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Sermon Notes

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## **The Lord Intervenes to Save Depraved Sinners**

### **Isaiah 59:1-21**

Jesus called himself a physician for the soul... but no one who thinks they're healthy will ever seek radical surgery or painful therapy for a disease they don't think they have.

***Luke 5:31-32 "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. <sup>32</sup> I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."***

The depravity of the human race is unfathomable, pervasive, universal, and radical. This is the consistent message of all of Scripture, but some passages make this radical depravity clearer than others. Perhaps the clearest in all the Bible is Romans 3:9-18 in which the Apostle Paul levels the pride of every human being on earth with the tattoo of a mournful drum:

***Romans 3:10-12 "There is no one righteous, not even one; <sup>11</sup> there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. <sup>12</sup> All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."***

To support this terrible but true thesis, Paul reaches for Isaiah 59. Centuries before Paul wrote his epistle, Isaiah stood as the mouthpiece of Almighty God to a radically depravity humanity. Paul paraphrases Isaiah 59 when he writes:

***Romans 3:13-17 "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips." <sup>14</sup> "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." <sup>15</sup> "Their feet are swift to shed blood; <sup>16</sup> ruin and misery mark their ways, <sup>17</sup> and the way of peace they do not know."***

The relevance of the timeless scripture stands on two major pillars: 1) the immutability of God; 2) the basin unchanging nature of the human condition in sin... to put it simply, God never changes, so the Bible's revelation of his character and standards is relevant in every generation; secondly, human beings wrestle with the same sin patterns in every generation as well

We need to walk with Isaiah through the dark and painful diagnosis of the cancerous heart tumor of sin... we need to listen to the brutally honest evaluation of a skillful surgeon who is telling us simply that our sin is PERVASIVE and DEADLY, and he alone can cure us!

This chapter ultimately points us to Christ for it gives us the good news of a salvation that GOD ALONE can work

If like so many people we shirk and shrug and deny and evade the diagnosis, we shall die. But if like Isaiah we humble ourselves and seek Christ, we shall be healed.

## I. Accusation by the Lord: You Are Radically Depraved! (vs. 1-8)

### A. There's Nothing Wrong With God's Arm or Ear... But With Your Wickedness (vs. 1-2)

***Isaiah 59:1-2 Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. <sup>2</sup> But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.***

1. The chapter begins with God accusing Israel of radical depravity...
2. He does it it seems in the face of them accusing him of being too deaf or too weak to answer their prayers!
3. Perhaps they were crying out to him in light of their crops failing or some drought; perhaps it was Jews who were terrified by a threatened Babylonian invasion; perhaps it was Jews who accused God of weakness or deafness AFTER the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem and the exile... these verses are timeless
4. Honestly, we ourselves make the same accusations against God... we get into some desperate situation, and we cry out to the Lord... we fear some outcome and we cry to God in prayer... BUT the thing we dread happens anyway—we lost our jobs, or our loved one dies of cancer, or some economic or natural disaster wipes out our earthly lifestyle...
5. We angrily bring it back to God with STRONG ACCUSATIONS!!! You must be deaf or weak... your ear is too deaf, your arm is too short to save
6. The truth is this: God is IN HIS PRIME...his hearing is PERFECT, and his arm extends to the ends of the earth with every bit of his immeasurable power... there is literally NOTHING THAT HE CANNOT DO...

7. That's not the problem! The reason your prayers have not been answered is YOU, not God!
8. Your iniquities have made a GAP, a SEPARATION between you and God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that HE WILL NOT HEAR! It's not a matter of God's ability, but of God's willingness... God is deeply offended by our sins... they create an infinite GAP between us and God
9. This GAP is often used to share the gospel... we draw on a napkin a DIAGRAM of a chasm with steep cliffs on both sides... and a stick figure on one side and the word God on the other... the GAP between us and God is wider than the Grand Canyon... no matter how fast we run or how far we jump off the edge, we shall NEVER leap this gap...our sins have SEPARATED US from the holy God; the CROSS of CHRIST is drawn in the gap between us to show that Jesus is the only MEDIATOR, the BRIDGE-BUILDER between us and God
10. But our own efforts can never save us, can never bridge the gap of separation between us and God
11. This should remind us of God in his infinite ELEVATION as we've already seen in Isaiah

***Isaiah 6:1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple.***

***Isaiah 57:15 For this is what the high and lofty One says-- he who lives forever, whose name is holy: "I live in a high and holy place***

These verses should cause us to TREMBLE and to REPENT and see what our sins have done to our prayer lives and to our intimacy with God

Next, God goes on to dig deep and expose the radical depravity of their hearts... this is no superficial issue, but it is deep and full and pervasive

At the beginning, he does it DIRECTLY, speaking to us in the second person:  
YOUR HANDS, YOUR FINGERS, YOUR LIPS

Then he broadens it to speak more universally: No one calls, no one pleads, they speak lies, they conceive evil...

SIN IS DEEP, personal, individual, pervasive, and universal

B. Your Radical Depravity Exposed (vs. 3-8)

***Isaiah 59:3-8 For your hands are stained with blood, your fingers with guilt. Your lips have spoken lies, and your tongue mutters wicked things. <sup>4</sup> No one calls for justice; no one pleads his case with integrity. They rely on empty arguments and***

*They speak lies; they conceive trouble and give birth to evil. <sup>5</sup> They hatch the eggs of vipers and spin a spider's web. Whoever eats their eggs will die, and when one is broken, an adder is hatched. <sup>6</sup> Their cobwebs are useless for clothing; they cannot cover themselves with what they make. Their deeds are evil deeds, and acts of violence are in their hands. <sup>7</sup> Their feet rush into sin; they are swift to shed innocent blood. Their thoughts are evil thoughts; ruin and destruction mark their ways. <sup>8</sup> The way of peace they do not know; there is no justice in their paths. They have turned them into crooked roads; no one who walks in them will know peace.*

1. **Your hands are stained with blood**: this speaks of VIOLENCE, of murder, of aggressively attacking weaker neighbors
2. **Your fingers and stained with guilt**: the fingers refer to details and precision and skill... we are SKILLFULLY EVIL... we are good at evil, like a concert pianist is skillful at hitting the perfect notes on the piano
3. **Your lips have spoken lies and your tongue mutters wicked things**: This addresses our MOUTHS, the way we speak... LYING is a terrible sin, for it shows that humans are imitating the devil, who is a liar and the father of lies; the muttering of wicked things shows the fullness of the heart, for out of the fullness of the heart, the mouth speaks
4. **No one calls for justice or pleads his case with integrity**: In the courts of law, they are not looking for justice, but for a decision which benefits them no matter what; so they are willing to twist the truth to get what they want; so they rely on empty arguments to win their case

*Vs. 4-5 they conceive trouble and give birth to evil. <sup>5</sup> They hatch the eggs of vipers and spin a spider's web. Whoever eats their eggs will die, and when one is broken, an adder is hatched*

5. This speaks plainly of their EVIL PLANS... their busy minds are conceiving trouble, spinning spider's webs of deceit to make a profit or to get revenge or to seize a neighbor's property or to hurt an enemy; they are using their amazing, God-given intellects and imaginations for crafting evil plots; their plots are likened to spider's webs and the eggs of a viper... the hatching of the eggs results in a bitter surprise—a young viper writhing out, snapping its poison-filled fangs at a hapless victim

#### C. You Cover Your Wickedness with Wispy Cobwebs (vs. 6)

*Isaiah 59:6 Their cobwebs are useless for clothing; they cannot cover themselves with what they make.*

1. Thinking to atone for their sins themselves, they cover their wicked nakedness with cobwebs of self-righteousness

2. This is exactly what Adam and Eve did in the Garden of Eden... hiding from God in fig leaves
3. This addresses the universal drive that sinners have to cover themselves in their own garments of self-righteousness, to make themselves beautiful and attractive to God by their own efforts... to weave our own garments to cover our shameful nakedness; we do this generally by MORALITY and RELIGION
4. The Jews of Isaiah's day were notoriously religious; they brought thousands of bulls and goats and sheep as atoning sacrifice to the Temple... there was a river of animal blood, but not a single genuine tear shed for sin
5. God sees through all this and says your evil plots are like cobwebs and they cannot conceal the wickedness of your hearts; actually they are a clear display of your sin
6. No sinner can be made right by our own works:

***Romans 3:20 For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.***

Application: STOP... look inward and see what these words say to you! Paul chose to borrow Isaiah's words in this chapter and apply them universally to the entire human race:

***Romans 3:9-12 What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. <sup>10</sup> As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; <sup>11</sup> there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. <sup>12</sup> All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."***

This means YOU and ME... we are stripped naked in the sight of God by his prophetic word; God sees through all our costumes of self-righteousness and brings us very low; do you see this as your personal problem, or is it just some words written long ago by men who lived in a different world than we do?

## II. Confession by the Humble: We Acknowledge Our Wickedness (vs. 9-15a)

### A. From "You" to "We": Confession Flows from the Humble

At this point the text turns inward and humble: the prophet, speaking for the redeemed among Israel and among the Gentiles who find salvation in Christ, makes no effort to deflect the accusation of verses 1-8, no effort to deny, no effort to minimize. Everything said about us is true, painfully

and shockingly true. The text moves from “you” and “they” to “we” and “us.” True salvation must always begin with honest confession and humble pleading for mercy.

***Isaiah 57:15 For this is what the high and lofty One says-- he who lives forever, whose name is holy: "I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.***

God is so high and holy, he cannot dwell with any sinners whatsoever because of their corruption in sin. But in his amazing mercy, he has chosen to dwell with sinners who are brokenhearted and repentant. Jesus told this parable to teach that lesson:

***Luke 18:10-14 Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. <sup>11</sup> The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men-- robbers, evildoers, adulterers-- or even like this tax collector. <sup>12</sup> I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' <sup>13</sup> "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' <sup>14</sup> "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."***

It is just as Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount:

***Matthew 5:3-6 "Blessed are the spiritual beggars, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.***

The central idea is to realize yourself so poor and destitute spiritually that you are nothing but a beggar in God’s sight spiritually. From this flows everything else:

***<sup>4</sup> Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. <sup>5</sup> Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. <sup>6</sup> Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.***

So, here in Isaiah 59, Isaiah speaks for the truly broken-hearted, repentant sinners of Israel, and indeed, of the world...

He includes himself in it... WE, US he says... it culminates in a clear confession of sin:

***Isaiah 59:12-13 For our offenses are many in your sight, and our sins testify against us. Our offenses are ever with us, and we acknowledge our iniquities: <sup>13</sup> rebellion and treachery against the LORD, turning our backs on our God, fomenting oppression and revolt, uttering lies our hearts have conceived.***

This is SO VITAL for us as well! As we look at the sin of the world, it is easy for us to excuse it... to see it as something THOSE PEOPLE are doing, something OUT THERE making this world hard for all us GOOD PEOPLE... the saving grace of Christ can do nothing for such self-righteousness

We need to see that we ourselves are included here!

B. Justice is Far from Us; We Grope Like the Blind; We Are Dead (vs. 9-11)

1. Isaiah begins by speaking specifically about the injustice of their land

***Isaiah 59:9 So justice is far from us, and righteousness does not reach us. We look for light, but all is darkness; for brightness, but we walk in deep shadows.***

2. Justice is giving horizontally what God would have us give... fundamentally, for both individuals and societies to LOVE THEIR NEIGHBORS AS THEMSELVES

3. Because of their hardness of heart to others, they are a land walking in darkness

4. The walking in darkness John shows is sin, especially in not loving others

***1 John 2:9-11 Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness. <sup>10</sup> Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble. <sup>11</sup> But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.***

- a. In our day, when an inner-city man impregnates a woman out of wedlock and refuses to take responsibility, that is INJUSTICE to both the woman and the child; when the pregnant woman choose to get an abortion rather than face the consequences of raising a child on a single income, that is an INJUSTICE toward the child
- b. When wealthy businessmen seek to do everything for the bottom line and defraud unskilled workers making their products in Asian sweatshops by failing to pay them a worthy wage, that is INJUSTICE
- c. When we see people in need in our community and close up our hearts against them, certainly not giving them money because we think that would corrupt them, but in the end doing literally nothing to help them, that is also INJUSTICE
- d. When the legal system seems rigged on behalf of the wealthy over the poor because they are able to get more skilled legal counsel than a public defender and so they get away with crimes on legal technicalities, that is INJUSTICE

5. Isaiah sees similar things in his own day and age... as Isaiah 5 made plain: rich people plundering the poor and needy; pleasure-seekers getting drunk all night and then running after wine first thing the next morning; judges accepting bribes and turning a blind eye to crime; idolaters following their own religions, bowing down to what their hands have made
6. This sin, this corruption has left them groping in the dark like the blind:

***Isaiah 59:10-11 Like the blind we grope along the wall, feeling our way like men without eyes. At midday we stumble as if it were twilight; among the strong, we are like the dead. <sup>11</sup> We all growl like bears; we moan mournfully like doves. We look for justice, but find none; for deliverance, but it is far away.***

7. This growling and moaning is from the lamentation of sin; sin robs us of all joy and hope. It leaves us deeply discontent and searching for answers that never seem to come

#### C. We Confess Our Wickedness; We Need a Savior! (vs. 11-12)

1. Here at last the prophet speaks for the elect in every generation; the elect are JUST AS SINFUL as the non-elect; but God works salvation in them by HUMILITY and FAITH

***Isaiah 59:12-13 For our offenses are many in your sight, and our sins testify against us. Our offenses are ever with us, and we acknowledge our iniquities: <sup>13</sup> rebellion and treachery against the LORD, turning our backs on our God, fomenting oppression and revolt, uttering lies our hearts have conceived.***

2. Isaiah comes directly to the point: our sins are MANY and MIGHTY in the sight of God and they stand up in the courtroom of God's holy justice and cry out against us... we can never shake their accusing finger... all we can do is CONFESS the truth to God
3. Our sins speak of a DEEP-SEATED REBELLION against the kingly rule of Almighty God. They are not minor issues but they threaten eternal death under the just wrath of God
4. They are deeply relational too; we have TURNED OUR BACKS on God; he wanted a love relationship with us, and we spurned him to follow sin instead... the lusts of our hearts
5. There is no hope from within ourselves. Salvation must come from OUTSIDE OF US

#### D. Our Sins Are Pervasive: Rebellion Against the Lord and Injustice toward Others (vs. 13-15a)

***Isaiah 59:14-15 So justice is driven back, and righteousness stands at a distance; truth has stumbled in the streets, honesty cannot enter. <sup>15</sup> Truth is nowhere to be found, and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey.***

Isaiah has spoken a word of humble confession to God... now only God himself can act decisively

### III. Intervention by the Lord: Salvation and Vengeance (vs. 15b-18)

#### A. God Saw That There Was No Man to Intercede (vs. 15b-16)

***Isaiah 59:15-16 The LORD looked and was displeased that there was no justice. <sup>16</sup> He saw that there was no one, he was appalled that there was no one to intervene; so his own arm worked salvation for him, and his own righteousness sustained him.***

1. God surveys the scene and evaluates the hearts of every human being on the face of the earth
2. There is NO ONE who is RIGHTEOUS, NO ONE who understands... NO ONE who seeks God
3. And that total depravity is exceedingly displeasing to God; it reminds us of the days before the flood

***Genesis 6:5-6 The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. <sup>6</sup> The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain.***

4. God finds no one to intervene for him, no one to vindicate righteousness for his name's sake; no human being that lives perfectly for the glory of God and the honor of his name; no one who perfectly upholds his righteous law and vindicates God's holy standards
5. What is difficult here is to see the two different outcomes: SALVATION for some, VENEGANCE... RIGHTEOUS CONDEMNATION for others... both of them worked by God alone, for the glory of God alone

SEE THE WORDS: "salvation" in verses 16 and 17; "vengeance" in verse 17

BOTH of these are in view here. God cannot allow sin to rule unchecked in his universe. He will move out, vigorously, and act. But amazingly, it is not only vengeance but also salvation that God achieves

6. We are troubled by God slaughtering his enemies without mercy; but the real question here is the word SALVATION in verse 16... If every single man is

sinful and has forsaken the glory of God, how does God vindicate his righteousness AND work salvation at the same time?

7. The only possible answer must be the CROSS OF JESUS CHRIST
8. In the incarnation, in Jesus Christ, God became human; he intervened, he entered the world, he walked on this guilty land in perfect righteousness and worked SALVATION by his own strength and power
9. He clothed himself with a garment of HUMANITY and of HOLINESS and drove out sin by healings and by teaching and by driving out demons and destroying Satan's evil kingdom
10. But especially his own arm worked salvation for us at the cross:

***Romans 3:21-26 But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. <sup>22</sup> This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. <sup>25</sup> God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished-- <sup>26</sup> he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.***

This is the key idea: God establishes his JUSTICE at the cross by slaughtering his own Son, Jesus Christ; God establishes his justice in JUSTIFYING SINNERS who are humble and broken-hearted and who come to Christ in faith and ask for forgiveness; the justice of God is vindicated in SALVATION for them!!!

11. The language of Isaiah 59 shows the work of SALVATION as a display of the zeal of Almighty God for righteousness worked by His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ
12. He saw that there was no other way to both be just and the savior of sinners like us; so HIS OWN ARM worked salvation for us

#### B. God Clothed Himself With Righteousness and Zeal (vs. 17)

***Isaiah 59:17 He put on righteousness as his breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on his head; he put on the garments of vengeance and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak.***

1. This language will be familiar to us who just finished studying spiritual warfare and the whole armor of God in Ephesians 6

***Ephesians 6:14-17 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, <sup>15</sup> and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup> In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup> Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.***

2. In Isaiah 59, it is CHRIST who clothes himself like this for us
3. Christ walked in perfect obedience to the law of God... he took on ALL of Satan's temptations and with infinite zeal for the glory of God he crushed every temptation
4. He worked a perfect righteousness for US... to give it to US as a gift!!

***Romans 3:21-22 But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. <sup>22</sup> This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.***

***2 Corinthians 5:21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God***

5. The righteousness that God IMPUTES to us by faith in Christ had to be WON by spiritual victory over Satan and sin and death; Jesus was a mighty warrior in winning that garment of righteousness for us

The prideful efforts of sinners to clothe themselves looks like wispy cobwebs of wickedness to God

But Jesus hands us a gift... a white robe of his own perfect fulfillment of the law, won through actual victories over Satan, sin, and temptation... he hands it to us and commands us to put it on:

WHITE ROBE in REVELATION:

***Sardis: Revelation 3:4-5 Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. <sup>5</sup> He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels.***

***Laodicea: Revelation 3:18 I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.***

***Twenty-four elders: Revelation 4:4 Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads.***

**The Multitude: Revelation 7:9-10** *After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. <sup>10</sup> And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."*

**The Armies of Heaven at the Second Coming: Revelation 19:14** *The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean.*

Now, we come to the rest of the words of Isaiah 59... how God wrapped himself with a garment of zeal for his holy name and his perfect law and entered the world to work VENGEANCE on his enemies... this will be finally achieved at the Second Coming of Christ

#### C. God Works Vengeance Himself as Well (vs. 16-18)

***Isaiah 59:17-18*** *he put on the garments of vengeance and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak. <sup>18</sup> According to what they have done, so will he repay wrath to his enemies and retribution to his foes; he will repay the islands their due.*

1. God is highly motivated, immeasurably zealous to vindicate his law against all sinners
2. He puts on garments of vengeance and wraps himself with zeal as with a cloak to hunt down and destroy any arrogant sinner who will not repent of his wickedness... of his lusts and idolatries, of his wickedness and injustice toward his neighbors
3. This is pictured in the Book of Revelation BOTH in the terror of the Second Coming of Christ AND the greater terror of Judgment Day and the Hell that follows

***Revelation 19:11-16*** *I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. <sup>12</sup> His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. <sup>13</sup> He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. <sup>14</sup> The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. <sup>15</sup> Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. <sup>16</sup> On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.*

This is Jesus returning to repay his enemies with zeal and wrath:

***Isaiah 59:19 He will come like a pent-up flood that the breath of the LORD drives along.***

No one will escape... it is not a localized judgment:

***Isaiah 59:18 he will repay the islands their due.***

***Matthew 24:27 For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.***

***Matthew 24:29-30 "the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken." <sup>30</sup> "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.***

But the greater terror lies in Judgment Day

***Isaiah 59:18 According to what they have done, so will he repay wrath to his enemies and retribution to his foes; he will repay the islands their due.***

4. The words “vengeance” and “retribution” speak of a meticulous record-keeping God, who notes what each person has done... ACCORDING TO WHAT THEY HAVE DONE, he will most certainly repay them

***Matthew 12:36-37 I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. <sup>37</sup> For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.***

***Revelation 20:11-15 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. <sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. <sup>13</sup> The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. <sup>14</sup> Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. <sup>15</sup> If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.***

#### IV. The Result: Worldwide and Eternal Salvation for the Repentant (vs. 19-21)

##### A. From East to West, They Will Fear and Glory in the Lord (vs. 19)

***Isaiah 59:19 From the west, men will fear the name of the LORD, and from the rising of the sun, they will revere his glory.***

1. Again and again, Isaiah has reminded us of God's gracious salvation plan for all nations on earth
2. From east to west, from the rising of the sun to the place where it sets, in the mainlands and in the distant islands of the sea, everywhere on earth God will have elect who will FEAR HIS NAME NOW... BY FAITH... and humble themselves before him
3. They know that Isaiah 59 and Romans 3 has to do with THEM, their sins
4. And they come to Christ in trembling faith and find a tenderhearted Savior who has worked salvation for them in his holy life and at the cross with immeasurable zeal
5. We are those who are spoken of in verse 19... we are in the distant WEST and we fear the name of the Lord; brothers and sisters in Japan and China fulfil the other half of the verse... from the rising of the sun, they revere Christ's glory

B. The Redeemer Comes to the Repentant (vs. 20)

***Isaiah 59:20 "The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins," declares the LORD.***

1. This is an amazing verse at the end of this chapter...
2. Zion sometimes refers to the heavenly Jerusalem; but sometimes it refers to the Jewish nation, especially the godly, the elect among the Jews
3. The Redeemer is Christ!! By his blood he has redeemed sinful Jews from their wickedness; to those IN JACOB who repent of their sins, Jesus will COME as a redeemer
4. Paul quotes this verse amazingly in Romans 11 to speak of the FUTURE SALVATION of Jewish nation; not of every individual Jew in history, for many die in unbelief and are condemned for their sins; but in the future, there will be a mass conversion of the Jewish nation alive at that time; they will turn as a nation to look to Christ, the one they have slain, and will find in him their salvation:

***Romans 11:25-27 I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. <sup>26</sup> And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. <sup>27</sup> And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins."***

5. Note that Paul changes the verse a little bit... not “the deliverer will come TO Zion” but “the deliverer will come FROM Zion”
  - a. Zion is the heavenly Jerusalem... no longer the earthly city of Jerusalem
  - b. While there is still time, before he comes in vengeance to repay his enemies, Jesus will come from the heavenly Zion by the person of the Holy Spirit; he will turn GODLESSNESS away from Jacob
  - c. Isaiah shows the other side of the equation:

***Isaiah 59:20 "The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins," declares the LORD.***

- d. How marvelous the plans of God! At the end of all history, right before the Second Coming of Christ, God will work a marvelous salvation among the Jewish nation that will complete his complex plan of redemption!!

C. The Promise of the Lord’s Covenant: the Word and the Spirit Forever (vs. 21)

***Isaiah 59:21 "As for me, this is my covenant with them," says the LORD. "My Spirit, who is on you, and my words that I have put in your mouth will not depart from your mouth, or from the mouths of your children, or from the mouths of their descendants from this time on and forever," says the LORD.***

1. This is the promise of the New Covenant...
2. The abiding presence of God with his humbled, repentant, saved people
3. The permanence of the Word and the Spirit! This is what we enjoy today

***John 14:16-17 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever-- <sup>17</sup> the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.***

## V. Applications

- A. Acknowledge Your Sins in Detail
- B. Do Not Try to Cover Yourself with Your Works
- C. Come to Christ in Faith
- D. Stand in Awe of the Zeal of God in Christ to Vindicate His Name
- E. See BOTH the Work of Salvation and the Work of Vengeance in verses 16-17
- F. Missions: Again... the Distant Islands will Fear His Name