

## **Wickedness Separates Us From God!**

Isaiah 59:1-8 (vs. 2-3)

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### **I. Historical Background & Biblical Context**

#### **A. Historical Background**

For centuries, Israel had been in moral and spiritual decline. Sin and wickedness gradually became a pattern that shaped the character and conduct of the entire nation. Instead of justice, truth, and righteousness, the society was full of violence, deception, and oppression. In this way, sin worked quietly, steadily, and systematically to corrupt the nation from within.

Eventually, national judgement came upon Israel: the northern kingdom of Israel fell to Assyria, and later the southern kingdom of Judah fell to Babylon. Many of the people were taken into exile and forced to live under foreign rule.

During exile, they experienced suffering and oppression that left their spirits drained and their hearts discouraged. They felt spiritually and relationally distant from God. Many cried out to God for deliverance and wondered why He had not answered. Some began to question God's power, while others questioned His concern.

This message in Isaiah 59:1-8 addresses this confusion directly and makes it very clear that the problem was never with God. God had not lost His power to save, nor was He unable to hear the cries of His people. The real problem was sin. The distance that they felt was not due to any weakness on God's part, but because their wickedness had created a barrier in their relationship with Him.

#### **B. Biblical Context**

Isaiah begins with a clear diagnosis and truth for the people: the problem is not with God, but with us. These first eight verses reveal what both sin and wickedness can truly do: They separate. They divide. They create distance between us and God.

From the very beginning, God designed humanity to live in close relationship, communion, fellowship, and connection with Him. Sin disrupted that by

breaking trust, challenging obedience, and damaging the closeness that God wanted us to have with Him.

After revealing this, this chapter builds hope and introduces the remedy, something far greater that had been in the works since the Fall. When God looked upon humanity's sins and saw that no one could intervene, no one righteous enough to repair what had been broken, He did not leave us in that condition. Instead, He came Himself. He clothed Himself with righteousness and wrapped Himself in salvation, becoming the Redeemer for all who turn from their wickedness. God reached down and stepped in to restore what sin had destroyed. This plan was ultimately fulfilled through Jesus Christ. His crucifixion and resurrection were both God's answer to the Fall and His decisive response to sin.

And this truth still speaks to us today. The same sin that separated humanity from God in the beginning continues to create distance in our own lives. Isaiah 59 tells us that our struggles, our brokenness, and our separation from God are not new problems. It also assures us that the solution has already been provided. Through Jesus Christ, the barrier created by sin can be removed by repentance, and the relationship God intended from the beginning can be restored. This restoration will ultimately be fulfilled at the second coming of Jesus Christ.

## **II. Lesson: Wickedness Separates Us From God (Isaiah 59:1-8)**

### **1. vv. 1-2. God's Power and Nature Does Not Change**

Like the people of Israel, many people today misunderstand what it means to feel distant from God. When that distance is felt, it is often assumed that something has changed on God's end, either that His power has faded or that He is no longer concerned. However, verses 1 and 2 challenge that assumption and provide a powerful reality check.

First, Isaiah refers to "the arm of the Lord" as a metaphor for God's power, strength, and His ability to act, particularly His ability to save and deliver His people. The prophet insists that God's arm has not grown short. In other words, God has not lost any of His power. He is still fully capable of reaching into any situation and rescuing His people. Second, Isaiah speaks of "the ear of the Lord", which symbolizes God's attentiveness and His willingness to hear the prayers of His people. Once again, Isaiah makes it clear that nothing has changed with God. His ear has not become dull or heavy. He is not hard of

hearing, nor is He indifferent to the cries and prayers of those who call on Him. The silence people sometimes feel is not because God cannot act, and it is not because He refuses to listen. There has been no breakdown on God's end.

In verse 2, Isaiah shows us the root of our separation from God: our iniquities. This encompasses our sins, wickedness, moral corruption, perversion, and wrongdoings. Each time we choose our own will over God's, it is like laying a single brick. At first, one brick may seem insignificant, but over time these bricks build a wall between us and Him. When we stay behind this wall, God's face grows more hidden from us, and we feel the absence of His presence, favor, and intimacy. The result is that, although God has the power to save, He withholds His intervention and does not respond favorably because of persistent, unrepented sin.

The verses that follow trace the downward progression of sin and its consequences, moving from personal sins to societal decay and ultimately to the complete absence of peace.

## **2. v. 3. Personal Sins Through Action and Speech**

Hands represent a person's actions, while the lips reveal the condition of the heart. With that in mind, verse 3 begins by addressing what people do and what they say. Their hands are described as stained with blood, meaning their actions have caused real harm through violence, injustice, and exploitation. Their words are equally corrupt, filled with lies, deception, and wickedness. The verse moves from hands and fingers representing actions and deeds to lips and tongue representing speech, showing that both conduct and character have been compromised.

## **3. v. 4. Societal Corruption**

Individual corruption spreads outward and begins to change society. Justice disappears. No one seeks what is right, trust is completely broken down, and deception becomes the norm. Sin is conceived internally in the heart and works its way outward, manifesting in different ways within the society through corrupt leadership, injustice in the legal system, and unfair treatment of the vulnerable.

## **4. vv. 5-6. Sin Becomes Deliberate and Deadly**

At this stage, Isaiah uses viper's eggs and spider's webs to describe the nature of sin. People's schemes are compared to hatching the eggs of a venomous snake. Instead of destroying what is dangerous, they nurture it until it

produces something deadly. This tells us that by this point, sin is not accidental but deliberate, cultivated, and planned. Then, their efforts are compared to a spider's web. Everything they create through their wickedness is fragile and useless. Though their schemes may harm or trap others, they cannot truly benefit or build anything lasting from them. Here, sin is both intentional and destructive, multiplying harm while producing nothing of real value for the person or for society.

### **5. v. 7. Relentless Pursuit of Evil (vs. 7)**

At this point, sin is no longer something that happens, but it becomes the chosen way of life. The people are not drifting away from or to it; they are actively running towards it. Evil is carefully planned, harm is inflicted upon those who do not deserve it, and destruction becomes the direction that the entire society is moving in.

### **6. v. 8. The Consequence: No Peace (vs. 8)**

The inevitable result is the complete absence of peace. At this stage, peace is missing and unknown. The people have become so consumed by corruption that they no longer know what it means to live in unity, harmony, and right relationship with God and others. They deliberately twist what should have been straight and clear, creating crooked paths for themselves and others. Anyone who chooses to walk that same crooked path will share in the same outcome. Peace cannot exist where righteousness and justice are rejected. When society abandons them, it eventually loses the ability to recognize what peace is.

All of this prepares the way for what follows later in the chapter, specifically in versus 16-19. After exposing the depth of humanity's corruption and the inability of people to repair what has been broken, Isaiah shows that God Himself must intervene, where the Lord steps in as the Warrior and Redeemer to accomplish the salvation that humanity could never achieve on its own.

## **V. Conclusion.**

Isaiah 59:1-8 calls us to:

1. Examine our lives honestly, recognizing where sin may be creating distance between us and God.
2. Humbly acknowledge our sins and repent, turning away from the attitudes and actions that separate us from Him.
3. Turn from sin and draw near and closer to God.