

Judah's transgressions and those of the world are no different. They just knew better. This chapter is a transitional chapter that begins by answering Judah's complaint against God. It moves on to describe their wickedness, and then moves into the rebellion of mankind as a whole. It ends with God's salvation of the Jews and the judgment of the world, which lead into the Millennial Kingdom described in the following chapters.

¹ Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; Isaiah 59:1 In our previous chapter we saw the people of Judah complaining about God not answering their requests when they would fast (Isaiah 58:3). God answered with a description of their hypocrisy. He answers that question again in this chapter with more specifics. But first He tells them that He is not impaired in any way. He hears just fine. His hand is more than able to save. He tells them just how He will save at the end of the chapter.

If God is not answering our prayers when and how we desire, we need to know that it isn't because He can't. It is either our sin that is in the way, or our request is something that wouldn't be good for us in the long run (James 4:3). His timing is perfect. His answers are best. He loves us enough to not give us everything we demand, just as we don't give our children everything they desire.

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. Isaiah 59:2 In the case of Judah before captivity, it was their sins that kept God from answering their prayers. His refusal to answer was a wakeup call to get them to open their eyes to the destructiveness of their sin. He hid His face from them for their good.

I should add that there are times in a believer's life when God will seem to hide His face from us to increase our faith (2 Corinthians 12:8-9). It isn't always because of sin. When sin is the cause, God uses difficulties and the natural consequences of sin to turn us back to Him. In some cases He even uses the lack of consequences to show that He is merciful and wants us to turn before severe consequences result. God's response to our situation depends on the condition of our hearts. But He will not condone or tolerate continued rebellion. He loves us too much to leave us as we are.

³ For your hands are defiled with blood and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies; your tongue mutters wickedness. Isaiah 59:3 Verses 3 through 8 are a description of the iniquity of Judah which is the same as that of the world. Hands, fingers, lips, and tongue remind us of a few of the Psalms (Psalm 51:14-15). Psalm 8 tells us the work of God's fingers include the moon and stars, yet He gave to man

Commented [PW1]: Isaiah 58:3 (ESV)

³ 'Why have we fasted, and you see it not? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you take no knowledge of it?' Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure, and oppress all your workers.

Commented [PW2]: James 4:3 (ESV)

³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

Commented [PW3]: 2 Corinthians 12:8-9 (ESV)

⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me.

⁹ But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Commented [PW4]: Psalm 51:14-15 (ESV)

¹⁴ Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness.

¹⁵ O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

Commented [PW5]: Psalm 8:3-6 (ESV)

³ When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,

⁴ what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?

⁵ Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.

⁶ You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet,

dominion over the works of His hands and put all things under our feet. He gave us this glorious creation and yet we abuse it. The innocent are slain. We lie to one another. We speak wickedly. Language seems to have degenerated into one vulgar expression after another. Live recordings of people on the street have so many bleeps when broadcast that you can hardly understand what the person is trying to say. A lying tongue and foul mouth is evil because God is true and holy (Proverbs 8:7). To be unlike Him is to be in rebellion toward Him, which is un-godly.

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. Isaiah 59:4 Insurance rates are as high as they are because of all the fraud and abuse of the system. Someone tried to sue our church because they fell in a drainage ditch in our parking lot a year prior to notifying us. Their attorney said there was no sign warning of the ditch. You have ridiculous labels on things for this very reason. Caution: This hot coffee is hot. The sad thing is that it is less costly for insurance companies to settle out of court than to go through a long drawn out court case. That is why people can make a living from frivolous law suits, which means those who pay for insurance also pay these people who conceive mischief (Proverbs 1:19).

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. ^{6a} Their webs will not serve as clothing; men will not cover themselves with what they make. Isaiah 59:5-6a In poetical form the people of Judah are compared to spiders whose fruit produces death, and whose offspring are called vipers. In other words, they produce evil and the children are much worse than the parents. Each successive generation is worse than the one before.

^{6b} 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. Isaiah 59:6b-7 God refers to their hands and feet again. It is our physical actions that express what goes on in the mind. If the mind dwells on evil, it will eventually be expressed in our actions. Our mind is where our spiritual battles are fought (2 Corinthians 10:5). Our heart decides the outcome (Proverbs 21:2).

On the very day I started working on this sermon, December 4th, as God would have it, Oswald Chambers devotional was explaining that life is a battle physically, mentally, morally, and spiritually.¹ To be physically healthy internally we must have sufficient vitality inside to resist the destructive forces from the outside, viruses, germs, and the like. The same is true of our mental life. Temptations from the world, the devil, and our old nature compete for time in the contemplation of the minds. Of course the world, the flesh, and the devil never tell you the whole story, otherwise it wouldn't be a

Commented [PW6]: Proverbs 8:7 (ESV)

⁷ for my mouth will utter truth; wickedness is an abomination to my lips.

Commented [PW7]: Proverbs 1:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ Such are the ways of everyone who is greedy for unjust gain; it takes away the life of its possessors.

Commented [PW8]: 2 Corinthians 10:5 (ESV)

⁵ We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,

Commented [PW9]: Proverbs 21:2 (ESV)

² Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the heart.

Commented [PW10]: Oswald Chambers, My Utmost for His Highest, December 4

temptation. And when given enough contemplation, we can talk ourselves into compromising and figure out a way to justify it.

"Swift to shed innocent blood" seems to be the mantra of ISIS. "Desolation and destruction are in their highways" also fits pretty well. But we should never fool ourselves that without Christ we wouldn't be as vulnerable to deception and lust as they are. It is only the grace of God, and His grace is even reaching some of them (Jeremiah 17:9). Our lust for violence and bloodshed is seen in our entertainment industry.

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. Isaiah 59:8 Whether ISIS or the ungodly that look so refined within our own culture, a wicked heart does not know the way of peace. As a previous chapter stated, "There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked." Isaiah 57:21 Sin is a hard taskmaster. It drives us to seek more and is never satisfied. And when sin reigns there is no justice in their paths. Everything is skewed by passion for sin (Romans 8:5).

"Crooked roads" in Scripture means an immoral lifestyle. No one on that path knows peace. That is because sin wont fill the emptiness within, and the subconscious acknowledgement that we will reap what we sow (Galatians 6:7).

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. Isaiah 59:9-10 Verses, 9-13, tell of the fruit of their choices. They are choices to contemplate wickedness, to act on it, to justify it, and even make it a goal. First, the wicked never seem to get justice from others. That is because they have sown injustice. Righteousness never overtakes them because the refuse to seek it. They hope for some light and clarity to life and their situations, but light is in the Lord whom they have rejected (1 John 1:5).

They grope around to find something that really satisfies, something that can make sense of life, a reason to go on, but they are spiritually blind. Compared to people who are alive in Christ, they seem like dead men. Have you noticed how some people exude life and joy while others seem to be so lifeless? In Christ we have a reason to live, a reason to go on, regardless of the circumstances we face.

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. Isaiah 59:11 This is a description of despair and frustration. As believers, we can fall back into the old nature and be right there with these unbelievers in complaining as if everything were hopeless. If we have life in Christ, we should be the ones lifting the conversation to another level. We should be

Commented [PW11]: Jeremiah 17:9 (ESV)

⁹ The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

Commented [PW12]: Romans 8:5 (ESV)

⁵ For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.

Commented [PW13]: Galatians 6:7 (ESV)

⁷ Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.

Commented [PW14]: 1 John 1:5 (ESV)

⁵ This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

speaking of what is praiseworthy and the goodness of God in the midst of this fallen world (Philippians 4:8). I can moan and growl with the best of them, but I don't believe that pleases the Lord. It certainly doesn't draw others to Him.

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. Isaiah 59:12-13

Acknowledgment of sin comes before there can be genuine repentance (Psalm 32:5). But when we see our sins and yet refuse to forsake them, we are laying up judgment against ourselves (Romans 2:5). To deny the LORD is to deny the conviction of the Holy Spirit and turning away from His love (Matthew 10:33).

That last line of verse 13 is something I've witnessed too many times. Even among Christians we see some who conceive a lie for their own advancement or gain, and then utter from the heart lying words. I've looked into the eyes of individuals and asked them about a sin they were involved in and had them answer without blinking that they weren't. Every time the sin eventually becomes known, but in the meantime damage is done to the reputation of the church and an excuse given to those who want to deny the validity of the Gospel (Luke 6:46).

¹⁴ Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands far away; for truth has stumbled in the public squares, and uprightness cannot enter. ^{15a} Truth is lacking, and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey. Isaiah 59:14-15a The rest of the chapter tells us God's description of the general condition of man and what He intends to do about it. He first addresses the injustice and denial of truth. **Ideology can be idiotology.** It can blind people to the truth, and it often results in a purposeful denial of truth. The whistle blowers are persecuted. The Christians are called bigots for pointing out the facts. Those ISIS members who have a revelation of Jesus are likely to be beheaded. He who departs from evil makes himself a prey (2 Timothy 3:12). Been there!

^{15b} 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. Isaiah 59:15b-16 God hates injustice! He hates it when the truth is denied and the godly are persecuted (Proverbs 12:22). He wondered that there was no one to intercede. Who can straighten out the mess in our world? I don't think this is addressing intercessory prayer as important as that is. It is expressing amazement that with the multitude of people on the earth and the abundance of truth God presents to us, no one has stood up and been the answer to the injustice of this world.

Commented [PW15]: Philippians 4:8 (ESV)

⁸ Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

Commented [PW16]: Psalm 32:5 (ESV)

⁵ I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah

Commented [PW17]: Romans 2:5 (ESV)

⁵ But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

Commented [PW18]: Matthew 10:33 (ESV)

³³ but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

Commented [PW19]: Luke 6:46 (ESV)

⁴⁶ "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?"

Commented [PW20]: 2 Timothy 3:12 (ESV)

¹² Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,

Commented [PW21]: Proverbs 12:22 (ESV)

²² Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who act faithfully are his delight.

The only answer is the God/man, the arm of the LORD (Isaiah 53:1), Christ Jesus. He is the source of eternal justice for our sins and final justice for the sins of the unrepentant world as well. He is the Captain of the Hosts (Joshua 5:14). He is the One who fought and won on Calvary for all who will come to Him. And He will fight and win the Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 19:11-16). All will stand before His judgment seat.

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.

Isaiah 59:17 The beginning of this verse reminds us of the armor we are to put on, which is listed in Ephesians 6:10-17. The last half of the verse is what He alone wears so well, garments of vengeance. Remember vengeance belongs to the Lord alone (Deuteronomy 32:35), as He is the only One who can administer it in justice. He wraps Himself in zeal as a cloak. He is zealous for justice to reign, for all wrongs to be righted, and to have truth and righteousness prevail in the earth. As much as we desire it, we can know He desires it even more. The disciples saw just a glimpse of it when Jesus cleansed the temple. They remembered the verse, "Zeal for your house has consumed you" (John 2:17) and *we* are His house.

18 According to their deeds, so will he repay, wrath to his adversaries, repayment to his enemies; to the coastlands he will render repayment. Isaiah 59:18 This is justice for the world! Repayment is inevitable because God is just. If our sins are not covered by His atonement, they will meet repayment at His hand. To all those who fight goodness and resist righteousness, repayment for every deed will be rendered.

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.

Isaiah 59:19 In Isaiah 57:11 God asked if they had no fear of God because He held off His judgment. When He delivers justice to the world, there will be a worldwide fear of the LORD (Romans 2:6). His judgment will come like a flash flood driven by a tornado!

20 "And a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression," declares the LORD. Isaiah 59:20 Jesus will come to reign in Zion. The Redeemer will come to the Jews who turn to Him in that time called Jacob's Trouble. Only one-third will have survived, but all those will turn to Him and be saved (Zechariah 13:8-9).

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." Isaiah 59:21 Isaiah's prophecy has gone from the reason the prayers of the hypocritical Jews were not answered to laying out all their sins and the consequences. They were not unlike the so

Commented [PW22]: Isaiah 53:1 (ESV)

¹ Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

Commented [PW23]: Joshua 5:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ And he said, "No; but I am the commander of the army of the LORD. Now I have come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, "What does my lord say to his servant?"

Commented [PW24R23]:

Commented [PW25]: Revelation 19:11-16 (ESV)

¹¹ Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.

¹² His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself.

¹³ He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God.

¹⁴ And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses.

¹⁵ From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.

¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

Commented [PW26]: Ephesians 6:10-17 (ESV)

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.

¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

¹⁴ Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ... [1]

Commented [PW27]: Deuteronomy 32:35 (ESV)

³⁵ Vengeance is mine, and recompense, for the time when their foot shall slip; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and their doom comes swiftly.

Commented [PW28]: Isaiah 57:11 (ESV)

¹¹ Whom did you dread and fear, so that you lied, and did not remember me, did not lay it to heart? Have I not held my peace, even for a long time, and you do not fear me?

Commented [PW29]: Romans 2:6 (ESV)

⁶ He will render to each one according to his works:

Commented [PW30]: Zechariah 13:8-9 (ESV)

⁸ In the whole land, declares the LORD, two thirds shall be cut off and perish, and one third shall be left alive.

⁹ And I will put this third into the fire, and refine them as one refines silver, and test them as gold is tested. They will ... [2]

called "godly" who go through religious routines but do not know the Lord. Then Isaiah predicted the return of the LORD to judge the earth and establish the kingdom of God. The Redeemer of chapter 53, who is our guilt offering and died for our sins, will make a new covenant with Israel (Isaiah 53:10; Hebrews 10:10). His Spirit will be upon them, His words will be in their mouths, and the mouths of the generations that follow. Isn't that one of the greatest desires of those who know the Lord, that their children will know Him as well? Israel's history of backsliding will be over. The cycle of sin, rebellion, repentance will finally end. The following chapters are glimpse into that time to come. This chapter has covered Isaiah's time to the near future. Only those who are living in Christ are ready for that day. Are you ready?

Questions

- 1 Give some reasons God doesn't answer prayer?
- 2 What is the connection with verse 3 and Psalm 8?
- 3 Are you surprised false lawsuits go back to 700BC?
- 4 Why is it so important to guard our thoughts?
- 5 What are "crooked roads" in Scripture?
- 6 Why do things seem dark to the wicked?
- 7 Why would we moan and complain?
- 8 Why does truth stumble in the public squares?
- 9 Why do those who depart from evil become a prey?
- 10 Summarize the chapter and its part in Isaiah.

Commented [PW31]: Isaiah 53:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

Commented [PW32]: Hebrews 8:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Ephesians 6:10-17 (ESV)

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.

¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

¹⁴ Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

¹⁵ and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

¹⁶ In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;

¹⁷ and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,

Zechariah 13:8-9 (ESV)

⁸ In the whole land, declares the LORD, two thirds shall be cut off and perish, and one third shall be left alive.

⁹ And I will put this third into the fire, and refine them as one refines silver, and test them as gold is tested. They will call upon my name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'They are my people'; and they will say, 'The LORD is my God.'"