

**Is. 59:1 Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:**

**Is. 59:2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.**

The wording of this verse declares that the people cannot get beyond God's ability to intervene on their behalf. They have prided themselves for so long in being God's chosen people that they think their actions have no bearing on all the rights and privileges that are connected with that relationship. They have not made any connection with their wickedness and rebellion against Him to the fact that God is not answering their prayers.

This is such a needed message to the church today specifically and our nation in general. The scripture is clear that God's response to our prayers is directly connected to our heart attitude before and obedience to Him. Our actions impact whether or not God "hears" us. The Hebrew for *hear* implies hearing intelligently and responding positively.

*Matthew 6:15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

*John 15:7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*

*James 4:3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.*

*1John 3:22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.*

*1John 5:14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us....*

**Is. 59:3 For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness.**

The poetic prophet continues to declare the sin of the people. He is not worried about being politically correct. He is concerned about declaring the truth and bringing the people to a position of repentance before the LORD. Oh that those who claim to be His messengers were so bold and concerned today. I am truly sickened to see men who claim to love the LORD and who serve as shepherds to the flock today be so wishy washy and cowardly when it comes to standing up for God's truth according to His word. They are so afraid of alienating people by identifying sin. Because of that there will be many who will never recognize that they can have a better life and overcome that sin through faith in the LORD Jesus Christ. All of us as God's children need to have that same mindset, but those who have been called to shepherd the flock carry greater responsibility. This reminds me of the warning God gave to Ezekiel.

*Ezekiel 33:6-9* But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

**Is. 59:4** None calleth for justice, nor *any* pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.

The prophet moves from actions and words against others to apathy and unconcern for the well-being of others. Sin is a result of not doing what is right as much as doing what is wrong.

*James 4:17* Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

The last half of this verse seems to tie directly to the preceding verse. It would seem that their lies are consistent with their trust in *vanity* (a worthless thing)—idols. The actions they conceive and carry out are consistent with appeasing those false gods.

**Is. 59:5** They hatch cockatrice' eggs, and weave the spider's web: he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper.

**Is. 59:6** Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works: their works *are* works of iniquity, and the act of violence *is* in their hands.

I liked the wording of the NLT for verse 5: "*They spend their time and energy spinning evil plans that end up in deadly actions.*"

Nothing about their actions results in good. Instead of righteous garments, these workers of evil and wickedness are covered in garments of their own making. Like a spider's web, these garments are useless for any other purpose than to facilitate their evil actions and to ensnare or trap other people to join their wickedness.

**Is. 59:7** Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts *are* thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction *are* in their paths.

Isaiah continues to declare the wickedness of the people. When I read this verse, the first connection my mind made was to Proverbs.

*Proverbs 6:16-19* These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and **hands that shed innocent blood**, An

*heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.*

The people of Israel had no excuse. They were given the oracles of God to know what was right and wrong, to know what was acceptable to Him and what was not.

*Romans 3:1* What advantage then hath the Jew? .... Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

**Is. 59:8** The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace.

The first thing I thought about in this verse was that all God's paths are associated with being straight.

*Psalms 5:8* Lead me, O LORD, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face.

*Proverbs 4:25-27* Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.

Crooked paths are associated with wickedness and evil.

*Proverbs 2:12-15* To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things; Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness; Who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the frowardness of the wicked; Whose ways are crooked, and they froward in their paths:

Again, back to Romans 3, the apostle Paul seems to be referencing this section.

*Romans 3:12-17* They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; **with their tongues they have used deceit**; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: **Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known....**

Then in verse 18 he gives the root cause of the problem.

*Romans 3:18* There is no fear of God before their eyes.

To act in direct rebellion to the revealed will and command of God is evidence that you have no fear of God. If we truly feared God, it would be reflected in how we live. We have been so conditioned in the church today to think of God as our Father and Jesus as our Savior and the Holy Spirit as our Comforter, that we have lost a healthy "fear" of the LORD. Without that fear, we will never make wise choices.

*Job 28:28 And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.*

*Psalm 111:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.*

*Proverbs 16:6 By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil.*

In the last phrase of this verse, Isaiah hammers home a point, a truth he has made at least twice before in this book.

*Isaiah 48:22 There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked.*

*Isaiah 57:21 There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.*

**Is. 59:9 Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness.**

“Therefore” – Because of all the wickedness and evil that predominates my people and because they do not fear God...

Isaiah seems to be speaking as representative of the people at this point. He is drawing the conclusion for them to be certain that they understand. This builds on the thoughts from the last verse regarding our inability to do what is right without a healthy “fear” of the LORD. In our natural sinful self, we will never be able to make truly righteous judgments. Our judgment will always be based on personal beliefs and circumstances that determine what we deem to be “right” rather than on God’s unchanging righteousness that is no respecter of persons. Light and brightness are associated with the things of God, while obscurity and darkness represent wickedness and evil.

*John 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*

*Malachi 3:6 For I am the LORD, I change not....*

**Is. 59:10 We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noonday as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men.**

This is obviously talking about spiritual blindness. Instead of living an abundant life in submission and obedience to Him, God’s people were living as those with no hope, those “who were dead in their trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1).

**Is. 59:11 We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves: we look for judgment, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far off from us.**

I thought it interesting that the Hebrew for *roar* referenced “moan and mourn” as well as making a loud uproar. This would fit more in with Isaiah’s poetic style of writing. The point being that rebellion from God has resulted in a time of great trouble for the nation, a time of mourning and moaning with sorrow—a time when they have caused God to remove His protective hand and use that hand for judgment and correction.

**Is. 59:12** For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions *are with us*; and *as for* our iniquities, we know them;

**Is. 59:13** In transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.

**Is. 59:14** And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.

**Is. 59:15** Yea, truth faileth; and he *that* departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the LORD saw *it*, and it displeased him that *there was* no judgment.

One thing that jumped out at me as I was reading this section was how Isaiah identified with the sin of his people. This seems to be the heart of a true intercessor as exemplified by the prophets. Daniel’s prayer in chapter 9 is another good example of this attitude of heart.

Knowing that we are sinners and repenting of our sins are two different things. Isaiah knows that the people cannot deny that they have openly rebelled against God, especially involving the public worship of idols. Verses 13-15 seem to be a summary of those sins.

- “Transgressing and lying...away from our God” – The Hebrew for *transgressing* is a reference to rebellion, turning away from God as their LORD, their authority. The rebellion and lies mentioned here are “against the LORD”—calling the truth a lie and accepting lies as truth. The LORD is the embodiment of truth.

*John 14:6* Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life....

Seems to speak loudly about what is happening in the “church” today.

- “speaking oppression and revolt” – This seems to emphasize the fact that they are trying to encourage others to follow them in their rebellion. The Hebrew for *oppression* implies the use of torture to get unjust gain. It seems that those in rebellion are abusing those who don’t choose to join with them.
- “conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood” – Jeremiah 17:9 tells us that “the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.” A person who has rebelled against God not only births lying thoughts, he is willing to share them with others usually resulting in wicked actions.

- “judgment is turned...standeth afar off” – Those who seek justice are not able to get it. Getting justice seems to be impossible.
- “truth is fallen...truth faileth” – Truth and honesty are no longer common character traits among the people. This seems to be the root cause that justice can’t be found. Without truth and honesty, dispensation of justice is impossible. The next phrase in verse 15 indicates that those who do stand for righteousness are subject to attack and becoming victims of those in rebellion to God and all that He represents.

YHWH knows everything that man does, but I believe He takes special note of the things done by those that are *called* by His name. The honor of His name is important to Him.

*Leviticus 19:12 And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD.*

*Isaiah 48:11 For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it: for how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another.*

**Is. 59:16 And he saw that *there was no man*, and wondered that *there was no intercessor*: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him.**

**Is. 59:17 For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke.**

As I read these verses, I immediately thought of the Ephesians 6 passage on the armor of God.

*Ephesians 6:13-17 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on **the breastplate of righteousness**; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take **the helmet of salvation**, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God....*

Armor and weapons are not just about defense; they are needed for offense as well. As the LORD watched His people, He was stunned/amazed that there was no one willing to step into the role of intercessor, one seeking reconciliation between parties—in this case YHWH and the people of Judah. God’s plan will not be thwarted. His people will be brought to their knees in repentance through judgment. God shows Himself ready to exact vengeance/punishment as necessary to bring about His purposes.

I can't help but think that God is just as amazed as He looks at America today. I don't think we are to the point of "no intercessor," but I can't help but wonder at the heart connection of the intercessors involved. I make this statement based on my own prayers for my country. It's hard for me to have faith that true revival is possible when I see so much identifying us as being in the "end times" which are described in such a way as to make true revival seem impossible.

LORD, increase my faith and give me a true burden for my people, my country. In my head I know that "with God all things are possible" (Mark 10:27); please help me move that faith to my heart.

His arm is representative of His power, which is unequalled. His righteousness is the trait that allows Him to be steadfast and unmovable toward His purposes. The fact that God is acting in vengeance and zeal/jealousy is directly in opposition to the unrighteousness of the people and in regard to the honor of His name.

I think the point needs to be made that vengeance is the prerogative of God alone, and is therefore not included as part of the armor of the Christian. All the armor and weapons of the Christian are provided as empowerment for defeating the attacks of the enemy as they work to serve God according to His will. God's armor, however, is a part of Him and is not dependent upon empowerment from another source; it represents His authority, power, and righteousness in judgment.

**Is. 59:18 According to *their* deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompence.**

To whom is God's vengeance and zeal directed? To those who are His adversaries and enemies. This would include those of His own people that have rebelled against Him. He also holds accountable those from other lands who have contributed to the corruption of His people and have acted in total disregard of Him. In this situation His vengeance and zeal will be exacted "according to their deeds"—not His mercy. The Psalmist was well aware of the difference; he believed the truth stated by the writer of Hebrews.

*Psalm 51:1 Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.*

*Psalm 119:124 Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy....*

*Hebrews 10:31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

**Is. 59:19 So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.**

**Is. 59:20 And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.**

Especially beginning in verse 16, I can't help but see foreshadowing of future fulfillment when Jesus Christ the Messiah comes as King. At this point I think the message is one that is yet to be fulfilled. The directions of east (rising of the sun) and west encompass the whole earth. Though actions of mankind on this planet declare loudly that they have no fear of the LORD, the time is coming when that will change.

"The enemy coming in like a flood" seems to be a reference to the armies of Antichrist at Armageddon.

The Hebrew for *standard* reflects the idea of putting to flight. This seems to fit better with the reading of the KJV. The armies from east to west will be gathered against Him at Armageddon, and the appearance of the LORD will send them running—but in vain. They will be destroyed with the sword from His mouth.

*Revelation 19:15* And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations....

It will be at this time that the Redeemer will come to Zion in response to the repentant people of Israel. This is the time spoken of by the prophet Zechariah.

*Zechariah 12:9-10* And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

**Is. 59:21** As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.

It is at that time that the Lord will establish a new covenant with the nation of Israel. This is the covenant described by the prophet Jeremiah.

*Jeremiah 31:31-37* Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name: **If those ordinances depart**

*from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD.*

Every time I read sections of scripture like this, I just don't see how anyone can believe in replacement theology—that the church has replaced Israel regarding God's covenant promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Each has a special place in God's plan for planet earth.