

## A Trek Through Isaiah 80 - 59:1-13

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For this week:

- The guilty people 59:1-13

Context

<b><u>The Ideal and the Actual 56:1 - 59:13</u></b>
The waiting people 56:1-8
The divided people 56:9 - 57:21
Ineffective religion 58:1-14
The guilty people 59:1-13

- In the book of the Conqueror (56 - 66)
  - Question: How will God's people fulfill their promise?
  - Three areas of emphasis
    - The contrast between the ideal community and the actual community
    - God's glorious promises for the faithful.
    - A Conqueror: the third messianic figure who accomplishes God's purpose and fulfills His promises.
- This section (56 - 59)
  - Four parts which contrast the ideal (the people of God as they are intended to be) with the actual (how they actually are).
  - The situation and God's remedy
- Today we will cover part 4 : The guilty people 59:1-13

## The guilty people 59:1-13

- Structure
  - The prophet continues the accusation of sin.
    - V1-4 accusation: 2nd person plural: you
    - V5-8 description: 3rd person plural: they
  - Then (v9-13) he joins the nation in a confession of sin and helplessness before God (1st person plural: we)

- V1-4 **Accusation**

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;

- Reply to the complaint in 58:3: God does not hear; does not take notice
- Second-person plural
- the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save,
  - He does not lack power to save
- Or his ear dull, that it cannot hear
  - He is not unable to hear
- But your.
  - Iniquities. Sin nature.
  - Not a "but God" indicating His mercy and grace.
  - Rather a "but man" indicating our sin
- Your iniquities...your sins
  - At the head of each line for emphasis
- made a separation between you and your God,
  - Like building a wall
- hidden his face from you
  - Face. Personal.
- he does not hear.
  - Not can not hear
  - Rather will not hear
  - Re Is 48:17 Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel:
    - The holy One of Israel

- For your hands are defiled with blood and your fingers with iniquity;
    - Hands.
      - Palm or grip of the hand.
      - Holding onto.
    - Fingers.
      - Intimate touch
    - Defiled.
      - Indelibly marked by their sin
    - Blood
      - Violence done to others
    - Iniquity
      - As v2
      - Sin nature from which springs sins
  - your lips have spoken lies; your tongue mutters wickedness.
    - Lips...tongue.
      - Parallel to cover all speech.
    - Lies.
      - Specific falsehoods
    - Mutters wickedness.
      - Broad word
      - What is not right
      - What is not fitting
  - No one enters suit justly;
    - No one takes a public stand for what is right.
  - no one goes to law honestly
    - All use the legal system for dishonest purposes.
- V4b Summary

4 ...they rely on empty pleas, they speak lies, they conceive mischief and give birth to iniquity.

- Change to infinitives absolute. General description of the current situation.
- they rely on empty pleas.
  - Heb tohu: lacking stability and sense.
- they speak lies
  - Heb saw: the spirit of disregard for the truth
  - Here is the source of the empty pleas.
- they conceive mischief and give birth to iniquity.
  - Parallel

- V5-7 **Description**

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.

- V5-6a metaphor
  - They. Speaking generally.
  - They hatch adders' eggs; ... he who eats their eggs dies, and from one that is crushed a viper is hatched.
    - Picture of poisonous snakes
    - What is produced is harmful fruit
    - Continually reproducing more evil
  - They weave the spider's web; ... Their webs will not serve as clothing; men will not cover themselves with what they make.
    - What is produced is useless
    - Men's works will not cover their sin
- V6b-7 Explanation
  - Every aspect of human behavior
    - Hands (what they do).
      - works of iniquity. Wickedness.
      - Deeds of violence
    - feet (where they go)
      - Running to evil
      - swift to shed innocent blood
    - thoughts (what they think).
      - thoughts of iniquity;
  - Results
    - desolation. General.
    - destruction. Specific
    - Everything that promotes the breakdown of standards and society
  - This verse used in Ro 3 to show that all (both Jews and Greeks) are under sin.

- V8 Summary

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.

- Peace...peace

- Inclusio

- Shows the theme: no peace

- As Is 48:22; 57:21 There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked."

- Peace in general: with God, with others, with themselves.

- They do not know peace

- Their way will not lead to peace

- there is no justice in their paths

- No willingness to submit to God's judgments of right and wrong.

- As 58:2 as if they were a nation that did righteousness and did not forsake the judgment of their God

- Not seeking justice in their ways

- they have made their roads crooked; no one who treads on them knows peace

- Not straight in truth and righteousness.

- They themselves make it impossible for them to come to peace.

- As Pr 11:5 The righteousness of the blameless keeps his way straight, but the wicked falls by his own wickedness.

- V9-11 Confession of **helplessness**

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.

- Structure
  - Change of tense to first person plural. The prophet identifies with his people.
  - In 57:17-19 divine enabling brought about the fruit of righteous lips.
  - In 58:1ff God's law and the people's sin were declared
  - Now the people are ready to acknowledge their guilt and hopelessness, and to cry out for salvation.
- justice is far from us.
  - Not living according to God's law.
- righteousness does not overtake us.
  - salvation and justification are not theirs.
- we hope for light, and behold, darkness, and for brightness, but we walk in gloom.
  - All is dark for them.
- We grope for the wall like the blind; we grope like those who have no eyes
  - Like blind people without eyes
- we stumble at noon as in the twilight,
  - They are dark no matter what the conditions.
  - The darkness is due to their own blindness.
- among those in full vigor we are like dead men
  - Among those who seem strong they have no vitality to live godly lives.
  - As Eph 2:1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins
- We all growl like bears;
  - An angry growl
  - From believers over the havoc caused by sin
  - As Mk 3:5 where Jesus was angry at those in the synagogue when He healed the man with a withered hand: And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart,
- we moan and moan like doves
  - Under the terrible devastation of sin
  - As Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus in Jn 11:33-35 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. 34 And he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." 35 Jesus wept.
- we hope for justice, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far from us.
  - Inclusio with v9a

- V12-13 Confession of **sin**

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.

- Structure
  - A courtroom scene with God as judge and their sins as witnesses against them.
- For our transgressions are multiplied before you,
  - Every sin brought out and made visible before God
- our sins testify against us
  - When compared to the God's standard of holiness
    - Ro 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God
- We know
  - Conscious acknowledging of sin
    - As David in Ps 51:3-4 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. 4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.
  - The key to forgiveness and cleansing
    - As 1 Jn 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- V13 Catalogue of sins
  - transgressing
  - denying the Lord,
    - The Judge is also the offended party
  - turning back from following our God
    - Picture of a new bride lovingly following her husband
    - Reversed
  - speaking oppression and revolt
  - conceiving and uttering from the heart lying words.
    - All from the sinful heart
- Nothing good here.
  - As Is 64:6 We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.

## **Discussion**

We will break into three groups for discussion. The questions are

- 1. Separation 59:1-8**
  - a. God's hand is not shortened**
  - b. God is able to hear**
  - c. Your sins have made a separation between you and God**
- 2. Helplessness 59:9-11**
  - a. No justice (conformance to God's judgments)**
  - b. No righteousness**
  - c. No light**
- 3. Sin 59:12-13**
  - a. Our sins testify against us**
  - b. We know our iniquities**

Remember to worship the Lord: (1) See (2) Know (3) Respond

For next week:

- Situation and response 59:14-20
- The Covenant Mediator 59:21

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