

I S A I A H

seems worthy of calling it a "rule." The length of time in which the Hebrews were called "the people of Jehovah" seems so short it is as if they were never His people at all. They are saying, in essence, Lord if Your name is ridiculed because of our being taken from our land, it is your fault. Their attitude is if God does not help them *now* and on their terms, He cannot blame anyone but Himself. How often all men are tempted to evaluate their circumstances through the dying eyes of carnal-mindedness and blame God for them. May it not be so in New Zion!

QUIZ

1. Where did the Hebrews believe God dwelt?
2. Is there a better location to suppose God abides?
3. Why do these people think God has disowned them?
4. Why are they now calling on Him to act like a Father when they did not before?
5. Does God *make* men err?
6. Can God demonstrate in their captivity that He is their Father? How?
7. What seems to be their accusation against God in verses 18 and 19?

SPECIAL STUDY

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES

by Ron Fisher
Great Lakes Bible College

INTRODUCTION:

There is a wealth of teaching in the Bible with respect to the person and work of the Holy Spirit. He is said to do what only

persons can do. He can speak, teach, search, reveal, lead, and forbid (I Tim. 4:1; John 14:26; I Cor. 2:10; Acts 16:6, 7). He has the faculties of a person-mind, knowledge, affection, and will (Rom. 8:27; I Cor. 2:11; Rom. 15:30; I Cor. 12:11). He is shown to have the attributes of God. He is eternal (Heb. 9:14). He knows what God knows (I Cor. 2:10, 11). He exerts God's power (Luke 1:35). He is everywhere present as God is (Psalms 139:7-10). He is the Spirit of holiness (Rom. 1:4). We have every right to conclude, therefore, that a Bible study of the Holy Spirit is most valuable and essential.

A. THE HOLY SPIRIT WORKED THE WORKS OF GOD IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES.

1. He was present and active in the creation of the universe (Gen. 1:2).
2. He shared in creating man in the Godhead's image (Gen. 1:26; Job 33:4).
3. He exerted power as from God (Judges 14:6; Mic. 3:8).
4. He convicted men of sin and tried to turn them back to God (Gen. 6:3).
5. He cooperated in confounding arrogant men at the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:7).

B. THE HOLY SPIRIT EMPOWERED AND GUIDED GOD'S LEADERS.

1. During the very unsettled times covered by the book of Judges, God gave assistance to several judges with the presence of His Spirit.
 - a. God sent His Spirit upon Gideon, encouraging him to rally the tribes of Israel against the Midianites and the Amalekites (Judges 6:33-35).
 - b. God's Spirit enabled Jephthah to defeat the sons of Ammon (Judges 11:29-33).
 - c. God's Spirit empowered Samson to slay a lion and to slay thirty men (Judges 14:6, 19).
 - d. God's spirit was strong in Samson to prepare him to slay 1,000 Philistines (Judges 15:14).
2. Though Jehovah did not want Israel to have a king, when

- granting them their wish, He assisted Saul and David by bestowing His Spirit upon them.
- a. When Saul was anointed by Samuel as Israel's first king, the Spirit came upon him to lead him in prophesying (I Sam. 10:1, 6, 10).
 - b. Once Saul was rejected by Jehovah, David was selected as Saul's successor. As the Spirit came upon David, He deserted Saul (I Sam. 16:12-14).
3. The Holy Spirit's most extensive work of all in Old Testament times is found with respect to God's prophets.
- a. Moses expressed the selfless, open-hearted wish that all of God's people could be prophets under the guidance of His Spirit (Num. 11:29).
 - b. When one understands the Old Testament's concept that the prophet must speak for and represent God to man exactly (Ex. 7:1, 2), he can see the necessity of man's being guided by the Spirit to be qualified as a prophet.
 - c. In Nehemiah's day, the Israelites stood a fourth of a day confessing their sins. Then they were admonished by Levites to recall the bountiful blessings God had showered upon their ancestors. Among these was the Spirit's instruction of them through the prophets (Neh. 9:20, 30). Sadly, most of the nation would not give heed to the prophetic words spoken.
 - d. Zechariah observes how the people had hardened their hearts against the former prophets, even though the Spirit revealed Jehovah's law and words through them (Zech. 7:12). Jehovah promised not to listen to them just as they had not listened to Him.
 - e. The most effective summary of Old Testament prophecy is found in the New Testament: II Peter 1:20, 21. There it is declared that no prophecy of Scripture originates from human will. Rather prophets spoke as they were guided by the Spirit of God.
4. Though there are over 300 references to priests in the Old Testament, there is not one example of the Holy Spirit's

presence to guide them. This is probably best explained by the fact that their duties, mode of dress, and style of life were set down by divine revelation. Their obligation was to obey what God had already told them to do.

C. THE HOLY SPIRIT ASSISTED SECONDARY LEADERS.

1. The leaders previously mentioned furnish illustrations of the major human leadership God provided and equipped for Israel.
2. There was also a back-up or assisting leadership which God prepared with Holy Spirit guidance.
3. During Moses' career of directing people of Israel over a period of 40 years of wandering, God commanded him to select 70 elders from among the population to act as his religious and civil assistants. This would lighten his burden of trying to deal fairly and adequately with almost three million people. God placed His Spirit upon these men, once they were chosen (Num. 11:16, 17, 25).
4. Joshua took Moses' place and led out to conquer Palestine for Israel and to settle the tribes in their new-found home. God had placed His Spirit within Joshua and asked Moses to ordain him to his task by the laying on of hands (Num. 28:17).
5. God endued Bezalel and Oholiab with His Spirit so as to make them skilled tradesmen, fitted to prepare all the artistic designs and accompanying furniture of the Tabernacle. They exhibited superior skills which were worthy of God's "house of worship" (Ex. 31:1-11).

D. THE HOLY SPIRIT STRESSED THAT DEPENDENCE UPON HIM IS THE ONE WAY TO GOD'S VICTORY.

1. Through Isaiah Jehovah chastised the nation of Judah for making its own plans, not accepting His; for making alliances with Egypt and not with His Spirit (Isa. 30:1, 2). See also Isa. 31:1-3. They were adding sin to sin. Their foul attitude is dramatized by the fact that they were refusing to listen to God's instruction. They even bullied God's prophets (seers), telling them not to prophesy what

was right. They wanted to hear pleasant words and deceits (Isa. 30:9, 10).

2. Because Israel rejected God's Spirit in the wilderness wanderings, He turned against them as His enemies (Isa. 63:7-14).
3. Under the figure of a lampstand holding seven lamps and supplied with lighting fuel by two olive trees, Zechariah conveyed a valuable lesson to Zerubbabel from God: accomplishment of God's work is achieved by God's Spirit, not by human might or power (Zech. 4:1-6).

CONCLUSION:

The presence of God's Spirit has played a fundamental role in His direction of men throughout both the Patriarchal and Mosaic Dispensations. Special men were selected for the Spirit's indwelling so that they might lead God's people correctly. These principles can minister to a better understanding of the Spirit's work in New Testament times.

D. RESTLESSNESS OF ZION (cont'd), CHAPTERS 63 - 64

4. PENITENTLY VEXED

TEXT: 64:1-7

- 1 Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might quake at thy presence,
- 2 as when fire kindleth the brushwood, and the fire causeth the waters to boil; to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence!
- 3 When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down; the mountains quaked at thy presence.
- 4 For from of old men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen a God besides thee, who worketh for him that waiteth for him.
- 5 Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness,

those that remember thee in thy ways: behold, thou wast wroth, and we sinned: in them have we been of long time; and shall we be saved?

- 6 For we are all become as one that is unclean, and all our righteousnesses are as a polluted garment: and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, take 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 by means of our iniquities.

QUERIES

- a. Why has the attitude of the people now apparently changed?
- b. Is verse four quoted in I Corinthians 2:9?
- c. How does one "take hold" of God? (verse seven)

PARAPHRASE

O Lord we wish you would break open the impenetrable expanse of the skies that seems to be keeping You from coming down personally to us in all Your omnipotence making the whole earth shake and tremble with Your judgment. If you would intervene directly, Lord, Your righteous glory would consume our enemies like fire consumes brushwood and the fiery lava of volcanoes makes the waters boil. Yet, when we think about it Lord, if you came down thus You would do such awe-inspiring wonders that we do not even have language to describe them. Since the world was created no person anywhere has ever seen or heard of a God like You who works for those who patiently trust in Him. Lord, You gladly receive any man who comes to you doing righteousness and joyfully following in Your ways. But we have continued in our sinning; even when You expressed Your hatred of our rebellious ways we went right on sinning. How can we ever be saved? Yes, we all stand in relationship to You as one cut off from the covenant

because of our uncleanness; any righteousness we might think we have is really non-existent and we are as legally unclean as the bloodstained rags of a woman at her monthly period. Like the leaves of autumn, we fade, fall and wither; our sins sweep us away like the wind blows away the autumn leaves. In spite of our very apparent condition, no one calls upon Your name and no one ever prods himself to make any firm commitment of his life to Your word. You have withdrawn Your grace from us and we are being consumed by the consequences of our sins.

COMMENTS

v. 1-3 CRY: The complaint of the preceding passage begins to turn toward a cry of desperation which leads to a confession. The remnant is gradually coming to the attitude God is able to use in His messianic program. Now the cry is that Jehovah will tear an opening in the impenetrable black cloud that is standing in the way of His seeing their predicament and come down to help them. They are begging God to come in direct intervention as He did for their ancestors. God presented Himself as directly as He dared to Isaiah in His theophany in the temple (cf. Isa. 6:1ff). Why could the people not accept Isaiah's testimony to that direct appearance and trust Him to deliver them from the impending captivity? For the same reason men and women today demand a physical appearance from God before they will believe when there is sufficient testimony to His incarnation in the New Testament!

The anticipation of Jehovah's appearance is couched in the experiences of their ancestors—mountains quaking, fire burning, waters boiling, nations trembling, (cf. Ex. 19:16ff; Psa. 144:5; Deut. 32:22; Judg. 5:4-5; Micah 1:3-4; Heb. 1:4-6; 3:3; 15; Psa. 18:8-16, etc.). Should God appear directly He would consume the whole material universe (cf. Heb. 12:18-21; 18:25-29). Instead of coming in His consuming Presence, He sent His Son to give the world a saving Presence. So when the people give more thought to what such a direct intervention

of Jehovah would bring, they are moved to cry, "O, Jehovah, if You came down thus You would do awe-inspiring deeds and wonders that not even we could anticipate!" Should Jehovah appear on earth it would be overwhelming—no human language could express it, no human being could guess what it would be like! The great apostle Paul was caught up "into the third heavens" and saw things it was impossible for human language to describe (cf. II Cor. 12:1-4).

v. 4-7 CONFESSIOIN: At last, the remnant, after contemplating the awesome holiness of Jehovah and His unsearchable power, confesses its sin and prepares to be clay in the Potter's hand (cf. 64:8). First, there is the confession of the uniqueness of Jehovah's revelation of Himself and His relationship to those who "wait" (or trust) in Him. The people are at last testifying that Jehovah is quite unlike the idols. In fact, no one in all the world is able to know the mind, Spirit, deeds, personhood of Jehovah unless Jehovah chooses to reveal Himself. And even then, man can know only as much of God's mind as He chooses to reveal through His appointed spokesmen (prophets and apostles, etc.). This is the sense in which the apostle Paul quoted Isaiah 64:4 in I Corinthians 2:9. The nature of the living God is such that the human mind is incapable of *discovering* Him or *inventing* Him—man must humbly "wait" until God reveals Himself and man must humbly accept both the instrumentality by which and the extent to which God reveals Himself.

The uniqueness of Jehovah stands out in contrast to all pretended gods most apparently in His faithfulness to be constantly present with those who seek righteousness and "remember" (walk in) His ways. The holiness of Jehovah was unique in contrast to all the gods of the heathen. At last the people are admitting that Jehovah requires men to "rejoice" in and "work" righteousness to enjoy His presence. They have come confessing as Hosea (Hos. 14:1-9) instructed their northern countrymen to do. This remnant of Isaiah's disciples has been brought to its confession through the preaching of the prophet concerning the atoning suffering of the Servant and the future

glory of Zion. They will produce a progeny of faithful servants (by implanting Isaiah's message in their offspring) which will, in turn, bring the Messiah into the world (cf. Mt. 1:18-25; Lk. 1:24-56; Lk. 1:67-80; Lk. 2:1-52; Lk. 4:14-30, etc.).

Once man has been confronted with a revelation of Jehovah's holiness and admits it, then he sees himself as he truly is, a sinner in need of Jehovah's saving grace (cf. Isa. 6:5-6). The remnant here acknowledges it has been "a long time" in its sin and in need of God's grace; else, how shall it be saved? They see their uncleanness. They now realize they are spiritually cut off from Jehovah because He is absolutely holy and they have defiled themselves and are no longer worthy to stand in His presence—even if He should come in answer to their prayer. This is quite different from the attitude expressed by some in Judah when they haughtily dared the Lord to come down and be present with them (cf. Isa. 5:19). They see their uncleanness as a "polluted garment" using the figure of the ceremonial uncleanness of a woman at the time of her monthly period (cf. Ezek. 36:17; Lev. 18:24-28). The Hebrew word *tame'* is translated *unclean* and is the same word the leper is to cry out (Lev. 13:45-46) indicating the confession here is a recognition of having been cut off from covenant relationship by their sin.

Not only are they experiencing the legal condemnation of their sin, they are also experiencing the psychological and social consequences of it. They are all withering and dying like leaves on a tree and their sin is tossing them about and blowing them away like the wind blows the fallen leaves. The tragedy of the situation is that sin is so pervasive in the nation, no one seems concerned enough to call upon the name of the Lord which involves "taking hold" of His word. Perhaps the "none" would be qualified by the fact that a *few* were calling on the Lord (Isaiah and the remnant). But there were so few Jehovah must still withhold His direct intervention ("hid thy face from us") until the captivity comes and the nation is chastened and purified and a larger remnant is formed. The Hebrew word *khazak* is translated *take hold* but is usually

more intense and translated *hold fast* as when Hagar was told to *hold fast* to Ishmael (Gen. 21:18) or when Pharaoh was *holding* on to the Israelites (Ex. 9:2). So now their sin is consuming them—they are suffering the due penalty of their sins (cf. Rom. 1:28), and the nation as a whole does not turn to God and hold fast to Him for strength—it is going to be blown away into captivity.

5. PLEA FOR VERIFICATION

TEXT: 64:8-12

- 8 But now, O Jehovah, 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 Jehovah, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, look, we beseech thee, we are all thy people.
 10 Thy holy cities are become a wilderness, Zion is become a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation.
 11 Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned with fire; and all our pleasant places are laid waste.
 12 Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O Jehovah? wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore?

QUERIES

- a. Is there a change in attitude here?
- b. Is Jerusalem a desolation at this writing?
- c. What is their "beautiful house"?

PARAPHRASE

Now, Lord, we are pleading that You will intervene directly and relieve our present circumstances because, First, You alone