

ISAIAH 64

“COME DOWN!”

This chapter continues that earnest prayer which God’s people offered up to Him in the latter part of the last chapter. There, they had pleaded their covenant-relationship with God, and His interest and concern in their sorrowful situation. Now, in this chapter, they pray that God would appear in some remarkable and surprising manner for them, which would destroy His and their enemies (verses 1-2). They remind the Lord of how He had formerly worked on their behalf, and how He was always ready to do so for His people (verses 3-5). They confess themselves to be sinful and unworthy of God’s favor, and they acknowledge that they had truly deserved the judgments which they were now under (verses 6-7). Then they refer themselves to the mercy of God, as their Father; and they submit themselves to His sovereignty (verse 8). After representing the very deplorable condition that they were in, they earnestly pray for the pardon of sin and the turning away of God’s anger (verses 9-12). These words were not only intended for the use of the captive Jews in Babylon, for they may also serve to give direction to believers in other times of distress; they show us what to ask from God, and how to plead with Him. Are God’s people in great affliction? Then let them pray thus!

The people of God desired that He would manifest Himself to them and for them, so that all nations could see it (verses 1-5). Although the Lord does have His ways of manifesting His great might and power on His people’s behalf, this prayer will ultimately be answered at the second coming of Christ, when He shall descend from heaven and be visibly seen by all people. The Lord’s people also put Him in remembrance of what He had previously done for His people, and what He had graciously promised to do for them. We do not need to be afraid of being disappointed by His promises, for they are certain and sure; nor ought we to fear being disappointed in the manner in which He fulfills those promises, for His grace is sufficient for us. Our happiness is bound up in what God has intended for us, and in what He is preparing for us and preparing us for. Is there *anything* that is too great to expect from His truth, His power, and His love? Indeed, “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!” His plans for us cannot be comprehended by human understanding, but He is eager and unlimited in doing us good.

Let us meditate upon the fact that the Lord’s presence is the one hope of His people. The prophet shows that he believed this, for he commences the chapter by a most ardent cry to God that He would come into the midst of His people. A little before this, in chapter 63:15, he had prayed, “Look down from

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ The people of God pray that His power may be manifested – verses 1-5
- ❖ They confess their sins, and bewail their afflictions – verses 6-12

heaven!” But one characteristic of true prayer is that it grows as it proceeds. So the prophet begins by asking God to *look down*; but he continues to gather intensity of desire and confidence of faith, until he here cries, “*Come down!*” So eager is he that the Lord would come at once, that he speaks to Him as though he were addressing a warrior who lingered in his tent while the battle was raging – who would be so eager to rush to the help of his friends that he would not even stop to remove the canvas or to lift the curtain, but would tear a way for himself *through* the canopy, in order to come at once to the deliverance of those who called him to the rescue!

The impetuous character of the simile that is here used shows that the prophet looked upon the Divine visitation as the one thing needful for God’s people. Is this not the prayer of every true heart that knows the need of the Church and the need of our present age? We do not *necessarily* need more ministers or more eloquent teachers, but we *assuredly* need more of our Lord’s sacred presence! We do not need wealth in the Church or magnificent buildings; but above all things, we crave that the living God would refresh His people. The desire of the prophet in his present time is abundantly justified by the history of God’s people in all ages. When the Israelites were in Egypt, what could set them free from the iron bondage, except the presence of God? And it was still His presence that preserved them in their marchings through the lonely wilderness. The favor of Jehovah is the hope of all His people! We see this in the Person of our Lord Jesus; for the entire world must have perished, if God had not come down to it in the Person of His dear Son. And until our Savior’s glorious Second Advent, the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church is our only dependence for success – in anything and everything that we attempt!

Another thought that will surely comfort our hearts is that the presence of God not only gives us hope, but it also dissolves difficulties. “The mountains flowed down at thy presence” (verse 3). Israel had enemies that were strong and powerful; heathen nations and kings towered above them like great mountains. But whenever God came to help them, the kingdoms dissolved, the people were conquered, and the mountains and hills were laid low. Even at this present time, there are great systems of error which oppose the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But the Church only needs the Divine presence in the midst of her; and all of those systems of error will flow down at His feet, like glaciers which dissolve in the summer sun! In addition, there are many times in our lives when we encounter personal mountains of difficulty; but if we go to Christ in order to obtain God’s help, every mountain shall sink and every rock shall melt!

Lord, we beseech You to pour out upon us the sweet influences of Your Holy Spirit to be with us in our time of prayer and Scripture study; for unless You awaken us to such activity, we will be cold and lifeless in it! Amen.

