

Isaiah 59:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him.

Analysis

Remarkably, God finds no human solution: 'And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor.' The Hebrew 'shamen' (wondered/was appalled) expresses divine astonishment at the absence of anyone to intervene. 'Therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him.' God Himself acts because no one else will.

Historical Context

This anticipates the Incarnation - when no human could save, God's own arm provided salvation. The Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 becomes God's answer to human inability.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What does it mean that God 'wondered' at the lack of intercessors?
2. How does this verse point forward to Christ as God's salvation?

Interlinear Text

וַיַּרְא	וְיַיְהֵה	אֵין	אֵין	וְאֵשׁ	וְאֵשׁ	וְיַשְׁתֹּם	וְיַשְׁתֹּם	וְיַשְׁתֹּם
And he saw		H3588	H369	that there was no man	H376	and wondered	H3588	H369
		H7200				H8074		
מִפְגַּשׁ	וְשָׁעַת	לֹא	זָרָעַ	וְ	לֹא	זָרָעַ	וְ	לֹא
that there was no intercessor	brought salvation	H6293	H3467	H0	therefore his arm	H2220		
אֶצְלָת	אֶצְלָת	הַיְאָה	סְמִכְתָּהוּ	הַיְאָה				
unto him and his righteousness		H1931	it sustained	H5564				
		H6666						

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 22:30 (Parallel theme): And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.

Isaiah 64:7 (Parallel theme): And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.

Psalms 98:1 (Parallel theme): O sing unto the LORD a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.

Isaiah 41:28 (Parallel theme): For I beheld, and there was no man; even among them, and there was no counsellor, that, when I asked of them, could answer a word.

Isaiah 52:10 (Salvation): The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

Psalms 106:23 (Parallel theme): Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them.

Mark 6:6 (Parallel theme): And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching.

Isaiah 50:2 (Parallel theme): Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? when I called, was there none to answer? Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness: their fish stinketh, because there is no water, and dieth for thirst.

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