

Reading : Isaiah 64-65v1

Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains would tremble before you! (Isaiah 64 verse 1).

As the prophet Isaiah looks ahead to God fulfilling his promises to rescue his people from captivity, his heart is stirred to prayer that God would move in power and grace as He did in the exodus (see verse 3) and restore the fortunes of his elect.

Yet Isaiah, like all the writers of the scriptures, has such a high view of the holy and majestic God of Israel, that a holy God like that is a real problem for sinners (verse 6). Sin then must result in judgment and therefore God has hidden his face of blessing from even his own people. The real issue is despite the rescues from Egypt and Babylon, sinners cannot stand before a Holy God.

But, Isaiah remembers God's promise that He would not remember the sins of the people for ever, that He is a Father God of compassion and tenderness and that even though Abraham himself would disown them, God will not (see chapter 63v15-16). So we see, as we so often do in scripture, God redeeming and rescuing his faithless people out of deserved judgment and trouble because of his grace and mercy alone.

Now in the text above Isaiah is not pointing to a second exodus from Babylon alone, but to another and greater exodus brought about by our Lord Jesus Christ. In Mark 1v10, we see an echo of the text as Jesus at his baptism comes out of the water, he sees heaven torn open and the Spirit descends on Him. Mark is telling us that God is coming to the rescue of his people and is accomplishing it by and through the incarnation, the life and ministry, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation comes in Christ alone.

There is yet another aspect and secondary fulfilment and answer to Isaiah's prayer. For when the saving gospel of our Lord is preached and by the convicting and converting power of the Spirit believed, heaven is opened. Yet, over the centuries while the church has praised and thanked God for every conversion, just as there has been rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who has repented, the cry has gone up that

God would rend the heavens and come down in mighty revival power. As we look out at the desolation being wrought in our land, as we daily see the declension in our churches (see verses 10-11), do our hearts not cry out to God, 'Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down as you did in days of old' How we long that our chapels, where once our forefathers gathered in the fear of the Lord, where there was a holy expectation as they sat under the Word, and where the persistent pleading of prayer was heard, would be full again with sinners seeking the Lord and being transformed by the grace of God.

During the past week when looking for something on Google, I came across the powerful and moving testimony of Mary Peckham who was converted in the Hebrides Revival of 1949-51. This was the last powerful local revival in our land and she gives a compelling account of what a genuine revival is like and how we need such a move of God today. Let us earnestly pray that once more 'out of darkness, God will bring light'

O Holy Ghost, revival comes from Thee;

Send a revival-start the work in me:

Thy Word declares Thou wilt supply our need;

For blessing now, O Lord, I humbly plead.

As we pray, let us remember our beloved sister Eileen who has had a fall and is rather weak. Pray for those who care for her and for the family too that they may have wisdom to know the best for her.

Pray also for Sue and Stephen. Sue is unable to visit Stephen at present and while video style calls help, when Stephen sees and hears Sue, Stephen goes to the door expecting to meet her in person.