

**CALVARY PANDAN  
BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**DHW BIBLE CLASS**

**LESSON 64**

**ISAIAH**

**CHAPTER 64**

**Theme:** "A Plea for Mercy!"

**THEME VERSES**

**Isaiah 64:8-9** (KJV) "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. **9** Be not wroth very sore, O LORD, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see, we beseech thee, we *are* all thy people."

**INTRODUCTION**

A rare glimpse of how the LORD views this world is revealed in this chapter of Isaiah. From the time of the fall of man into sin, this world is one gigantic cess pool of filth and evil. Man has been swimming in this cess pool for millenniums. The worst part is not in the swimming of the cess poll but that fact that men liked it. Man loved this life of sin so much that no matter what the almighty God had done to reveal to man His great love for them, man had kept on resisting. The patience and longsuffering of God in this regard is incomprehensible. Anyone of us would have destroyed

this sin sick world a thousand times over. But God did not.

It is not because God is blind or ignorant of man's manifold great sins. It is purely because of His grace and mercy that man is not consumed! Isaiah described the awesome holy nature of God's wrath in the early verses of Isaiah 64. He concluded by pleading for the LORD's mercy to save and to help. That the wrath of God is known to Isaiah is seen in the manner in which he describes God's sovereign power. The calamities that man experienced in the past as well as in the present ought to cause man to see his evil ways. Instead man kept on explaining them all away as some form of natural disaster as if there is no sovereign God who is in absolute control of the whole universe. The evidence is all around him and yet man blindly refused to see.

This blindness in man has resulted in man persecuting and killing the prophets of God whom He sent to reveal His truth to man so that man could be saved. Finally when God sent His only begotten Son to bring the message of grace and mercy, man did the ultimate heinous act of all time. He crucified His Son even though God revealed to man by His perfect life and stupendous and incontrovertible miracles that He was God incarnate. Man deserved God's judgement and a taste of His wrath.

However when sinful man repents and begs God for mercy, the mercy of God comes immediately. There is no hesitation on the part of God. There is no delay in His help and

restoration. When man repents and changes and accepts God's grace and mercy, the blessing of God toward him flows continuously. Man's testimony will once again shine forth God's goodness into a world of sin and darkness. This light of God in Christ is what Isaiah pleads for in this chapter. Look down from heavens glory upon a world that needs His grace and mercy as never before.

### OUTLINE

1. The Dealings of God! (vv.1-5);
2. Be Merciful O God (vv. 6-12);

### COMMENTARY

#### The Dealings of God! — 64:1-5

Isaiah cried to the LORD for the God of heaven to come down and demonstrate His awesome power to His adversaries that they might see. Rend the heavens and melt the mountains are two very magnificent ways to show the wrath of God to sinful man. These would be in the form of severe storms, lightning and thunders, typhoons and tornadoes, including earthquakes, tsunamis, and volcanic eruptions. The waters would be the seas, which would boil when these calamities fall upon man. These are clear signs that God is angry with sinful man. The mountain flowed down is surely a picture of great volcanic eruptions where the side of the mountain literally melts away and turned into hot boiling lava sweeping away everything in its path.

But sinful man is hardened. His heart is unmoved by these acts of God almighty. Instead he explains them as some form of natural disaster that scientists blamed it on man's negligence rather than on man's sin. When man's sinful behaviour is ignored and man does not take the blame for the natural disasters due to sin but turned the blame onto nature due to "ozone" depletion and gas emission, etc, man will remain in his sin and will not repent! This is true today just as it was also true in Isaiah's time. The explanation is different because of different advancement of science but man will just not see the hand of the angry God.

Isaiah confessed that since the beginning of the world, man has not heard and perceived with the ear nor seen with their eyes how good God has been to man despite his sinful nature. He gave man His word and the hope of salvation in Christ from the moment man fell into sin. This message of God is an unending one as He revealed Himself more and more with every passing generation. This is progressive revelation. God has not left man without a witness of Him regardless of man's stubbornness and intractable behaviour. He continues to save sinful man by His grace and mercy.

This unconditional love that God has shown toward sinful man is incomprehensible. No matter how many generations of sinful man that perpetually reject God and insult Him by their worship of idols, the LORD remained faithful and continues to

save and love. The moment man repents of his sin and waits upon the LORD; He would open His arms wide for man to enter into loving embrace. The meeting of the LORD with these men who repent of their sins and believe in Christ is immediate. There is no intermediary. He personally meets them in His grace and mercy.

These men will rejoice and live righteously before God on the earth! They would remember God's Word and how he has been very gracious and merciful to mankind as taught in Holy Scriptures. The Word of God would be loved by them. The Word of God would be studied and obeyed by them. Their sins have been forever forgiven by God. Their sins will He remember no more. They are called the saved ones. Their lives have been transformed by the power of God. The wrath of God is no longer on them but only His special saving grace!

### **Be Merciful O God! — 64:6-12**

Isaiah admits that all mankind deserves God's wrath. No one must ever think or begin to think that He is right with God because of his good deeds or own righteousness. Isaiah declared that all mankind are unclean, spiritually speaking. All of man's righteousness is as filthy rags before God. The filthiness is compared to the piece of rag that has been soiled by a woman's menstrual period. This is clearly evidenced by the fact that man dies. He fades away like a leaf. The leaf turns brown and withers away. The reason for death and man's transient life on this earth is because of man's iniquities. Man's self

righteousness has been the bane of this world's wickedness. As long as man thinks that he is nice and right, he seeks no Saviour, just like a man who thinks he is not sick will not seek a doctor. It is only when the person realizes that he is sick that he will humble himself and see a doctor. This is also true in the spiritual realm. As long a sinful man thinks that he is not a sinner, and a great sinner at that, he will not turn to Christ.

Therefore no man calls on the name of the LORD to be saved! Even when the heavens and the earth proclaim the existence of a powerful God, man cannot see. No one calls on the LORD to save him. Man simply goes on his merry way thinking that all is well when in reality he is dying in sin and death can strike man at anytime. There is no urgency in sinful man to fix his soul that is filled with sin. He has been ignoring God for thousands of years to his own detriment and eternal punishment! God has hid His face from sinful man which means that he allows man to face His punishment and will not come to his aid. This included the nation of Israel. God will not lower His standard of holiness for sinful man for He is God, the immutable One. Man must change and not the other way round if man wants to be saved. Isaiah used the plural personal pronoun to include himself in this cry. Man is being punished including Israel for her many sins. God did not intervene at all.

But now Isaiah cried to God for help in true repentance. He calls God their Father. He spoke on behalf of the redeemed including Israel, God's

people. God's people are the works of God's hand. God is the potter and they are God's clay. This means that they are being shaped and molded by God in whatever way the potter sees fit. The potter has absolute power over the lump of clay! By this humility of self on behalf of Israel, Isaiah asked the LORD not to be angry. He asked the LORD not to remember the iniquities of His people. God does not forget the way we forget. What Isaiah means is to ask God not to hold the iniquities of His people against them. The only way God will not hold the iniquities against them is when the sins have been washed by the blood of Christ. Isaiah obviously was not asking God to take away the iniquities by sweeping them under the carpet. They are not remembered by the LORD because Christ has paid the penalty for the believers. That is what Isaiah meant when he said that they are His people.

The state and condition of Israel is deplorable. The holy cities, note the use of the plural, could refer to all the cities in the Land of Israel or as some commentators said, the city of Jerusalem is divided into the upper and lower portions. The upper portion is called Zion whereas the lower is called Jerusalem. The latter seems to be the better understanding because other cities in Israel have never been called "holy" before. Zion is a wilderness and Jerusalem is desolation. This implies that Isaiah was given prophetic insight into the future destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians even though he ministered only in the time of the

destruction of the northern kingdom by the Assyrians.

The focus is in Jerusalem where the House of God was located. This is a reference to the temple of Solomon and is without doubt as the use of the singular for the word "house". The Temple of the LORD was destroyed by fire is definitely a prophetic future event. The things they used for worship and praise the LORD are in ruins! The vestige of Israel's solace and symbolic presence of God's favour toward Israel is destroyed! Isaiah pleaded for the LORD's mercy to come upon Israel. Will the LORD not come and intervene and show mercy to His people! They are now without hope and greatly forsaken by all! Will the LORD also forsake His own? Amen.

## **DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

### **Daily Readings**

**MONDAY:** Isaiah 64:1-12

**TUESDAY:** Isaiah 64:1-12

**WEDNESDAY:** Isaiah 64:1-12

**THURSDAY:** Isaiah 64:1-12

**FRIDAY:** Isaiah 64:1-12

**Discussion Questions**

1. Do you take your salvation for granted? Give reasons for your answer.

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2. Do you think that the grace and mercy of God will run out one day? Please explain with biblical evidence.

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3. Why is it so difficult for man to repent of his sin? Would a true believer ever not forgive and hold on to sin? Support your reason with Scriptures.

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4. How and when did you call on the LORD to be saved?

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5. Have you ever asked God not to remember your iniquities? What about asking it on behalf of others like the church?

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6. Will the LORD ever forsake CPBPC? Is there a difference between the LORD forsaking a church and the LORD forsaking His people? When is it justified for you to pronounce "ichabod" on a church or can you?

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7. What lessons have you learnt from this chapter about God's Word and about yourself?

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