

"For from days of old they have not heard or perceived by ear, nor has the eye seen a God besides You, Who acts in behalf of the ones who wait for Him" (Isaiah 64:4, NASB)

"These amazing things had never been heard of before; you did things never dreamed of! No one perceived Your greatness. No eye has ever seen a God like You, who intervenes for those who wait and long for You!" (Isaiah 64:4, Passion Version)

Remember last week's lesson, on Isaiah 63, where Isaiah presented an awesome, prophetic picture of God, in the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ, the Anointed One, coming (in His second advent) at the close of the Great Tribulation, as a "Warrior," to take vengeance on His "enemies" (represented by Edom), and restore a relationship with His people (Israel)! It is His "day of vengeance," as well as the "year of redemption"! Isaiah describes Him as "majestic in His apparel, marching in the greatness of His strength, and speaking righteousness, as the One "mighty to save"! His garments are "sprinkled and stained with the lifeblood of those He has trampled," in what Revelation 14:19 describes as "the great wine press of the wrath of God"!

But it's also a great day of salvation for Israel! And Isaiah takes the occasion to "make mention (and to tell again!) of the lovingkindness of the Lord, according to all that the Lord has granted us, and His great goodness to toward house of Israel...according to His compassion and the abundance of His lovingkindness"! "Surely they are My people," declared the Lord...so He became their Savior...and in His love and mercy He redeemed them...and lifted them and carried them all the days of old"! But they "rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; therefore, He turned Himself to become their enemy...and fought against them"!

Then (Isaiah writes in 11-14), "His people remembered the days of old, of Moses...and asked (rhetorically!) "where the One is who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of His flock...who put His Holy Spirit in the midst of them, who caused His glorious right hand to go at the right hand of Moses, who divided the water before them to make for Himself an everlasting name... who led them through the depth, like a horse in the wilderness, where they did not stumble...and gave them rest"!

Then Isaiah, having looked back at, and extolling God's goodness and past faithfulness, issued a solemn "prayer of intercession, and repentance, for the nation--"storming the gates of Heaven" (as Motyer put it!), beseeching God (in what Wiersbe calls "one of the greatest revival prayers in Scripture"! ) to "look down from heaven and see from His holy and glorious habitation the desperate condition of His people"! Wondering, and raising the question, as to "whether God had somehow changed the way He felt towards Israel," and so he appealed to Him for "new mercies," such as He had exhibited toward the nation in the past!

"Return for the sake of Your servants, the tribes of your heritage," cries Isaiah! "Your holy people possessed Your sanctuary for a little while (and now), our adversaries have trodden it down, and we have become like those over whom You have never ruled, like those who were not called by Your name!"

And on that sad and worrisome note, Isaiah 63, and our lesson last week, on Isaiah 63, ended!

But Isaiah's intercessory prayer for Israel picks up and continues in Isaiah 64, as he again "storms the gates of heaven" and passionately pleads with God to "rend the heavens" (Passion says, "tear open the heavenly realm!") and "come down that the mountains might quake at your presence...and make known Your name to Your adversaries, that the nations may tremble at Your presence"! (In Isaiah 63, Isaiah had beseeched God to "look down"--here to "come down"! To "come down, just like He did on Mt. Sinai (in Exodus 19), in the "days of old...when He did some "awesome things" for them--"things that "had not ever been heard of, or even dreamed of before" (when the "lightning flashed, and the mountains quaked at His presence," and God came down to the top of the mountain to meet with Moses!

"You act in behalf of the ones who wait for You, and meet him who rejoices in doing righteousness, who remembers You in Your ways," continues Isaiah, but "behold (now!), You are angry, for we have sinned"! (Jim Battle referred to it as "the BIG problem"! "Is there any way we could be "saved?" (wonders Isaiah!) "For all of us have become like one who is unclean and (even) our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; and all of us wither like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away...and there is no one who calls on Your name...for You have hidden Your face from us"!

"But now, O Lord (Isaiah recounts), "You are our Father! We are the clay, and You are our potter, and all of us are the work of Your hand! Don't be angry with us beyond measure, O Lord! Nor remember our iniquity forever! Behold, look now! All of us are Your people!" And look! "Your holy cities have become a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation! Our holy and beautiful house, where our fathers praised You, has been burned by fire; and all our precious things have become a ruin! Will You restrain Yourself at these things, O Lord? Will You keep silent and afflict us beyond measure"?????

Wow! So how will God respond to Isaiah's passionate intercessory prayer for Israel?

We'll find out in our lesson for next week, on Isaiah 65!

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