

A Redeemer in Zion

Isaiah 59:15-21

SS Lesson for 08/02/2015

Devotional Scripture: Isa 47:4-14

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Introduction

Overview and Key Verse of the Lesson

The lesson teaches about how Jesus will be and is **A Redeemer in Zion**. The **study's aim** is to see that God knows our hopeless condition as a fallen and spiritually helpless human race and to understand that God alone provides the remedy we need. The **study's application** is to use this information in all our attempts to understand humanity and live our lives.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

Key Verse: Isa 59:20

"The Redeemer will come to Zion, And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob," Says the Lord.

Commentary from The Bible Knowledge Commentary

Because of the depravity of the nation, national salvation and prosperity would have to come from God's initiative. In chapter 59 the Lord again spoke of the people's sins and His provision of salvation because of the Abrahamic Covenant. 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.

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). 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).

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. 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. 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).

Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

If you aren't angry, you aren't paying attention. Perhaps you have seen this slogan on bumper stickers or billboards. We might object to it. After all, we should control our anger, shouldn't we? And I resent being told that I am not paying attention! I read the bumper sticker, did I not? But that provocative saying makes a point that Christians should affirm. Injustice and wickedness seem rampant. Everywhere we turn, we see the power of evil. How can a thoughtful person not be angry in a world like this? Our indignant reaction reflects how God made us. As people who bear his image, our response to the world should reflect his own. Our Creator is utterly just, righteous, and holy. He cannot tolerate the evil that mars his creation and victimizes people. God's wrath, his righteous anger against evil, burns against all that is wrong. When we feel indignant anger about the evils we see, we reflect God's own reaction. But God's intent is not merely to destroy evil. He also intends to enact justice and righteousness as he reasserts his rightful reign over creation. As those who bear his image, we long for his will to be done! Yet if we are honest, we know that we are part of the reason that God's justice does not reign as fully as it should in our world. The righteousness that we desire is the very thing we often reject in our stubborn selfishness. We regularly act in ways that embody evil, not justice. We who long for the solution are part of the problem. Today's text reflects these realities. Above and beyond that, however, it expresses God's promise to establish his justice despite our failures.

The prophet Isaiah delivered his messages during the turbulent eighth century BC. Judah, the southern kingdom in Israel's divided monarchy, was threatened by the powerful Assyrian empire. Isaiah's generation had witnessed the Assyrians' destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 BC, and only by God's intervention did Judah and Jerusalem survive that awful time (see 2 Kings 18:13-19:37; Isaiah 36, 37). But the threat from within was just as great, if not more so. Of the four kings who ruled Judah in Isaiah's day (see Isaiah 1:1), three were relatively "good" and one was quite evil. But the unholiness that had gained a grip continued during the reigns of the good kings (2 Kings 15:4, 35). Temporary repentance would occur (2 Chronicles 32:26), but it was always just that—temporary. Judah was surrounded by violent, ungodly nations, and Judah itself had become such a nation. How could a holy God tolerate all that unholiness? How could he promise that his people would become a "light for the Gentiles" (Isaiah 42:6; compare 49:6) when the Israelites were as sinful as the pagan nations around them? Our text today is part of a larger context that addresses such questions.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

A Redeemer to Combat Injustice (Isaiah 59:15-16)

15 So truth fails, And he who departs from evil makes himself a prey. Then 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 intercessor; Therefore His own arm brought salvation for Him; And His own righteousness, it sustained Him.

Combat injustice through truth (15)

Truth that comes with a seal (Eph 1:13)

13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,

Truth that brings hope (Col 1:5)

5 the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel

Truth that comes through maturing in the word (James 1:18)

18 He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

Truth that comes by being established in the truth (2 Peter 1:12)

12 So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have.

Truth that lives in us (2 John 1:2)

2 because of the truth, which lives in us and will be with us forever:

Truth that comes by working together (3 John 1:8)

8 We ought therefore to show hospitality to such men so that we may work together for the truth.

Combat injustice through salvation (16)

Salvation that God appointed through Jesus (1 Thess 5:9)

9 For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Salvation that Jesus will bring with Him at His second coming (Heb 9:28)

28 so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

Salvation through justification by Jesus' blood (Rom 5:9)

9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!

Salvation that is gained through belief in Jesus (John 6:40)

40 For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

Salvation that brings eternal life (John 11:25)

25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies;

Salvation that is hidden in Jesus (Col 3:3-4)

3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

A Redeemer to Bring Righteousness and Glory (Isaiah 59:17-19)

17 For He put on righteousness as a breastplate, And a helmet of salvation on His head; He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, And was clad with zeal as a cloak.

18 According to their deeds, accordingly He will repay, Fury to His adversaries, Recompense to His enemies; The coastlands He will fully repay.

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 comes in like a flood, The Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him.

Righteousness (17)

Righteousness that comes by faith (Heb 11:7)

7 By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

Righteousness that has been credited through faith (Rom 4:2-5)

2 If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about — but not before God. 3 What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." 4 Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. 5 However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.

Righteousness that is the gift of God (Rom 5:17)

17 For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

Righteousness that is revealed through the gospel (Rom 1:17)

17 For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

Righteousness through the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:5)

5 But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope. NIV

Repayment (18)

Do not try to pay back (Prov 24:29)

29 Do not say, "I'll do to him as he has done to me; I'll pay that man back for what he did."

It is God's role to avenge in due time (Deut 32:35)

35 It is mine to avenge; I will repay. In due time their foot will slip; their day of disaster is near and their doom rushes upon them."

God is a jealous and avenging God (Nah 1:2-3)

2 The Lord is a jealous and avenging God; the Lord takes vengeance and is filled with wrath. The Lord takes vengeance on his foes and maintains his wrath against his enemies. 3 The Lord is slow to anger and great in power; the Lord will not leave the guilty unpunished. His way is in the whirlwind and the storm, and clouds are the dust of his feet.

God does the judging and avenging (Heb 10:30-31)

30 For we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge his people." 31 It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Glory (19)

God's glory is reflected in the Heavens (Ps 8:1)

1 O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.

God's glory is over all the earth (Ps 57:5)

5 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth.

God's glory is in His sanctuary (Ps 96:6)

6 Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and glory are in his sanctuary.

God is the King of glory (Ps 24:7-10)

7 Lift up your heads, O you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. 8 Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. 9 Lift up your heads, O you gates; lift them up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. 10 Who is he, this King of glory? The Lord Almighty — he is the King of glory.

God's glory is great (Ps 138:5)

5 May they sing of the ways of the Lord, for the glory of the Lord is great.

Ascribe to God's glory (Ps 29:1-2)

1 Ascribe to the Lord, O mighty ones, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. 2 Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness.

Revere God's glory (Ps 102:15)

15 The nations will fear the name of the Lord, all the kings of the earth will revere your glory.

A Redeemer With A Covenant (Isaiah 59:20-21)

20 "The Redeemer will come to Zion, And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob," Says the Lord.

21 "As for Me," says the Lord, "this is My covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants' descendants," says the Lord, "from this time and forevermore."

Redeemer (20)

A Redeemer that provided us full rights as a son (Gal 4:3-5)

3 So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. 4 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, 5 to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.

A Redeemer that gave Himself for us (Titus 2:12-14)

12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope — the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

A Redeemer that provided redemption through His blood (Eph 1:7)

7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace

A Redeemer that entered the Most Holy Place to provide eternal redemption (Heb 9:12)

12 He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.

Covenant (21)

A covenant whose mediator is Jesus (Heb 9:15)

15 For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance — now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

A covenant originally of law and now by faith (Rom 4:16-17)

16 Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring — not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. 17 As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed — the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were.

A covenant built around belief in God (Gal 3:7-9)

7 Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. 8 The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." 9 So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

A covenant made effective after the death and bloodshed of Jesus (Heb 9:16-19)

16 In the case of a will, it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it, 17 because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living. 18 This is why even the first covenant was not put into effect without blood. 19 When Moses had proclaimed every commandment of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people.

A covenant that is an eternal covenant of peace (Ezek 37:21-26)

21 and say to them, "This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land. 22 I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms. 23 They will no longer defile themselves with their idols and vile images or with any of their offenses, for I will save them from all their sinful backsliding, and I will cleanse them. They will be my people, and I will be their God. 24 "My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees. 25 They will live in the land I gave to my servant Jacob, the land where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children will live there forever, and David my servant will be their prince forever. 26 I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant. I will establish them and increase their numbers, and I will put my sanctuary among them forever.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from Dr. Thomas Constable

Verse 1

The people were complaining that God was not answering their prayers (cf. Isaiah 58:1-3). Isaiah assured them that His silence was not due to His inability to help them (a shortened hand) or to His disinterest in them (an insensitive ear).

Verses 1-8

Isaiah's evidence 59:1-8

"This passage describes the appalling moral breakdown of Jewish society-which perfectly accords with what we know of the degeneracy of Manasseh's reign." [Note: Archer, p. 650.]

The prophet resumed his accusations against God's people (cf. Isaiah 58:1-5).

Verses 1-15

What Israel did 59:1-15a

As mentioned above, this second segment of the section dealing with the relationship of righteousness and ritual (chs. 58-59) deals with the inability of God's redeemed people to produce righteous behavior in their own strength. Chapter 57 dealt with their inability to break with idolatry in their own strength.

"In chapter 57 he [Isaiah] condemned adulterous paganism, in chapter 58 hypocritical fasting, while here it is chiefly injustice that calls forth his condemnation. Each of these chapters speaks about prayer. In chapter 57 it was not answered because it was not addressed to the true God (Isaiah 57:13); in chapter 58 because the petitioners are hypocrites (Isaiah 58:4); while here in Isaiah 59:1-2, it is because of their sins and particularly, as later verses indicate, their injustice." [Note: Grogan, p. 325.]

Verse 2

Rather the problem was with them, not Him. It was their sins that had separated them from their holy Lord (cf. Genesis 3:6; Genesis 3:16; Jeremiah 5:2-6; Habakkuk 1:13; 1 John 1:6).

The evidence to support Isaiah's indictment follows.

Verse 3

Violence and bloodshed among God's people were signs of their sinfulness. Lies and deception were others.

Verse 4

Justice was not coming out of the courts, but legal maneuvering and loopholes had taken the place of straightforward decisions. The people were using and abusing the legal system for their own ends rather than allowing it to sit in judgment on their actions. They were trying to confuse the issues and lie their way out of their responsibilities. Instead of conceiving the truth that would issue in righteousness, they were conceiving mischief that would bear iniquity (cf. Job 15:35; James 1:15).

Verse 5-6

The results of such a society are serpents' eggs and spider webs. Instead of receiving nourishment from the eggs, the eggs either poison or, if hatched, fatally attack the eater. Instead of receiving warmth from the beautifully woven web, the web fails to clothe and instead entangles its wearer. This was because the work the people expended to secure food and clothing was self-centered. People even resorted to physical violence to get

what they wanted for themselves. Such a society promises much but delivers little, and what it does deliver turns around and kills it.

Verse 7-8

Instead of running from evil, God's people were running to it, even hastily shedding innocent blood to secure their ends (cf. Romans 3:15-17). Again Isaiah used "way" to describe the moral life. Their hands and feet only manifested what was in their hearts, however. Their imaginations and thought processes were corrupt. All human ways are utterly futile apart from the Lord's intervention. Note the repetition of "iniquity" four times in Isaiah 59:3-4; Isaiah 59:6-7.

"His highways are peace and redemption (Isaiah 11:16; Isaiah 19:23; Isaiah 35:8; Isaiah 40:3; Isaiah 49:11; Isaiah 62:10), but the human highways are destruction and confusion (Isaiah 7:3; Isaiah 33:8; Isaiah 36:2; Isaiah 59:7). In his way there is guidance and confidence (Isaiah 2:3; Isaiah 30:12), but in our ways there is discord and strife (Isaiah 3:12; Isaiah 8:11; Isaiah 57:17; Isaiah 65:2)." [Note: Oswalt, *The Book . . .* 40-66, p. 516.]

Verse 9

Because they had denied justice and righteousness to others, the Israelites had not experienced justice or righteousness themselves, from the hands of God or men.

"*Justice* is not 'the just society' as such but the rule of God which will set everything to rights; *righteousness* has the same meaning as in Isaiah 56:1, the coming act of God in which he will vindicate and display his righteousness and fulfill [*sic*] all his righteous purposes." [Note: Motyer, p. 486.]

They had hoped for a bright future in view of God's promises, but their present condition was dark. They had expected to walk in the brightness of His presence, but they were groping in gloom because He had withdrawn the light of His presence from them (cf. Isaiah 58:10).

Verses 9-15

Israel's confession 59:9-15a

Isaiah, speaking for the sinful Israelites in captivity (cf. Isaiah 6:5), first acknowledged the consequences of their behavior (Isaiah 59:9-11) and then confessed their guilt (Isaiah 59:12-15 a).

Verse 10

All the parallel descriptions in this verse stress the hopelessness and vulnerability of the Israelites due to their natural blindness to God's ways (cf. Isaiah 6:10; Isaiah 8:16-17; Isaiah 42:7; Deuteronomy 28:29).

"They are 'blind' as to vision and clarity for guiding life, 'stumbling' as to constancy and stability of life, 'dead' as to vitality and 'get-up-and-go'." [Note: *Ibid.*, p. 487.]

Verse 11

They could not even articulate their grief but simply growled and moaned like angry bears and pitiful doves (cf. Mark 7:34; John 11:38; Romans 8:22-23). This lament closes as it began, with an admission that justice and salvation were far from God's people.

Verse 12

The reason justice and salvation were far away was the Israelites' multiplied transgressions, sins, and iniquities. But they had finally acknowledged their condition (cf. Psalms 51:5). Therefore, hope was now possible, that God would step forward and deliver them (cf. 1 John 1:9).

"Hatred of the consequences of sin and its destructive effects on one's own life are not necessarily evidence of true repentance. It is when we face sin as rebellion against the holy God who loves us that we begin to see it, in some degree, as he sees it." [Note: Grogan, p. 326.]

Verse 13

The people acknowledged sins against God and against other people. They also admitted sins of omission and sins of commission, sins of action and sins of attitude, sins of the mouth and sins of the hands.

Verse 14

These are the reasons justice and righteousness stood far removed from the people. Truth had collapsed, so uprightness could not enter the company of the redeemed (cf. Isaiah 1:21-23).

Verse 15

Though Israel was blind (Isaiah 59:10), the Lord saw. He saw the true state of His people, as He sees everything. He saw that there was no justice in Israel or for Israel (Isaiah 59:9-15 a).

Verses 15-21

What God would do 59:15b-21

This is the third and last pericope, parallel to Isaiah 57:14-21, which announces that God would deliver His people from the sin that plagued them as redeemed people (cf. Isaiah 6:5). The section also closes the part of Isaiah that deals with the recognition of human inability (chs. 56-59).

"This is the ultimate development of the Divine Warrior motif in the Bible: God comes to destroy the final enemy of what he has created: not the monster Chaos, but the monster Sin." [Note: Oswalt, *The Book . . .* 40-66, p. 527.]

Verse 16

God also saw that there was no human being who could mediate between Himself and His people, who could appeal effectively to Him for them (cf. 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 7:25; 1 John 2:1). Aaron and Phinehas had done this for Israel in the past (Numbers 17:12-13; Numbers 25:7). So God Himself acted in power to deliver them, in faithfulness to His promises.

"In saying that God was astonished the prophet does not mean that God had been ignorant of the situation until He saw it and then this sight brought astonishment to Him. Rather, the language speaks of a genuine astonishment, which would express itself in displeasure and yet in compassion for His own to such an extent that He Himself acts." [Note: Young, 3:438.]

"Man's failure to avail himself of God's gracious provision to have a share in the restraint of wickedness and the promotion of righteousness through the ministry [*sic*] of intercession is a definite cause for divine astonishment." [Note: D. Edmond Hiebert, *Working with God: Scriptural Studies in Intercession*, p. 89.]

Verse 17

As a warrior preparing for battle, the Lord made ready to defend His people (cf. Ephesians 6:13-17).

"No weapon is mentioned, neither sword or bow; for His own arm procures Him help, and this alone." [Note: Delitzsch, 2:405.]

Verse 18

God would take vengeance on His enemies and on those forces that opposed His people. He would pay them back according to their dealings. While the context refers to deliverance from sin in a general sense, the

reference to the coastlands suggests that the Lord will also defend and deliver Israel from Gentile opponents (at His second coming). Ultimately, of course, the Lord will subdue every enemy of His.

Verse 19

God's deliverance of His people will result in the whole world fearing Him for this display of His glory. His coming deliverance would be swift and forceful (cf. Revelation 6:15-17; Revelation 16:17-21). Water rushing down a wadi may be in view.

Verse 20

God would redeem His people, as the next of kin came to save the helpless widow. But it is His people who have turned away from their transgressions that He saves (cf. Romans 11:25-27). They will have given up on their ability to deliver themselves, or to secure deliverance from another source, and will have turned to the Lord (cf. Isaiah 55:6). That is the picture of "Jacob" that Isaiah gave in the preceding verses (Isaiah 59:9-15 a; cf. Isaiah 58:1; Isaiah 58:14). Repentance in the sense of forsaking sin, apart from faith, is not a condition for deliverance from sin's *penalty*, but God only delivers believers from the *power* of sin who seek Him for deliverance.

Verse 21

In closing, God promised with a covenant promise that He would not withdraw His Spirit or His Word from His people on whom He would place them (cf. Jeremiah 31:31-40). This is a reference to the New Covenant. The Spirit would abide on His people forever, and His Word would remain in their mouths so they could be the witnesses to Him that He created them to be. Since this has not yet happened, it appears that it will happen at the Lord Jesus' second advent (Isaiah 59:18).

There is debate about whether the Lord has already given His Spirit permanently to all His people, but there is no question that He has not yet made His people the witnesses that they should be. He has given the Spirit to Christians, but not to all Israelites (cf. Joel 2:29). Christians are relatively ineffective witnesses now, but Israel will be a faithful witness in the Millennium (Jeremiah 31:33-34; Ezekiel 36:27 b). Israel will witness to the greatness of Yahweh and will draw the nations to Him (cf. Isaiah 2:2-3; Isaiah 60:1-3). This is the purpose for which He will redeem them.

"The true people of God will ever be a witnessing people, faithfully proclaiming the truth of the Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit." [Note: Archer, p. 650.]

(Adapted from URL:<http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/dcc/view.cgi?bk=22&ch=59>)

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Living in a world filled with evil and injustice as we do, it is natural to become angry or discouraged. But we have great hope in hearing of God's commitment to bring justice. Isaiah offered a glimpse of what lies beyond the oppression of injustice and certainty of God's judgment: the promise of God's mercy. The prophet reminded the people of his day that the merciful God intended to restore his glorious design to those willing to receive it. That reminder is ours as well. The fact that we know the climax of the story gives us an advantage over Isaiah and his audience: the Son of God has indeed visited his people! Having given his life as the perfect sacrifice, he has satisfied the requirements of God's justice to punish sin (Isaiah 52:13-53:12), thus enabling his mercy to be poured out. Risen from the dead, Jesus now reigns on high (Hebrews 1:3) as we await his return when he will judge some (Acts 10:42) and redeem others (Mark 13:26, 27). Knowing how the promises are fulfilled, we have a duty beyond that of Isaiah's audience. Knowing how God exhibits his justice and mercy through Jesus, we have every reason and obligation to reflect those in the way we live.

Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

1. Our decision to follow the Lord will not be looked upon kindly by the world (Isa. 59:15)
2. Through Christ, God does for us what we cannot do for ourselves (vs. 16)
3. God's character and power guarantee the fulfillment of His promises (vs. 17)
4. God's justice demands that He recompense those who make themselves His enemies (vs. 18)
5. The wicked have reason to fear God; the godly can rejoice even in His judgment (vss. 19-20)
6. As redeemed people, we must continually testify of the Lord's salvation (vs. 21)