



**Study Guide:** 23 September 2018

**Sermon Series:** Isaiah

**Text:** Isaiah 59.1-21

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*Hello! This guide is provided to help facilitate a clear understanding of the Bible passage with a focus on applying God's truths to our lives individually and corporately. As such we encourage you to budget sufficient time for application questions. A recommendation would be to spend at least half your time pondering and discussing questions that are application focused. The guide has been bulked up to help you lead a discussion, but please remember that you will still need to prepare for the study by reading and praying through the passage; and reading through the guide, thinking about how to best lead the discussion for your group. The sample answers are not model answers, but possible answers that people may give, that help you understand how the discussion might go.*

## OVERVIEW OF ISAIAH

### Background and Context

Isaiah ministered for more than 40 years, through the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. His office of prophecy began in the final days of Uzziah's reign, through the war between Judah and the united kingdoms of Israel and Syria, Judah's defeat and exiled by Assyria, and the Babylonian captivity.

### Isaiah Chapters 1-35

The first part of Isaiah speaks about God's judgement on Israel and Judah by Assyria. Isaiah railed against the leaders for their hypocrisy (1:10-15), greed (5:8), self-indulgence (5:11), and cynicism (5:19). The rich prospered while the poor was oppressed. The people confessed the Lord as their king with their lips, but their hearts were far from Him and their temple sacrifices were a mere sham.

### Isaiah chapters 40-66

The second part focuses on the remnants' future return from Babylon and their ultimate deliverance in the remote future and the fall of pagan Babylon (46:1-47:15). More than a century before Cyrus the Persian came to power, Isaiah named him as God's anointed agent to restore the remnant to the land (44:24-45:13). He challenged the people to renew their loyalty to the Lord after they return to the land (56:1-8) and to avoid repeating idolatry and evil acts (57:3-13).

### Christ in Isaiah

Beyond this future act of salvation, Isaiah predicted the coming of a Servant and Saviour much greater than Cyrus. This Servant would fulfill Israel's original destiny by bringing justice to the nations (42:1-4) and becoming a light to the Gentiles (49:1-7). The Servant would suffer willingly to take away the sins of His people (52:13-53:12) and thus establish a new covenant between the Lord and the new Israel (42:5-7).

## BIG IDEA OF THE TEXT

Isaiah 59 by clarify that the reason God has not delivered his people is not because of a lack of power, but because of their sins. Justice and deliverance is far from the Jews because they have not been showing justice to one another. However God graciously initiates to bring about redemption, deliverance and judgement through the sending of the Redeemer (v20).

### Let's read: Isaiah 59:1-21

*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.

**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.*

**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."*

## QUESTIONS

Q1. Why does Isaiah begin chapter 59 by clarifying that the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear?

Q2. How does Isaiah illustrate Israel's sins?

Q3. What are the consequences of the people's sins?

Q4a. What changes do you notice in the use of pronouns when moving from v1-8 to v9-

Q4b. What is significant about this?

Q5a. Read Psalms 51:3-4. What parallels can you draw between this verse and Isaiah 59:12?

Q5b. What does this teach us about sin?

Q5c. How does this teach us to repent?

Q6. What is Israel hoping for as they pray in verses 9-11?

Q7. How does God respond to his people's desire for justice and salvation?(v14-21)

Q8. How does this passage encourage you to identify sin in your life that hinders your relationship with God?

Q9. How does Christ's redemption affect the way we treat others?

Q10. How has this passage challenged your understanding of repentance?

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Reference Material

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## HELPFUL RESOURCES

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