

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Bible Study Notes: Isaiah Chapter 59 - 61

6/18/14

Chapter 59 Study Notes

Sin, Confession and Redemption

1 Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. **2** But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear. **3** For your hands are stained with blood, your fingers with guilt. Your lips have spoken lies, and your tongue mutters wicked things. **4** No one calls for justice; no one pleads his case with integrity. They rely on empty arguments and speak lies; they conceive trouble and give birth to evil. **5** 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. **6** 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. **7** Their feet rush into sin; they are swift to shed innocent blood. Their thoughts are evil thoughts; ruin and destruction mark their ways. **8** 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. **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. **10** 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. **11** We all growl like bears; we moan mournfully like doves. We look for justice, but find none; for deliverance, but it is far away. **12** 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: **13** rebellion and treachery against the LORD, turning our backs on our God, fomenting oppression and revolt, uttering lies our hearts have conceived. **14** So justice is driven back, and righteousness stands at a distance; truth has stumbled in the streets, honesty cannot enter. **15** Truth is nowhere to be found, and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey. The LORD looked and was displeased that there was no justice. **16** 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. **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. **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. **19** From the west, men will fear the name of the LORD, and from the rising of the sun, they will revere his glory. For he will come like a pent-up flood that the breath of the LORD drives along. **20** "The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins," declares the LORD. **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.

59:1-14 Sin offends our holy God and separates us from him. Because God is holy, he cannot ignore, excuse, or tolerate sin as though it didn't matter. Sin cuts people off from him, forming a wall to isolate God from the people he loves. No wonder this long list of wretched sins makes God angry and forces him to look the other way. People who die with their life of sin unforgiven separate themselves eternally from God. God wants them to live with him forever, but he cannot take them into his holy presence unless their sin is removed. Have you confessed your sin to God, allowing him to remove it? The Lord can save you if you turn to him.

59:15 Because of Israel's willful, persistent rebellion (chapters 56-59), the nation became unable to take action against its sins. Sin fills the vacuum left when God's truth no longer fills our lives. Only God can defeat sin.

59:16-17 God would, in fact, act to rescue the nation from enemy armies (Assyria and Babylon) and to punish wicked Israelites as well. He would also rescue his people from sin. Because this is an impossible task for any human, God himself, as the Messiah, would personally step in to help (Romans 11:26-27). Whether we sin once or many times, out of rebellion or out of ignorance, our sin separates us from God and will continue to separate us until God forgives us and removes it.

59:21 When the Holy Spirit dwells within his people, they change. Their former desires no longer entice them; now their chief aim is to please God. We who are Christians today are the heirs of this prophecy; we are able to respond to God's will and distinguish between good and evil because the Holy Spirit dwells within us (John 14:26; Philippians 2:13; Hebrews 5:14).

Chapter 60 Study Notes

The Glory of Zion

1 "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. **2** See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you. **3** Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. **4** "Lift up your eyes and look about you: All assemble and come to you; your sons come from afar, and your daughters are carried on the arm. **5** Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy; the wealth on the seas will be brought to you, to you the riches of the nations will come. **6** Herds of camels will cover your land, young camels of Midian and Ephah. And all from Sheba will come, bearing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the LORD. **7** All Kedar's flocks will be gathered to you, the rams of Nebaioth will serve you; they will be accepted as offerings on my altar, and I will adorn my glorious temple. **8** "Who are these that fly along like clouds, like doves to their nests? **9** Surely the islands look to me; in the lead are the ships of Tarshish, bringing your sons from afar, with their silver and gold, to the honor of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendor. **10** "Foreigners will rebuild your walls, and their kings will serve you. Though in anger I struck you, in favor I will show you compassion. **11** Your gates will always stand open, they will never be shut, day or night, so that men may bring you the wealth of the nations-- their kings led in triumphal procession. **12** For the nation or kingdom that will not serve you will perish; it will be utterly ruined. **13** "The glory of Lebanon will come to you, the pine, the fir and the cypress

together, to adorn the place of my sanctuary; and I will glorify the place of my feet. **14** The sons of your oppressors will come bowing before you; all who despise you will bow down at your feet and will call you the City of the LORD, Zion of the Holy One of Israel. **15** "Although you have been forsaken and hated, with no one traveling through, I will make you the everlasting pride and the joy of all generations. **16** You will drink the milk of nations and be nursed at royal breasts. Then you will know that I, the LORD, am your Savior, your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob. **17** Instead of bronze I will bring you gold, and silver in place of iron. Instead of wood I will bring you bronze, and iron in place of stones. I will make peace your governor and righteousness your ruler. **18** No longer will violence be heard in your land, nor ruin or destruction within your borders, but you will call your walls Salvation and your gates Praise. **19** The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you, for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. **20** Your sun will never set again, and your moon will wane no more; the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of sorrow will end. **21** Then will all your people be righteous and they will possess the land forever. They are the shoot I have planted, the work of my hands, for the display of my splendor. **22** The least of you will become a thousand, the smallest a mighty nation. I am the LORD; in its time I will do this swiftly."

60:1-22 As we read these promises, we long for their fulfillment. But we must patiently wait for God's timing. He is in control of history, and he weaves together all our lives into his plan.

60:6-7 The places mentioned belonged to obscure tribes in the Arabian desert hundreds of miles from Israel. All people would come to Jerusalem because God would be living there, and they would be attracted to his light. Don't be discouraged when you look around and see so few people turning to God; one day people throughout the earth will recognize him as the one true God.

Chapter 61 Study Notes

The Year of the LORD's Favor

1 The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, 2 to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, 3 and provide for those who grieve in Zion-- to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor. 4 They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations. 5 Aliens will shepherd your flocks; foreigners will work your fields and vineyards. 6 And you will be called priests of the LORD, you will be named ministers of our God. You will feed on the wealth of nations, and in their riches you will boast. 7 Instead of their shame my people will receive a double portion, and instead of disgrace they will rejoice in their inheritance; and so they will inherit a double portion in their land, and everlasting joy will be theirs. 8 "For I, the LORD, love justice; I hate robbery and iniquity. In my faithfulness I will reward them and make an everlasting covenant with them. 9 Their descendants will be known among the nations and

their offspring among the peoples. All who see them will acknowledge that they are a people the LORD has blessed." 10 I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. 11 For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.

61:1-2 Jesus quoted these words in Luke 4:18-19. As he read to the people in the synagogue, he stopped in the middle of 61:2 after the words, "to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor." Rolling up the scroll, he said, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21). The next phrase in 61:2, "and the day of vengeance of our God," will come true when Jesus returns to earth again. We are now under God's favor; his wrath is yet to come.

61:6 Under the old covenant, God ordained the priests of Israel to stand between him and his people. They brought God's word to the people and the people's needs and sins to God. Under the new covenant, all believers are priests of the Lord (1 Peter 2:5), reading God's Word and seeking to understand it, confessing their sins directly to God, and ministering to others.

61:8 We suffer for many reasons—our own mistakes, someone else's mistakes, injustice. When we suffer for our own mistakes, we get what we deserve. When we suffer because of others or because of injustice, God is angry. God in his mercy says that his people have suffered enough. God will reward those who suffer because of injustice. He will settle all accounts. 61:10 "Me" could refer to the Messiah, the person appointed by the Spirit of the Lord (61:1), or to Zion (62:1), which symbolizes God's people. The imagery of the bridegroom is often used in Scripture to depict the Messiah (see Matthew 9:15), while the imagery of the bride is used to depict God's people (see Revelation 19:6-8). We, too, can put on our new clothes—a right relationship with God—by putting our trust in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21).