

C. (1) Severe Rebuke upon Iniquity (Isaiah 59:1-8)

In chapter 59 the alternation of rebuke and blessing which has been found in the previous two chapters heads toward a great climax. The denunciation in verses 1-8 goes even beyond that contained in the previous chapters. Here the people are represented as coming into the situation which is inevitable when their leaders take the attitude described in chapter 57, seeking their own desires instead of the welfare of the nation, and when the religion of the nation falls into a condition of mere formalism, as described in chapter 58. Here the whole nation is pictured as having fallen into sin and wickedness.

It must be recognized, of course, that this description does not apply to every single individual in the nation. There was still a large group of godly, faithful people who were trusting in the Lord and anxious to receive His blessing. It is to comfort this group in particular that chapters 40 to 66 have been written. Yet they feel themselves involved in the sin of the nation in general and have to confess that they deserve punishment with the nation for their implication in its sin.

C. (2) The Prayer of Repentance (Isaiah 59:9-15a)

It is this group that is represented as in prayer before God, confessing the terrible sin of their nation and describing its inevitable result, which they already see as if actually present. These words could be spoken by the godly in Isaiah's day, as they looked forward to the punishment which would inevitably come upon the nation; they would be equally appropriate in the mouths of the godly when the punishment has actually fallen. The speakers make no attempt to deny their implication in the sin. They recognize that the judgment against the nation is right and proper, but they cry to the Lord for help.

C. (3) God's Answer to His People's Prayer of Repentance (Isaiah 59:15b-63:6)

Here the transition is quite sudden, coming in the middle of verse 15. The Lord sees the terrible condition and knows