

v. 12 SANCTIFIED: When Zion separates itself from paganism and accepts the Lord's salvation, she shall be acknowledged as *holy*. It will be apparent to the whole world that she is dedicated, set-apart, and belongs to the Lord of Glory, author of Life and Righteousness. This is what the church of Christ is for—a testimony of the Holy God. She is to fulfill what God intended for Israel (Ex. 19:6). The world is to acknowledge that members of New Zion consider themselves *purchased* (redeemed) by Almighty God; Zion is to testify that her citizenship is in heaven and that she has no abiding place here—she is a city of sojourners whose destiny is the Eternal Jerusalem where God dwells forever and ever.

### QUIZ

1. Why is Zion admonished to "go through the gates"? What gates?
2. What must Zion do concerning the salvation offered by Jehovah?
3. What will the New Zion fulfill that Old Zion did not?

## D. RESTLESSNESS OF ZION, CHAPTERS 63 - 64

### 1. PREDICTED VINDICATION

TEXT: 63:1-9

- 1 Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.
- 2 Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winevat?
- 3 I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the peoples there was no man with me: yea, I trod them in mine anger, and

- trampled them in my wrath; and their lifeblood is sprinkled upon my garments, and I have stained all my raiment.
- 4 For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.
- 5 And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my wrath, it upheld me.
- 6 And I trod down the peoples in mine anger, and made them drunk in my wrath, and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth.
- 7 I will make mention of the lovingkindnesses of Jehovah, and the praises of Jehovah according to all that Jehovah hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses.
- 8 For he said, Surely, they are my people, children that will not deal falsely: so he was their Saviour.
- 9 In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.

### QUERIES

- a. Who is the one "who speaks in righteousness"?
- b. What is the "year of my redeemed"?
- c. Who is the "angel of his presence"?

### PARAPHRASE

Who is this majestic figure I see approaching Zion from the direction of Edom. He has on royal robes and strides along in a grand and stately march. He answers, I am the One who vindicates Zion, the One who is Zion's Saviour. But why are your robes stained all over with red as if you had been tramping

grapes in the winevat? He answers, There was no one capable or willing anywhere to do what I have done so I have had to do this mission all by myself. What I have been doing is enforcing My threats of wrath and anger by utterly destroying the enemies of My people. That is the blood of My enemies staining My garments! I have done this because the allotted time for punishment to be meted out has reached its fulfillment in My divine program of redemption. When this time came, I looked for someone to join with Me in this work of judgment but there was no one and I was disturbed. So I did the work of destroying the enemy alone. When I executed My anger upon My enemies, I made them reel and stagger with the destruction. The cup of their wrath which they made others drink, I filled up with My wrath and made them drink until they died of it.

In all of this judgment upon Zion's enemies the compassion of Jehovah is manifest toward Israel and I will therefore praise Him and proclaim His lovingkindness with all that is within me. It is also evident in this great deliverance through judgment that Jehovah has saved Zion to make of her a people who will not deal falsely but will be righteous and just. God Himself experienced affliction when His people were afflicted and so He sent Himself to save His people. Personally affected as He was by His love and compassion for them, He personally entered into the salvation and redemption of His people all the years of their past history and He will take a personal hand in their future salvation and redemption.

### COMMENTS

v. 1-6 CONQUEST: The prophet sees "Someone" coming from the direction of Edom (southeast of the Dead Sea) with "dyed" garments. The Hebrew word is *khamutz* and means, *highly colored*, indicating royalty or affluence. The remainder of verse one indicates the approaching One is majestically divine since He is One that "announces vindication" (*davver tzedakah* in Hebrew) and is "mighty to save." Later, the prophet

praises Jehovah for His lovingkindnesses as expressed in the judgments upon Zion's enemies. The unrecognizable figure coming from Edom is Jehovah. Bozrah was the ancient capital of Edom. For a discussion of Edom and its relation to the Israelites, read our comments in *Minor Prophets*, pub. College Press, pg. 117-118. The Edomites were inveterate enemies of Israel. They rejoiced with spite-filled hearts at any misfortune befalling the Jews. Edom participated in every opportunity that came their way to plunder Jerusalem and Judah, selling Jewish captives into slavery and killing them unmercifully (cf. Obadiah 1-14; Isa. 34:5-15; Ezek. 35:1-15). Many of the prophets predicted the judgment of God upon the Edomites. Edom is often mentioned as typical or representative of *all* the ungodly powers that oppose Jehovah's redemptive work through Israel. We believe that is the case here also. The picture here is of Jehovah's judgment of all that opposes His messianic program.

The Hebrew word *'adam* is translated *red* and is the same word we apparently translate *man* and *Edom*. The garments of the One approaching are splattered with *red* like a man who has just come from tramping in the winevat and has splattered red grape juice all over his clothing. This red is the "lifeblood" of his enemies (cf. v. 3). A similar picture is painted by John the apostle as he portrays the judgment of God upon the Roman empire in Revelation 19:13.

Lest someone get the idea that Edom's downfall (and that of any other nation for that matter) is a matter of chance, or that it might have been averted if other circumstances had fallen just right, Jehovah emphasizes that He *alone* brought it about. The One approaching (the Lord) had trodden the "winepress" alone. He had no assistance, not only because no one else would be adequate for the task, but also because He needed no one else! The emphasis of this whole passage is that Jehovah is *personally* involved in and responsible for the deliverance, salvation and redemption of Zion—even to the destruction of her enemies. In a prior statement (Isa. 59:16) the Lord emphasizes the same ideas. The Lord has everything needful for Zion's messianic destiny exactly scheduled in history

and He carries it out according to His own righteous pleasure. The "day" of His vengeance was in His own heart and the "year" of His "redeemed" comes precisely according to His timetable, (cf. Isa. 61:1). The Lord sets times and seasons (Dan. 2:20-23); He deposes and sets up kings and kingdoms to fit His own plans (Dan. 5:18-21); He has a definite time schedule for the messianic nation to bring forth the Messiah (see comments Dan. 9:24-27). He has the power in His own "arm" to bring salvation to His people and needs no other assistance (cf. Isa. 40:10; 51:5; 52:10; 53:1 for comments on "arm"). The Lord made His enemies *drunk* with His wrath. This is a figure of speech indicating two ideas. First, His enemies have caused the Jews to "drink" their cup of wrath in plunder and slavery; Jehovah will recompense these enemies with His own cup of wrath filled to the brim. God is not mocked; whatever a nation sows, that shall it reap, double! Second, when Jehovah's enemies are made to drink His cup of wrath, they will stagger and reel under it as drunken men reel (cf. Isa. 29:9; 49:26; Rev. 17:6; 18:3-7, etc.). God's wrath is *perfect*; it is complete and lacks nothing.

v. 7-9 CELEBRATION: Zion, through the prophet Isaiah, is led to rejoice in Jehovah's judgment of her enemies. It is not sadistic for those who love righteousness to praise God when He judges and defeats evil. The Bible insists that an Omnipotent, Absolutely Holy and Just God must, by His very nature, ultimately uphold and give complete victory to truth, holiness and justice. He must, on the other hand, bring about complete defeat and incarceration of evil. That is why He made Hell! God intends to accomplish those objectives through two means. First, He will make available an opportunity and a way for all human beings, who so choose, to be declared righteous (by Jesus' blood) and to grow into the image of His own righteous nature (through faith and obedience to His revealed New Covenant). These, He will save and give Life everlasting. Second, He creates an everlasting penitentiary (Hell) where He will ultimately defeat and imprison all those who choose against His will and desire to live in rebellion against Him. Now a

part of recreating in His own righteous image those who choose that Life by surrender to His will is that they shall also hate evil and love good (cf. Isa. 1:16-17; Prov. 8:13; Amos 5:15). Heaven and the saints are told to rejoice over the fact that God destroyed the "harlot," "Babylon" (the city of Rome and the Roman empire) with blood, war, pestilence, fire, destruction and torments (cf. Rev. 17-18, esp. Rev. 18:20 and 19:1-8)! A person who cannot hate evil, cannot love good! The uniqueness of Jesus' fleshly nature was that as a man He "loved righteousness and hated lawlessness" (Heb. 1:9) and thus was the Perfect Man!

Thus in these verses it is a mark of the righteousness and godliness of Zion that she praise God and speak of His loving-kindnesses in response to His wreaking vengeance upon those who despise Him, rebel against Him and oppress His people. He vindicates His holiness, He upholds His absolute justness and He delivers His people and vindicates their faith in Him. If He cannot thus vindicate man's faith in His absolute holiness and justice and righteousness, then His faithfulness is compromised and there is no hope in worshipping Him as opposed to any other god!

God is true! Those who wish to be known as His children must be true. They must rejoice at the defeat of evil and the establishment of righteousness because this is the absolute truth. Those who oppose good and rejoice in evil cannot be His children because that is the ultimate falsehood. In addition, His sons will act upon their choice and *do* righteousness. Those who claim to be His children will not deal falsely. A citizen of Zion cannot *say* he stands for righteousness and *refuse to do* it. That is falseness (cf. I Jn. 2:3-6; 3:4-10). God cannot save the declared rebel and He cannot save the pretending servant; the pretender is as much a rebel as the declared one!

There is a difficult problem with the opening phrase of verse nine. The modern, vowel-pointed Hebrew text reads, *bekal-tzaratham l'o tzar*, or, "In all their affliction he was *not* afflicted." The ancient Hebrew text was strictly consonantal (without vowel-points). There is a consonantal text known

as *Kethiv*, or, "written" which acquired a standing of sacredness and prohibited any scribe from tampering with it. It could not be changed. But the Massorettes (cir. 950 A.D.), a group of Hebrew scholars, produced a text which preserved traditional readings in variance with the "sacred" *Kethiv*; this was called *Qere*, or, "to be read." The *Qere* was a text with the "traditional" variant consonants out in the margin. Because the vowels, being added later, did not have the sacredness of the consonants, the Massorettes felt it was proper to put the vowels for the marginal consonants (*Qere*) with the old consonants in the text (that is, with the *Kethiv*). This, of course, resulted in some impossible forms. The problem in verse nine is that the *Kethiv* text has *l'o* while the *Qere* text has *lo*. Young advocates the adoption of the *Qere* reading which would make the phrase read, "In all their affliction, there was affliction to him." Keil and Delitzsch say, "The Masora actually does reckon this as one of the fifteen passages in which *lo* is to be read for *l'o*." The *Qere* reading of *lo* certainly fits the context better and suits the concept already expressed concerning the suffering Servant (cf. Isa. 53:4-6; 53:10-11). The context indicates that when His people suffered affliction from their oppressors, God Himself felt that affliction and acted in judgment. That is no strange teaching in the Bible. The experiences of Hosea were indicative of the feelings God experienced toward a nation of people who had spurned His love (cf. Hos. 1:2-3; 3:1; 11:1-4, etc.). Our God feels—He is not a robot or a stoic, impassive, insensitive Idea. Jesus proved God feels (cf. Jn. 11:33-35).

Another interesting phrase in verse nine is, "and the angel of his presence saved them . . ." The Hebrew word translated *presence* is *panaym* which means literally, *face* or *person*. The word *male'k* is *angel* and means *messenger*. God promised to send the *messenger* of His *face* or *person* to His people (Ex. 23:20-23) and actually did send to them this messenger (Ex. 14:19; Num. 20:16). He is the Lord's messenger (Ex. 33:14, 15) and is actually the Lord Jehovah Himself (Ex. 33:12). Keil and Delitzsch say, "This mediatorial angel is called 'the angel

of His face,' as being the representative of God, for 'the face of God' is His self-revealing presence (even though only revealed to the mental eye); and consequently the presence of God . . . is called directly 'His face' in Deut. 4:37 . . . and 'my face' in Ex. 33:14-15, by the side of 'my angel' in Ex. 32:34, and the angel in Ex. 33:2, appears as something incomparably higher than the presence of God through the mediation of that one angel . . ." Young says, "The angel of His face is the angel who is His face or in whom His face is made clear. In him the Lord is Himself present." When the Lord said He would send His angel to slay 185,000 Assyrian soldiers (Isa. 37:36) it is reported that the Lord Himself did the deed (cf. Isa. 10:12; Isa. 10:33-34).

The next section (63:10-14) indicates the judgments over Zion's enemies here declared (63:1-9) were past judgments upon which Zion might base her trust in Jehovah for deliverance from the Babylonian captivity which was apparently inescapable as Isaiah was writing these words. But, as the next section indicates, Zion is having difficulty believing that Jehovah will work for her deliverance as He did in days gone by.

## QUIZ

1. Why is the One appearing to Isaiah's vision coming from Edom?
2. What could be a different translation of the word "righteousness" in verse one?
3. Why does this One coming have "red" on his garments?
4. Why stress that this One has trodden the winevat alone?
5. Is it proper for Zion to speak of God's lovingkindness in connection with judgment and vengeance?
6. How is God afflicted when His people are afflicted?
7. What is the relation of this angel to Jehovah?

## 2. PRAYER FOR VICTORY

TEXT: 63:10-14

- 10 But they rebelled, and grieved his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them.
- 11 Then he remembered the days of old, Moses and his people, saying, Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock? where is he that put his holy Spirit in the midst of them?
- 12 that caused his glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses? that divided the waters before them, to make himself an everlasting name?
- 13 that led them through the depths, as a horse in the wilderness, so that they stumbled not?
- 14 As the cattle that go down into the valley, the Spirit of Jehovah caused them to rest; so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name.

## QUERIES

- a. Upon whom did Jehovah turn to be an enemy?
- b. Who remembered the days of old?
- c. When did they "rest"?

## PARAPHRASE

In spite of all the times God vindicated His people by saving them from their enemies in past times, they have grieved His Holy Spirit by rebelling against His commandments. Because of their rebellion He had to become their enemy and must now fight against them. Now they are remembering those days gone by when Moses delivered God's people and they are crying out, Where is the One who brought our ancestors through

the Red Sea with shepherds like Moses? Where is the One who put His Holy Spirit within them? They are also saying, Where is the One whose glorious power parted the Red Sea in the path of our ancestors and vindicated His name forever when Moses lifted up his rod? Where is the One who guided them through the bottom of the Sea? Like horses galloping easily through a desert cleared of all obstacles, our ancestors never slipped or stumbled walking through that Sea's rocky bottom. Just like cattle that go easily and safely down to graze in the wadis, the Spirit of Jehovah gave our ancestors rest. That is the way You led our ancestors, Lord, and Your name then was made glorious. Where are you now, Lord?

### COMMENTS

v. 10 RESISTING HIS SPIRIT: Although the Lord has given the prophet a vision of His power and faithfulness to destroy Zion's enemies and uphold her when she trusts Him (63:1-9), Zion seems bent on not believing and acting upon it (63:10-14). Therefore the Lord is going to give Zion over to humiliation, destruction and captivity (63:15-19).

The Hebrew word *maru* is translated *rebel* and is the strongest word for that circumstance, meaning literally, *to revolt*. Their revolt *pained* or *sorrowed* the Holy Spirit; in Hebrew *'itzevu 'eth-ruach kadesho*. In Ex. 23:20-21 Jehovah said to the people, "Behold, I send an angel before you, to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place which I have prepared. Give heed to him and hearken to his voice, do not rebel against him, for he will not pardon your transgression; for my name is in him." However, the people rebelled from the time they left Egypt (Ex. 17:1ff; 32:1ff), and they continued their rebellion until God finally took them out of their land and into captivity. The third Person of the Godhead was actively involved in the program of redemption in the Old Testament (see Special Study, "The Holy Spirit In Old Testament Times," pages 458-462). Young sees in this chapter all three Persons of

the Godhead: "Thus, . . . there is a distinction of the three persons of the Triune God: He (Yahweh), the angel of His presence and the Spirit of His holiness. In the history of the chosen people each Person of the Trinity was active." The point of this verse (10) is that the people whom Jehovah chose to cooperate with Him in redeeming the whole world forced Him to be their enemy because they revolted and afflicted His Holy Spirit. Jehovah is against them because they are against Him. He must vindicate His holiness and justice now upon the chosen people. He is giving them up to chastening in Mesopotamia for 70 years. The writer of the Hebrew epistle in the N.T. exhorts, ". . . do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion" (Heb. 3:7-19). The Lord had to turn from being "afflicted with their affliction," to "fighting against them" because that was what He said He would do if they rebelled against Him. The Lord keeps His promises!

v. 11-13 REMEMBERING HIS SPIRIT: The subject of "remembered" could be either Jehovah or Zion. It appears Zion would fit the context better. With the downfall of Jerusalem and the Babylonian captivity imminent, Zion (the people of Judah) is *remembering* (and evidently praying for a return of) the Holy Spirit of God in power and deliverance as He did through Moses at the crossing of the Red Sea. If the Holy Spirit of God could part the waters of the Red Sea, can He not now deliver them from Babylon? The phrase, "where is he that put his holy Spirit in the midst of them?" is interesting and perhaps should give us pause to rethink our concept of the activity of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament age. The Hebrew word *kerev* is translated midst; the usual word for midst is *tok*. *Kerev* is unique and means *inward part, inwards, bowels*; hence, *the heart*. *Kerev* is the word in I Kings 17:22 where "the soul of the child came *into him* again." Did God's Spirit indwell the believer of the O.T.? Could it be that God put His Holy Spirit in the hearts of the people as He was leading them in the exodus from Egypt—and there they grieved Him? One N.T. passage appears to preclude the possibility of the Spirit dwelling in believers of the O.T. age. John notes, "But

this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believed on him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified" (Jn. 7:39). Note, however, the word *given* (in Jn. 7:39) is a supplied word—it is not in the Greek text. Does this indicate that the Spirit was not yet for *everyone* who believes (including Gentiles)? or does it mean that the Spirit was *not yet given at all* (not even for Jews) until after Jesus was glorified? The latter has been the traditional interpretation. If the latter interpretation is to be followed, what is one to do with the apostle Paul's clear statement that, ". . . if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his . . ." and, ". . . if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through the Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8:9-11)? If eternal life and resurrection from the dead necessitates the Spirit of God dwelling in man, and if the Spirit was *not given at all* until Christ was glorified, how do we account for the eternal life apparently granted to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Mt. 8:11; Lk. 13:28; 16:23, etc.). How could Abraham be justified by faith without receiving the Spirit of God also by faith (Rom. 4:2-9; Gal. 3:6-7; Jas. 2:23)? How could the beggar be borne to Abraham's bosom if the beggar did not have the Spirit of God (Lk. 16:22)? How could Moses and Elijah be transfigured with Christ in glorified appearance without having the Spirit of God (Mt. 17:1-5; Lk. 9:30-31, etc.)?

The only resolution of this dilemma appears to be to recognize that the Spirit of God was certainly *in* men of the Old Testament (Enoch, Abraham, Moses, Elijah, David and the prophets, cf. Num. 27:18; Psa. 51:11; 143:10, etc.). Rotherham says on Psa. 51:11, "David . . . had enjoyed the presence of the Holy Spirit, or he could not have prayed, *Take it not from me*. Was that Spirit, not hallowing, as well as illuminating and revealing? Can we really enter into the undercurrent of this psalm, without perceiving that a hallowing Divine *Presence* had lain at the roots of the writer's spiritual life; . . . By how much soever this is clear, by so much also must it be clear.

that the Evangelist (John) spoke *comparatively* when he said (Jn. 7:39) that the Spirit could not be given until Jesus was glorified." (*Studies In The Psalms, Vol. I*, by J. B. Rotherham, pub. College Press, pg. 352).

B. B. Warfield in his *Biblical and Theological Studies*, (pub. The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1952), says, "The Spirit of God, in the Old Testament, is not merely the immanent Spirit, the source of all the world's life and all the world's movement . . . He is as well the indwelling Spirit of holiness in the hearts of God's children."

We submit that the message of the Messiah was therefore, that the Spirit of God was *not* come *in His fulness* until Jesus was glorified and redemption was completed. After the redemptive work of God was completed through the Son, the indwelling presence of the Spirit would give man a greater, more strengthening participation in the inheritance God had stored up for believers. The New Covenant is certainly better, far surpassing and the fulfillment of the Old. The New is enacted upon better promises. But it would seem to us that the Spirit of God was in those saints of old who were justified and thus given eternal life (historically accomplished at the death of Christ, Heb. 9:15-17; Rom. 3:21-26), which they appropriated by faith. Perhaps it was a matter of "good, better and best" as pictured in the following chart. Or, perhaps the Spirit of God was given to the O.T. saints "on credit" or "retroactively" to guarantee their resurrection to eternal life much as their forgiveness was "on credit" (cf. Heb. 9:15). One thing is certain, having the Spirit of God is necessary to being raised from the dead!

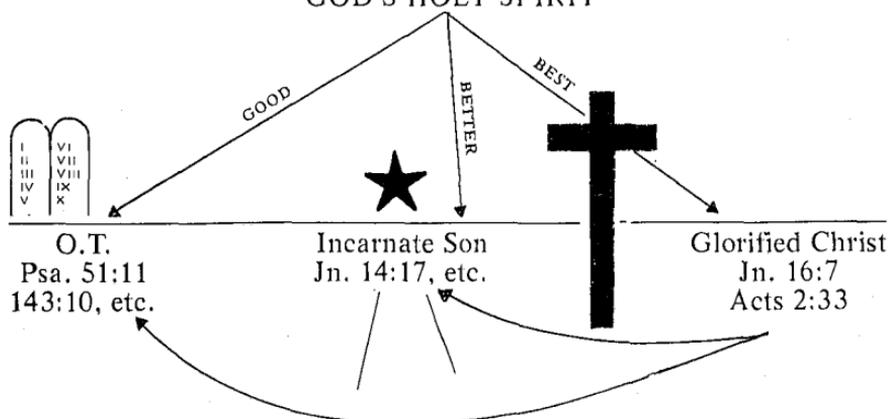
Be that as it may, the point of this passage is to portray the frustration of the people over the impending captivity. It appears to them as if God's Spirit has deserted them and that God Himself does not care that His name will be debased if He does not save them as He saved their ancestors. He led their ancestors across the bed of the Red Sea as easily and swiftly as a horse runs through a desert where all the obstacles have been removed. Why does He not do that now?

Was not The Spirit of God in the saints of old  
in order to keep them from eternal death? (Rom. 8:9-11)

YES

Perhaps in lesser degree of companionship.

GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT



Or, perhaps the Holy Spirit was theirs in promise before  
Jesus was glorified and theirs in fact, retroactively,  
after His glorification (like forgiveness, Heb. 9:15f).

v. 14 RESTING IN HIS SPIRIT: The people remember that their ancestors were led by the Spirit of God into the land of Canaan like contented cattle are led securely and easily down into the wadis to graze. The Spirit of God was the *cause* of their *nukh* ("rest, settling down, having repose, abiding") in Canaan. Now they are wondering why He cannot cause them to remain in their land. Could it be that their prayer is not really a penitent prayer but a selfish one? Could it be that they want Jehovah to deliver them *in* their rebellion and not *from* it—as so many of us are prone to want to be saved in sin and not from it? On the other hand, perhaps this is a prediction of the prayers of penitence the people will offer down in Babylon when they have had time to consider their sins and truly repent. Perhaps this is prophecy! When they have truly repented (cf. Dan. 9:3-19) God will hear their prayer (Dan. 9:20-23) and return them to their land to fulfill their messianic destiny (Dan. 9:24-27).

## QUIZ

1. When did God's people rebel? How long?
2. Did God put His Holy Spirit in people in the Old Testament?
3. Have you thought through the teaching of the Bible on the Holy Spirit as thoroughly as you would like? (We suggest C. C. Crawford's two-volume work entitled, *The Eternal Spirit, His Word and Works*, pub. by College Press.)
4. Do you think the prayer of the people here is a penitent prayer?

## 3. PETITION OF VICTIMS

TEXT: 63:15-19

- 15 Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where are thy zeal and thy mighty acts? the yearning of thy heart and thy compassions are restrained toward me.
- 16 For thou art our Father, though Abraham knoweth us not, and Israel doth not acknowledge us: thou, O Jehovah, art our Father; our Redeemer from everlasting is thy name.
- 17 O Jehovah, why dost thou make us to err from thy ways, and hardenest our heart from thy fear? Return for thy servants' sake; the tribes of thine inheritance.
- 18 Thy holy people possessed it but a little while: our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary.
- 19 We are become as they over whom thou never barest rule, as they that were not called by thy name.

## QUERIES

- a. Why did they think they had to call upon God to "look"?
- b. Why does Abraham not know the nation?
- c. What time reference is involved in verse 18?

## PARAPHRASE

Lord, where have You gone? Lord, are You oblivious to our predicament? Look down from where You sit on Your transcendently glorious and holy throne and give attention to our situation. Where is all the eagerness and power You used to show us now? Apparently You are deliberately keeping Your love and pity from us! You are the only Father we have with enough power to save us from the impending captivity. Yes, Abraham and Jacob were our earthly fathers, but they are not able to redeem us or save us; You, Jehovah, are our only Everlasting Father. Why have You disowned us? Why have you prevented us from wandering away from You and prevented us from hardening our hearts toward You? Come back, Lord, for the sake of those who serve You and help us, for we are the people of Your possession. We, your holy people, have possessed the land so briefly; our enemies are making us a dispossessed and dispersed people by taking over Your land. Lord, You are treating us as if You had never been our Sovereign and as if we had never been Your people.

## COMMENTS

v. 15-17 DISOWNED: The Hebrew word *shamayim* is plural for *shamah* which means *high, heavenward, height*. The word is always in the plural form in the O.T. God most often manifested Himself from the direction of the sky in the O.T. and the Hebrew thought of the sky (or beyond) as the place of Jehovah's habitation. Actually, due to the limitations of human language (which is limited by human experience) designating the *heavens* as God's habitation is about as accurate as any man can be. The point seems to be that these people feel Jehovah is so utterly transcendent, dwelling in such absolute holiness (separation from this world) He is disowning His creatures. The petition is that He will look down from His high and lofty place and give attention to their predicament.

Based upon the historical record of Jehovah's dealings with their ancestors (Genesis, Exodus, et al.) He was eager, zealous and arduous in delivering, guiding and sustaining their nation in centuries past. But suddenly, it appears, Jehovah has deliberately *restrained* (withdrawn) His zeal for their nation. It is their assumption that Jehovah does not even care about them anymore. How could they get that idea? Jehovah repeatedly told them of His love and care through the prophets. But their accusation that Jehovah was deliberately insensitive to their needs was based upon their carnal concept of what their need was and their carnal ideas as to how God should act toward them. They believed their imperative need was to be delivered from those who would take them into captivity. They believed God should act in supernatural, judgmental power *now* upon their enemies as He had done in the past. Man has always had the tendency (ever since the devil taught him in Eden to do so) to blame God, or someone else, for the consequences of his own faults and failures. Judah has been indulging in false religion which induces false ethics which results in social disintegration; she has been playing the dangerous game of international intrigue and politics which results in war and invasion; now she is blaming God for her predicament. Judah suggests that Jehovah has defaulted on His Fatherhood! Acknowledging that He is the only Father capable of saving their necks, the implication is that He is unwilling now to act as their Father. He has disowned them! There is no disavowal of their ancestry to Abraham and Jacob here—the point is the contrast between human fathers and Supernatural Father. An emergency has arisen and now they need their heavenly Father; they did not seek Him before (cf. Isa. 8:19-22; 30:9-11; 58:2-5; 59:1-3, etc.). The Hebrew word *tate'enu* is from the *Hife'iyil* stem which denotes causative manner and is thus translated *make us to err* in verse 17. Certainly God does not *force* man to sin. God does not even cause man to sin in the sense that He makes man's choice for him. Of course, man very often *accuses* God of making him sin, or being the cause of his sin. That is the way of rebellion,

dishonesty, lawlessness and devil-mindedness! Man may be even more subtle (as we have given it in our paraphrase) and blame God for *not preventing* him from sinning! It is the old cliché, "If God is a good God, why does He permit evil to happen?" The Lord tried every way possible consistent with the free will of man to keep man from wandering into rebellion and lawlessness. Judah, by the use of the *hife'iy* stem, has betrayed her moral dishonesty in trying to blame God for her wandering and hardening of heart against Him. In one sense of the word God must, by the fact of man's freedom to choose, allow man to either choose that which will soften his heart and bring him to walk in God's way, or, choose that which will harden his heart and lead him to wander away from God's way. But God will also make the ultimate sacrifices to furnish man with every opportunity to make the right choice; He will send His Spirit in His word through the prophets, leaders and kings; and finally in His Son He will Himself atone and offer a New covenant.

God has not disowned His people. He is about to demonstrate, through the captivity, just how much He owns them. The child who is not chastened has no real father (cf. Heb. 12:1-11). So, our Father-child relationship to God depends upon our perspective. These people of Judah could not look upon their impending captivity as the chastening of a loving Father (which is what it was revealed to be by Hosea, Isaiah and others). They looked at it through carnal eyes, not eyes of faith. Looking thus, they charged God with desertion!

v. 18-19 **DISPOSSESSED:** In these two verses the people are dangerously near impugning the honor of the Lord. They complain that although God gave them the land of Palestine and built them a Temple, they had lived in it only a brief time (from approximately 1400 B.C. to 600 B.C.) and now it was about to be invaded by enemies and they would be dispossessed. So the Lord appears to them unable to maintain His people in His land and keep His Sanctuary standing. The time in which the Lord maintained His people in His land by His sovereign power was so relatively short (800 years), it hardly

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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