



ISAIAH 59

CONVICTION OF SIN ~ CONFESSION OF SIN ~ THE LORD, OUR REDEEMER ~ GOD’S COVENANT WITH ZION

Israel’s sins have separated them from God. Isaiah describes their sins – inequity, injustice, violence, corruption – and, speaking for the people, acknowledges their guilt. Their sins have left them blind and hopeless. The Lord will judge their sins but, as always, offers hope to those who repent. “Truly Yahweh’s arm is not too powerless to save you nor his ear too deaf to hear.” Isaiah writes in verse 1.

In this chapter, Isaiah draws a sharp contrast between the Lord’s faithfulness and Israel’s wickedness. Ultimately, the Redeemer will come to Zion and set things right. While He tarries, the people are called to repent of their sins and return to the Holy One of Israel.

English Standard (ESV)	Passion Notes	Passion Translation (TPT)
<p>Isaiah 59:1 Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; ² but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear. ³ For your hands are defiled with blood and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies; your tongue mutters wickedness. ⁴ No one enters suit justly; no one goes to law honestly; they rely on empty pleas, they speak lies, they conceive mischief and give birth to iniquity. ⁵ They hatch adders’ eggs; they weave the spider’s web; he who eats their eggs dies, and from one that is crushed a viper is hatched. ⁶ Their webs will not serve as clothing; men will not cover themselves with what they make. Their works are works of iniquity, and deeds of violence are in their hands. ⁷ Their feet run to evil, and they are swift to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; desolation and destruction are in their highways. ⁸ The way of peace they do not know, and there is no justice in their paths; they have made their roads crooked; no one who treads on them knows peace.</p>	<p>a 59:7 See Prov. 6:16–19; Rom. 3:15–16.</p>	<p>Conviction of Sin</p> <p>Isaiah 59:1 Truly Yahweh’s arm is not too powerless to save you nor his ear too deaf to hear. ² Rather, your sinful deeds have built a barrier between you and your God. Your sins have made God turn his face from you so that he does not hear your prayers. ³ For your hands are stained with blood and your fingers are dripping with the guilt of sin. Lies spill from your lips and your tongue mutters treachery. ⁴ No one seeks true justice; no one pleads his case with honesty. They rely on their illusions and misleading lies; they conceive trouble and give birth to sin. ⁵ They hatch harmful plots like snake’s eggs and spin their lies like a spider spins its web. Whoever eats their “eggs” dies and a poisonous snake gets hatched! ⁶ Their “webs” cannot substitute as clothing, they cannot cover themselves with the lies they spin, nor can their works cover themselves adequately. Their actions are evil, and the wages of violence is in their hands. ⁷ Their feet eagerly run after evil, and they are swift to shed innocent blood. a Their imaginations are filled with evil; b destruction and desolation litter their paths. ⁸ They know nothing of the way of peace, c and injustice is their way of life. Their paths are so crooked that no one who walks in them knows peace.</p>

English Standard (ESV)	Passion Translation (TPT)	Passion Translation (TPT)
<p>⁹ Therefore justice is far from us, and righteousness does not overtake us; we hope for light, and behold, darkness, and for brightness, but we walk in gloom. ¹⁰ We grope for the wall like the blind; we grope like those who have no eyes; we stumble at noon as in the twilight, among those in full vigor we are like dead men. ¹¹ We all growl like bears; we moan and moan like doves; we hope for justice, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far from us. ¹² For our transgressions are multiplied before you, and our sins testify against us; for our transgressions are with us, and we know our iniquities: ¹³ transgressing, and denying the LORD, and turning back from following our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart lying words. ¹⁴ Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands far away; for truth has stumbled in the public squares, and uprightness cannot enter. ¹⁵ Truth is lacking, and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey. The LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no justice. ¹⁶ He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no one to intercede; then his own arm brought him salvation, and his righteousness upheld him. ¹⁷ He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on his head; he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak. ¹⁸ According to their deeds, so will he repay, wrath to his adversaries, repayment to his enemies; to the coastlands he will render repayment. ¹⁹ So they shall fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun; for he will come like a rushing stream, which the wind of the LORD drives.</p> <p>²⁰ “And a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression,” declares the LORD. ²¹ “And as for me, this is my covenant with them,” says the LORD: “My Spirit that is upon you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your offspring, or out of the mouth of your children’s offspring,” says the LORD, “from this time forth and forevermore.”</p>	<p>b 59:7 See Gen. 6:5.</p> <p>c 59:8 See Rom. 3:17; Eph. 2:14.</p> <p>d 59:9 See John 8:11–12.</p> <p>e 59:10 The meaning of this Hebrew clause is uncertain. See Eph. 2:1.</p> <p>f 59:13 See Eph. 4:25.</p> <p>g 59:15 Or “Truth is hidden” (Vulg.).</p> <p>h 59:16 Or “intercessor.”</p> <p>i 59:16 Or “intercede.”</p> <p>j 59:16 Or “arm,” a metaphor for his mighty power.</p> <p>k 59:17 See Eph. 6:10–18.</p> <p>l 59:19 God broke into the human condition as a man who died on the cross. His blood, like a flood of righteousness, washes away the sins of those who believe in him.</p> <p>m 59:19 Or “When the enemy comes in, the Spirit of Yahweh, like a flood, will lift up a standard against him” or “When the enemy comes in like a flood, the breath of Yahweh will put him to flight.”</p> <p>n 59:21 See Jer. 31:33; Rom. 11:26–27; Gal. 3:29; Heb. 12:22–24.</p>	<p>Confession of Sin</p> <p>⁹ For this reason, justice is far from us and righteousness doesn’t reach us. We hope for light, but sadly, there is only darkness. d We wait for a bright light, but walk in darkness. ¹⁰ We are like the blind groping along a wall, inching along in the dark like those who cannot see; we stumble around in broad daylight like it was night, like the walking dead. e ¹¹ We are frustrated, growling like bears, like doves cooing mournfully. We wait and wait for justice, but it never seems to come; for salvation, but it remains distant. ¹² For our many rebellious deeds are stacked high before you; our sins testify against us. We are aware of our sins, and we know our evil deeds all too well. ¹³ We have rebelled and even tried to deny Yahweh; we have forsaken our God. Our speech stirs up oppression and revolt, and our hearts conceive, then confess, lies. f ¹⁴ Justice is driven away and righteousness stands on the sidelines, for truth has stumbled in the public square and morality cannot enter. ¹⁵ Yes, truth has disappeared, g and those who turn from evil become the next victim. Yahweh saw this and was greatly displeased that there was no justice.</p> <p>The Lord, Our Redeemer</p> <p>¹⁶ And then he was astonished to see that there was no champion, h “not even one, who would rescue the oppressed. i So then his own mighty power j was released to deliver, and his own righteousness supported him. ¹⁷ He put on righteousness as his body armor, k salvation for a helmet; a garment of warring vengeance was his uniform and passion, his cape. ¹⁸ He will repay wrath to his enemies and retribution to his foes, according to what they have done. Reckoning is coming to the islands for what is due them. ¹⁹ From the west to the lands of the rising sun, the glory and the name of Yahweh will be held in highest reverence, for he will break in as a flooding, rushing l river driven on by the breath of Yahweh! m</p> <p>God’s Covenant with Zion</p> <p>²⁰ “He will come to Zion as a Kinsman-Redeemer to those of Jacob’s tribes who repent of their rebellion,” says Yahweh. ²¹ “And this is my covenant promise with them,” n says Lord Yahweh. “From now on, my Holy Spirit will rest on them and not depart from them, and my prophetic words will fill their mouths and will not depart from them, nor from their children, nor from their descendants, from now on and forever says Lord Yahweh.</p>

Bible Knowledge Commentary

JOHN A. MARTIN

- The Lord's Ability to Save.

- 59:1. The prophet reminded the nation that the LORD could save them in spite of their difficult circumstances. He is powerful enough—His arm (cf. v. 16; see comments on 40:10) is not ... short. And He is caring enough—He is not dull of hearing. This implies that Israel simply needed to call out to God and He would come to her rescue.

- Israel's Spiritual Depravity (59:2-15a).

- **59:2-8.** However, though the Lord could save them, the nation's sins had separated them from the Lord (cf. Ps. 66:18; Prov. 28:9). Though He could hear them (Isa. 59:1) He chose not to (v. 2). Sin prevents prayer from being answered (cf. Ps. 66:18). Those sins included murder, lying, injustice (cf. Isa. 59:9, 11, 14-15), and planning evil (vv. 3-4). Their actions were like those of deadly poisonous snakes (vipers and an adder), for they were harming each other. Just as people can see through cobwebs, which therefore are inappropriate for clothing (v. 6), so God could see through the evil deeds of these people and judge them. In a hurry to do evil things, they were bringing ruin to others (v. 7) and were constantly traveling down evil paths. As a result they knew no peace (cf. 48:22; 57:20-21).
- **59:9-15a.** Here the prophet, using first-person plural pronouns (us. ... we. ... our), identified with the people (cf. 6:5). Israel was so corrupt spiritually, without justice (cf. 59:4, 11, 14-15) and righteousness, that it was as if they were in darkness and were blind and dead. As a result, the oppressed were angry like growling bears and moaned like doves. They wanted justice and help but found none (v. 11). Isaiah confessed that the people were noted for their many ... sins, deliberate rebellion (cf. 1:5; 58:1) against the LORD, lying, injustice, and dishonesty (59:12-15a).

- The Lord's Promise to Help Israel (59:15b-21).

- **59:15b-16a.** Because of her depraved condition (vv. 2-15a), no one but the LORD could save the nation. Being displeased with her injustice (cf. vv. 4, 9, 11, 14), He realized there was no one to intercede on her behalf. Isaiah was not saying that the Lord did not want to get involved, but that Israel was totally incapable of helping herself. Only God could help her. This is true of salvation in any era. No one can save himself. Only God can forgive sin and change a person's heart.
- **59:16b-20.** In His power (by His ... arm; cf. v. 1 and comments on 40:10) God provided salvation, both spiritual and physical, for him (i.e., for Israel personified as a man). Like a warrior God goes forth to fight for His people. Righteousness is His breastplate and salvation is His helmet (cf. Paul's use of this imagery in Eph. 6:14, 17). God's other garments are vengeance and zeal. This verse (Isa. 59:17) means that God supplies righteousness and salvation (cf. v. 16) for His people as He zealously executes vengeance on His enemies (v. 18). Because of this, people everywhere will acknowledge His glory, overpowering majesty, and strength (like a pent-up flood let loose). When the LORD executes judgment on His enemies (at Christ's second coming), the Messiah will go to Zion. He will be the Redeemer (see comments on 41:14) of those Israelites who turn to Him in repentance (59:20). Showing their future hope, the nation was being encouraged to repent.
- **59:21.** When the Messiah returns in judgment (v. 18), He will inaugurate His covenant (elsewhere called the New Covenant, Jer. 31:31), pouring His Spirit on believing Israelites (cf. Ezek. 36:27a; Joel 2:29) and instilling His words within them (Jer. 31:33-34; Ezek. 36:27b).

TONIGHT'S DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How do you feel about repenting of your sins? When someone says, "What's missing from that person's life is a repentant heart." What is a repentant heart?
2. In our contemporary culture, you find a lot of people who feel like God "understands" their weaknesses and forgives them without repentance. Does that way of thinking run true for you? Why or why not? Are weaknesses the same as sin?
3. If you were discipling someone and they were struggling with making unhealthy moral choices, what encouragement or direction would you give them when it came to dealing with shame? What is the link between being unwilling to recognize and repent of sin and the oppressiveness that comes with shame?
4. If you were going to put a sticky-note on you refrigerator that had to do with repentance, what would it say?
5. Chapter 59 wraps up with a promise of the Holy Spirit. Have you seen this prophetic word manifest itself in your life? What changes in your life came with the the Holy spirit resting upon you? If it hasn't happened with you yet, what do you think might be the impact on you of having the Holy spirit rest upon you?