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Our Offenses are Ever with Us, and We Acknowledge Turning Our Backs on God

59: 1-15a

Our offenses are ever with us, and we acknowledge turning our backs on God DIG: Isra'el had been blind to her own sins. Of what sins does God accuse them? What would life in this community be like? What does the image of the snake eggs and spider's web say about the effect of all their sin? What are the signs that Isra'el will see to convince her that she is in ruin? What characterizes her? Who was her sin against? What has to happen before the LORD returns?

REFLECT: How did you feel as you read the description of sin in these verses? Do your feelings change after reading Romans 3:9-17? Why? What does it mean to you that this is the situation within the heart of all people, including you? Think over this past month. Is what Isaiah and the apostle Paul writes true in your life? Have you ever experienced spiritual blindness like that described in 59:10? What aided you as you groped through life's darkness? Did God break through to you in that time? How?

Here, we have Isra'el confessing her sins at the end of the Great Tribulation. The actual words of this prayer are found in four key passages of Scripture, first, in **Psalms 79**, secondly in **Psalms 80**, thirdly in **53:1-9**, and lastly in **63:7** to **64:12**. **The Jews** will have been hunted down and slaughtered by the antichrist and his armies by that time. Only a third of **them** that entered the Great Tribulation will remain (**Zechariah 13:8**). As Jerusalem is defeated (**Zechariah 14:1-2**) and Bozrah is surrounded (**34:6**), the spiritual scales fall from **their** eyes and as a nation, **they** confess **their sins**.

Repentance does not come easily to any of us, and it is hardest of all for people who have become accustomed to using religion as a cover for their **sin**. When their prayers go unanswered, they find it easier to blame **God** than to take a long, hard look at themselves (chances are you know somebody like that). But **Isaiah** will have none of it. It was as if he was saying to his fellow countrymen, "It is not **God** who has the problem, but you."²³⁸

The flagrant sins of the nation had formed a barrier between God and them, and consequently they were plunged into misery. When, however, their plight is at its worst and their position seems hopeless, ADONAI will intervene and deliver them. Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor His ear too dull to hear (59:1). Here, and in **verse 19**, is the seventh of nine references to **the arm of the LORD (30:30 and 32, 40:10, 50:2, 51:5 and 9, 52:10, 53:1, 62:8, 63:5)**. Remember that **the arm** was a symbol of power, so shortness of **arm** signifies diminished power. **It was not ADONAI's inability or indifference, but the sin of the people that is the cause of Israel's sorrow and suffering.** This is not a pretty sight! Could these actually be **the people of God**? And yet which of us who has had the courage to look into the depths of our own hearts has not found such things hidden there? The mirror that **Isaiah** holds up shows us ourselves as well.

But your iniquities have separated you from your God (59:2a). Those **sins** will be a barrier between the people and **ADONAI**. The fact that this phrase occurs elsewhere only in **Genesis** makes it likely that **Isaiah** is alluding to it here. Just as **expanse separated the water** that remained on the earth from the water above (**Genesis 1:6**), preventing them from coming together, so **sin** and iniquity will prevent any union between **the LORD** and **the Jews** during the Great Tribulation. A similar point is made by **Jeremiah (Jeremiah 5:25)**, and **Habakkuk** observes that **the LORD is too pure to look upon evil (Habakkuk 1:13)**. **ADONAI** is neither powerless nor insensitive. But **He** is holy. What can keep **Him** from us? Only **sin**.

John says the same thing: **If we claim to have fellowship with Him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies or cleanses us from all sin (First John 1:6-7).**

Your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear (59:2b). **Sin** always takes you farther than you want to go, and costs you more than you want to pay (**Psalms 66:18**). That was true of **Isra'el** and that is true of us. **Sin** had totally corrupted **them**. Not only that, **their sins** were premeditated and were not done in ignorance. **Their sin** lays the ground for their own self-destruction. This is one of the verses that **Paul** quotes to prove the sinfulness of man. **Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways (Romans 3:15-16).** **Their** actions were like those of deadly poisonous snakes. **Their plots are so deadly that whether one falls victim to them, or one attempts to counteract them, the effects are equally fatal. Even if their acts appear helpful, they are in reality useless, if not dangerous.**

For your hands are stained with sin, leaving a mark that remains visible to **God, with blood** because of the violence done to others, **your fingers with guilt. Your lips have spoken lies, and your tongue mutters wicked things (59:3)**. The heart of the wicked **sinner** bubbles out of the mouth. Throughout the prophets, violence and murder are symptoms of a society where the self runs rampant. There could be no greater example of anarchy than during the Great Tribulation where the restraining influence of the Church is gone from the world as a result of the Rapture (see the commentary on **Revelation, to see link click By - The Rapture of the Church**).

There will be no "justice system" per se, because the world will be under the control of the counterfeit trinity of Satan, the antichrist, and the false prophet. **No one calls for justice; no one pleads their case with integrity. They rely on empty arguments (tohu)**, meaning to *lack stability or sense*, **and speak lies (58:4)**. We see the same thing in **Genesis 1:2: Now the earth was formless (tohu) and (waw) empty (bohu)**. **The Jews** will be spiritually lost and the entire world wants to kill **them**. At that point **they** will do anything or say anything to survive. There will no longer be any rules except for the self-imposed anarchy of the unholy trinity. When the standard is wickedness, the law of the jungle prevails. This is the society that **the Jews** will be living in during the Great Tribulation.



They hatch the eggs of snakes and spin a spider's web. Whoever eats their eggs will die, and when one is broken, an adder is hatched. Their spider webs are useless for clothing; they cannot cover themselves with what they make. God could see through their evil deeds and He judged them. Their deeds are evil deeds, and acts of violence are in their hands (59:5-6). These two verses are the perfect example of a sinful society controlled by **the man of lawlessness (Second Thessalonians 2:3)**. What type of society produces serpent **eggs** and **spider webs**? Whether you try to eat the **eggs** or crush **them**, the results are just as deadly. The baby **snakes**, whose poison is already as potent as a mature **snake's**, can kill you. Normally **eggs** are good to eat, but not these **eggs**! They are

the very opposite. Like a beautiful **spider's web** seen with its glittering dew, it seems so beautiful. Yet, getting involved in the sinful society of the Great Tribulation will be like getting all tangled up in **spider webs**.

In a hurry to do **evil deeds**, they were bringing ruin to others. **Their feet rush into sin; they are swift to shed innocent blood. Their thoughts and schemes are evil; ruin and destruction mark their ways (59:7).** When the society is so wicked that all restraints are removed, the most powerful move quickly to reap the apparent rewards, even if those rewards are only **snake eggs** and **spider webs**. In a picture of total depravity, we are told that **violence** will be **in their hands (59:6b)** and **their feet rush into sin**.

Sometime before the beginning of the Great Tribulation, **Isra'el** will sign a seven-year covenant with the antichrist (see the commentary on **Revelation Bz - The Signing of the Seven Year Covenant with the Antichrist**). This charismatic leader will seemingly sway the whole world with his ability to bring about world peace. For the first half of the Great Tribulation **the Jews** will be allowed to worship in a rebuilt tribulation **temple (Revelation 11:1-2)**. But in the middle of **the Time of Jacob's Trouble (Jeremiah 30:7)**, the antichrist, who will be the epitome of Satan, will have his **image** set up in the Most Holy Place in the tribulation **temple** by the false prophet. There, the counterfeit son will claim **to be God (Second Thessalonians 2:4)**, and the persecution of **the Jews** will begin.²³⁹

Of **the Jews** that were living when the Great Tribulation began, **two-thirds will be struck down and perish** either as a result of the seven seal judgments (**Revelation 6:1-12**), the seven trumpet judgments (**Revelation 8:2 to 9:21**), or persecution for not taking the mark of the beast (see the commentary on **Revelation Dp - The Mark is the Name of the Beast or the Number of His Name**). By the end of **the Seventieth Week of Dani'el (Dani'el 9:27)**, **one third will be left (Zechariah 13:8)**. This will be **the believing remnant**, purged by tribulation, but still lost. As a result, **they** will have no **peace**. **The way of shalom, or peace they do not know**. This verse is quoted by Paul to emphasize the sinfulness of man (**Romans 3:17**). **There** will be **no justice in their paths**. **They** will **have turned them into crooked roads; no one who walks in them will know shalom (59:8)**.

In verses 9 through 11 Isra'el recognizes the calamity she is in. So justice is far from us, and righteousness does not reach us. We look for light, but all is darkness (59:9). **Isaiah** now uses first-person plural pronouns (**us, we, our**), to identify **himself** with **his people**. Up to this point, except for **the believing remnant, Isra'el**, will be corrupt and without **justice (59:4, 11, 14-15)** or **righteousness**. Spiritually **they** will be in

darkness, blind and dead. At that point **Isra'el** then will confess the truth of what **she** has been accused of in the first eight verses. The situation is that preceding the Second Coming of **Christ** and the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom; therefore, **Isra'el** must make a national confession of **her sin** of rejecting **Yeshua** Messiah and asking **Him** to return (see the commentary on **Revelation Ev - The Basis for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ**). The actual words of this prayer are found in four key passages of Scripture, first, in **Psalm 79**, secondly in **Psalm 80**, thirdly **Isaiah 53:1-9**, and lastly in **Isaiah 63:7 to 64:12**.

As the spiritual scales fall from **their** collective eyes, **they** begin to acknowledge how **Isra'el** had **turned** her back on **their** Messiah. **Like the blind we grope along the wall, feeling our way like men without eyes. At midway we stumble as if it were twilight; among the strong, we are like the dead (59:10).** Up until that time spiritual blindness and death had characterized **them**. What a picture of the person who does not have a personal relationship with **the LORD**. **We growl like bears; we moan mournfully like doves. We look for justice, but find none; for deliverance, but it is far away (59:11).** **They** will recognize that not only has there been no **justice**, but even worse, there has been no **deliverance** or salvation.

In verses 12 through 15a Isra'el recognizes her sin. 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 (59:12). The very sins of **Isra'el** will testify against **Isra'el**. There is a recognition that as religious as **they** thought **they** had been, in reality, **their sin** had separated **them** from **ADONAI**. **Rebellion and treachery against the LORD, turning our backs on our God, fomenting oppression and revolt, uttering lies our hearts have conceived (59:13).** These sins were not merely against other men, **they** were against **God (Psalm 51:4).**

As the army of the antichrist tighten its noose around the neck of **the Jews** left at Bozrah, **they** finally realize the results of **their** denial. **So justice is driven back, and righteousness stands at a distance; truth has stumbled in the streets, and honesty cannot enter. Truth is nowhere to be found, and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey (59:14-15).** The believing remnant, the righteous of the TaNaKh, finally recognize **their sin**.