums aren't the only ones either.

The church fathers tell us this. So when you get to the church fathers and the Nicene church fathers, they interpret speaking words, your own words, as not just any words. And I'll say this in quote, so no one might be willing to send one word out of his mouth in anger on the day of the Sabbath.

So you can see right here, this is in the three hundreds, the three and four hundreds AD, 300 years after Christ, the early believers interpreted Isaiah 58 13 as talking about work and talking about not allowing anything to come out of your mouth in anger, which makes perfect sense because in Deuteronomy 5, the second telling of the 10 commandments, it talks about lighting a fire. And the Jews have always interpreted lighting a fire on the Shabbat as partly metaphorical, that you're not invigoratively, you're not allowed to argue or to speak anything in anger because that would be lighting something on fire. Okay.

But not finished yet, even in the medieval times, the rabbis said this, medieval Jewish exegetes generally understand the expression following rabbinic tradition as a prescription against a prescription against excessive or idle conversation on the Sabbath. So what Alex Jansen is saying here is that the rabbis in the medieval times interpreted Isaiah 58 13 even more broadly. So you could see an evolution of their thinking from the ancient rabbis, 250 years before Christ, that believed that the words talking about speaking in anger and working were expanded to mean that you're not allowed to have any idle talk as well.

That's too much, too excessive. So I can assure you that the Jewish people who are very, very detailed in every single commandment, if they interpret it as work and speaking anger, and they didn't expand it into every kind of pleasure, then I can assure you the original creator didn't either. So when it's all said and done, we have rabbis in the medieval times, we have church fathers in the three and four hundreds, we have the Damascus scrolls in the first century, and we have the Septuagint 250 years before Christ, all saying the same thing.

9:57-10:42

Doing your own pleasure is connected to work, talking about work, and speaking your own words is talking about letting evil or wickedness or anger come out of your mouth. My friends, it just makes sense because Yeshua said that the Sabbath was made for man. It was not made to put a yoke of bondage around our necks.

It was made so that we could enjoy the Sabbath, spend time with one another, be refreshed and recalibrated, spend time in the Word, of course, go to a congregation, get some fellowship if you can, but at the end of the day, the Sabbath is all about you being refreshed. Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh you rest. Spend time with one another.

10:42-11:06 Love is the epitome and the foundation and the perfect unity of the law all combined together. It is the goal of the entire Torah, is love, and that is most found many times when we stop working, we stop laboring, and we just look into the eyes of our loved ones and our Creator with the pleasure that they deserve and desire. That's when we please the Father the most.

Watch full teaching here:



<https://youtu.be/JHHeYGYGFPk>

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