

## Having A Basic Understanding of Some Old Testament Truths

Part 281 – *Oh That Thou Wouldest Through Wilt Thou Refrain (Isaiah 64:1-12)*

### 1. Why did Israel want God to rend the heavens and come down?

To make His name known to the adversaries and that nations would tremble at His presence: *“(1) Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence, (2) As when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence” (Isaiah 64:1-2)!*

- David requested a similar event (**Psalms 144:5-15**).
- To ask the mountains to flow down at the presence of the Lord was reasonable (**Exodus 19:18-19** and **Psalms 68:8**).
- When God made nations to know Him that caused fear (**Psalms 9:20, Psalms 48:1-8, and Isaiah 25:1-3**).
- That benefited Israel (**Deuteronomy 2:25** and **Jeremiah 33:7-9**).
- It should be noted that this fear would have worn off (**Jeremiah 5:22-24**).

### 2. Did God ever do terrible things that Israel did not look for?

Yes: *“When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence” (Isaiah 64:3).*

- Terrible in the sense of causing fear (translated as fear @188 times, afraid @78 times, dreadful, terrible, etc.). When you look at other verses containing his Hebrew term that is what you conclude (**Genesis 3:10, Genesis 15:1, Genesis 18:15, Deuteronomy 6:13, Deuteronomy 6:24, II Kings 17:36, Psalms 139:14, Isaiah 41:5, Jeremiah 32:39, etc.**).
- The terrible things, in this sense, are those things God did that caused fear (**Hebrews 12:18-21**).
- God foretold of some things they could expect Him to do (**Genesis 15:12-14, Psalms 137:8, Isaiah 13:1-32:20, Isaiah 44:28-45:5, Jeremiah 36:29, Jeremiah 51:1, Jeremiah 51:55, etc.**).
- Other times there was no announcement before He acted (**Numbers 16:1-40**) and they knew such (**Psalms 31:20-21**).

### 3. Under the Old Law, did they know what God prepared for those whom waited for God?

No: *“For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him” (Isaiah 64:4).*

- I say under the Old Law, for now those things have been revealed (**Romans 16:25-26, I Corinthians 2:9-10, and Colossians 1:26-27**).
- These things were hidden since the beginning [even before; **I Peter 1:18-20**], but now revealed (**Ephesians 3:1-11**).

4. Did Isaiah present Israel before God, in this context, as a worthy people?

No: *“Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways: behold, thou art wroth; for we have sinned: in those is continuance, and we shall be saved. (6) But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. (7) And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities” (Isaiah 64:5-7).*

- “Meetest” is an encounter with God (**Exodus 29:42-43** and **Isaiah 47:3**).
- They understood that the righteous could present themselves before God acceptably (**Psalms 25:10**).
- Yet, they understood why God was wroth with them (**Psalms 90:7-13**).
- Their righteousness was likened to filthy rags (**Zechariah 3:3-4**).
- The acknowledgement of them being unclean doesn’t mean they cannot be saved (**Ezekiel 36:29**), but it did mean they’d suffer (**Ezekiel 39:24**). God did not want anything or anyone unclean among His people (**Isaiah 52:1**; cf. **II Corinthians 6:14-18**).
- Iniquities, like the wind, had taken them away (**Isaiah 59:1-3** and **Jeremiah 5:25**).
- They were not looking to God (**Isaiah 50:2**, **Ezekiel 22:30**, and **Hosea 7:7-14**).
- Their reasoning for not looking to God was that God had turned from them. Now, whose fault was that (**Deuteronomy 31:16-17** and **Deuteronomy 32:18-20**)?
- Was this really irreversible (**Hosea 5:15**)?

5. When Isaiah besought the Lord as their Father, did he ask for God’s anger to continue or for God to refrain from His anger?

Refrain: *“(8) 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. (10) Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. (11) Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste. (12) Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O LORD? wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore” (Isaiah 64:8-12)?*

- Acknowledgment of God’s position and man’s place is a good starting place for confession of sins (**Isaiah 63:16** and **Romans 9:20**).
- Besought Him as His people, but they weren’t acting like it (**Jeremiah 7:23**).
- They didn’t want His anger to continue (**Micah 7:18**).
- They aimed to get God to look at His holy city and people in ruins (**Psalms 79:1-13**).
- It would be a long time coming, but God was not going to stay silent and angry (**Zechariah 1:1-17**; cf. **Jeremiah 25:11**).