

Part II, Lesson 36

Isaiah

The Lord is Salvation

Separated
From
God

Isaiah
59:1-8

*Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex
Curriculum*

Isaiah Part II, Lesson 36

Separated From God

Isaiah 59:1-8

Our lesson today begins another poem speaking God's words to the people of Israel after they had returned from Babylon. This could be a continuation of the message of chapter 58. In both chapters we find a discussion between God and His people. In both we read of the sins of the people and their perception that God is too far away to hear or see them. Read Isaiah 59:1-6a.

They were home (in Judah) now, and expected God's previous promises to be fulfilled. Remember Isaiah 44:28 promises Jerusalem and its temple would be restored; 49:19-21, 54:1-3 that all the people would be happy; 45:14 that the riches of the other nations would be brought to them and 49:22, 23 promises foreign kings would bring their respect, even their gifts and place them at the feet of God's people.

However, none of these promises had been fulfilled. The people were still waiting. They were losing patience with God and complained that God couldn't reach out and make things happen (arm too short). They were complaining He was not listening (His ear is dull). Think of the person trying to rescue someone from a deep hole. If their arm is too short, their good intentions are not good enough. If you are shouting for help but no one hears you, you must continue to suffer. That's the way the people felt. Since their return from Babylon, they couldn't feel God with them. He didn't even hear their cries for help in rebuilding their homes and the Temple.

But God said, through His prophet, that He had not moved, nor had He held His hands over His ears. The problem was that their sin had separated them from God and the barrier created by their sins kept God from seeing them and from hearing them. Since He doesn't want to see their sin, His back is turned and both His eyes and ears are pointed the other way. God didn't really turn His back, He was just drawing a picture that would help the people see the situation. The important thing to see here is that the sins of the people had made it impossible for God to help them. God would not break through the wall built by their sin. Look at the ways they had sinned:

1. Their hands were stained with blood. 2. Their fingers were stained with guilt. 3. Their lips had spoken lies. 4. Their tongues muttered wicked things. 5. They didn't want justice. 6. When they gave reasons, they were all false. 7. They were involved in empty arguments. 8. They lied. 9. They were trouble-makers and the trouble they made was evil. 10. Snake eggs are poison and are used to kill and to produce more snakes. 11. Like the spider, they spin their webs and the webs hide nothing of their sins.

This is an awful picture of sin. It is the picture of a people who aren't even trying to be righteous or to be a good witness for God. With a list of sins that long, and with a list of sins that serious, they would be convicted in a human court, and certainly were convicted in God's court of eternal justice. He could not bring Himself to look at them, their evil was so great.

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Separated From God

Notice that the viper and the spider are mentioned. The viper referred to here is an especially shrewd one. He gets his way by being smart and quick. There can be no doubt that this refers to Satan and the havoc that he can cause.

Then God warns of the outcome of their sins. It is obvious to the Christian that for every sin, a price must be paid. Doing the wrong thing doesn't only cause a problem for the one who is sinned against, but also to the one sinning. Though God forgives our sin when we ask Jesus to be our Savior, the results of our sin aren't erased on earth. When we do something that hurts someone, God's forgiveness doesn't take away the hurt, and doesn't make everything right between us and the person we hurt. Sin costs. The snake of sin is poisonous. When sin bites, only pain and suffering result.

When Paul was talking about sinners, he said, "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness, Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery marks their way, and the way of peace they do not know. There is no fear of God before their eyes." Romans 3:14-17. Read Isaiah 59:6b-8.

God said through Isaiah that they hurried into sin and are swift to shed blood. They lived by violence. Again, we may not be talking about murder here. It is obvious, however, that those who sin this way, rushing into it as if it was the best thing to do, are not at all concerned about the result of their sin. They don't have the compassion and care for other humans that God does.

There is an interesting lesson in verse seven. It has to do with the word "thoughts" and the word "highway." Thoughts are mentioned twice. It emphasizes the fact that the sin comes from within. In Mark 7:14-23, Jesus said that "evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly" come from within a person.

The word "highway" could lead us to believe that the conclusion of their thoughts is a planned highway to ruin. In their thoughts, they are planning their own way to destruction. And the way to destruction is as big as a highway.

Finally, He said that they don't have a clue as to how to get to peace. Sin is not the way to peace. Hurting other people is not the way to peace. They don't have a clue as to how to get to justice. Their highways don't go that way. They have, by creating broad highways to sin, hidden the paths to peace. Those paths are now made crooked by their sin and deception. And you just can't get to peace by going that way.

Separation from God has a terrible cost.

*Underlined words and phrases are to be used in completing the Student Worksheet.

Page Three

Scripture Memory: "Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor His ear too dull to hear." Isaiah 59:1

Lesson Goal: To show students the danger of getting away from God, and the terrible cost of sin, and to help students see the cost of evil, especially for other humans.

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Separated From God—Isaiah 59:1-8

Student Worksheet

Listen during the lesson for this information:

1. What were the promises of God that the people expected Him to fulfill?
2. Why wasn't God reaching out or hearing the cries of His people?
3. What were the eleven ways that the people had sinned?
4. The snake of _____ is poisonous. When sin bites, only _____ and _____ result.

Page Four

Scripture Memory: “Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor His ear too dull to hear.” Isaiah 59:1

How to begin a Personal Relationship with God:

First, believe that the God of the Bible is the true God.

Second, believe that Jesus, God's Son, was sent to earth to die so that you can have a relationship with God.

Third, ask God to forgive your sins in Jesus' name. Jesus' death on the cross paid the price of every sin you commit.

Fourth, ask Jesus to be your Savior and the Lord of your life.