

Isaiah 58:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;

Analysis

Continuing the promises, God pledges immediate response to prayer: "Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am." This intimate response—"Here I am" (hineni)—is the same phrase Abraham, Moses, and Isaiah used when responding to God's call (Genesis 22:1, Exodus 3:4, Isaiah 6:8). God reciprocates their availability to Him with His availability to them. However, this promise is conditional: "If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity." Three sins must cease:

1. "the yoke"—oppressive burdens placed on others
2. "putting forth of the finger"—gestures of mockery, accusation, or contempt (Proverbs 6:13)
3. "speaking vanity" (aven)—worthless, deceptive, or malicious speech.

From a Reformed perspective, this shows that effectual prayer requires not sinless perfection but genuine repentance and transformation. God hears the prayers of the righteous (Proverbs 15:29, James 5:16, 1 John 3:22), but unconfessed sin hinders prayer (Psalm 66:18, Isaiah 59:2). Christ's perfect righteousness opens the way, but we must approach through faith active in love.

Historical Context

The community addressed had been crying out to God while maintaining injustice —expecting Him to answer while they refused to answer the cries of the oppressed. This reflects a pattern throughout Israel's history where God withdrew His presence due to covenant unfaithfulness (Ezekiel 10:18-19, Hosea 5:15). The promise of restoration appears when justice and mercy return (Zechariah 8:3-5, 13-17). In the New Testament, believers have confident access to God through Christ (Hebrews 4:16, 10:19-22), but must maintain clean consciences and genuine faith.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What sins in our lives might hinder God from responding to our prayers?
2. How does the promise 'Here I am' reflect the intimacy God desires with His people?
3. In what ways do justice and mercy toward others relate to our access to God in prayer?

Interlinear Text

תְּ呼ַלֵּךְ אַתָּה יְהֹוָה יְעַנֵּנִי תְּשׁוּעָה
H227 Then shalt thou call and the LORD shall answer thou shalt cry
H7121 H3068 H6030 H7768

מִתְּזַכֵּר וַיֹּאמֶר אָמַת הַבָּנִי תְּסֻבֵּב
and he shall say H2005 H518 Here I am If thou take away from the midst
H559 H5493 H8432

מִזְבֵּחַ הַשְׁלָל אֶצְבֵּעַ וְיִדְבֶּר אַיִל
of thee the yoke the putting forth of the finger and speaking vanity
H4133 H7971 H676 H1696 H205

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 50:15 (Parallel theme): And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

Isaiah 65:24 (Kingdom): And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

Isaiah 1:15 (Parallel theme): And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

Psalms 91:15 (Parallel theme): He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.

Psalms 12:2 (Parallel theme): They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.

Proverbs 6:13 (Parallel theme): He winketh with his eyes, he speaketh with his feet, he teacheth with his fingers;

Psalms 118:5 (References Lord): I called upon the LORD in distress: the LORD answered me, and set me in a large place.

Psalms 37:4 (References Lord): Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

Isaiah 57:4 (Parallel theme): Against whom do ye sport yourselves? against whom make ye a wide mouth, and draw out the tongue? are ye not children of transgression, a seed of falsehood,

Isaiah 58:6 (Parallel theme): Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

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