

Salvation Brought and Bought

Book of Isaiah

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Bible Text: Isaiah 59:16-21

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Look with me, if you will, in your Bibles to Isaiah 59. We're going to be considering together verses 16 down to verse 21 and as I announced, I'd like to speak with you about a salvation that God himself has brought to this world and has paid for in full. Brought and bought through the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Isaiah 59:16,

16 And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him. 17 For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke. 18 According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompence. 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 shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him. 20 And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD. 21 As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.

So here in a nutshell we have what I liken to a golden nugget of the Gospel story that is foretold here through Isaiah's pen, but let's remember Isaiah wasn't the author, the Spirit of God is the author of this word that we are considering.

So if we wonder what the Spirit of God would have taught the Lord's own in the Old Testament concerning God or concerning Christ, or salvation or judgment, I believe here we have a portion of Scripture that should ever cause us to see that there has only been one way of salvation revealed in them as well in us. There are preachers today that like to divide between what the Old Testament believers knew and understood and what those since the New Testament would have understood, but if you'll look with me in 1 Peter 1, I can truly call Isaiah my brother. I don't believe that in glory some day there is going to be

one section for the Old Testament believers and then over here another section for those that are since the cross. There are some men that preach that way. They preach as if the Jews were somehow God's favored sons and, alas, he had to kind of set aside his plan for them for a while but they say Christ is coming again and he's going to pick it up again with them as if there are two separate people. They're not. There never has been. True, he did work through that nation to bring his Son into this world, but there has never been two true people of God. There has only been one: Jew and Gentile.

This is what they would have understood. 1 Peter 1, notice in verse 10, "Of which salvation." That right there is a declaration. There is only one salvation, it's in the singular, "Of which salvation," one true salvation, "the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you." Now, that doesn't mean that there wasn't any grace in the Old Testament but specifically here, "who prophesied of the grace." Remember what John wrote in John 1 that the law came by Moses, grace and truth by the Lord Jesus Christ? He was the full manifestation of all that the law foretold. There is not a divide between the law and what Christ did. He came and accomplished the law. In him is grace because he finished the work and it's through him that God shows grace to sinners.

So they prophesied of the one grace that should come unto you. That means when I go back and read Isaiah like I am right now with you and you looking at it, you ought to see that he spoke of Christ. He was their message. It's not different and verse 11 clarifies that, "Searching what, or what manner of time," notice, "the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify." I was raised being taught and believing that somehow those before the cross simply had the Spirit of Christ on them. That's what I was always taught. They'd say, "He couldn't have been in them because he had not yet come." That's crazy. The Scriptures clearly declare here in the word and underscoring that little preposition, "the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand," and notice the one message, "the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."

So when I come back here to Isaiah 59 with you and talk to you about Isaiah's message, it's the same as Peter's. It's the same as Paul declared. It's the same as John the Baptist declared, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." So what was revealed here in Isaiah 59 and really throughout the whole book of Isaiah. When I read Isaiah, it's like reading Paul. There is no conflict between Isaiah and Paul. It's the same message: the same Lord; same salvation. But what was revealed in Isaiah and through Isaiah is about how and that's really what this message is about, how God has brought salvation to sinners and purchased it in, by and through the Lord Jesus Christ alone.

Here in a very precise, concise and simple declaration. I like that. When I was going through school, I don't mind telling you, that big old Penrod book they gave me was that thick, I was wanting a summary of it. I was asking around to my classmates if they had read it, "Give me the sum of it because when we get into class, you know, what is the concise thing that this thing is teaching." Then when I got into high school, I found that little Cliffs Notes. I'm so thankful. I've never met that guy but if I met him, I would give

him a big hug. He saved the day, many a day in English class because it was Cliffs Notes. Of course, today kids have the internet so you can go out there and just check it out. Get a review. Sometimes you learn more just through the reviews than you do actually in reading through the whole thing.

I don't mean to put down reading, but in reading Scripture, we have a chapter such as this, a concise, precise and simple declaration about the unfolding of the story of redemption and the outworking in time according to God's eternal purpose of how he would save sinners. I know there are those today and I would have to tell you, for a while, I kind of fell into this trap. When I first began to study and read about God's sovereignty and all things being purposed from eternity, I fell into that trap of thinking that, well, since it was purposed from eternity, it was done from eternity. That's what some theologians call today "eternal justification." But I have to tell you that as I have studied the Scriptures, I've come to see just how wrong that particular interpretation of Scripture is. Do I believe as the Scriptures teach that God has purposed all things from eternity and that nothing takes place but what he has ordained? Absolutely. Absolutely.

But, dear friends, it wasn't done in eternity. What he purposed needed to be accomplished. It is true he gave a people unto his Son but the covenant of which he speaks here in Isaiah 59:12, "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord." That covenant of grace that is eternal is founded upon the condition that Christ would come and actually work it out. If you ask me where is my hope, yes, I'm thankful to know and believe that God purposed it from eternity, but do you know when the Lord opened the eyes of this sinner and caused me to see my need, where he caused me to look? It's the same place that he caused Isaiah to look in Isaiah 6, to the one sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. To the cross. Because you can have a message that declares that God is eternal and that he has purposed it from eternity and that he has chosen sinners in Christ from eternity but, dear friends, the rest in peace that comes in this matter of salvation comes as the Spirit opens your eyes and causes you to see that one hanging on a tree who paid the debt, who actually worked out that righteousness.

And if your eyes are not there, I have to tell you, the Spirit has not directed your thoughts. If you're looking even to your own profession. So many people when you ask them, "When do you believe the Lord saved you?" they go back to when they were six years old, five years old, when they walked an aisle, when they said a prayer, when they raised a hand, when they did what someone asked them to do. That is not salvation. If you were to ask me, this poor sinner standing before you, when do I believe that God saved me, I would tell you without a hesitation or a blink of an eye it's when Christ paid the debt there at Calvary because that is when he declared, "It is finished," and that's when salvation was bought. So it's all about this salvation that was brought and bought.

I want to show you just two or three verses because I made some pretty strong statements but I believe every one of these is supported with Scripture. Look in Isaiah 14. The connection between a sovereign God, and he is, who has purposed all things that take place, and he does. There is not one mistake, there is not one thing that happens in this world, not one speck of dust that rises from our shoes as we walk, but what God ordained

the rising of it and the falling of it. But what I want you to see is that what he has purposed, there is that working out in time and that's what salvation is. It's God doing the delivering. It's God doing the saving and it happened in the context of time. There was a time, as Paul preached, "In the fullness of time, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made unto the law to redeem them that were under the law."

Here in Isaiah 14:24 notice, "The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand." Do you see that connection? Yes, Christ is that Lamb from eternity that God purposed to send into this world and those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life have been written from eternity. But notice, "as I have thought, so shall it come to pass." There is that outworking of what he has thought, what he has purposed. His thoughts are eternal but the outworking of them in time is not. It is for eternity, but he brings to pass everything that he has purposed.

As I have often told you, you might wonder about tomorrow, and we all do, let's be honest. We get a tight stomach about situations that you're going to be facing this week or how they're going to turn out. We all do. A person is a liar that tries to put on a face like, "Oh well, I don't worry about those kinds of things because God is sovereign." I'd like to get in there and take a picture of their thoughts just for a second and find out. But if we wonder even about something in the past and if you look back hard enough, long enough, some of us don't even have to look that hard, that long, we see a broken road. We see a trail that if we were to kind of examine it under the microscope of life we'd say, "That was a bumpy road. That has a lot of twists and turns to it. It has a lot of valleys. That has a lot of rocks. Lots of sorrow, trouble." Again, if you just dwell on that part of it, you'll be carried into despair. Every bit of that, the Lord determined. I know that for sure and you can rest in that. There is no sense in just sitting and dwelling, "Well, what if? What if I had done something different?" You see, we get into that spin cycle and the ultimate answer according to Scripture is what God thought and what he purposed, that's exactly what came to pass so I can rest in that. I may not know what tomorrow holds, but I know who holds tomorrow and I know that what he has brought to pass is exactly what he determined. Not one detail more or less.

Over here in Isaiah 37:26, and the reason I'm bringing this up is the language of Isaiah 59, even though God had purposed this from eternity, yet it's described in human language and if we don't understand this foundation, we're going to miss what this is saying about how God works. Isaiah 37:26, the Lord said, "Hast thou not heard long ago," notice, "how I have done it; and of ancient times, that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste defenced cities into ruinous heaps." So whether it's for the salvation of sinners or whether it's for the condemnation of sinners, it's the Lord that has purposed it. He is God.

One other verse over here in Acts 4:28. The connection between God's eternal purpose and what he has actually accomplished in time is the way that the Lord has enabled me to see it, by his grace, and declared it is this: God purposed it from eternity, Christ accomplished it in time there at the cross and the Spirit reveals it when it pleases God. So

that's the connection between God purposing, Christ having finished it, and the Spirit revealing it. You're not saved when the Spirit reveals Christ, but what the Spirit reveals is that you were saved when Christ paid the debt. If you want to say it's a salvation to me because my eyes were opened, okay, that's in your experience, but as far as the actual salvation is concerned, it was done when it was done. It was done when Christ finished the work otherwise why would he say, "It is finished"?

So here in Acts 4:27-28, "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together." Against him. Imagine that tumult. All that was going around and happening around the crucifixion of Christ. Look at verse 28, "For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." God wasn't simply saying, "Oh well, it doesn't matter what they do because I've already ordained it." That's how some people reason in their minds. They think, "Well, whatever will be, will be. It doesn't matter." No, it matters to God in that everything we see taking place good and bad, is from his hand. He has ordained it. He himself said that in Isaiah 45, "I create evil and I create good." I know it shocks some people when I tell them that the devil is God's devil and he gives him whatever liberty he determines and he restrains him in whatever area he restrains him, but he's God's devil to do with as he will just as any sinner is God's to do with what he will. And if a person has a problem with that, he has a problem with God. It's just that simple.

So come back here to Isaiah 59. Let's take a look at this, considering this salvation that God purposed and in time brought and bought. The first thing in verse 16 that is clear is the need for God bringing salvation to sinners. The need. This would be otherwise like setting a bunch of blind people off on a scavenger hunt without any direction. No knowledge of where to go, where to turn, where to find it. Can you imagine? It would be a mockery. What do you do with a blind person? You take them and lead them and bring them to where they need to be.

And this matter of salvation, herein is where I see the goodness and grace of God in that he is not a God who has remained removed. He did not say at the fall of Adam, "Oh well, you blew it so you're on your own." No, right from the fall, he gave instructions to how he would save fallen sinners there in the garden, Genesis 3:15 and 21, where he would bring forth the seed of a woman and to depict what he would do through that seed, he took the skin of animals, innocent animals, and slew them. Imagine Adam and Eve watching the lifeblood flowing out of an innocent victim for the first time because of their sin, because of their fall. God spared them but slew the victim. That's a simple declaration of how God has purposed to save sinners from the beginning.

In verse 16 here, we see this need. It says that, "he saw that there was no man." Underscore that word "saw." He foresaw. This wasn't something that happened in time, he foresaw from eternity that there was no man. God ordained the fall but he foresaw that of men among men, there would not be one that could do his work. That there was no man. Here' where, again, we see Isaiah and Paul in agreement because Paul wrote in Romans 3, "There is none righteous, no not one." So Isaiah is declaring the same thing

and he saw that there was no man. Even among those that he had chosen from eternity. You see, to me this is, again, an argument against the fact that sinners were justified from eternity. Well, there was no man among those that could intercede.

It says in the second part of verse 16, "and wondered." Now, this is where the Scripture uses human language so it's like you tell your children a story, you bring it down to their level and you use language that they can identify with because the word here in verse 16 "wondered" means "to be appalled or stunned." Now, we know that God does not react. We know that there is nothing in man that causes God to stress, so just understand though that for us, we can understand what it is to be shocked. We can understand what it is to be stunned at something. So God has purposed by his Spirit to take language that we're used to hearing and apply it to himself. It's like when the Scriptures speak of the arm of God or the eyes of God or his hand. We know he's a spirit, but it's there to help us identify with his attributes. That's really what it's about.

So here it's using human language. "He wondered that there was no intercessor." And that word "intercessor" in verse 16 means "one sent to entreat another in the face of hostility," in other words, an ambassador. Somebody that can stand in the breach. The reason it's written this way is for us to see that if salvation could have come in any way by our obedience to the law, then it wouldn't have been necessary for Christ to come, but the reality is there was none who could qualify and be that intercessor, as we see here, that would satisfy God's holiness and justice. So "he," it says.

"Therefore," verse 16, "his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him." Know the truth, dear friends, that had God not seen our need, had God not purposed to bring salvation to the sinner, there would be none that could be saved. There would be none.

Look in Isaiah 1. Hold your hand here because in Isaiah 1, you have to remember how this all started. Notice how the Lord used Isaiah to describe the wretchedness of the people of Israel which, when I read it, I have to say describes me own wretchedness? Notice in verse 6 of Isaiah 1, "From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city." What a picture. It is overrun. Look at verse 9, "Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah." How great is our need?

So that's what we see here in Isaiah 59:16, the need. It took God intervening. It took God coming and arming himself. That's what verses 16 through 21 are all about, the way that God has brought and bough salvation. Now, notice the language again. Verse 16, the second part, "therefore his arm brought salvation unto him." You can see how foolish it is

to ask people to raise their arm, raise their hand, as if that's going to accomplish salvation. Dear friends, salvation is not in you raising your arm and you raising your hand.

I remember back before the Lord ever taught me the Gospel, buying into this simple plan of salvation, they called it, and salvation was described as a bridge that, there it is, the opportunity is yours. You can cross it or not, but God has built a bridge. I'm thankful that salvation isn't even a bridge. Take a blind man and put him out here on Baird Road and tell him without any knowledge to find Shreveport Bridge and walk across it. He couldn't. He'd be lost. Too far removed, and that's just a simple example. No, salvation is the arm of the Lord bringing that salvation. Again, human language. The arm of the Lord here is metaphoric of his strength and his ability alone. Do you see in verse 16, "his arm brought salvation"? Every word is important. His arm. His power. His glory alone. I believe what the Scriptures here and Isaiah's writing is forward looking to the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ. His coming.

If you look in 1 Corinthians 1:24, again, the unity of Scripture that we see between what Paul writes here by the Spirit and Isaiah wrote, the arm speaking of God's power in bringing salvation. In verse 24, it says, "But unto them which are called," that is, the called, "both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." It took both. It took Christ coming in all of the strength that lay in him to work this salvation out. It took that power, his arm, but it also took the wisdom of God. You can understand a little bit about the wisdom of God in Christ in working out this salvation. He had to satisfy God's law and justice as a man. He didn't just pass his hand over, wave it over our sin and say, "Okay, hocus pocus, be gone." He didn't stand there like some men do and make the sign of the cross and say, "Okay, be forgiven."

In God's wisdom, he came and he had to satisfy every aspect of the law, not only the letter of the law, but the spirit of it. Most of us pretend to be law keepers. We know what to say, "Oh yeah, I love my neighbors." Sure you do. When was the last time you talked to them? When was the last time when they were ill you really sat next to them and cared for them like you do your own children or your own loved ones and kin? Just that one commandment alone, we fail daily to love our neighbor as ourselves. Do you really want your salvation to depend upon how you obey that law? It was given that every mouth might be stopped and every person found guilty before God. That's our place, but Christ, the wisdom of God. In him is that perfect wisdom whereby he not only satisfied the precept of the law, not only its letter but in its spirit, but he also paid the penalty and lay down his life and paid the debt. That's all summed up over here in Isaiah 59 when it speaks of "his arm brought salvation." He came to accomplish it and fulfill it.

Then coming back here to Isaiah 59, look at that second part in verse 16, "and his righteousness, it sustained him." You see, that's what it took, the righteousness of another because there was none in us, so it took the righteousness of another. Do you realize in all of Scripture you'll never find the term "Christ's righteousness"? I know we speak of it, but it's always God's righteousness. Here it is set forth that way, "his arm brought salvation unto him." God's arm brought salvation unto him. God's righteousness sustained him. It sustained this one that he sent to accomplish it, that is, the Lord Jesus Christ.

So we see described here what it took to accomplish this salvation. It took one sent of God. It took one like God himself, that's what Immanuel means, "God with us." And it took him obeying the precepts of that law. That's what some of the old writers call the active obedience that Christ worked out. He had to obey the law in every jot and tittle. When I read for you in Luke 2, even as a child, it says, he was submissive unto his parents and he grew in wisdom and stature before the Lord. He had to work out this righteousness as a man and then, of course, his passive obedience. That word "passive" means his submission unto death. He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Had Christ come and simply obeyed the law and then ascended back into heaven, there would be no salvation. All it would have proved was that he is God and he is right and he is righteous but it took him paying the penalty of the law.

Dear friends, as a man, verse 16, this is why I say it wasn't just done in eternity. This was worked out in a body because it says there, "his righteousness, it sustained him." That word means that by consciousness in his coming, it wasn't for himself. That's why when his parents scolded him for staying in Jerusalem as we read in Luke 2, you can imagine the scolding, like you would. "I've been looking for you for three days! Don't you know we've been worried!" And he said, "Don't you know that I must be about my Father's business?" All of a sudden, "Whoa, this is not our kid." In reality, none of our children are ours. They're on loan. But this particularly God's Son and even as a child of 12 years old, he was brought to remind them and it says, "Mary pondered these things in her heart." The day would come when he would be for the standing or falling of many in Israel just like he is today.

Everybody likes think they love Christ until you start declaring him for who he is and all of a sudden you see people scatter. They're like, "Whoa, if that's the Christ you believe in, that's not my Christ," and they scatter like ants. But do you know what? That's the fall of many in Israel. But for the standing, those sinners, I trust I'm speaking to you, to see that he is that one righteousness which God has accepted and sent and approved and by his life, not just by his death but by his life and death, he has come and exercised righteousness. He has earned it. He has established it and God is satisfied with it to the degree that he has put it to the account once for all of every one for whom Christ died. I love to hear that message again and again. I need it.

But this language here in verse 16, "his righteousness, it sustained him." It's derived from speaking about someone that's engaged in a righteous cause. We see somebody every once in a while standing up for something and they make that their cause. You think, "Wow, that takes a lot of dedication." All that pales in comparison to the work that the Lord Jesus Christ came to fulfill and accomplish, a righteous, the truly righteous cause, a cause of redemption. A cause in which the Redeemer is sustained from the womb all the way to the cross, to the grave, to the resurrection, his ascension, and even now seated in the heavens. That cause has never changed. There is a man seated in glory, purposed from eternity, for one cause and when you stop and think about it, that's where I bow in admiration, was to identify with sinners and make them his own and redeem them that he

might throughout eternity share his glory with them and them with him. That's a message that I can never, ever declare clear enough, but that's what we see here.

That's really what we see described in Isaiah 42. We're going to have to stop here and I'll come back to this. Isaiah 42. Again, here's a commentary of Scripture upon Scripture. You don't have to go with men's commentaries to understand what it means here in Isaiah 59:16 that God's arm brought salvation unto him and his righteousness is sustained. Look how it's put, Isaiah 42, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles," or to the nations. He's going to work out this salvation. "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street." It's not a political campaign. We've just been through one: lots of campaigning and yakking and talking and promising. That's men. "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth." When it talks about a bruised reed that he shall not break, that's that blind Bartimaeus that was caused to cry out to him and say, "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy upon me." This is that adulterous woman that they drug there before him to condemn and as he stooped and wrote in the sand, one by one they all went their way and he looked up and said, "Where are these thine accusers?" She said, "They're gone." He said, "Neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin no more."

That's the bruised reed. That's the smoking flax that he shall not quench, but rather "he shall bring forth judgment unto truth." In other words, his end, his view, that righteousness that sustained him, was that cross which he was to bear on their behalf. And it says, I love verse 4, "He shall not fail nor be discouraged," to Isaiah it was still forward looking, "till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law." The isles means simply the nations. This wasn't just for the Jew, but it was for all those throughout the world that God sent his Son to accomplish that salvation on their behalf.