

# Book of Isaiah



## Chapter 64

*Theme: God's control of the universe recognized;  
man's condition in the universe confessed*

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## Chapter 64

**THEME:** God's control of the universe recognized; man's condition in the universe confessed  
This chapter continues the pleading of the hungry hearts for the presence of God in life's affairs. No child of God today can be immune to such ardent petitions. The Christian can cry with the same passionate desire, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" (see Rev. 22:20).

This, too, is a neglected section of the Word of God. We have attempted to emphasize this section so that you can see why we hold the premillennial viewpoint and why we believe Christ is coming before the Great Tribulation period. The church will be taken out of the world before the Tribulation. The Lord will come at the end of the Tribulation to establish His Kingdom. This is not just a theory. This is what we find in the Book of Isaiah. We have looked at Isaiah almost verse by verse, and the prophet has presented a very definite program. The Word of God simply does not give isolated verses to prove some particular theory of interpretation, but whatever your or my theory is, it has to fit in place. Some of the theories I hear today remind me of the lady who went into the shoestore to get a pair of shoes. The salesman asked, "What size do you wear?" The lady replied that she could wear a size four, but a size five felt so much better that she always bought a size six or sometimes a seven. There are some theories, as far as the Word of God is concerned, that require a size change because they simply don't fit.<sup>1</sup>

**<sup>1</sup>Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence,**

[Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down] This part of the prayer beseeches God to rend the heavens miraculously, and come down to destroy His enemies as He did in days of old when He brought Israel out of Egypt and when He caused mount Sinai to be rent (Isa. 64:1-3; Ex. 19:18).

[flow down at thy presence] Mountains will be moved at the second coming (Zech. 14:4; Rev. 16:17-20).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>2</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

The prophet is a representative of the believing remnant of Israel in that future day. Again he is using the past tense, which is called a prophetic tense. That is, God sees it as having already taken place, and He gives the prophecy to Isaiah from the other side, looking back at the event. The prophet is pleading with God just as the remnant of Israel will do in that day of the Great Tribulation. This Scripture is not written to us -- the church is not in view here. It is addressed to the remnant of Israel, but as believers we can identify with them. Our prayer today should be for the return of the Lord. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." But it is clear in this section that Isaiah is predicting Israel's prayer during the Great Tribulation period.<sup>3</sup>

The Spirit: For similar references, see 11:2; 30:1; 42:1; 48:16; 59:21; Luke 3:22. The Me featured so prominently here is the same Servant as in 42:1; 49:1; 50:4; 52:13. Several reasons point to this identification: (1) The Servant refers to God as His Master, the "Lord" (compare 50:4); (2) He has received the Lord's Spirit (compare 42:1); (3) He brings a word of healing and liberation (compare vv. 1–3 with 42:7; 49:9 50:4); (4) He proclaims the "year of the Lord" (compare v. 2 with 49:8); (5) He is associated with an everlasting covenant (compare v. 8 with 42:6; 49:8); (6) Jesus Christ inaugurated His ministry by identifying Himself as this Servant (Luke 4:17–21). The passage may also refer to Isaiah, but if so, he is only a pale shadow of Christ. the Lord has anointed: This phrase signifies that the Servant is more than a prophet, since only kings and high priests—with the exception of Elisha (1 Kin. 19:16)—were anointed (45:1). The name Messiah, or Christ in Greek, means the "Anointed One." Poor also means "humble," which like brokenhearted, indicates those who confidently hope in God in spite of their present distress (11:4; Ps. 34:18; 51:17). Proclaim liberty probably alludes to the official inauguration of the "Year of Release" or Jubilee (Lev. 25:10). Captives refers to those in bondage to the wicked (58:6) or to wickedness in general—not to the exiles as in 51:14. Those who are bound is translated "prisoners" in 49:9, where it refers in part to the exiles; here it means "captives."<sup>4</sup>

**1-7** The second plea of the remnant is recorded in these verses (the first is in 63:15-19). Realizing their uncleanness (64:5-7), they would ask God to smite their enemies (vv. 1-4). They would pray that the Lord would rend the heavens (the sky is pictured as a piece of cloth He would tear), come down (vv. 1-2; cf. "look down," 63:15), and execute judgment on the nations. Fire and boiling water picture judgment (cf. Jer. 1:13-14; Mal 4:1, 5). The awesome things (Isa. 64:3) probably refer to the phenomena of fire, darkness (Deut. 4:11-13), and earthquake (Ex. 19:16-19) when God gave the Mosaic Law. This revealing God—the only God (Isa. 64:4; cf. 1 Cor. 2:10)—acts on behalf of those who believe in Him and who therefore willingly do what is right. Recalling this, the remnant would ask that God work on their behalf. They would confess their sin (Isa. 64:5b), spiritual uncleanness (v. 6a), weakness (v. 6b, like a shriveled leaf), and lack of prayer (v. 7). However, they would not blame God for their dreadful condition; they would know that their wasting away was because of their sins. Therefore they would have to count on God's faithfulness and promises.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>4</sup> Nelsons Study Bible Notes

<sup>5</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

Oh, that You would rend the heavens! That You would come down! The prayer of the remnant continues from Isaiah chapter 63; here, the plea is for God to intervene from heaven.

The mountains shook at Your presence: Earlier in this prayer (Isaiah 63:11-13), the praying one remembered God's great work for Israel in the days of the Exodus. Here, the praying one also remembers how the LORD shook Mount Sinai when Israel camped there on their way from Egypt to the Promised Land (Exodus 19:17-18).<sup>6</sup>

O that you would: This wish is linked to the mysticism of the last chapter in which the messiah is pictured as wearing red garments although he is also pictured as caring for the nation throughout the ages from the Exodus from Egypt through the current time and into the future mixed with calamity and future victory. Oh that you might rend the heavens and consume your enemies now may also be our wish.<sup>7</sup>

The prophet called on God to make another appearance among His people, as He had done at Mt. Sinai and at other times (cf. Exod. 19:18-20; Judg. 5; Ps. 18; Mic. 1:3-4; Hab. 3). The Israelites' condition was so desperate that another special visitation from God was what they needed. The next time God did this was at the Incarnation.<sup>8</sup>

Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down. Isaiah sees the heavens as a vast curtain, concealing God, and begs God to rip them apart and step down into this world with his felt presence (cf. 40:22).<sup>9</sup>

**<sup>2</sup>As *when* the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, *that* the nations may tremble at thy presence!**

“Melting fire” - Mic 1:3,4.

God's appearance is so intense that it is like a consuming fire that burns everything in its path. If we are so impure, how can we be saved? Only by God's mercy. The Israelites had experienced God's presence at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:16-19). When God met with Moses, there was a thunderstorm, smoke, and an earthquake. If God were to meet us today, his glory would overwhelm us, especially when we look at our "filthy rags" (64:6).<sup>10</sup>

Just as fire makes water boil, so the presence of God would make the nations tremble. Today the nations are not conscious of the existence of God. There are people who wonder how we can sit down with godless nations like Russia or China. The reason is that we are just about as godless as they are. In our day the nations of the world are not turning to God, nor do they recognize Him. However, as the end of the age approaches, I believe there will be a very real consciousness

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<sup>6</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Isa/Isa-64.cfm?a=743001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Isa/Isa-64.cfm?a=743001)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.moellerhaus.com/isa64.htm>

<sup>8</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> ESV Study Bible

<sup>10</sup> Life Application Study Bible.

that God is getting ready to break through. There was that consciousness throughout the world at the time of the birth of Christ, and several Roman historians have called attention to that fact.<sup>11</sup>

Had God appeared, He would have ignited the brushwood of people's lives and brought them to a rolling boil in judgment. Then the nations would know who Yahweh really was, and they would tremble at His presence.<sup>12</sup>

**<sup>3</sup>When thou didst terrible things *which* we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence.**

The very mountains melt -- that is, become molten -- at His presence. The enemies then will cry for the mountains to hide them from "...the wrath of the Lamb" (Rev. 6:16).<sup>13</sup>

A host lavished on a guest the oil of joy (Ps. 23:5; 45:7; Luke 7:46).  
He may be glorified: For similar references see 44:23; 49:5.

At the Exodus, God had done awesome things that no one had expected. Isaiah wished that instead of remaining quiet, the Lord would do something spectacular again—something that would motivate the Israelites and the nations to respect Him.

"We too who are so often baffled by the way the Lord runs the world can identify with the spirit which wonders why he has acted in some other way—why he has not done something to check evil, change circumstances and people, rescue his own—rather than, as it appears, doing nothing!" (Motyer, p. 519)<sup>14</sup>

Awesome things alludes to the history recalled in 63:7–14 (cf. Ex. 15:11; 19:16–20; 34:10; Deut. 10:21; 2 Sam. 7:23; Ps. 66:3–5; 106:21–22).

**<sup>4</sup>For since the beginning of the world *men* have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, *what* he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.**

= Who hath worked for him who hath waited for him. Cf Isa 65:17; Jn 14:2; 1 Cor 2:9; Rev 21:1 (quoted in 1 Cor 2:9 in different context).<sup>15</sup>

Paul expresses this same thought in 1Corinthians 2:9 when he says, "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." Paul goes on to say, "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1Cor. 2:10). 1Corinthians 2:9 is obviously a quote from Isaiah, but verse 10 tells us that in our day the Holy Spirit will reveal these things unto us. In the day of the Great Tribulation they will have to wait

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<sup>11</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>12</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>14</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

until Christ comes. And even for us it can be said, "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (1Cor. 13:12).

All through this section we can identify with these people, for we have a hope also. We are looking for Him to take us out of the world, and they will be looking for Him to come and establish a kingdom here on the earth.

My friend, it seems to me that the only folk who miss this distinction are the theologians. Failure to recognize that Christ is going to take the church up to meet Him in the air and that He is coming down to the earth to establish His Kingdom gives us some upside-down theology.<sup>16</sup>

The hearing and seeing refer to knowledge of God through His works. The Holy Spirit is the One who unfolds God's revelation to man: (1) Man is created in the image of God (Gen 1:27), and God has a particular and unique plan for each individual (cf. Ps 139:13-16, note; Eph 2:10). (2) God made provision for man's reconciliation with his Creator. (3) The way of salvation is carefully taught in Scripture. (4) The millennial kingdom in which God's people will be fellow citizens is promised. The apostle Paul refers to this verse in a free paraphrase (cf. 1 Cor 2:9). Man cannot help being astonished at the wonder of the works of God.<sup>17</sup>

Nor has the eye seen any God besides You, who acts for the one who waits for Him: The praying one now trusts that since he is one who waits for the LORD, he also will see God act on his behalf.

The one who waits for Him: "There is, however, a special blessing connected with waiting for the Lord. Men, even church-going men, would rather work than wait. They also love the legalism more than the holiness of waiting. Church leaders of today think waiting for the Lord is foolish dreaming." (Bultema)<sup>18</sup>

**1 Corinthians 2:9,10** But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

It is wrong to conclude in Isaiah that this verse refers to what some call "end time." It is obvious that Paul sees the fulfillment of this in the humble Messiah of Nazareth and of the call of the Gentiles into Zion as a spiritual thing which is fulfilled in his day through the gospel. "Unto us they have been revealed" And their spiritual power exceeded what was done when the shekina glory led the children of Israel for 40 years out of Egypt into the promised land.<sup>19</sup>

Isaiah respected Yahweh because he knew who Yahweh was, but so many of his contemporaries were spiritually blind and deaf that they could have profited from a dramatic revelation (cf. Ps. 31:20; Matt. 13:17; 1 Cor. 2:9).<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>17</sup> Believers Study Bible Notes

<sup>18</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Isa/Isa-64.cfm?a=743001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Isa/Isa-64.cfm?a=743001)

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.moellerhaus.com/isa64.htm>

<sup>20</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

a God besides you. Essential to Isaiah's message is the uniqueness of Israel's God (cf. 43:11; 44:6; 45:5–6, 18, 21–22; 46:9; 47:8, 10). who acts. Unlike the idols, the God of Israel intervenes (cf. Ps. 135:5–18; Isa. 31:1–9; 37:14–38). He never fails to meet those with true faith. who wait. See note on 40:31.<sup>21</sup>

**<sup>5</sup>Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, *those that remember thee in thy ways: behold, thou art wroth; for we have sinned: in those is continuance, and we shall be saved.***

#### **Eightfold confession of Israel:**

1. God is just and meets him that rejoices, works righteousness, and remembers the Lord in his ways (Isa. 64:5).
2. God is angry because we have sinned and still continue in sin.
3. We are all as an unclean thing (Isa. 64:6).
4. All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags (note a, Isa. 64:6).
5. We fade like a leaf, and our iniquities take us away like the wind.
6. There is none that calls upon God's name and stirs himself up to take hold of God (Isa. 64:7).
7. God has hid His face from us and destroyed us because of sin.
8. But now we turn to God who is our Father and will mold us like the potter does the clay (Isa. 64:8).

[in those is continuance, and we shall be saved] If we continue in the ways of God we shall be saved (Isa. 64:5). It could not mean that if the continued in sin they would be saved, for that is contrary to both the law and the gospel (Rom. 8:12–13; Gal. 5:19–21).<sup>22</sup>

Sin, Discipline—Sin destroys us spiritually and physically because God intervenes in our lives to discipline sinners. Habitual sin brings God's judging anger from which salvation appears impossible. Such sin makes us feel filthy, unworthy of speaking to God. We see our basic sin as failing to call on God in moments of distress because we feel He will not hear us. Still we have hope. We can express our feelings to God as the prophet did in this strong prayer of lament and confession.<sup>23</sup>

The prophet knew that God has fellowship with those who practice righteousness and who "remember His ways," i.e., to walk in them. He wondered if there was any hope of Israel being saved, since she had sinned so much for so long, and since this sinning had angered God.<sup>24</sup>

You meet him who rejoices and does righteousness: The praying one asks the question, "What kind of man does the LORD answer in prayer?" In Isaiah 64:4, he noted that it was the one who waits for the LORD. Now the praying one expands the idea, and notes that the LORD will answer the prayer (meet) the one who rejoices and does righteousness. The LORD will answer the prayer of the one who remembers the LORD in hisways.

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<sup>21</sup> ESV Study Bible

<sup>22</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>23</sup> Disciples Study Bible Notes

<sup>24</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

Knowing that, there is a problem: For we have sinned - in these ways we continue; and we need to be saved. The praying remnant knows that God only answers the prayers of the righteous man, yet it isn't the righteous man who needs to be saved from the disaster he has brought on himself. And we need to be saved is translated well by the NIV here as, How then can we be saved? The praying one then goes on to eloquently describe our state of sin.

First, our sin makes us like an unclean thing; it makes us unacceptable and unworthy before God. "Under the Jewish law you know that when a person was unclean he could not go up to the house of the Lord. He could offer no sacrifice. God could accept nothing at his hands; he was an outcast and an alien so long as he remained unclean." (Spurgeon)

Even all our righteousness are like filthy rags. The good we may try to do is unacceptable and unclean before the LORD. Because we are all like an unclean thing, even the good we do is polluted. "Brethren, if our righteousnesses are so bad, what must our unrighteousnesses be?" (Spurgeon)

We all fade as a leaf. Our sinful condition has made us weak and unstable, with no lasting power before God.

Our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away means that we have no power to stand against temptation. Our sins carry us along like a hurricane wind.

And there is no one who calls on Your name, who stirs himself up to take hold of You: Even in our unclean, unstable condition, we didn't seek the LORD the way we should. We were lazy and complacent before the LORD.

"The verbs sin and angry are perfect tenses - it was your fixed mind to be angry and ours to continue in sin." (Motyer)

Taken together, this is a fearful description of our fallenness: "You must not merely know that you are lost, but you must feel it. Do not be content with simply feeling that it is so, but mourn before God that it is so, and hate yourself that it is so. Do not look upon it as being a misfortune, but as being your own wilful sin, and look upon yourselves, therefore, as being guilty sinners." (Spurgeon)<sup>25</sup>

**5b–7** With four similes, Isaiah laments the long-standing patterns of sin among God's people. like one who is unclean. A leper, infected and infectious (cf. Lev. 13:45–46; Isa. 6:5). like a polluted garment. Even their righteousness is disgusting to God (cf. 57:12; Ezek. 36:17). like a leaf. Decayed, brittle, lifeless (cf. Isa. 1:30; 40:6–8). like the wind. The overwhelming power of sin (cf. Ps. 1:4; Isa. 17:13; 40:24). for you have hidden your face. Cf. 8:17. When God's "face" shines upon his people, they live in his favor (Num. 6:25–26); when he hides it due to their unfaithfulness, they suffer.<sup>26</sup>

**6**But we are all as an unclean *thing*, and all our righteousnesses *are* as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

Here begins the acknowledgment of sins and, at the same time, an expression of confidence in the redemption of the Savior.

This verse is familiar because it is used very frequently to establish the fact that man has no righteousness per se; that is, man has no righteousness in himself whatsoever. This is not only

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<sup>25</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Isa/Isa-64.cfm?a=743001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Isa/Isa-64.cfm?a=743001)

<sup>26</sup> ESV Study Bible

true of Israel but it is also true of the entire human family. Both Jew and Gentile alike have sinned and come short of the glory of God. "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." It does not matter what we might consider to be good works. It may sound pretty good to give a million dollars to feed the poor and hungry or to care for little orphans and widows, but in God's sight anything that the flesh produces is as filthy rags. You cannot bring a clean thing out of an unclean thing. A lost sinner is unable to do anything that is acceptable to God -- he must first come to God His way. This is very difficult for man to accept - especially the unsaved man who is depending upon his good works to save him.<sup>27</sup>

“Filthy rags” = really means “used menstrual cloths”!

Righteousness as a garment - Mt 6:33; Gen 3:21; Rev 19:8.<sup>28</sup>

The prophet compares Israel to the case of the leper in the time of Moses (cf. Lev 13:45). “Filthy rags” is a reference to dressings employed by women during menstruation. Notice that it is the best which men have to offer which is compared with these things.<sup>29</sup>

Sin makes us unclean so that we cannot approach God (6:5; Romans 3:23) any more than a beggar in filthy rags could dine at a king's table. Our best efforts are still infected with sin. Our only hope, therefore, is faith in Jesus Christ, who can cleanse us and bring us into God's presence (read Romans 3).

This passage can easily be misunderstood. It doesn't mean that God will reject us if we come to him in faith, nor that he despises our efforts to please him. It means that if we come to him demanding acceptance on the basis of our "good" conduct, God will point out that our righteousness is but filthy rags compared to his infinite righteousness. This message is primarily for the unrepentant person, not the true follower of God.<sup>30</sup>

[unclean] Hebrew: tame' (HSN-<H2931>), foul in a religious sense; defiled; infamous; polluted; unclean in a ceremonial and moral sense. It refers to anything regarded as polluted and abominable by the law of Moses (Isa. 6:5; 35:8; Lev. 5:2; 7:19,21; 11:4-8,26,28-31,35,47; 13:15,45-55; 14:40-45; Dt. 14:7-19). The meaning here is: All of us are ceremonially and morally unclean and abominable before God; and all our righteousness (our deeds, prayers, sacrifices, alms) are as filthy rags. The Hebrew for "filthy" is `ed (HSN-<H5708>), to set a period; it refers to the menstrual fluid and the rags used by women in their monthly periods.

### **Tenfold State of Sinners**

1. We have sinned (Isa. 64:5).
2. Unclean, ceremonially and morally (Isa. 64:6).
3. All righteousnesses are as filthy (menstruous) rags.
4. Fade as a leaf.
5. Taken away by sins like the wind take away chaff.
6. None calls upon God's name (Isa. 64:7).
7. None stirs himself to take hold of God.
8. God's face hidden from him.

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<sup>27</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>28</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

<sup>29</sup> Believers Study Bible Notes

<sup>30</sup> Life Application Study Bible.

9. Consumed because of sin.
10. Under God's wrath (Isa. 64:5,9).<sup>31</sup>

Israel's sins had thoroughly polluted her and had placed her in an apparently hopeless position (cf. 6:5). Furthermore, she could not stop sinning. Was there any hope for her? She was as unclean as a leper, as repulsive as menstrual cloths, and as spiritually lifeless as a dead leaf on a tree ready to be blown away by more sin.<sup>32</sup>

**<sup>7</sup>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.***

### **Most Essential Thing in Prayer**

Hebrew: *`uwr* (HSN-*<H5782>*), to open the eyes; to awake. This is most essential in the prayer life -- one must stir himself up to pray and lay hold of God; the person who does will be blessed by the Lord (Isa. 64:7). No man rises to God without effort; and if one fails in this he sinks into sin and spiritual deadness which will take him to the lowest hell. The idea here is that of making an effort to rouse one's self when oppressed by a spirit of heavy slumber and extreme drowsiness. By this time the whole nation of Israel had sunk into a spiritual stupor.

[take hold of thee] How to Pray

Hebrew: *chazaq* (HSN-*<H2388>*), to fasten upon; sieze; be strong; courageous; obstinate; to bind; restrain; conquer; catch; cleave to; be constant; continue; force; lay hold on; maintain; play the man; wax mighty; prevail; retain; be urgent; wax strong. All these meanings can be understood in connection with prayer. If one would stir himself up in this manner, refusing to be denied, and if he would appropriate every benefit of the promises and covenants of God which have been freely and abundantly given to men -- all men -- then such a person would experience answers to prayer for body, soul, and spirit -- for both himself and others.

[hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities] Withdrawn Your favor from us and melted us down because of our sins.<sup>33</sup>

The sinful condition of man brings forth two reactions from God. First, You have hidden Your face from us - fellowship is broken, or at the very least, damaged. Second, the LORD has consumed us because of our iniquities. Our sinful condition has invited - even demanded - the righteous judgment of God.<sup>34</sup>

Furthermore, none of the Israelites felt concerned enough about their sinful condition to seek the Lord, and to try to lay hold of Him in prayer. This was understandable, since God had hidden Himself from His people; they saw no hope that He would respond, even if they should now pray (cf. 59:16; 63:5).<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>32</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

<sup>33</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>34</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Isa/Isa-64.cfm?a=743001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Isa/Isa-64.cfm?a=743001)

<sup>35</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

**<sup>8</sup>But now, O LORD, thou *art* our father; we *are* the clay, and thou our potter; and we all *are* the work of thy hand.**

[thou art our father; we are the clay] The second time stated in two chapters (Isa. 64:8; 63:13). [our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand] The idea is: We are no more capable of molding ourselves than the clay; we depend upon God as our potter to make us what we ought to be.<sup>36</sup>

God is our Father by creation, but man lost that image. You and I can become sons of God in only one way, and that is through Christ. The New Testament revelation of the sons of God is not by creation at all, but on an entirely different basis. In John 1:12-13 we read, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

"We all are the work of thy hand" is a recognition that God is our Creator. He is the Potter, the One who creates. Now, a man that makes a vessel or a pretty vase is, in a sense, the father of it. In this same way we speak of George Washington as being the father of our country. Paul makes this distinction in his speech in Athens: "For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device" (Acts 17:28-29). Man is the offspring of God in that he was created by Him, but not all men are the born-again sons of God. Paul is saying that since God has created us, we ought not to make an image and say that it is a likeness of God. In doing so we would be attempting to create God, and God has forbidden that.<sup>37</sup>

**8-12** This final part of this beautiful prayer by the righteous remnant is a confession of trust in the Lord. The remnant would address God as their Father (cf. 63:16) and as the Potter. Israel was to be like obedient children and as submissive as clay (cf. 29:16; 45:9). Therefore the remnant would obediently and submissively ask the Lord to withhold His anger and to look on them (cf. 63:15) as His own. The remnant would remind God that Israel's cities including Jerusalem had been destroyed and that even the temple had been burned. The nation would urge God to do something about the situation (64:12), thereby breaking His silence (cf. 62:1; 65:6) and withholding His punishment on her.<sup>38</sup>

Creation, Personal Creator—The Creator is not far removed from His creation. We can still cry out to Him and claim the personal relationship of Father-child because He is our Creator. The Creator is also the One who listens and forgives.<sup>39</sup>

But now, O LORD, You are our Father: The praying one is in a desperate place; he needs to mercy of God, because the justice of God condemns him. In his appeal for mercy, he first reminds God, "You are our Father. Please, LORD, have mercy on us as loving Father."

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<sup>36</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>37</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>38</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

<sup>39</sup> Disciples Study Bible Notes

We are the clay, and You our potter: Next, the praying one appeals for God's mercy because of God's sovereign power over each life. It is like saying, "LORD we are like clay in Your hands. Deal gently with us, and mold us according to Your mercy."

A father is always a father; he can never truly disown his children. A potter cannot disown the pot; it is only there because he made it. This is Isaiah's way of saying, "You're stuck with us LORD!"<sup>40</sup>

Yet Isaiah did appeal to God for help. He appealed on the basis that Yahweh had brought Israel into existence and was, therefore, responsible for her—regardless of her condition (cf. 63:16). She was just inert clay, but He was the Potter who had formed Israel as the work of His own hands (cf. Jer. 18:1-6; Rom. 9:19-21).<sup>41</sup>

**8–9** you are our Father. Isaiah is not blaming God for Israel's condition; he puts his hope in God as the sovereign Father (cf. Ps. 103:13–14; Isa. 45:9–10). Be not so terribly angry. See Ps. 79:8; Isa. 54:7–8; 57:16–19. remember not iniquity forever. See 43:25; 53:4–6; Jer. 31:34. we are all your people. God chose them, and thus his fame in the world could suffer loss through them (cf. Ex. 32:11–14; Ezek. 36:20–23).<sup>42</sup>

**<sup>9</sup>Be not wroth very sore, O LORD, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see, we beseech thee, we *are* all thy people.**

[Be not wroth very sore, O LORD, neither remember iniquity for ever] The appeal here is for God to begin all over again, like the potter with the clay (Isa. 64:8-9).<sup>43</sup>

The Church, God's Community—The people of God are His sons, totally dependent on our Father and Creator. As such, we can pray for forgiveness and ask God to take away His anger. He hears our prayers even when they are bold laments expressing our dissatisfaction and impatience.<sup>44</sup>

Do not be furious, O LORD, nor remember iniquity forever: The praying one asks for mercy on account of "time served." It is as if he prays, "LORD, You had a right to be furious with us for a time. You had a right to remember our iniquity for a while. But please, LORD, do not remember iniquity forever."

Indeed, please look - we all are Your people! The praying one makes his final appeal for mercy on the simple grounds that "LORD, we all are Your people. We are sinners, and deserve your judgment, but we are still Your people. In a sense, LORD, You are stuck with us!"<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Isa/Isa-64.cfm?a=743001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Isa/Isa-64.cfm?a=743001)

<sup>41</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

<sup>42</sup> ESV Study Bible

<sup>43</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>44</sup> Disciples Study Bible Notes

<sup>45</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Isa/Isa-64.cfm?a=743001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Isa/Isa-64.cfm?a=743001)

The prophet pled with God not to be overly angry with Israel and to put the memory of her sins behind Him. God should look on Israel in mercy simply because Israel was Yahweh's chosen people.<sup>46</sup>

**<sup>10</sup>Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation.**

**Prophetic Prayer of Israel** In Isa. 64:10-11 we have a prophetic section of the prayer that will be prayed by the Jews at the end of the tribulation -- at the second coming of Christ. The stated conditions will be true at that time. Many cities of Israel will be destroyed; Jerusalem will be made desolate (houses rifled and women ravished, Zech. 14:1-5); the temple will be destroyed and the pleasant things laid waste. Christ will build the millennial and eternal temple after He comes, so the temple where Antichrist is to reign during the tribulation will be destroyed to make way for the future eternal one (Isa. 64:11; Dan. 7:27; Mt. 24:15; Rev. 11:1-2).<sup>47</sup>

The description given in this verse was not true in Isaiah's day, but it came to pass shortly afterwards when Babylon came against Jerusalem. 2 Kings 25:9-10 tell us, "And he burnt the house of the Lord, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt he with fire. And all the army of the Chaldees, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about." Isaiah's prophecy was literally fulfilled.<sup>48</sup>

Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation: In his appeal for mercy, the praying one asks God to look closely at the terrible condition of His holy cities. As he draws attention to our holy and beautiful temple, he notes that it is burned up with fire. It is an eloquent and powerful way of pleading with God to act.<sup>49</sup>

**10–12** Jerusalem was a desolation as a result of the Babylonian invasion (cf. 6:11–12; Jer. 25:8–11). Our holy and beautiful house. The temple was lovely with the holy presence of God, as it matched God's "holy and beautiful habitation" (Isa. 63:15; cf. note on 60:7). yourself . . . us. God's own glory and his people's desire for restored happiness in him will surely move him to act.<sup>50</sup>

**<sup>11</sup>Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste.**

Isaiah writes as if this has already taken place, but it didn't happen until about one hundred years after Isaiah. The temple was destroyed at the same time Jerusalem was destroyed.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

<sup>47</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>48</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>49</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Isa/Isa-64.cfm?a=743001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Isa/Isa-64.cfm?a=743001)

<sup>50</sup> ESV Study Bible

<sup>51</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

In 63:18 which in that chapter mentions the destruction of the temple as an accomplished fact. It is Isaiah's style to relate his visions as though the events had already happened. Reasons for rejecting "Deutero-Isaiah" are given above. The visions of Isaiah relate the future destruction of Jerusalem and the restoration and the birth of Zion under the Messiah, which will result in the call of the Gentiles into a Jewish root, and the new heavens and the new earth which is to follow the messianic period. Shall we say that Isaiah lived after those times too? It is simply short sighted skepticism which does not require a great deal of literary skill which creates doubt from such superficial exegesis.<sup>52</sup>

The holy temple had been burned, and all the precious things associated with Yahweh worship in it were gone. Isaiah was speaking for the Israelites who lived after the Exile had begun. Thus the Israelites were ashamed as well as ruined. Would God not do something in view of a situation that reflected so negatively on Him and His promises?<sup>53</sup>

**12Wilt thou refrain thyself for these *things*, O LORD? wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore?**

The prophet closes this chapter with a question: Will God refuse to act? The remainder of Isaiah's prophecy is God's answer to this question. God rejected Israel only after they rejected Him, but it did not thwart His plan and purpose for them and for the earth. God has carried through with His program, which is yet to be finalized.<sup>54</sup>

Will You restrain Yourself because of these things, O LORD? The praying one concludes up the prayer with a great question. The these things he refers to are not the desperate condition of Jerusalem and the temple (Isaiah 64:10-11). They are the descriptions of our sinful condition (Isaiah 64:5b-7). The praying one asks, "LORD, You know very well our sinful condition. But will You restrain Yourself because of these things, O LORD?"

Will You hold Your peace, and afflict us very severely? "LORD, please show mercy! Will you always give us what we deserve?"

In this prayer, the praying one deals with what seems to be an impossible problem. Because of our sin (Isaiah 64:5b-7), we are in a desperate state and need the LORD's salvation. But the LORD only answers the prayers of a righteous man (Isaiah 64:4-5a) - and a righteous man wouldn't be in the place we are! Ultimately, the answer is found in the New Covenant, where a righteous Man stands in our place and prays for us. This is why Jesus invited us to pray in His name (John 14:13-14). When we pray in Jesus' name, He is the righteous Man who appeals to God for us.<sup>55</sup>

Excessive waiting: This may be Isaiah's response to the information that there is a period yet to be lived through during which the Temple itself will have been destroyed. How much longer do we have to wait and how much more must we endure. Please God come now! As John said: "Even so come Lord Jesus!" So Isaiah is hoping that the wait will not be excessive. No doubt the

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<sup>52</sup> <http://www.moellerhaus.com/isa64.htm>

<sup>53</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

<sup>54</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>55</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Isa/Isa-64.cfm?a=743001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Isa/Isa-64.cfm?a=743001)

result will be humbling for all of us who realize that God has known all along what calamities await us while the blessings are being prepared.<sup>56</sup>

In conclusion, Isaiah asked the Lord if He would restrain Himself from acting in view of all these conditions. One could paraphrase here: "Lord, how can You not do something after all that has happened?" Would He remain silent to His people's prayers and allow their affliction to continue beyond what they could endure? Would He show no compassion?<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> <http://www.moellerhaus.com/isa64.htm>

<sup>57</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>