



ISAIAH 64

A CRY FOR REVIVAL ~ SIN IS OUR PROBLEM ~ THE MASTER POTTER

Isaiah 64 is a confident prayer for deliverance by the believing remnant. It begins with a plea for the LORD to intervene to deliver His people in His characteristically powerful way (1-4). Their confidence is based on the LORD’s great demonstrations of power in the past. Their recalling the works of the LORD is followed by the acknowledgment of their complete sinfulness (5-8). And yet, in spite of their guilt, they could appeal to God because He was their Father and Creator (= potter); He would change their estate by His grace (9-12).

| English Standard (ESV) | Passion Notes | Passion Translation (TPT) |
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| <p>Isaiah 64:1 Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at your presence—² as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil— to make your name known to your adversaries, and that the nations might tremble at your presence! ³ When you did awesome things that we did not look for, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. ⁴ From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides you, who acts for those who wait for him. ⁵ You meet him who joyfully works righteousness, those who remember you in your ways. Behold, you were angry, and we sinned; in our sins we have been a long time, and shall we be saved?</p> | <p>a 64:1 See Judg. 5:5; Hab. 3:6. Mountains can also symbolize governments and kingdoms. There is one King and one kingdom that rises above every other mountain (Isa. 2:1–5).</p> <p>b 64:1 Or “before your faces.”</p> <p>c 64:2 Fire is a frequent metaphor for the presence of God. See Gen. 3:24; Ex. 3:1–2; Isa. 4:5; 6:6; 10:16–17; 29:6; 30:27, 30; 31:9; 33:12, 14; 66:15–16, 24; Acts 2:3; Heb. 12:29.</p> <p>d 64:4 See 1 John 1:1–4.</p> <p>e 64:4 Or “who works on behalf of those.”</p> <p>f 64:4 The Hebrew word chakah implies waiting with trusting anticipation (longing).</p> <p>g 64:4 Or “him.” See Isa. 40:31; 1 Cor. 2:9–10.</p> <p>h 64:5 Or “You attack them [with kindness].”</p> <p>i 64:5 Or, as a question, “How can we be saved?” There is no verse in Isaiah that is more perplexing and difficult to translate than this one. The exact Hebrew meaning is uncertain.</p> | <p>A Cry for Revival</p> <p>Isaiah 64:1 God, if only you would tear open the heavenly realm and come down! How the mountains would tremble a in your awesome presence! b ² In the same way that fire sets kindling to blaze and causes water to boil, let the fire of your presence c come down. Reveal to your enemies your mighty name and cause the nations to tremble before you! ³ When you did amazing wonders we didn’t expect, you came down, and mountains shuddered in your presence! ⁴ 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, d who intervenes for those e who wait and long f for you! g ⁵ Those who delight in doing what is right— you go out to meet h them with kindness. They remember you and cherish your ways. You showed your anger when we sinned again and again, yet we can be saved. i</p> |

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| <p>⁶ We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. ⁷ There is no one who calls upon your name, who rouses himself to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have made us melt in the hand of our iniquities.</p> <p>⁸ But now, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. ⁹ Be not so terribly angry, O LORD, and remember not iniquity forever. Behold, please look, we are all your people. ¹⁰ Your holy cities have become a wilderness; Zion has become a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. ¹¹ Our holy and beautiful house, where our fathers praised you, has been burned by fire, and all our pleasant places have become ruins. ¹² Will you restrain yourself at these things, O LORD? Will you keep silent, and afflict us so terribly?</p> | <p>j 64:6 The implication is that we are whirled along by the wind of our sins.</p> <p>k 64:7 Or “melted by our own sins.”</p> | <p>Sin Is Our Problem</p> <p>⁶ We have all become contaminated with sin, and you see our self-righteousness as nothing better than a menstrual rag. We are all like fallen leaves, and our sins sweep us away like the wind. j ⁷ No one calls on your name or presses in to lay hold of you, for you have hidden your face from us. You have let us be ruined k by our own sins.</p> <p>The Master Potter</p> <p>⁸ Yet still, Yahweh, you are our Father. We are like clay and you are our Potter. Each one of us is the creative, artistic work of your hands. ⁹ Yahweh, don’t be angry with us! Don’t remember our sins again forever! Please look at us; we are your people. ¹⁰ Your sacred cities are abandoned like a desert; Zion is a wasteland; Jerusalem sits in ruins. ¹¹ Our holy temple, our source of pride, where our ancestors sang your praise, has been consumed by fire. All that we held dear has been destroyed. ¹² Now, Yahweh, after all this, are you still unmoved? Will you continue to stand silently by and afflict us so severely?</p> |

Bible Knowledge Commentary

JOHN A. MARTIN

- **64:1-7.** 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 [Vol. 1, p. 1119] 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.
- **64:8-12.** 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.

TONIGHT'S DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. HIM...SIN...US...These 12 verses of Isaiah sum up our predicament. God is beyond good. Sin is surprisingly effective. We are deceptively unaware of our own tragic condition. What are a sinful people to do? God in his mercy is about to set them free from bondage and deliver them back to their homeland. Suppose you were given the task of crafting a “verse 13” of Isaiah 64. What would it say?
2. Isaiah 63:15 thru 64:12 is actually one prayer with three parts: Two pleas and a confession. The confession in vs. 8-12, is a declaration of their trust in God; not a very confident one, but a sure step in the right direction. What are the two pleas asking for?
3. If you were going to rate the “confession of trust” in verses 8-12, what “grade” (A thru F) would you give these Israelites being held captive in Babylon? Explain why you would give them this grade.
4. What does it mean to you to trust God? How does trust manifest in our lives? How do you know you think you have is real?
5. Do you feel that you trust Jesus with your life? What evidence do you see? How do you intend to grow in your trust of Jesus? Are you currently in a “growth phase” for trusting the leadership of Jesus in your life?