

# And So All Israel Will Be Saved – *Isaiah 59:15b-21*

**Introduction** – In the first half of Chapter 59 we saw how really bad the Bad News is; we saw how desperate our situation is. Full of sin, sinfulness, rebellion, Jew and Gentile alike are under the wrath of God with no way out (vv7-8, Rom 3:15-18, 23). Many Christians seem to come to a realization of how bad this Bad News is. What is amazing is how infrequently we come to believe how good the Good News really is as well, for ourselves and for the world. *“How sin abounded we have read, to our great amazement, in the former part of the chapter; how grace does much more abound we read in these verses. And, as sin took occasion from the commandment to become more exceedingly sinful, so grace took occasion from the transgression of the commandment to appear more exceedingly gracious”* – M. Henry. If God opened your heart to hear the Bad News in the first half, may He grant you abounding faith in the overwhelming Good News of the Warrior/Savior/Redeemer of the World.

**Salvation From His Own Arm** (vv15b-19) – When God saw that there was no man who could deliver Israel because of their desperate condition (Isaiah 59:2ff), He sent a Man, a Deliverer (v16). This One put on the armor of God: the breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation (vv16-17, Eph 6:11, 13-17). In this passage there is no weapon of offense; apparently *“His own arm”* is all that is needed, clothed in the *“zeal”* of the LORD for such a salvation. In this armor, the Deliverer judges the wicked near and far (v18) and as a result, *“they”* shall stream to Him, fearing His name and His glory (v19).

**Getting Our Bearings** – We already know that Paul uses this chapter to describe the condemnation of all mankind, Jew and Gentile (Rom 3:9-20). So we must be careful that we do not simply interpret these verses as describing the exile of Israel under Babylon and the historical deliverance brought forth through Cyrus. Those events, while they literally/historically did occur, were themselves types of something far greater. Jesus, speaking of the judgment upon unbelieving Israel in His ministry, gave this similar promise that following that judgment, peoples from all over the world would stream to Him (Luke 13:29).

**The Rejection and Return of Israel** (Rom 11:11-36) – Paul, writing to the church at Rome, is explaining how the apostasy of most of the Jews was such a blessing to the Gentiles and how much more of a blessing the fullness of Israel coming to Christ will be (vv11-15). The Jews, as a nation, were about to experience a great disaster (AD 70) and through that the Gospel would go to the nations like never before. He then warns the Gentile church in Rome not to become haughty, for they are wild branches grafted into the olive tree – how much easier it would be for God to cut them out and how much easier would it be for Him to graft in the natural branches (vv16-24). But Paul means to prove more than logical possibilities; he begins to declare the prophetic certainties. The partial blindness of Israel (except for the remnant) was predicted until the fullness of the Gentiles had been reached (v25). By explaining this “mystery” Paul expects the church in Rome not to become conceited (v25). Paul then turns to Isaiah 59:20-21, conflating those verses with Isaiah 27:9, to explain God’s intentions to take away the sins of Israel (vv26-27). So for the time being the Jews were enemies of the Gospel, but still beloved for their father’s sake (v28). These gifts are irrevocable, which is why the Jews will return to Christ (v26, 29). The Gentiles were once disobedient, but were brought out of unbelief by the unbelief of the Jews (v30). In a twist of events, God will bring the Jews out of unbelief through the mercy that was shown to the Gentiles (v31). And so the overall plan of God was to place the Jews in unbelief (for the time being) in order to bring mercy to the whole world – Jews included (v32). Understanding this even just a little is a mind-blowing experience and brings overwhelming praise to God for His sovereign goodness (vv33-36).

**The Victorious Covenant of God** (Isaiah 59:21) – In Isaiah’s day, Israel is on a path of full apostasy and the prophet uses it to preach the full sovereignty of God, the inability of His plans to be thwarted, and in fact His absolute commitment to His covenant promises. The words He placed in the mouth of His servants will never cease to be spoken. These words of promise are beyond belief – except God gives faith to believe and walk in them.

**How Good is This Good News for You?** – Not only are we to understand how great our fall was, not only what an offense we are to the holiness of God and how just His holy wrath is upon us. The results of our sin are immense. The results of Christ’s atoning work – for you – is far, far greater (Rom 3:23-24, 5:20-21).

**Israel Will Be Saved** – God does not have a special covenant relationship with ethnic Israel that is separate from His relationship to His covenant people anymore. But He does promise that ethnic Israel will be saved. They will come to faith in Jesus Christ after the fullness of the Gentiles. We are called to believe this promise, and pray that He would hasten the day.

**When the Gospel Wanes** – Rejections and apostasies are not evidence of the impotence of the Gospel. When Jesus was rejected and crucified, it produced the great atoning work of salvation. When Israel rejected the witness of Jesus and the Holy Spirit, bringing the destruction of Jerusalem, it sent the power of the Gospel out to all nations. We ought to learn that rejections and apostasies are means by which God propels the Gospel out in His perfect plan.

**Your Salvation** – But this has implications for our own faith, our own salvation. We saw how great our fall was and continues to be as a people under Adam. Do you see how great your salvation is? Do you see the trajectory of the faith/gospel/salvation God has granted you? Through His work over generations, He is going to bring forth your salvation – and the salvation of the world.