

God is so Appalled No One stood for Justice!**Isaiah 59:15-20****Bible Teacher: Rev. Tesfaye Tamrie****I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND BIBLICAL CONTEXT****A. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

One of the *recurrent characteristics* in the history of the Israelites is “back sliding” due to their *strange affinity* to idol worship. Their history is *marked* not only by their *unfaithfulness*, but also by their *ungrateful ways* expressed generation after generation in spite of God’s abundant love, mercy and grace towards them. ***I pray our history will never be stained by such a treacherous streak!***

B. BIBLICAL CONTEXT

In Isaiah chapter 59, **justice** is mentioned several times which requires us to examine and understand why. The Bible clearly and abundantly shows that the *maintenance and promotion* of **justice** rank high in God’s priorities in advancing His Kingdom on earth. In other words, the Lord *desires justice* to be one of the *permanent characteristics* of who we are as God’s people. As a matter of fact, we cannot separate **Justice** from **Love** and **Truth**: that means, we cannot claim to be people of **truth** while being **unjust** to other people. Also, we cannot say we **love** God while we deny people **justice** in our society. **The LOVE of God flows through His Truth and Righteousness!** *The Bible in various ways shows that out of God’s “Righteousness” flow justice, peace, freedom, goodness, kindness and the divine principles of morality and ethics based on The Law.* **When the Love, Truth and Righteousness of God abound in society, governance, judicial systems and civil laws consolidate justice, promote peace and facilitate freedom without bias, favoritism and racism.** On the other hand, the *absence* of **Love** means *diminishing* acts of compassion, kindness and goodness replace by hate, cruelty and all manners of viciousness!

II. THE LESSON: God is so Appalled No One stood for Justice**1. v. 15. What Happens When Truth and Justice cannot be Found?****A. When Truth is Nowhere to be Found!**

- a) Because **Truth** was “nowhere to be found,” the situation has become so bad that those who **“shun evil”** *are targeted for destruction*. In other words, telling *lies, deception, perjury, dishonesty, fraud, guile, cunning, craftiness,*

double-dealing and duplicity have become the norm in society, there is no place for those who “**shun evil.**” This despicable situation was the reality of the Israelites (God’s chosen people)! If you and I expose liars, fraudulent practices, etc., testify in court against those who swindle, exploit the innocent through craftiness, duplicity, etc. or openly condemn such **evil deeds**, *we put our lives in danger!* The condition of the country is such that any one who prefers love over hate, stands up for Justice and promotes the Truth becomes the “prey” to be hunted down like the worst criminal!

- b) Because **Truth** was “nowhere to be found, whoever stands for God becomes “**prey.**” Can you imagine **being hunted** because you are trying to live your life by being truthful – for being honest, sincere and faithful in telling the Truth? *Society has been corrupted to an extent that **Truth tellers** have to hide, flee the country or die while trying to do **the right thing!** The absence of **Truth** in society leads to the rise, proliferation and dominance of **injustice!** **You cannot have Justice in the absence of Truth.** *Lies and deceitful deeds give birth to injustice! **Unjust society** breeds people who sow conflicts, plot division, enjoy violence, profit from wars, and benefit from abusive systems of exploitation and oppression.**

B. When there is No Justice in the land God is Displeased!

The absence of Truth and Justice angers God! *The Bible says, “**God was displeased that there was no justice.**”* The *absence* of **Truth** means *elevation* of lies, deceit, and evil deeds of all kinds spreading in the communities. The *absence* of **Righteousness** creates the environment for **loss** of **justice, peace, freedom, fruitfulness** and **productivity** in society! Evil doers benefit the most at such times! When society *descends* to such an extent, Isaiah says, ***God is Appalled because no one stood for Justice!*** In the context of the Israelites, things have gotten so bad that the Bible says, “**justice is driven back and righteousness stands at a distance; truth has stumbled in the streets, honesty cannot enter**” (v. 14). For God to feel that way about His people! *What an awful, terrifying and tragic picture! What a terribly sad commentary on the state of affairs in Israel at the time!*

2. v. 16. God was so Appalled No One Stood for Justice!

I thank God for verse 16 because the God who **knows** and **hears** also **sees** everything going on in the world! *That is the shout right there!* There are times when those who love the Lord *feel powerless/helpless* because **evil people rule, truth is suppressed, hatefulness is celebrated** and *injustice is practiced everywhere!* But in the first part of verse 16, the Bible says, “God

saw that there was no one, He was appalled that there was no one to intervene.” There are at least two things in this verse we need to pay attention to:

- a) **16 (a). Divine Indictment: God was Appalled No One Stood for Justice.** “God saw that there was no one” in Israel who stood up for **Truth** and **Justice**. This is the *worst* **divine indictment/condemnation** regarding the *state of affairs* in Israel (or a Christian nation). In a country of five, ten, fifty or hundred million people, “God saw that there was **no one**” who stood up for the Truth and Justice! How can that be?!
- b) **16 (b). Divine Indictment: God was Appalled No One Intervened for Justice!** “He was **appalled** that there was **no one to intervene**.” God “saw” and was “appalled.” In the Bible, we encounter few places where the “emotions” of God are so elevated requiring a decisive action. For example, during the time of Noah (Genesis 6:18 when God “was **grieved** that He had made man on earth”), during the time of Moses (Numbers 14:26-38 when God was **so angry** with the Israelites He **decided to destroy them in the desert**), and during the time of Jesus (Luke 7:1-10) when Jesus “was **amazed** at him, and turning to the crowd following Him, He said, ‘I tell you the truth, I have not found such great faith even in Israel.’”
- c) **16 (c). Divine Intervention: God was so Appalled He decided to Intervene Himself!**

First, here is the Alarming Part: God was so Appalled! It is so *alarming* to read that *things have gotten so bad* that God is “**appalled!**” We never want to do anything to such an extent that God is “appalled” at what we have done and keep doing! Whether it is in our home, in the church or in the community, those who are in Christ should never be doing anything that gets God “**appalled!**” Those who love the Lord cannot allow **things to get so bad** that it draws God’s attention so much so He had to **intervene!** *We have got to get things right before it gets that bad!* When God *intervenes*, His **Righteousness** *requires judgement* which punishes evil doers and restores Truth and Justice!

Second, here is the Hallelujah Part. God Decided to Intervene! This is the shouting part! When everything seems *hopeless*, God **intervenes** to *rekindle* our spirits, *reignite* Joy in our hearts and put *strength* in our feeble bodies! When the enemy thinks he is riding high while oppressing people, the Sovereign God **intervenes** to let everybody know that He is The King of kings and The LORD of lords! **The Bible tells us that there is a Time when God**

will Intervene! Praise God! Are you glad that we love and serve a God who intervenes!? Are you glad that God sees and intervenes?

3. vv. 16(d)-17. God's Own Hand will work out Salvation for Him.

This Section is the **Prophecy about the coming Messiah, the Savior**. In the Book of Isaiah, the Prophecy about the Messiah is hinted multiple times in various chapters. So, it is here as well. The Israelites (God's chosen people) who were supposed to *represent God* by being people who **Love the Truth** and **uphold Justice** in their dealings have become so corrupt it is appalling! Understand that God *chose* the Israelite with **the Divine Purpose of advancing His Kingdom on earth**. God was *looking* for people *like* Abraham and Sarah, Moses, Jashua and Caleb, Judge Deborah, Priest/Judge Samuel, King David, King Jehoshaphat, King Hezekiah and **couldn't find no one** who *stood up* for the **Truth** and **Justice** in all Israel! God who can see into the future knew that Israel will be **spiritually dead** and be *ruled* by the Romans (idols worshipping empire) *because they have already turned their backs on Him!* **But God's Plan of Salvation cannot be stopped!** Therefore, God decided His own arm will work out Salvation for Him! **The Messiah** will do it for Him! Hallelujah! **The Messiah** will come dressed in His own:

- **Righteousness** as His **Breastplate** which will *sustain* Him (to Proclaiming the Truth and Standing Up for Justice);
- **Helmet of Salvation** on His Head (to bring Salvation and Advance God's Kingdom);
- **Garment of Vengeance** (to bring Judgement);
- **Zeal as in a cloak** (to *act and complete* using His Supernatural Power).

4. vv. 18-19. God's Intervention come like a "Pent-up Flood!"

The Bible portrays God's Intervention as a **"Pent-up Flood."** It is **"pent-up,"** because God was *patient for a long time* while holding up His righteous indignation! *We should be careful not to take God's Patience for Tolerance! God is never okay with sinful behavior.* **A raging flood sweeps everything in its path! It is sudden, violent and powerful! Nothing can hold it back! It destroys everything in its path regardless of weight, size and height! When God Intervenes, His Judgment brings Wrath and Retribution to Evil Doers!**

God's Intervention is based on His Righteousness. Therefore,

- a) It judges **"According to what they have done."**

God's Judgment comes in the form of **wrath** and **retribution** "in accordance to what they have done." *The Judgement is in the context of Israel.*

Understand God's Judgment is coming to the people He chose for their *unfaithfulness, disdain* for the **Love** shown to them, *disregard* for the **Truth** and their *rejection* of **Justice**.

- **Wrath – judgment** coming down carrying God's anger, fury, outrage and vengeance for all the harm evil doers did to others.
- **Retribution** – *deserved* punishment (**payback to redress all the wrong done**) which is severe in magnitude, duration and effect.

b) It produces Fear and Reverence.

Since God lavishes us with **Grace and Mercy**, we must always remind ourselves that *we neither earned nor deserved* them! We should always be thankful and grateful for His Unconditional Love! *There is a danger in taking God for granted!* Just because He is Loving, Gracious, Merciful and Kind doesn't mean we can be foolish with Him! God *deserves* our sincere love and **reverence** for who His is! *Just because God is a Forgiving God doesn't mean He appreciates unfaithfulness and tolerates our evil deeds!* We cannot forget that He is **Righteous** and **All-Powerful** God! **His Judgement comes like a "Pent-up Flood!"**

c) It Brings Salvation to the world.

God's Intervention is not only about bringing Judgment, but also Salvation! It is about dealing with **evil** so that **good** can flourish again! It is about dealing with the lies, deceit, and conniving so that **Truth** can flourish again! God's Intervention is about dealing with hate, prejudice, racism and injustice so that Love and Justice give birth to Joy, Peace, Freedom and Fruitfulness! It is like dealing with the weeds so that the grass, plants, and the flowers in your yards can grow healthy and bloom beautifully again!

III. CONCLUSION

5. v.20. Redemption for those who Repent and get Saved!

God Intervened so that through the Blood of His Precious Lamb there is opportunity for **Redemption** for those who are willing to **repent** of their sins and have **faith** in Jesus Christ! Amen!