

Isaiah 58:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward.

Analysis

God promises abundant blessing for those who practice true religion: "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning." The Hebrew shachar (morning/dawn) suggests sudden, glorious illumination after darkness. This light likely represents God's favor, vindication, and spiritual enlightenment (Isaiah 60:1-3, Malachi 4:2). "And thine health shall spring forth speedily" uses arukhah (health/restoration), the same word for flesh growing over a wound—complete healing and restoration. "Thy righteousness shall go before thee" pictures righteousness as a herald preparing the way, demonstrating God's approval. Most glorious: "the glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward." The Hebrew me'aseph (rereward/rear guard) refers to the protecting force behind an army or caravan. God Himself guards their backs, as He did in the exodus (Exodus 14:19). From a Reformed perspective, this doesn't promise prosperity gospel health-wealth rewards for good works, but the covenant blessings of God's presence, protection, and favor for those who live out genuine faith. The blessings are primarily spiritual—light, healing, righteousness, God's presence—though they include temporal provisions.

Historical Context

These promises were fulfilled initially in the post-exilic restoration when those who practiced justice and mercy experienced God's blessing (Nehemiah 9:36-37, Zechariah 8:9-13). However, ultimate fulfillment comes in Christ and the new covenant. Believers experience the light of Christ (John 8:12), spiritual healing (1

Peter 2:24), imputed righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21), and God's presence through the Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16). The glory of God becomes both our protection and our inheritance.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How do justice and mercy position us to receive God's blessing?
2. What does it mean for God's glory to be our 'rear guard' in daily life?
3. How are these promises fulfilled in Christ and the new covenant?

Interlinear Text

מִתְהַלֵּךְ	הַ	אֶת	עַ	יְבָקַח	כִּי	שְׁמַר	אָוֶן	בְּ	אֶת	רְכָתָב	מִתְהַלֵּךְ
H227	break forth	as the morning		Then shall thy light		and thine health		speedily			
H1234		H7837		H216		H724		H4120			
תָּצַם	ח	יְבָקַח	בְּ	לֹפֶת	בְּ	צָלָק	בְּ	כְּבָד	לְ		
shall spring forth		shall go		before		and thy righteousness		thee the glory			
H6779		H1980		H6440		H6664		H3519			
יְהִי	הָ	אָסְפָּבָה:									
of the LORD		shall be thy rereward									
H3068		H622									

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 52:12 (Light): For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rereward.

Jeremiah 33:6 (Parallel theme): Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth.

Psalms 37:6 (Righteousness): And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.

Psalms 85:13 (Righteousness): Righteousness shall go before him; and shall set us in the way of his steps.

Jeremiah 30:17 (References Lord): For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the LORD; because they called thee an Outcast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after.

Malachi 4:2 (Righteousness): But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

Acts 10:35 (Righteousness): But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

Proverbs 4:18 (Righteousness): But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

Exodus 14:19 (Parallel theme): And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them:

Psalms 97:11 (Righteousness): Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.