

Isaiah 64:1 Oh, that You would rend the heavens! That You would come down! That the mountains might shake at Your presence -- ² As fire burns brushwood, As fire causes water to boil -- To make Your name known to Your adversaries, *That* the nations may tremble at Your presence!

Isaiah begins this section with the picture of God peeling open the sky, “that you might rend the heavens.” Because this image implies the open display of the power of God, we might immediately think of Judgment day. But actually that is not what Isaiah is talking about here. The rest of the chapter makes that quite clear. Consider verse three, here we have the exact same image but it is used of the past. This is something that has already happened

This is not a picture of judgment day but instead a picture of the way in which the Lord comes now in judgment on those who oppose Him and His will.

“the mountains” which shake at His presence are the great people of this earth those who set themselves up with great power and authority, and they look to us as though they are unassailable. But at the Lord’s judgment they will melt away, like twigs that are burnt up in the fire, like water that boils above fire, so these great men, these mountains that are opposed to God melt away and are gone when He comes in His judgment.

“that you would rend the heavens” – “that the mountains would melt” – are indeed references to the Lord revealing himself in power and judgment. Isaiah confess that because He does bring down His enemies, those who are opposed to Him, in this way He reveals His presences and His power.

In His arrogance Pharaoh refused to acknowledge the Lord, not when Moses showed him miracles, not during the ten plaques, not even at the death of His own Son. Not until His army was drowning in the midst of the sea, then only did he finally acknowledge the Lord.

³ When You did awesome things *for which* we did not look, You came down, The mountains shook at Your presence.

Isaiah continues to speak of the faithfulness of the Lord in verse three. That He has done these awesome things even when we did not ask for them.

The Israelites as slaves in Egypt prayed only that they might not be persecuted, yet the Lord utterly destroyed Pharaoh and his armies, lead the Israelites out of Egypt and gave them a new land.

Martin Luther discussing this verse talks about who he himself, prayed only that he would be spared his life. But the Lord did so much more than that bringing down extremely powerful men who opposed the Word of God.

⁴ For since the beginning of the world *Men* have not heard nor perceived by the ear, Nor has the eye seen any God besides You, Who acts for the one who waits for Him.

Here is a third example of the Lord's faithfulness – that He does indeed act for the one who waits.

No other God has there ever been who actually does listen and come to us and fulfills our prayers.

But, we have to wait, we have to wait on the Lord's time. Yet we are so selfish and impatient and have such little faith. That we so often assume that He will not do it because he has not yet done it.

Even Abraham who is called the father of those who believe, and is held up as the ultimate example of faith. Even his faith failed. Because He did not wait on the Lord, but after just 15 years, decided he had to help the Lord out and had a son with Hagar. What is 15 years to the Lord, if Abraham had waited only a little longer.

Do we get angry because the Lord does not answer, after a day or two or a week of prayer? WAIT, for the Lord does reveal himself as verse 5 reminds us

⁵ You meet him who rejoices and does righteousness, *Who* remembers You in Your ways.

The Lord does indeed “rend the heavens” that is He reveal himself to those who remember His ways. So many people get angry the Lord does not show himself.

If Randy Strelow tells me he lives on Grand River Road, and I take off south on 73 will I ever find him? Of course not. God says we are to come to him in the His word and sacrament, but many think they know where and how God should reveal himself, and then they get angry because God has not so revealed himself.

This is the fourth and final way that Isaiah lists in which God reveals himself as a faithful God, who comes in righteous judgment on the world

You are indeed angry, for we have sinned -- In these ways we continue; And we need to be saved. ⁶ But we are all like an unclean *thing*, And all our righteousnesses *are* like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.

Contemplating God's goodness and faithfulness makes Isaiah realize the truth about himself and us and all humans. God has done all of these things yet what have we done. Nothing other than to sin constantly against him.

We do not wait, knowing that He will deliver us. But instead we cry and complain constantly.

We know his righteousness and His judgment, but we don't care. We are content to live comfortably in our sin, thinking it doesn't really matter. I'm good enough, God's not really going to punish me.

"In these ways we continue" day after day. We are like a dead leaf, we are that useless. We are just blown around by every little wind, going this way and that. Even our greatest good deeds are nothing more than a dirty rag in God's eyes, something which should be thrown away

⁷ And *there is* no one who calls on Your name, Who stirs himself up to take hold of You; For You have hidden Your face from us, And have consumed us because of our iniquities.

"**there is none who calls on your name**" – God opened the heavens and revealed himself to us. He gave us His name so that we might call upon Him in every trouble, pray, praise and give thanks.

"**No one bothers to take hold of you**" – here we have a reference to the story of Jacob. Remember how Jacob took hold of the Lord. He grabbed on to him and would not let him go until he blessed Him.

Here we have an example of how we might receive anything we need from the Lord. But no one can be bothered to do that. We would have to get off the couch. We would have to spend time reading His word and praying.

This is the greatest act of faith, to take hold of the Lord and demand that He bless us. But we do not do it. Because we are afraid, we are afraid that He has hidden his face from us.

When you are angry with someone, you avoid looking at them. That is the picture here. We are afraid that God is angry with us and won't look at us. And its no wonder we are afraid for we are sinners.

Truly we need a savior

⁸ But now, O LORD, You *are* our Father; We *are* the clay, and You our potter; And all we *are* the work of Your hand. ⁹ Do not be furious, O LORD, Nor remember iniquity forever; Indeed, please look -- we all *are* Your people!

But Isaiah says, “you are our Father.”

There is no single word in all of scripture that so adequately sums up the Gospel as this word, “Father.” For when the Bible teaches us to call Him father, it means that everything that is true of a good Father is true of God towards us.

It means that He loves us enough to discipline us but will not stop loving us even when we sin daily against him.

Indeed He is the potter – Because of our sin we are useless cracked and broken vessel, but here Isaiah prays that the Lord would smooch us up into a ball of clay and reform us into something good.

We cannot make ourselves righteous but only God can remake us, so that we can be the Sons of God.

Therefore, Isaiah finishes, do not be angry or keep a count of sins. But forgive us for Jesus sake. For indeed we are His people.

AMEN

THE PEACE OF GOD THAT SURPASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING SHALL KEEP YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS IN CHRIST JESUS.