

# The Spirit and the Word—for Us and for Our Children

Isaiah 59:1-21

*Halifax: 27 March 2011*

## **Introduction**

As you all know, today we have planned the baptism of Ethan Van Kesteren.

- Very often, when we have a baptism, I break from our regular sermon series to preach from a passage that specifically pertains to baptism.
- But there is no need to do that today because Isaiah 59 very much has to do with covenant baptism.

I would draw your attention at the outset to the very last verse where God renews His covenant promise to us and to our children.

- God uses a variety of ways to communicate to us that He is our God and the God of our children...
  - Sometimes, He simply declares that He will be our God and that we will be His people...
    - but sometimes, people will take that as a mere temporal promise about the land of promise and nothing more.
  - But here, in Isaiah 59:21, the focus is on His promise to give us His Spirit and His Word forever.
    - You can't get more spiritual than that!
    - This is what He says.
      - **Isa 59:21: "As for Me," says the LORD, "this is My covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants' descendants," says the LORD, "from this time and forevermore."**
  - The possession of the Spirit and the Word distinguishes those who are God's people from those who are not!
    - To truly be His people, we must have both.
      - By the Word, the LORD reveals Himself and His way of salvation to us.
        - The Word declares to us that we are sinners, but that God, in His mercy, has sent His Son to save us if we will repent and believe.
          - But the Word alone, without the Spirit, will not help us.
      - So the Lord also promises the Spirit to His people.
        - The Spirit cleanses us with the washing of regeneration which is also called the new birth.

- The Spirit comes upon those God has appointed for salvation so that we are able to receive and accept God's word—and so that we will indeed repent and believe.
- Without the Spirit renewing us, we would never respond to God's Word—
  - We would never truly see our need of salvation...
  - We would never accept God's provision of Christ as Saviour.
  - We would never turn from our beloved sins to Him for salvation but would remain dead in our sins and would die in sin.

Now you may say, "So what does this have to do with infant baptism?"

- Much indeed!
  - God's promise to give us His Spirit is His promise to baptise us with His Spirit.
  - Baptism with water is the outward symbol of the baptism of the Holy Spirit that God gave when He sent Christ the Redeemer.
    - As the LORD has promised to give the Holy Spirit to us and to our children,
      - It is only right that both we and our children should be given the outward symbol of the Holy Spirit and of the cleansing He gives us through Christ.
      - They are to be baptised just as in the Old Testament they were circumcised because God had promised to circumcise His people's hearts and the hearts of their descendants.
        - If they had the circumcision of the heart, it was only right for them to have the sign.
        - So also, if they have the baptism of the Spirit, it is only right that they should have the sign.
- The Bible's testimony of the relationship between baptism and the promise of the Spirit is abundantly clear.
  - When John the Baptist came on the scene,
    - he called for a baptism of repentance in view of the coming Redeemer who was at hand;
      - the Redeemer who was going to come to Zion to those who turn from transgression.
    - And when he baptised, he declared that he baptised with water because the coming Redeemer would baptise with the Holy Spirit.
      - His washing with water represented the cleansing Jesus would give to His people by giving them the Holy Spirit who would unite them to Christ in faith for salvation and transform their lives to serve God.
    - Thus John declared, when he saw Him:
      - **John 1:29-34: "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who is**

preferred before me, for He was before me.' I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water." And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."

- This connection between baptism and the coming of the Spirit has its roots in the Old Testament.
  - For example, in Ezekiel 36:25-28, the Lord says:
    - **Ezekiel 36:25-28:** "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.
  - You see that the sprinkling of clean water (which is done in baptism) is used to symbolise the outpouring of the Spirit in regeneration.
- Now this promise of the Holy Spirit, in the time of the Messiah, was to be upon all flesh—
  - This includes you and your children, young and old, Jew and Gentile, male and female.
  - The promise is to all those who turn from transgression and to their children.
- This is precisely what we find when the Redeemer comes...
  - At Pentecost, the Spirit is poured out on those who are already followers of Jesus, and then Peter declares that the Spirit will be given to all who repent:
    - **Ac 2:38-39:** Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."
  - You see that they come to baptism, not merely to have their bodies washed, but looking for the gift of the Holy Spirit for them and for their children.
    - As the children of repentant parents are specifically promised the Spirit, it seems clear that Peter's intent was that they to were to be baptised.
      - The pattern is that those who are designated as recipients of the Spirit are to be baptised with water.
      - There was no reason for Peter to mention children at all if he did not mean to include them as part of a believing household.

- Of course the 25 year old son of the 50 year old father would be included if the 25 year old also believed...
  - But Peter mentions children who, like the son of Abraham who was only eight days old when circumcision was given to him, could not speak for themselves.
  - Again, the pattern is that those who are baptised (or promised baptism) by the Spirit are to be baptised with water.
  
- Later on when the first Gentile confesses Christ and receives the Holy Spirit along with his household,
  - the reason they are baptised is for the very reason that they too have received the Holy Spirit.
    - The sign is given to those to whom the thing signified is given—those who repent and their children.
    - This is what Peter says in Acts 10:47-48
      - **Ac 10:47-48: Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.**
    - In this case, you see that they were baptised because they had *already* received the Holy Spirit.
      - This order was necessary to demonstrate that the Holy Spirit was for Gentiles as well as Jews.
      - The ordinary pattern seems to be that a person comes to baptism looking to God's promise to pour out His Spirit.
  
- After the initial outpourings of the Spirit which were accompanied by miracles and signs,
  - the coming of the Spirit is an invisible event that is outwardly demonstrated by baptism.
    - Even at Pentecost, Peter tells them to baptised because of the promise of the Spirit for those who repent...
      - And this is clearly what happened with the Samaritans... they were baptised, and then the Spirit was poured out when the apostles came.
      - And with Paul, he tells us that the LORD instructed him to be baptised in anticipation of the washing of the Holy Spirit...
        - **Acts 22:16: 'And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.'**
    - You see in this that Paul is instructed to seek that washing that God gives that is represented through baptism...
      - Not that Paul expected the water to wash away his sins,

- but that in receiving the sign of cleansing, he was instructed to look for the cleansing that God gives by the Holy Spirit and by the blood of Jesus.
- Certainly the Spirit had already done a mighty work in calling Paul and the Samaritans and the Jews at Pentecost,
  - so we are not making a rigid distinction about the time of the Spirit's coming.
    - He often works in us for years before our conversion is complete...
      - but still they were called to be baptised in view of the promise of the Spirit who washes.
- Learn from this that you ought to look to God's promise represented by water baptism...
  - Look for the cleansing that His Spirit gives us by working faith in us that unites us Jesus Christ with faith that first justifies us and then keeps on working in us for progressive sanctification.

So we have begun today with the climax of Isaiah 59 where God graciously promises the Word and Spirit to us and to our descendents forever.

- From now on, I want to refer to this as the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.
- So now let us turn back and see what Isaiah says in this chapter to prepare us for this great promise in verse 20-21.

### **I. First, Isaiah declares to us how much we need the baptism of the Spirit.**

- It is really quite simple:
  - We need to be washed by the Spirit because our sins have made us filthy before God.
- A. Isaiah begins by explaining that **“your iniquities have separated you from your God.”**
  1. The people were, just as we saw back in chapter 58, outwardly religious...
    - And they were a little irritated with the LORD because He did not seem to be answering their prayers!
    - And indeed He wasn't!
  2. And the problem was not that God had no power to save them,
    - Nor that He was hard of hearing or inattentive.
    - Isaiah says on no uncertain terms...
      - **Isa 59:1: Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; [meaning that their problems are beyond His reach] Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear.**

- Of course it is absurd and even blasphemous to think such things of God Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth!
    - He has no limitations as we do.
      - But wicked men would prefer to believe something absurd about God rather than admit their own sin!
  - If they had been godly and the LORD had been testing them,
    - they might have had at least *some* justification for questioning what had gone wrong, much as Job did when he was bewildered in God's testing of him...
      - But when wickedness was running at such a high pitch,
        - it is just another clear example of their blindness and hardness that they do not know why He is not answering them!
        - They are like the son who wonders why his father won't let him borrow the car after finding out that he has been lying about where he has been going.
    - Look, if you are living a blameless life as Job was, you can say, "Why is all this happening to me?"
      - But if you are living in defiance and rebellion against the LORD, you have no business asking such a question!
      - Most people in our day would sooner accuse God of injustice for the afflictions we share in this fallen world than to admit that we have provoked Him to wrath!
3. And so Isaiah spells it out quite plainly to them in verse 2!
- **Isa 59:2: But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.**
  - *Iniquity* does not speak of the sins we commit as we are sincerely serving God...
    - It speaks of defiant rebellion against God in those who have turned away from His call.
    - If we walk in the light, the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all unrighteousness...
      - but here you have those who have rejected the light and are only outwardly serving God—and they wonder why He does not hear!
  - The LORD has a lot to say about reasons that He will not answer our prayers!
    - In Matthew 17:20, Jesus says that prayer is not heard because of unbelief.
    - In Ps 66:18, it is because we regard iniquity in our heart.
    - In Isaiah 58, it is because of hypocrisy.
    - In 1 John 1, it is because of a refusal to confess our sins.

- In Malachi 2, it is because of dealing treacherously with your wife.
    - So look, if you are not treating your wife right, don't be puzzled about it when the Lord does not answer your prayers!
    - On the other hand, if you indeed walking in the light, it may be that God is testing you or using your afflictions for His glory,
      - But if you are in rebellion, don't even ask why He is not hearing you!
  - Our society thinks that problems are just the weather or just bacteria or just our enemies.
    - But the truth is that God does not hear us because of iniquity.
    - The sooner you admit that, the better!
      - Because then you will see how much you need to look to God for the baptism of the Spirit which He promise to those who turn from their sin and look to Christ.
- B. You see that Isaiah goes on to describe the wickedness that has provoked God.
- His charges are sadly quite descriptive of our society...
1. He says, **“Your hands are defiled with blood and your fingers with iniquity.”**
    - He does not mean by this that they were all literally murdering each other...
    - He is talking about things like harsh words, cruelty, disdain...
      - all of these things defiled them and made them as those with blood-stained hands.
  2. He says, **“Your lips have spoken lies; your tongue has muttered perversity.”**
    - How quickly we will spin a lie in our day...
      - Even just to save face—or just to make an impression—
        - Plagiarism fills our universities...
        - False claims are used to make a sale...
        - Promises are made in bad faith...
          - A study was done on date rape in which statistics were published to support the conclusions—and it was discovered that no research had been done! The stats were just made up!
        - Drug companies cover up the truth about the side effects of their products.
        - Teenagers lie to their parents.
        - Even toddlers who can't even talk will try to deceive their parents.
          - Lies are everywhere and we wonder why God does not hear us?
- And then there is perversity...

- The mouths of our society are like sewers before God, spewing out all kinds of filth and corruption.
    - Our airwaves, our phone lines, our emails are filled with corrupt speech.
    - Some try to excuse filthy speech by saying that it is only words...
      - But God is highly offended when we speak perversely—
        - Speech is a precious gift from God and we are not to abuse it.
        - Let filthy speech not even be named among you as is fitting for saints!
          - These things stir up the wrath of God!
3. In verse 4, Isaiah says that **“no one calls for justice, nor does any plead for truth.”**
- In other words, nobody takes a public stand for what is right.
    - Calvin says:
      - It is not enough that we abstain from violence, if we do not, as far as lies in our power, hinder it from being committed by others. And indeed, whoever permits what he is able to hinder does in some sense commend it; so that silence is a sort of consent.
  - Who takes a stand for what is right?
    - Especially in the churches!
    - Jesus and the apostles did not go out to speak against the wickedness in Rome—but within the church...
      - We will not address the wickedness among the saints!
        - We need to expose the errors or wicked ministers even within our own denomination.
        - Pray for our Presbytery as we are presenting a memorial to Synod with the intent of ousting those who refuse to accept inerrancy of scripture.

TRANS> And what happens when we don't cry out for justice and plead for truth?

4. Verse 4 continues **“They trust in empty words and speak lies,”**
- People become enchanted by the lies and actually start to believe them!
    - There are people today who actually believe that the whole world came into being without a Creator!
      - It is preposterous, but they really do believe that.
      - And they have all sorts of ridiculous theories to try to support it and they go off into fairy tales that are swallowed up by gullible students!
      - And people in the church will believe these lies!



- Or we listen to psychiatrists who tell us that sin is not sin.
  - They give out excuses for every kind of selfishness and vice and people eat it up!
  - And people in the church will believe these lies.
  
- 5. A church like this becomes a sin factory, giving birth to all sorts of destructive behaviours by which they ruin each other.
  - a. Isaiah speaks of this at the end of verse 4...
    - **Isa 59:4 They conceive evil and bring forth iniquity.**
      - God created us to bring forth good for our neighbour, but instead we bring forth evil and iniquity.
      - He formed the church to be the pillar and ground of the truth—but what is left if we are bringing forth evil!
  
    - He gives a graphic illustration in verse 5:
      - **Isa 59:5: 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.**
        - Until God changes us, we only bring forth what in the long run ruins our neighbour and poisons him.
          - Well meaning parents who are not baptised by the Spirit lead their children down the path to death and suffering.
  
      - The spider's webs are seen to be that with which they try to clothe themselves.
        - Look, the church has been given the message of the gospel!
        - It is ridiculous to see her constantly spinning all sorts of clothes to try to hide sin and deny sin and cover sin—like Adam's fig leaves in the garden...
          - People make righteousness out of everything from religious rituals to environmentalism!
            - It's so empty!
            - You cannot hide your sin under such things!
            - And the church is doing this!
  
        - Isaiah says:
          - **Isa 59:6: Their webs will not become garments, Nor will they cover themselves with their works;**
          - What a helpful picture of the futility!
            - Trying to cover nakedness with a spider's web!

- b. You need to understand that when you are without God's Spirit, you are, before the LORD, as one who constantly brings destruction upon others.
  - You see, if you are not reconciled to Him, you are constantly leading others toward death—death in their sin.
    - You are teaching and encouraging them to learn to live in their sin without doing anything to truly rectify it—
      - that is, without coming to the one and only Saviour who shed His blood on the cross.
  - This is how Isaiah describes the outcome of your behaviour without the baptism of the Spirit... starting from the middle of verse 6:
    - **Isa 59:6-8: Their works are works of iniquity, And the act of violence is in their hands. 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. 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.**
    - Do you see?
      - All you are doing is spreading destruction and ruin!
      - Wasting and destruction is what you are about!
      - If you are living without reconciliation to God, you have no true peace and you cannot lead anyone else to have peace.
        - Instead you are ruining lives.

What a miserable condition!

- And this is God's people who are being addressed here!

## II. Isaiah goes on to confess just how miserable and desperate we are without the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

A. We have no deliverance from the Lord.

- That is what Isaiah means in verse 9-10 when he says:
  - **Isa 59:9: Therefore justice is far from us, Nor does righteousness overtake us; We look for light, but there is darkness! For brightness, but we walk in blackness!**
- This is very much like verse 1 and 2—
  - These are God's covenant people and as such they are looking to Him to save them from their enemies—the Assyrians, the Egyptians, the Babylonians...
    - They pray, but no justice is done to these enemies!
      - Righteousness does not come to stop their enemies!
  - Christians can complain about all the injustices that are done to us by those who utterly reject God,

- but could it be that He does not give us justice today because our own sin?
- If the church would repent, God would raise her out of the obscurity to which she has fallen—
  - He always has.
  - But not until we repent and receive His Spirit and forgiveness!

B. We are totally lost in the darkness without the Spirit.

- This is described in verse 10
  - **Isa 59:10: We grope for the wall like the blind, And we grope as if we had no eyes; We stumble at noonday as at twilight; We are as dead men in desolate places.**
  - How aptly this describes the church in our day in North America!
    - We grope around like blind men,
      - turning to political solutions (as if getting the right guy in office will save us),
      - turning to rituals (as if a few new ones will save us),
      - turning to psychology for answers,
      - looking for signs and wonders by barking and laughing and falling on the floor,
      - trying to be relevant by embracing the world,
      - trying to define love in new ways—such as accepting perversity,
      - trying to create community in some bazaar new way,
      - embracing feminism or environmentalism or some other ism...
        - Anything but repent!
          - And so we stumble at noon day!
            - We bring greater and greater confusion and darkness upon ourselves.
- And then after our grouping has gone on for a while to no avail, we fall into despair...
  - We become like “dead men in desolate places”—with no hope of escape!
    - We have pursued all the wrong ways with so much enthusiasm and then we burn out and give up because everything has fallen apart.

TRANS> The result is that...

C. We are full of groaning.

- Isaiah speaks of two kinds of groaning in verse 11...
  - The loud kind...
    - **Isa 59:11: We growl like bears!**
  - And the soft kind...

- **We moan sadly like doves!**
- We are, to use the words of Malachi, covering God's altar with our tears, hoping that He will hear us and pity us...
  - But we do this instead of turning from our transgressions to our Redeemer.
  - And so there is no salvation for us at all...
    - Isaiah says:
      - **We look for justice, but there is none; For salvation, but it is far from us.**

TRANS> When we resort to our own ways, we only make things worse.

D. We simply multiply our transgressions all the more!

- The more we look for salvation in the wrong ways, the more we provoke God and expose our wickedness.
    - In verse 12, Isaiah says:
      - **Isa 59:12: For our transgressions are multiplied before You, And our sins testify against us; For our transgressions are with us, And as for our iniquities, we know them:**
  - Sin itself is the only accuser necessary to convict us of our apostasy from God!
    - We have wickedly departed from Him so long as we refuse to repent and turn to His salvation.
    - Our consciences are defiled by all of our dead works!
      - We truly know that we are not right even though we try to pretend that God accepts us!
1. The truth is that we are not seeking God at all.
    - We are rather turning away from Him—v. 13 explains
      - **Isa 59:13: In transgressing and lying against the LORD, And departing from our God, Speaking oppression and revolt, Conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.**
      - Transgression is the wilful refusal of God's way!
        - We deliberately twist His words so that we may depart from Him.
        - We spin lies and distortions so that we call evil good and good evil.
      - This is the real heart of the matter!
        - When we do not come to God for **His** cleansing by His Spirit,
          - our whole life is nothing else than a departure from Him.

2. We claim to be interested in justice, righteousness, and truth, but we are not.

- Instead (v. 14):
    - **Isa 59:14: Justice is turned back, And righteousness stands afar off; For truth is fallen in the street, And equity cannot enter.**
  - What a dreadful picture!
    - This is God's people!
    - They are supposed to be riding forth for justice, righteousness, and truth, but instead they perverting all of these.
3. Things are so desperate that whenever anyone repents, he becomes the bad guy.
- **Isa 59:15: So truth fails, And he who departs from evil makes himself a prey.**
  - You have all seen this!
    - Just this week someone sent me an article about how Ken Ham and how he was excluded from a home schooling conference because he dared to expose one of the other speakers at the conference who rejected Biblical creation!

TRANS> When this becomes the condition of the church, what hope is there?

- None at all! apart from the electing grace of God.
  - He must rescue us by sheer grace because on our own, we will never turn to Him!
  - Even though salvation is preached to us with power and clarity,
    - We will go on refusing Him all day long until He comes to change us by His Spirit!
- And now Isaiah tells us what God Himself does!

### **III. Isaiah declares to us that our gracious Lord Himself baptises us with the Holy Spirit!**

A. He Himself takes note of our desperate condition!

1. First, He sees that there is no justice and it displeases Him!
  - This is what we are told in the last of verse 15:
    - **Isa 59:15: Then the LORD saw it, and it displeased Him That there was no justice.**
  - This is actually wonderful news!
    - We have a God who is deeply concerned about the condition of His people!
      - He is concerned for His own honour and reputation!
      - He is concerned for the promise that He made to the Fathers!
      - Most of all He is concerned for the promise He made to His Son.

- He will not have His people to continue in such a condition as that into which they have fallen!
    - It is a dishonour to Him and to Christ and He will act for His name.
    - We should be so glad that our God is displeased when His church is without justice!
    - He cares and that means that He will act for us!
2. Secondly, He sees that we have no one even to intercede for us!
- So it says in verse 16:
    - **Isa 59:16: He saw that there was no man, And wondered that there was no intercessor.**
  - There is no one among us, no matter how godly, who is able to transform us.
    - There is no one who is, in His own merit, worthy even to intercede for us.
    - Who could go before God in your behalf?
    - Who can intercede for the nations so that they will be saved?
  - There is only one mediator between God and man—
    - the man Christ Jesus!
    - No one else is worthy.

TRANS> And now see how the LORD takes action for His church!

B. He Himself takes up the task of saving them!

- Verse 16 continues. Listen to the entire verse...
    - **Isa 59:16: He saw that there was no man, And wondered that there was no intercessor; Therefore His own arm brought salvation for Him; And His own righteousness, it sustained Him.**
1. This is a most amazing thing my brothers and sisters!
- a. Our Creator Himself comes forward to save wretched rebels like us?
    - The Holy Creator undertakes to save the sinful creature!
    - We are the offenders and He is the justly offended One,
      - yet He comes forward to do all that must be done to save us.
      - He even comes to bear the curse for us as our representative!
  - b. As God, He possesses within Himself all that is necessary to see this work to completion!
    - 1) He has a **mighty arm of power**:
      - that can crush our enemies who brought us into bondage,
      - that can transform us into new creations,
      - and that can purchase complete forgiveness for us.

2) And not only does He have an arm of power, but He has **righteousness to sustain Him**.

- He will never be drawn into corruption as we are...
  - though He was tempted in every way we are, He remained holy and harmless and undefiled.
  
- And not only that, but even when all our iniquities were hammered down upon Him,
  - They could not eclipse His righteousness.
  - He was able to rise victoriously over the curse and from death.
  - His righteousness sustained Him because it was the righteousness of the eternal God.

2. In verse 17 we have a marvellous picture of our LORD preparing Himself to come and do this great work!

a. First of all He is clad with righteousness as a breastplate!

- Let all the temptations of a wicked world, of ungrateful followers, of a crafty Devil, of anticipated agonies, of bearing the curse...
  - Let all of these come at Him as so many fiery darts and they will every one be extinguished by His breastplate of righteousness!

b. Secondly, He puts on a helmet of salvation on His head.

- This is referred to as a helmet of the hope of salvation...
  - He goes forth with complete confidence in God's promise to Him that He will indeed inherit the nations...
    - And with that hope set before Him, there is nothing that can stop Him or discourage Him from finishing the task He is given.
  
  - His great desire is to bring us before the Father's glory that we might be His true worshippers and admirers and see and live in the love that He has enjoyed from all eternity!
    - For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross.

c. Thirdly, He clothes Himself with the garments of vengeance...

- He has fury against all those who would oppose His kingdom of righteousness—
  - against Satan and all who are in league with him.
  
- He truly hates them with a perfect hatred and will not stop until He has cast them into the place of outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth!

- There could be no true deliverance without the removal and just punishment of every last one of them.
  - His great love for truth and for His Father's honour will bring them to a very miserable and bitter end!
- d. And finally, He is said to be clothed with zeal as a cloak.
  - This is the zeal for His Father's house that consumed Him!
  - It is this zeal that caused Him to see the task through to the end when everything in Him wanted to turn back!

TRANS> He is fully furnished for the great task that only He can perform.

C. The actual work of our Saviour is now described...

1. First we are told of that great work of destroying His enemies.
  - a. The whole human race turned against their Creator when our first Father Adam declared rebellion in the Garden of Eden.
    - It was then that the terrible, yet just sentence of death was pronounced against us.
    - We are sworn enemies of the true and living God apart from His saving grace—
      - If left to ourselves, we are so rebellious that we won't even come to him for salvation—for forgiveness and for reconciliation!
      - We deserve to suffer forever!
  - b. And so for this reason, we must be dealt with very severely—that justice may stand.
    - And so in verse 18, this glorious work of vindictive wrath is declared:
      - **Isa 59:18: According to their deeds, accordingly He will repay, Fury to His adversaries, Recompense to His enemies; The coastlands He will fully repay.**
    - You see that it is a work of justice...
      - They are repaid according to their deeds—according to what they deserve!
        - Recompense and repayment are the standard.
          - There is no excess here, only what is deserved.
    - You see also that it is not just the rebels within Israel that will face this judgement...
      - God is not the God of Israel only, but of the whole world.
      - The whole world is at enmity with Him and the whole world must bear its judgement in full.



- c. But look at the fruit of this judgement on those who repent.
  - Verse 19 says that it will cause many to fear the LORD!
    - **Isa 59:19: So shall they fear The name of the LORD from the west, And His glory from the rising of the sun**
  - The fear of the LORD described here seems to be the salvation of the nations—that they become God’s true worshippers with true repentance and true adoration of Him!
    - It comes about because they see the Spirit of the LORD lift up a standard against the enemy when the enemy comes in like a flood.
      - The picture is that of a raging wall of water rushing down a narrow corridor—a force that appears to be unstoppable...
        - But then the Spirit of the LORD raises up a standard to stop it.
  - This seems to refer to the glory that will be brought to the LORD at the last day when the saved of the earth see His judgement fall on the wicked...
    - When His people whom the Spirit raised up to stand against the enemy will be vindicated and His enemies will be sent to their final abode.
      - You know how the martyrs keep looking for this in Revelation.
  - When that final judgement comes, the elect will glory in the LORD like never before—
    - they will fear the name of the LORD from the west and His glory from the rising of the sun!
      - They will marvel at His mighty hand that brought such great vengeance upon His enemies and that, at the same time, enabled His own people to stand in faithfulness.
    - The only time the word Hallelujah is used in the New Testament is in Revelation when judgement falls upon God’s adversaries,
      - And the kingdoms of this world become fully and forever the kingdom of our Christ!
      - What glory it will be!
  - But even now we get to see previews of this coming glory...
    - Did the LORD not bring vengeance upon Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Jerusalem, and Rome, just as the prophets foretold?
      - And did He not raise up a standard when the enemy came in like a flood so that He always had His people who stood against these enemies and their violent persecutions?
        - Were there not those Daniels and those Maccabees and those Peters and Jameses and Johns and those Polycarps

and those Husses and Riddleys and all of the many faithful martyrs in our day who stood for the Lord?

- And did these, even in their faithfulness unto death,
  - not cause many more to fear the Lord and to become His disciples?
  - Fear not when the enemy comes like a flood!
    - The LORD will both strengthen His people and bring vengeance upon all His adversaries...
      - until at last the world is entirely filled with true worshippers of God!

TRANS> What can I say to you but this:

- Be sure that you are in that number of God's true worshippers!
2. And now we are told of second aspect of our Saviour's work—even the redemption of His people.
- a. In verse 20, the glorious promise is made...
- **Isa 59:20: "The Redeemer will come to Zion, And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob," Says the LORD.**
- 1) The Redeemer is the great next of kin who comes to meet all of His people's needs!
- We have already seen that this Redeemer is none other than God Himself.
    - God Himself is the one who brings salvation because no one else is able to intercede...
      - Yet here, by calling Him a Redeemer—we see that He is also a near relative!
  - Here we have in Isaiah once again a testimony that the Son who is given to us is the One whose name is Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace.
    - That He is who is to be born of a virgin will be called Emanuel which means "God with us."
      - He is our brother, our own flesh and blood, yet He is the LORD of glory who alone is able to save!
      - He is both God and man—God incarnate for our salvation.
- 2) And you see that the Redeemer comes to Zion...or for Zion... or from Zion...
- The Hebrew is quite general here and can include all of these ideas—
    - All of these are true—to Zion, for the sake of Zion, and from Zion.

- Zion, of course, is the name given to the city of God.
    - It refers, on the one hand, to the Jews for whom Christ came,
      - but on the other hand, as it is used here, only to those who turn from transgression in Jacob.
  - This is what Isaiah has been stressing all along in his prophecies!
    - Redemption is only for those who repent of their sins and turn to the LORD!
    - But interestingly, when Paul quotes this verse in Romans 11:26, he modifies it and says,
      - **“And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob!”**
      - This is a masterful addition by the Inspired Apostle!
        - It teaches us that Christ came not only to redeem His people by dying in their place for the remission of sin...
        - But also by turning them from sin to His salvation!
    - Of course this two-fold work is found all the way through the Bible...
      - The promise of God is not only that He will pardon our iniquities and remember our sin no more,
      - but also that He will write His law on our hearts so that we will delight in it—that He will circumcise our hearts.
        - There is forgiveness and there is new life.
    - But you see, Paul’s addition is really not an addition—it is more of a summary that compresses Isaiah 59:20 and 21 into one succinct statement.
      - The Redeemer comes to turn His people from ungodliness!
        - He does what they would never do if left to themselves!
        - He so works in them by His Spirit that they turn to Him for salvation!
        - He renews them so that they cease to be rebels and become true disciples!
- b. See how Isaiah explains this great aspect of redemption—that of turning us from ungodliness to the Saviour—in verse 21!
- **Isa 59:21: "As for Me," says the LORD, "this is My covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants' descendants," says the LORD, "from this time and forevermore."**

- 1) Do you see what this is saying?
  - The LORD is going to give His word and Spirit as a permanent gift to those who turn from ungodliness in Jacob and to their children!
    - These two things—the Word and the Spirit!
    - We must have both of them together!
      - In the Word we are shown what sinners we are and we are told of Christ and of what He did to take away our sins and that if we believe, we will be saved...
      - But the Word alone will not help us at all unless we also have the Holy Spirit who enables us to believe the word and to turn to Christ, and then to follow Him.
  
- 2) And it is the Redeemer who baptises us with the Holy Spirit...
  - You see that it says, “My Spirit who is upon you.”
  - It is second person singular and speaks to the Redeemer Himself.
    - He is the anointed One—the one who was given the Holy Spirit without measure—
    - And His Spirit is given to all those whom God has appointed to salvation to wash them with the washing of regeneration so that they will come to Christ to be cleansed—
      - both to be justified by Him and sanctified by Him through His suffering on the cross.
  - The baptism of the Spirit is the power of the new life
    - It distinguishes those who are mere outward disciples from those who are disciples indeed—who come to Christ for salvation and obtain it in truth!
    - All of Christ’s descendents—His true seed—both Jew and Gentile, male and female—are given the word and the Spirit.
      - And so also are their descendents according to God’s promise.
      - In this way, the Redeemer turns us from ungodliness to be His disciples and to receive His salvation!

## **Conclusion**

And so today as we see the sign of baptism applied to covenant child,

- let us remember the promise that while we baptise with water, Christ baptises with the Holy Spirit!
  - And let us look to Him for that promise, for this child, and for ourselves and our own children.
  - It is only by the working of the Spirit that we will come to Jesus through the word and believe on Him for salvation.
    - The Spirit must show us that we are desperate sinners and that only Jesus who was crucified can save us...
    - And then He must so work in us that we will turn to Him for that salvation.