



[Isaiah 59:1-8](#)

(1) Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened,
That it cannot save;
Nor His ear heavy,
That it cannot hear.

(2) But your iniquities have separated you from your God;
And your sins have hidden *His* face from you,
So that He will not hear.

(3) For your hands are defiled with blood,
And your fingers with iniquity;
Your lips have spoken lies,
Your tongue has muttered perversity.

(4) No one calls for justice,
Nor does *any* plead for truth.
They trust in empty words and speak lies;
They conceive evil and bring forth iniquity.

(5) They hatch vipers' eggs and weave the spider's web;
He who eats of their eggs dies,
And *from* that which is crushed a viper breaks out.

(6) Their webs will not become garments,
Nor will they cover themselves with their works;
Their works *are* works of iniquity,
And the act of violence *is* in their hands.

(7) Their feet run to evil,
And they make haste to shed innocent blood;
Their thoughts *are* thoughts of iniquity;
Wasting and destruction *are* in their paths.

(8) The way of peace they have not known,
And *there is* no justice in their ways;
They have made themselves crooked paths;
Whoever takes that way shall not know peace.

New King James Version

Isaiah 59 portrays an entire culture in collapse. What is reported there took place about 120 years before Judah's devastation by Nebuchadnezzar's armies in 605 BC. Until being conquered, Judah was still holding together as a nation, so the chapter provides insight into what the self-centered leadership was producing on a more day-to-day basis. In the first eight verses, Isaiah lists Judah's immoral activities.

This passage appears like a report from [God](#) through Isaiah on how He sees the collective cultural chaos produced as each citizen's sinfulness contributed to the wickedness of all who were living in Judah at that time. It is delivered as though God is a prosecuting attorney presenting his case before a court for judgment. After reading such a condemning report, one can only wonder whether any more than a mere handful of citizens were actually obeying God! In the same way, we can confidently judge from the news reports we hear daily in the media that the quality of life in the United States is approaching the same condition.

Notice how the *Revised English Bible* renders the first three verses:

The LORD'S arm is not too short to save nor His ear too dull to hear; rather, it is your iniquities that raise a barrier between you and your God; it is your sins that veil His face, so that He does not hear. Your hands are stained with blood and your fingers with crime; your lips speak lies and your tongues utter injustice.

The people are indeed suffering from the chaotic immorality that surrounds them, and some are truly appealing to God to bring it to a merciful end. They have prayed and fasted about the situation, but God did not react. He provided no answers. He effected no changes. He did not raise up righteous and dutiful shepherds to provide good guidance and instill peace. Indeed, it seemed as if He had not even heard! Or if He had heard, He seemed not to have enough time or strength to do anything to bring the agonies of this kind of life to an end. Why?

Verses 2-3 contains the answer: Surprise, surprise—the very people appealing to God to end the crisis in their communities were guilty of committing the same sins that were responsible for intensifying the crisis. Despite crying out to God, they were not repenting of their own sins! In the meantime, God is waiting for the beginning of a truly sincere and substantial change led by the people crying out to God. He wants them to begin obeying His Word and restoring justice in all their doings.

The Berean: Daily Verse and Commentary for Isaiah 59:1-8 (<http://www.theberean.org>)

We can apply this to the ever-worsening situation in the United States. Many people in this nation still hold sincerely to a substantially correct understanding of God and His purposes for mankind. They understand to some degree where the present immorality can lead. Because they fear what is coming and are suffering some degree of misery due to the nation's spiritual decline, they are probably praying about these things.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[Leadership and Covenants \(Part Two\)](#)

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