

Unanswered Prayer: Unconfessed Sin

The prophet Isaiah lived in the Southern Kingdom Judah about one hundred years before the fall of Jerusalem. His beautiful literary skill exemplified Hebrew literature at its best as the result of his apparent erudite education. During this time, he witnessed the fall of the Northern Kingdom Israel to the Assyrians.

As Isaiah repeatedly reminds Judah that sin separates man from God, he reveals why prayers go unanswered.

Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save,
nor his ear too dull to hear.
But your iniquities have separated
you from your God;
your sins have hidden his face from you,
so that he will not hear.
For your hands are stained with blood,
your fingers with guilt.
Your lips have spoken falsely,
and your tongue mutters wicked things. (Isa 59:1-3, NIV)

1. Carefully observe Isaiah 59:1-3. What images do you see that describe sin? What do these images represent?

2. As you think about Isaiah 59:1-3, what would cause the face of God to reappear and hear your prayers?

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Teacher Notes

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Teach the student a generalized bit of Israel's ancient history.

1000 A.D.: David unites the people to form a government with a monarchy where he rules as the sovereign king priest of the nation and establishes Jerusalem as the capital city.

922 A.D.: After the death of Solomon, the united monarchy splits into two as the Northern Kingdom Israel and the Southern Kingdom Judah. They are often referred to as Israel and Judah, which can sometimes be confusing.

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Encourage the student in his observation by circling phrases or marking up the text. Ask the student: what is God saying through the prophet?

Hands / fingers represent the acts of a person.

Blood / guilt represent violence and harm to a person.

Lips / tongue represent the speech of a person.

Falsely / wicked things represent the quality of what a sinful person says.

2. As you think about Isaiah 59:1-3, what would cause the face of God to reappear and hear your prayers?

Ask questions to encourage thought and discussion.

There is only one way to restore your relationship with God. For those who are not Believers, they must respond to the gospel. For those who are Believers, they must repent and seek God's forgiveness.