

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Isaiah: Jahweh Is Salvation

Part LXXIV: The Believing Remnant's Plea For God's Gracious Deliverance From Their Enemies (Isaiah 64:1-12)

I. Introduction

- A. God's people often face oppressors due to God's discipline, but He will deliver them if they turn from sin.
- B. Isaiah 64:1-12 describes the believing remnant's plea in the Babylonian Captivity for God's help to deliver them from their oppressors in His grace (Bib. Know. Com., O. T., p. 1118), and we view it for our insight:

II. The Believing Remnant's Plea For God's Gracious Deliverance From Their Enemies, Isaiah 64:1-12.

- A. Where Isaiah 63:7-19 presents the believing remnant's plea for God's deliverance from the Babylonian Captivity based on His past mercies in the Exodus, Isaiah 64:1-12 continues that plea with a focus on finding God's deliverance from their foes who have oppressed them in their captivity, *Ibid.*
- B. This plea expresses a longing for God to act with great might like He once did at Mount Sinai, Isaiah 64:1-3:
 - 1. The believing remnant would long for God to rend the heavens and come down that the mountains might quake at His presence, much as a fire kindles brushwood and the resulting fire boils water, Isaiah 64:1-2a.
 - 2. They would long for God in this way to make His Name known to His foes, the adversaries of His people, that the Gentile nations that oppressed Israel might tremble at His presence, Isaiah 64:2b!
 - 3. In making this petition, the believing remnant would recall the day when God indeed performed such awesome works they were not expecting, when God came down and the mountains at Sinai so that they quaked at His presence amid the fire and smoke, Isaiah 64:3 with Exodus 19:16-19; *Ibid.*, p. 1118-1119.
- C. The remnant would assert that no one had heard from antiquity or perceived with the eye a God like Israel's Lord Who (1) acted for those who wait for Him in faith, Who (2) meets the one who joyfully works righteousness, Who also meets (3) those who remember God's ways so as to walk in them, Isaiah 64:4-5a.
- D. However, the problem of sin in the nation Israel had blocked such blessings from the Lord, Isaiah 64:5b-7:
 - 1. In Israel's case, she had sinned, angering the Lord, and she had practiced such sins for such a long time that the remnant rhetorically asked how they could then even be saved, Isaiah 64:5b ESV, NIV.
 - 2. Regarding their sin, the remnant would admit they had become like an unclean person, that all their most "righteous" deeds were as a *begeg 'idim*, lit. a "garment of times," figurative for a menstrual rag, Isaiah 64:6a; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Is. 64:6; B. D. B., A Heb and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 723.
 - 3. Consequently, the people of Israel would have all faded from spiritual vitality like a leaf that fades in the fall, and when they fall, the wind takes them away in divine judgment, Isaiah 64:6b.
 - 4. Indeed, no one in Israel would call on the Lord's Name in their sin, no one would rouse himself to take hold of the Lord in confession of sin and restoration, for God in discipline had hidden His face from His people and made them to melt in the hand of their iniquities, to leave them without spiritual strength, Isaiah 64:7; Edward J. Young, The Book of Isaiah, 1974, v. III, p. 497.
- E. Yet, with the words, "But now . . .", the believing remnant would claim that regardless of all such iniquity in Israel, God was their Father, that due to this relationship to them, He would show them mercy, Isa. 64:8a KJV.
- F. Like obedient children and submissive clay in the hands of God Who was their Potter (Isaiah 64:8b), the believing remnant would implore God not to be terribly angry with them nor to recall their sin forever, but to look upon them in the sense of having regard for them, recalling that they were His people, Isaiah 64:9a.
- G. The remnant would then remind God that His holy cities in Israel had become desolate like a wilderness due to His judgment, that the temple where their fathers had worshiped the Lord had been burned down by fire, with all the pleasant places becoming ruins, Isaiah 64:9b-11.
- H. They would thus petition God, asking if He would restrain Himself at these things, if He would keep silent and still afflict them so terribly without showing them mercy, Isaiah 64:12.

Lesson: *The believing remnant in the Babylonian Captivity would long for the Lord to demonstrate His great power to counter their Gentile oppressors, but that their sin had been so repugnant to the Lord that He could not bless them. Consequently, the remnant would confess their sins, relying on God's grace alone as their Father to bless them, to have regard for their plight and the plight of their holy cities that lay in ruins due to God's judgment.*

Application: *God is a very Good God Who longs richly to bless us as His people, but our sin is so repugnant to Him that He must discipline us, blocking His blessing, so we must confess our sin and depart from it for restoration.*