

Predictions - Fulfilled and Unfulfilled - Part 1

Isaiah 65

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Of course, it is a somewhat silly thing to say that “one part or section of the Bible is “interesting” because it suggests that what you mean is that it is “more interesting than others. Obviously, for believers and for those who believe the Bible to be the Word of the Living God, everything it contains, ought to be, at the very least, “interesting”. I will say, however, that because we as the children of God, ought to be absorbed in learning as much as we can. 39 Books in the Old Testament and 27 in the New make for a very large selection of content from which to draw. Though I can’t lay a primary emphasis on the Book of Isaiah, I do have to say that it has always been a fascinating place for a child of God to focus attention.

Here in Isaiah 65 we find some very interesting information about God’s opinion and what He wants His people (read OT “Israel”) to know about the state of their walking with Him over the past centuries.

In the first few verses we read a stern rebuke of the Lord going forth because of their rebellion in the face of open opportunity:

- An ignored seeking in verse 1, and
- abundant divine revelation, 2,
- which they scouted for idolatry, 3–4, and
- the intrusion of self-righteousness, 5.
- The warning and justification of coming punishment concerning the day of vengeance, 6–7.

We’ll start with viewing the first few verses and looking at the content that Isaiah given us there...

I. Three Predictions are Seen to be Fulfilled:

A. I am sought of them that asked not for Me (Isa. 65:1).

These few verses show the Righteousness of God’s Judgment, and the immensity of the work done by God that culminated in the of the Lord Jesus. Though Israel sought the Lord, they did so only superficially. They did not genuinely seek Him. The NT assigns an additional sense to the words in Rom. 10:20, applying them to Gentiles who were no more (and perhaps a bit less even) energetic in seeking the God Who they knew to be present and knowable. The NT is clear that those who seek Him would find Him through the work of His sovereign grace.

***65 “I was sought by those who did not ask for Me;
I was found by those who did not seek Me.***

*I said, 'Here I am, here I am,'
To a nation that was not called by My name.*

A brilliant writer of Hymns, one named “Haldor Lillenas” (1885-1959), spoke of this wonderful and immense grace of God extended on the behalf and benefit of those who had not sought to know Him. One of the most glorious aspects of God’s great mercy and how it exercised toward unbelievers is the fact it is that He has it for those who not only do not know Him but for those who NEVER even looked/asked for Him! Of course, that is true of Gentiles as well as that group directly addressed here.

You and I, and non-Israelites, had the same failing. Paul tells us in Romans 1&2 that all men are born with the knowledge that there is a God and that they are accountable to Him. But yet, they refuse to seek Him and, in fact, rebel against Him! He goes on some bit later to refer to such human beings as “haters of God”, a fairly good description if you think about it a bit. As we’ve already seen, this stern rebuke from the Lord goes forth because of Israel’s rebellion in the face of:

1. Open opportunity, in verse one 1, and
2. Abundant divine revelation, in verse 2,
3. The fact that they ultimately deliberately and knowingly scouted for and opportunity to worship false idols and gods Isaiah says in verse 3–4,
4. And citing the exercise of their self-righteousness, mentioned in verse 5.
5. Finally, Isaiah voices the warning of punishment which concerns the day of vengeance, 6–7.

How wondrous is it for us to ponder the good grace and mercy of God extend to such as this? So many around us and around the world choose to think evil of God and lay guilt at His feet because of some circumstance(s) in their lives that they fail to understand. They simply cannot (or will not) understand why it is that there is pain or lack in their lives, or in the lives of others. Sadly, many choose to lay the fault for that presence on God. Certainly we can see some reason for this failure to understand, but there is no legitimate reason for staying in ignorance and interpreting the reason of them wrongly.

The Scripture teaches that the originating reason for evil existing in the world is the first couple, Adam and Eve. Human life has experience a growing evil both within and all around them ever since. Certainly, this is not to deny the truth that you and I do not demonstrate this continuing tendency to sin as we live our lives. Let’s not blame everything on Adam and Eve.

Isaiah’s statement here is very valuable in reminding us that we, at some point in our lives, as unredeemed people, stood in the very same place that Israel stood as Isaiah spoke to them. Though we certainly see that this was intended to speak to the Israelites, we must surely see that it speaks, every bit as surely and fearsomely to every single Gentile who has lived since the time of Isaiah’s prophecy. One thing that became clear, not to mention welcome in the NT era,

was that this resistance and rebellion of Israel fits into the plan of God to extend salvation to all nations (Rom. 10:20–21; 11:11–32).

These verses actually anticipate the drama of the book of Acts and the spread of the gospel to the Gentiles, as seen especially in Acts 28:17–28 (cf. Rom. 10:20–21).

- **Here am I.** God takes the initiative to reveal himself to the nations through the gospel (cf. Isa. 11:10; 56:3–8).
- **I spread out my hands all the day.** God patiently pleads with obstinate Israel (cf. John 1:11).
- **following their own devices** (or thoughts).

How welcome is it, especially in this time of year, to remember that our Lord Jesus Christ, the only Begotten Son of the true and living God, came willingly and virtually eagerly, in order to demonstrate the love of our heavenly Father for all us. Remember the wording of that very famous verse:

For God so loved the world that He gave his Only Begotten, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life!!

The truth here is that all of us, those who are described even as Isaiah speaks of Israel here in Isaiah 65, those with

- An open opportunity to submit themselves to a loving and calling God, in verse one, and
- Abundant divine revelation, in verse 2,
- The fact that they ultimately deliberately and knowingly looked for an opportunity to worship false idols and gods Isaiah says in verse 3–4,
- And proudly and even eagerly exercised their self-righteousness, mentioned in verse 5.
- And for virtually all, ignore the warning of punishment which concerns the day of vengeance, 6–7.

We MUST remember that all men, every SINGLE one of them (and not just males) have the knowledge of God and of their accountability to Him built into them from the time of conception/birth. No one can rightly or truly claim “I never knew of Him”. It does not matter what nation or country, what religion (now or in the past), or whether they had the Scriptural revelation of God to refer to. We remember what Paul said in Romans 3:23:

...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

That is not just a vague, generalized statement. It is a very serious and trustworthy one. All persons, every single one of them in history, has committed sin, they have come due the wrath of God because “the soul that sins shall die” is God’s sentence as put forth by Ezekiel over in Ezekiel 18:4

*“Behold, all souls are Mine;
The soul of the father*

*As well as the soul of the son is Mine;
The soul who sins shall die.*

Now, I'll grant that this is not the most pleasant of verses in God's Word, not by any means. But we must acknowledge that at least three things are definitely stated here as being declared by God as fact:

1. ALL souls are ultimately God's possession. There is simply no way of wiggling out of the truth of this - It is God Who is Master and not any kind of human comprehension or perception.
2. The general truth that all men are God's specifically applies to the spiritual identity of men. Their spiritual being or existence lies in His hand and relies on His disposition. Everyone needs to face up to this truth as it is revealed the Scripture.
3. That is not just generally so, but is specifically so as well...father and son both (or inclusive) are His and God will exercise His will to deal with them in righteousness.
4. Ezekiel finishes by making clear to Israel that the chief matter at hand is the matter of Israel's sin before God.
5. That being so...anyone who sins (and all do) will suffer the penalty that God's Law demanded of it - they will die. And that death is the death of the "soul" as the topic of the verse has made clear!

And so we can see that this first few verse speak of five basic

- An ignored seeking in verse 1, and
- abundant divine revelation, 2,
- which they scouted for idolatry, 3-4, and
- the intrusion of self-righteousness, 5.
- The warning and justification of coming punishment concerning the day of vengeance, 6-7.

We've spoken of the first fulfilled prophecy, what we have called "I am Sought of them that asked not for me...". We'll continue on this in later installments.