

Is. 59:15b-17 (LD 5) “Who Can Bring Justice?”

For the Children: If you see someone being bullied, you might be able to step in and help. If you hear someone being unfairly accused, you might be able to defend them. But when you are accused by God of sinning against Him, every day, there is no way you can defend yourself or help yourself. No one else can help you deal with your own sins, with Satan, or with the punishment your sins deserve. The only One who can help is God Himself. The Lord Jesus can deal with our sins because He is truly man, truly God and truly righteous. He had to be those 3 things in order to take our place, die on the cross and pay the penalty we owed to God.

Questions: Why could God not just pretend our sins never existed? Why can't we get rid of our own sins? Why can't an angel get rid of our sins?

Introduction:

First Point: What Is Needed for Salvation?

- 1) Justice against Enemies: Is. 59 tells of a situation in Israel where there was injustice and oppression within the covenant-nation, as well as from enemy nations. The Lord hates all injustice and unrighteousness.
- 2) Justice Re Our Debt: However, there is also sin and injustice within every sinner. That sin renders all guilty before God. It also creates a debt to Him – of unpaid obedience and glory, as well as the penalty set by His Law. His justice must be satisfied – by us or another – or God would be ignoring His own perfect attribute of justice. See Q/A 12.
- 3) Someone to Intercede: V. 15 also shows that sinners need an Intercessor for salvation. They need someone to speak up for them before God, the offended party. This was the high priest's job, but in a corrupt Israel, his prayers mean nothing. A better Intercessor is needed.

Second Point: Who Is Needed for Salvation?

- 1) No One to Help: No mere creature was able to intercede for God's people, deal with their enemies and their own sins, or satisfy God's justice and pay the debt owed to God (v. 16). Q/A 13-15 explains why. The debt is too big for sinners to pay – especially when they are actually adding to the debt each day. Another creature could not pay e.g., an angel, because only a man can represent men and only a man can pay a penalty tailored for humans – physical, spiritual and eternal death. Moreover, no finite creature could pay an eternal death penalty for others. Note that these problems involve questions of justice. To sum up, the only One who can satisfy God's justice is the One who is truly human, truly righteous and true God (Q/Q 15).
- 2) Displeasure and Astonishment: When God says that He was displeased and astonished that there was no one who could meet these criteria, we should not see this as a statement of His surprise or ignorance. It is a poetic way of saying that He desired to solve the problem of sin, by means of the One who does meet these criteria.

Third Point: Who Alone Brings Salvation?

- 1) His Own Arm: That is why we go on to read that God gathered His own salvation and righteousness to Himself in the power of His own “arm.” Salvation is God's work, grace and initiative, not man's.
- 2) The Armour of God: The Lord is pictured as going to war for His people to save them. He puts on the armour of God. See Eph. 6:13ff. His “armour” is His own “righteousness” (the word also means “justice”); His own “vengeance” against our enemies; and His own “zeal” or “jealousy” to defend the people He loves. He shares these attributes and works with us, so that we can put on the armour of God as well.
- 3) The Redeemer He Sent: All of this is brought to us through the Lord Jesus, the Redeemer, Mediator, Deliverer and Intercessor whom we need to deal with our sins, to pay our debt to God and save us.

Conclusion: