



# Highlights From the Book of Isaiah

To Download this lesson go to:

<http://www.purifiedbyfaith.com/Isaiah/Isaiah.htm>

<https://www.wikiart.org/en/ernest-meissonier/isaiah>

# The LORD Intervenes (59:15b-21)

- The text that we will be examining today plays a significant role in the structure of chapters 56–66.
- In the *immediate* context, it provides the divine response to the confession of the demoralized Israelites in the previous part of chapter 59 that we looked at last week.
- But *more generally*, it brings to a conclusion the quest which began in 56:1 regarding righteousness and justice:
  - *This is what the LORD says, “Promote justice! Do what is right! For I am ready to deliver you; I am ready to vindicate you openly.*

# The LORD Intervenes (59:15b-21)

- God is depicted as the mighty warrior who comes to defeat Israel's enemies as he first did Amalek and the Canaanites so many years before (Exod 17:8-13; Josh 5:13-15).
- But who are those enemies now?
- There is no reference to Assyria, Babylon, or Persia, or even the nearer neighbors, the Philistines, Moabites, or Ammonites.
- What is it that was still *defeating* Israel and preventing its light from dawning on the world?
- It is no longer Babylon, for Isaiah has prophetically seen that that threat has been dealt with.

# The LORD Intervenes (59:15b-21)

- Yet Israel is still in need of deliverance; it is still defeated.
- By what?
- By its inability to live the life of God, to do justice and righteousness (56:1) in the world.
- Here is the *true* enemy against which God has come to make war.
- It is not the Canaanites or Babylonians who are the enemies of God's people, and thus of God; rather, it is the *sin* that the Canaanites and Babylonians *represent*.
- So here we see that God now comes to destroy the *final* and *ultimate* enemy of what he has created: sin, and the death that results from it (cf. 1 Cor 15:26).

# The LORD Intervenes (59:15b-21)

- Just as in the conquest of the land of Canaan, so it will be in the conquest of sin: the power of God *alone* makes such a conquest possible.
- When it does so, the mouth of God's people will be a clean vehicle for the Spirit of God to speak through to reveal himself to the watching world (v. 21).
- In short, the vocation that came to the man of unclean lips for his nation in chapter 6 will now have come to the nation of unclean lips (cf. Isaiah 6:5) for the world.

# The LORD Intervenes (59:15b-21)

59:15b *The Lord watches and is displeased, for there is no justice.* <sup>16</sup> *He sees there is no advocate; he is shocked that no one intervenes. So he takes matters into his own hands; his desire for justice drives him on.* <sup>17</sup> *He wears his desire for justice like body armor, and his desire to deliver is like a helmet on his head. He puts on the garments of vengeance and wears zeal like a robe.* <sup>18</sup> *He repays them for what they have done, dispensing angry judgment to his adversaries and punishing his enemies. He repays the coastlands.* <sup>19</sup> *In the west, people [fear] the Lord's [name]; in the east they recognize his splendor. For he comes like a rushing stream driven on by wind sent from the Lord.* <sup>20</sup> *"A [redeemer] comes to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their rebellious deeds," says the Lord.* <sup>21</sup> *"As for me, this is my [covenant with] them," says the Lord. "My Spirit, who is upon you, and my words, which I have placed in your mouth, will not depart from your mouth or from the mouths of your children and descendants from this time forward," says the Lord.*

59:15b *The Lord watches and is displeased, for there is no justice.*

- The great hope of the world is that God sees!
- He is neither blind nor insensitive.
- He sees and hears the clamor of the Sodoms of this world and decrees that their sin will have a *limit*.
- Likewise, he sees the oppression of his people in Egypt and determines to put an end to it.
- So here, although he is the *transcendent* God of the universe, he is nevertheless *aware* of his people's helplessness before sin.
- He sees that they *receive* no justice, because they are unable to *do* justice.

- Not only does he *see* the situation, but he *cares* about it.
- To our God, this capitulation of people to injustice and unrighteousness is a *great evil*, and it is *appalling* to him that it should remain unaddressed.
- The situation in which Israel will find itself upon its return from Babylonian exile is not what God ultimately desires, and he will not leave it unaddressed.
- If Israel is unable to defeat its sin, then God must.



**59:16** *He sees there is no advocate; he is shocked that no one intervenes. So he takes matters into his own hands; his desire for justice drives him on.*

- No national leader would or could do what was necessary to be done for Israel.
- God's desolation (he was "*shocked*") over this fact is surely not a response of *surprise*, as though some human could have filled this gap but did not.
- Rather, it is an expression of his perpetual *horror* at sin and his perpetual *compassion* for his people.
- So here, as in chapter 53, God must *intervene* on his people's behalf.
- They were helpless to overcome the guilt and alienation that their sin had produced, and so God exerted his power and intervened on their behalf, submitting to the death that was rightfully theirs and ours.

**59:16** *He sees there is no advocate; he is shocked that no one intervenes. So he takes matters into his own hands; his desire for justice drives him on.*

- Here the LORD “*takes matters into his own hands*” and exerts his power as he intervenes to destroy the sin’s ability to neutralize Israel’s witness before the world.
- But although his power is depicted differently here than in chapter 53, its function is exactly the same in both places: God’s redemptive activity on behalf of a helpless people.
- “*his desire for justice*” emphasizes that aspect of his character that was prominent in chapters 40-55: God’s faithfulness to his prior promises.
- His deliverance of Israel from the power of *sin* by means of *his* power is an expression of the gracious trustworthiness of God.

**59:17** *He wears his desire for justice like body armor, and his desire to deliver is like a helmet on his head. He puts on the garments of vengeance and wears zeal like a robe.*

- In this verse the idea of God's coming to the defense of his people is depicted by the imagery of a warrior preparing for battle.
- This imagery is no doubt the prototype of what we see in Eph 6:13-17, where Paul calls on his Christian hearers to prepare for spiritual battle ("*...take up the full armor of God so that you may be able to stand your ground on the evil day, and having done everything, to stand.*")
- The **first** half of the verse seems to speak of salvation for the devout ("*his desire to deliver*"), while the second speaks of destruction (i.e., "*vengeance*") for the enemies of the devout.

**59:17** *He wears his desire for justice like **body armor**, and his desire to deliver is like a **helmet** on his head. He puts on the **garments** of vengeance and wears zeal like a **robe**.*

- God is fully clothed as a warrior, with “**helmet**”, “**body armor**”, “**garments**”, and “**robe**”.
- It is interesting that **no offensive** weapons are mentioned – no bow, spear, or sword.
- Why these are omitted is not readily apparent.
- Perhaps all that was needed to wreak God’s vengeance on his enemies and work salvation for his people was his mighty arm.

**59:18** *He repays them for what they have done, dispensing angry judgment to his adversaries and punishing his enemies. He repays the coastlands.*

- God will repay his foes; he will take vengeance on those who have opposed him.
- The word “*repays*” is from the Hebrew verb šālam (the same root as šālôm, “peace”) with the sense of pacifying a debt.
- It is hard to escape the sense that the choice of the word is ironic.
- God will give šālôm, “peace,” to those who love him (cf. 57:19), but he will “pacify” all accounts with his enemies, whether they be near at hand or at the ends of the earth (“*the coastlands*”).
- All that God’s enemy, sin, has done to creation will be richly repaid.

**59:19** *In the west, people [fear] the Lord's [name]; in the east they recognize his splendor. For he comes like a rushing stream driven on by wind sent from the Lord.*

- From the “*west*” to the “*east*”, people will “*fear*” God’s “*name*” and “*splendor*”.
- His “*splendor*” (or glory) is his fundamental and inescapable reality, which fills the earth (6:3) and makes everything else pale into insignificance beside it (2:10, 19, 21).
- His “*name*” is his reputation and his character.
- The “*fear*” spoken of here is a terror of retribution.
- The wrath of God against sin will be like a stream thundering through a narrow canyon, pushed on by a roaring wind; and those who choose to ally themselves with sin, no matter where they are in the world, will have good cause to be terrified (cf. 2:19-22; Rev 6:15-17).

59:20 “A [redeemer] comes to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their rebellious deeds,” says the Lord.

- A “*redeemer*” is the One who pays a price in order to set His people free.
- In our translation it says that a redeemer comes “*to Zion*”, which is an allowable meaning of the Hebrew preposition used here.
- The Septuagint translates this as “*for the sake of Zion*”, which is also a legitimate translation.
- In his citation of this verse in Romans 11:26, the Apostle Paul renders this “*from Zion*”, which is *also* grammatically allowable.
- There is a sense in which *all* of these ideas are true.

59:20 “A [redeemer] comes to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their rebellious deeds,” says the Lord.

- Those whom the redeemer comes to are those “*who repent of their rebellious deeds,*”
- The words serve as an identification of who Isaiah is talking about when he speaks here of “*Zion*”
- For Isaiah is not speaking here of the physical city but of the coming of God for His true people.
- These converts had once rebelled against the LORD, but have now “*repented of their rebellious deeds*”.
- The reference, therefore, is not to the nation as a whole, but to the elect, or *true* Israel.



**59:21** *“As for me, this is my [covenant with] them,” says the Lord. “My Spirit, who is upon you, and my words, which I have placed in your mouth, will not depart from your mouth or from the mouths of your children and descendants from this time forward,” says the Lord.*

- God’s “*covenant*” with his remnant has already been mentioned several times and is a central part of God’s deliverance (see 54:10; 55:3; etc.).
- This verse speaks of the new covenant’s promise of the “*Spirit*” that will come to live within believers (i.e. the remnant), a promise confirmed in Acts 2 when the Holy Spirit comes at Pentecost (see Acts 2:1-21 where Joel 2:28-32 is said to be fulfilled).

59:21 *“As for me, this is my [covenant with] them,” says the Lord. “My Spirit, who is upon you, and my words, which I have placed in your mouth, will not depart from your mouth or from the mouths of your children and descendants from this time forward,” says the Lord.*

- The phrase *“my words, which I have placed in your mouth, will not depart from your mouth”* refers to new-found obedience to the law which the LORD gives to them (see Josh. 1:8) that will last from this time on and forever (v. 21).
- This is similar to the description of what will happen to the recipients of the New Covenant as it is described in Jeremiah 31:31ff, where it says in verse 33 *“I will put my law within them and write it on their hearts and minds.”*

# Paul's Citation of Isaiah 59:20 in Romans 11:26

Isaiah 59:20 *"And a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression," declares the LORD. (ESV)*

Romans 11:25 *Lest you be wise in your own sight, I want you to understand this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. <sup>26</sup> And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob"; <sup>27</sup> "and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins." <sup>28</sup> As regards the gospel, they are enemies of God for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. <sup>29</sup> For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. <sup>30</sup> For just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, <sup>31</sup> so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy. <sup>32</sup> For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all. (ESV).*

# Paul's Citation of Isaiah 59:20 in Romans 11:26

- The Apostle Paul's citation of Isaiah 59:20 in Romans 11:26 occurs in a section of Romans where he is discussing the rejection of the Jews and inclusion of the Gentiles as God's People. (Romans 9-11)
- Paul addresses three aspects of this situation as follows:
  - 9:1-29 - Paul explains the *ultimate* cause of the rejection of Israel and the salvation of the Gentiles: God's sovereign choice.
  - 9:30-10:21 - Paul explains the *immediate* cause of the rejection of Israel and the salvation of the Gentiles: the different way in which the two groups were responding to the Gospel
  - 11:1-36 - Israel's Rejection is Neither Total Nor Final
- It is in this last section where Paul cites Isaiah 59:20

# Paul's Citation of Isaiah 59:20 in Romans 11:26

- In Romans 11:1-36 the Apostle Paul expresses *four thoughts* in support of the idea that Israel's Rejection is Neither Total Nor Final:
  - Romans 11:1-10 – Not All Jews Are Rejected, God Has Saved His Elect from Among Them
  - Romans 11:11-24 – God's Rejection of Those Jews Who Had Rejected the Gospel Was not Final
  - Romans 11:25-32 – God Will Be Faithful to Save and Keep *All* of His Elect - Both Jews and Gentiles
  - Romans 11:33-36 – Paul Praises God for His Glory and Wisdom
- It is the presentation of the *third* thought where Paul cites Isaiah 59:20

# Romans 11:25-32 - God Will Be Faithful to Save and Keep All of His Elect - Both Jews and Gentiles

Having warned the Gentiles to not be arrogant towards those Jews who had, up to this point, rejected the gospel - Paul now reminds them that God has at one time bound **all** of his elect people (both Jews and Gentiles) over to disobedience in order that He might mercy on them **all**.

**11:25** *Lest you be wise in your own sight,*  
[in thinking that God has shown the **Gentiles**  
more favor than He has shown the **Jews**]  
*I want you to understand this mystery, brothers:*  
[A “mystery” is a truth which would not have been known if God had not revealed it]  
*a partial hardening has [at the present time]  
come upon [the nation of] Israel,  
until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.*

# Romans 11:25-32 - God Will Be Faithful to Save and Keep All of His Elect - Both Jews and Gentiles

Paul has already explained (vs. 11ff), the Gentiles are now being saved because the Jews **rejected** the gospel and now, in turn, the Jews are being won out of **envy** for what the Gentiles have in the gospel. And so it is through **this process** that God will continue to save **all** of His elect (both Jews and Gentiles) i.e., true, spiritual Israel:

**11:26**

*And in this way all [true, spiritual] Israel will be saved,*

[Paul now shows how it is that God saved true, spiritual Israel - by sending His Son to take away the sins of His people as He promised He would do]:

*as it is written,*

[Paul, then quotes Isaiah 59:20]:

*“The Deliverer [Christ] will come from Zion,*

[“Zion” here is probably a reference to the people of Israel whose center is Jerusalem, thus acknowledging that Christ, in His humanity, came from the Jewish people (cf., 9:5)]

*he will banish ungodliness from Jacob” [i.e., Israel, the people of God].;*



# Romans 11:25-32 - God Will Be Faithful to Save and Keep All of His Elect - Both Jews and Gentiles

**11:27** *“and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins.”*

This reference to a divine covenant which is connected with the removal of sins is probably a reference to Jeremiah 31:33-34 – *“This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,” declares the LORD. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the LORD. “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”*

# Romans 11:25-32 - God Will Be Faithful to Save and Keep All of His Elect - Both Jews and Gentiles

**11:28**

*As regards the gospel,  
they [elect Jews who have temporarily experienced  
a hardening from God]  
are enemies of God for your [i.e., you Gentiles ] sake.  
But as regards [God's] election,  
they [these elect Jews] are beloved [by God]  
for the sake of their forefathers [Abraham, Isaac, and  
Jacob].*

Thus, Paul answers again the question that he asks and answers in verse 11a: “Did the Jews stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all!”

# Romans 11:25-32 - God Will Be Faithful to Save and Keep All of His Elect - Both Jews and Gentiles

**11:29**

*For the gifts [in this context, this would seem to be gifts that accompany salvation, such as faith, or perhaps gifts given to believers by the Holy Spirit at salvation]*

*and the calling of God [inward spiritual call to salvation, cf., 1:6,7; 8:28,30; 9:24]*

*are irrevocable.*

In other words, God's sovereign choice in election and subsequent salvation will never be retracted - God is faithful to save and to keep every last one of His chosen people, Jew and Gentile alike

# Romans 11:25-32 - God Will Be Faithful to Save and Keep All of His Elect - Both Jews and Gentiles

**11:30**

*For just as you [Gentiles] were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their [the Jews'] disobedience,*

**11:31**

*so they [these Jews] too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you [Gentiles] they [these elect, but temporarily hardened Jews] also may now receive mercy.*

[That is, these Jews, seeing God's mercy to the Gentiles, may become envious and therefore turn to receive God's mercy themselves]

# Romans 11:25-32 - God Will Be Faithful to Save and Keep All of His Elect - Both Jews and Gentiles

**11:32**

*For God has consigned all [elect Jews and Gentiles]  
to disobedience,  
that he may have mercy on all.*

Every elect person, whether Jew or Gentile, was at one time “locked up in the prison of disobedience”. Therefore all men must acknowledge that they have been saved only by the mercy of God!

# Next Time

- I hope to cover *The Future Glory of Zion*  
(60:1-22)

# Class Discussion Time

- Within society and in our own lives, we often encounter enemies who seek to harm to us.
- The Israelites in their day faced many enemies that caused problems for them and therefore they sought help from the LORD in order to defeat those enemies.
- We saw in today's text that Israel's ***greatest*** enemy that they needed help from the LORD to overcome was their own ***sin***.
- What does this say to us about the enemies that ***we*** face in our lives?
- Do you think Christians tend to feel more upset about their lesser enemies than they do about their greatest enemy?
- Why do you think that is?

# Class Discussion Time

- As we saw today, the Apostle Paul cited the second half of Isaiah 59:20 in Romans 11:26: “*The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob*”
- In looking at this citation we covered the surrounding context in Romans 11 to understand how the apostle used the citation.
- Part of the surrounding context included the first half of verse 11:26 which reads: “*And in this way all Israel will be saved*”.
- A very common understanding of this verse (perhaps the **most** commonly held view) is that the Apostle Paul is teaching that sometime in the future there is coming a day when all (or at least a vast majority of) people of Jewish lineage living on the earth will accept Christ and be saved.
- As you can see from the presentation of I gave this morning of this passage and it’s surrounding context, I believe “*Israel*” in **this** context is referring to True Israel, that is, elect Jews.
- Is there anyone here who holds to the more commonly held view and would like to talk about why you think that?