

Special Topical Study
Isaiah 64
“Prayer that Rends the Heavens”

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In the Book of Isaiah, chapter 64 Isaiah wrote:

Isaiah 64

1 Oh, that You would rend the heavens!
That You would come down!
That the mountains might shake at Your presence—

“Rend”

1. To tear something apart violently...
2. To tear somebody away
3. To disturb the silence or pierce the air with a loud sound
4. To cause pain or distress to the heart or emotions

What kind of prayer could cause the Lord to hear us and Rend the Heavens to come down?

- ☞ **What kind of prayer** moves the Lord to act on our behalf.
- ☞ **To move him** into our situation.
- ☞ **To pierce the silence** of our life with His Glory.
- ☞ **To move our heart** and emotions by His presence?

James 5:16

...The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

A man had a dream one night when the Lord came to Him.

The Lord told him that if he would surrender his life to him that the Lord would never leave him or forsake him.

In that instant, the man called on the name of the Lord and asked Jesus into his heart as Lord and Savior of his life.

The next morning he awoke with the greatest feeling of joy and peace he had ever known.

Not just a week later, a great storm came into his town and the waters of the storm began to flood the streets and neighborhood where he lived.

The man prayed: **“Lord you said that if I would call upon you and make you Lord and Savior of my life, that you would never leave me...Lord rescue me from this**

flood...”

As he finished saying this prayer, the sheriff rolled up in his squad car and commanded the man to get in to his car as the flood was rising.

The man told the sheriff **“Officer, I surrendered my life to Jesus Christ last week and He promised that He would never leave me or forsake me, No I am going to stay here and trust the Lord...”**

A few hours later the flood waters were up to the door of his house and a fireman in a boat arrived at his house and commanded the man to get into the boat before the flood overtook his house.

“Thank You but last week I surrendered my life to Jesus Christ and He promised to never leave me or forsake me...I am going to stay here and trust the Lord...”

As night fell the waters were nearly over the top of the mans roof. The man found himself sitting on the crest of the roof shivering in the cold and the rain.

A Helicopter arrived with the National Guard. They let down a ladder to the roof of the man’s house and commanded him to climb the ladder before he drowned.

“No thanks, I gave my life to Jesus Christ I am trusting in Him to save me...”

The flood waters overtook the man and he drowned.

To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, the scripture says, so the man arrived in Heaven where he was greeted by Jesus.

“Lord let me ask you a question” You said that when I surrendered my life to You and made you Lord and Savior of my life that you would never leave me or forsake me...why did you let me drown in that flood?”

The Lord answered the man and said: *“Hey don’t get mad at me, I sent you a Police Car, a Boat and a Helicopter, and you wouldn’t get in...”*

Is it possible to pray a prayer with your mind but doubt in your heart?

☞ **Does the Lord only answer** the prayers that come from faith and not doubt?

In the Book of Acts, chapter 12, Peter has been arrested and is put in prison by King Herod.

Acts 12

1 Now about that time Herod the king stretched out his hand to harass some from the church.

2 Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

3 And because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further **to seize Peter** also. Now it was during the Days of Unleavened Bread.

4 So when he had arrested him, he **put him in prison**, and delivered him to **four squads of soldiers** (8 per squad-32 men) to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after Passover.

5 Peter was therefore kept in prison, but **constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church.**

How many of you think that the prayers that were being offered by the church were sincere prayers of faith?

Acts 12

6 And when Herod was about to bring him out, that night Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains between two soldiers; and the guards before the door were keeping the prison.

7 Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, "Arise quickly!" And his chains fell off his hands.

8 Then the angel said to him, "Gird yourself and tie on your sandals"; and so he did. And he said to him, "Put on your garment and follow me."

9 So he went out and followed him, and did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision.

10 When they were past the first and the second guard posts, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city, which **opened to them of its own accord**; and they went out and went down one street, and immediately the angel departed from him.

11 And when Peter had come to himself, he said, "**Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel**, and has delivered me from the hand of Herod and from all the expectation of the Jewish people."

12 So, when he had considered this, **he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying.**

So now we come to the house where all those from the church had been praying for Peter while he was in prison...

Acts 12

13 And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a girl named Rhoda came to answer.

14 When **she recognized Peter's voice, because of her gladness she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter stood before the gate.**

15 But **they said to her, "You are beside yourself."** Yet she kept insisting that it was so. So **they said, "It is his angel."**

16 Now Peter continued knocking; and when they opened the door and saw him, **they were astonished.**

- ☞ Peter is arrested.
- ☞ The church is praying for him.
- ☞ The Lord sends an angel and sets Peter free.
- ☞ Peter comes to the door of the house where those from the house are praying.

- ☞ They don't believe that it is Peter.
- ☞ **Why?**
- ☞ **Because their prayer** was not really a sincere prayer of faith!
- ☞ **If they really believed** what they were praying, they would have been **expecting** Peter to show up at any moment.
- ☞ **When the Lord immediately** answered their prayer, they were "Astonished"

I wonder how many prayers we pray that we don't really expect the Lord will actually answer?

- ☞ **If someone came into the church** this morning with a missing arm or leg, would we pray for the Lord to grow them an arm or leg, **probably not**.
- ☞ **If someone in the church has a cold**, most of us would pray for that person, knowing that in a few days the person will be over the cold anyway.

Where is the prayer of faith that causes the Lord to rend the Heavens and come down and do mighty works among us?

It is possible to be a person of prayer but not have faith.

- ☞ **If every prayer we prayed** depended on their being a tremendous amount of faith on our part behind that prayer, I fear that not many of our prayers would be answered.

When we pray, do we immediately adjust our life to include the answer to that prayer.

- ☞ **When you pray** for the Lord to provide a job for you, do you go out everyday and look for a job because you believe He will provide one.
- ☞ **Or do we sit at home** and wait for someone to just call us and offer us a job?

Why are we surprised when the Lord actually does answer our prayer, like those who prayed for Peter while he was in prison? **They prayed for Peter's release, but when he appeared at their door, they didn't believe it was Peter!**

- ☞ **As a follower** of Jesus Christ, we should **ALWAYS** expect the Lord to answer us whenever we pray.
- ☞ **If you have been praying** for forgiveness in your life, are you still living with guilt from the past?
- ☞ **If you have prayed** for the Lord to provide for your needs, are you still worried and anxious about those needs?

This morning, we need to ask the Lord to "Increase our faith".

In the Book of Luke, as Jesus is teaching on the principle of forgiving others who have sinned against us, notice what those who hear the teaching by Jesus ask Him for:

Luke 17:3-5

3 Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.

4 And **if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, “I repent, you shall forgive him.”**

5 And the apostles said to the Lord, **“Increase our faith.”**

Do you know why the disciples asked Jesus to increase their faith in response to Jesus command to forgive those who have sinned against you 7 times for the same sin in one day?

- ☞ **They recognized** that it was not humanly possible for them to be able to do this.
- ☞ **It was going to take** supernatural power by the Holy Spirit to be able to forgive this way.

When we pray for anything, we should along with the offering of that prayer, ask the Lord to increase our faith also, so that we will be expecting the answer to that prayer.

- ☞ Pray.
- ☞ Ask the Lord to increase your faith.
- ☞ **Begin to live your life** in a way that shows that you believe He has heard you and is going to answer you.

These are the kinds of prayers that ***“Rend the Heavens”*** and bring the Lord into every situation of our life.

Let’s read Isaiah 64 again, this time with the full context of the complete verse:

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!

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

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.

Do you see what Isaiah is doing as He is praying for the Lord to come down?

Isaiah 64

3 You came down,
The mountains shook at Your presence

- ☞ **He is beginning his prayer** with worship and acknowledgment of the greatness of the Lord.

“When you did awesome things...the mountains shook at your presence...since the beginning of the world, men have not seen any God besides you, who acts for the one who waits for him..”

Are these facts about the Lord that the Lord is not aware of about himself?

- ☞ **No, of course not**, Isaiah is not reminding the Lord, **he is reminding himself**, and all of us who are reading this.

“The Lord is great, and nothing is too hard for Him, there is no God like you Lord...”

It is helpful when we pray, that we remind ourselves who we are praying to, and how incredible the power is of this One to whom we are making our requests.

In Genesis 32, when angels appeared to Jacob and he begins to speak to the Lord about his life, Jacob starts his prayer with these words:

Genesis 32:12

For You said, “I will surely treat you well, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.”

Jacob is not reminding the Lord of his promises and his ability to meet all of his needs, **He is reminding himself** that the one he is praying to is able to do what He promised...

- ☞ It is helpful when we are praying and expecting the Lord to help us, that we recite for ourselves, what the Lord has already promised us...

“Lord you said you would supply all of my needs in Christ Jesus, Lord you said you would make all things turn out together for good to those who love you....”

Notice the continuing prayer of Isaiah:

- ☞ **A confession** of the utter and complete sinfulness of each one of us who is coming to make request of our great Holy God.

“We are all like an unclean thing, all our righteousness is like filthy rags...”

Isaiah 64

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.

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.**

Every prayer that moves the Lord to act in our life,

- ☞ **Starts with** praise and worship of Him as God, and then
- ☞ **Acknowledges** our own sinfulness and inability to do anything without Him., and that
- ☞ **Finishes with; Whatever we are,** we are because He has made us, and we are under His mighty power...

What kind of prayer moves the Lord? The kind of prayer that Daniel prayed in Daniel chapter 9

Daniel 9

1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans—

2 in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

3 Then **I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer** and supplications, with **fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.**

4 And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession, and said, “**O Lord, great and awesome God,** who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments, (**Worship and Adoration**)

5 we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments. (**Confession of Sin**)

6 Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name....

7 O Lord, righteousness belongs to You, but to us shame of face,

9 To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him.

10 We have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His laws...

11 Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him.

12 ... by bringing upon us a great disaster; for under the whole heaven such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem.

13 “As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us; **yet we have not made our prayer before the LORD our God,** that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Your truth. (**Acknowledgment that Gods judgment was right But even so...**)

18 O my God, **incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations,** and the city which is called by Your name; for **we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies.**

Asking for the Mercy of God and the forgiveness of God even though they did deserve the punishment they had already received...

19 **O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name.**” (Notice, these are YOUR people)

Notice how long it took for the Lord to send the answer back to Daniel, because of the way that he prayed:

20 **Now while I was speaking, praying,** and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God,

21 yes, **while I was speaking in prayer,** the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering.

22 And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, “O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand.

23 **At the beginning of your supplications the command went out,** and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision:

Daniel’s prayer did rend the heavens and brought the Lord down because.

- ☞ He worshipped the Lord.
- ☞ He acknowledged his and his peoples sin.
- ☞ He blamed himself and his people for their troubles, not the Lord.
- ☞ He acknowledged the Lord great power to help.
- ☞ He said “*Lord we are your people, where else can we go, we depend on you...*”

And when your troubles and difficulties of your life are overwhelming, take them to the Lord like King Hezekiah did:

Isaiah 36

1 Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah that **Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against** all the fortified cities of Judah and took them.

3 And Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, who was over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came out to him.

5 I say **you speak of having plans and power for war; but they are mere words.** Now in whom do you trust, that you rebel against me?

6 Look! **You are trusting in the staff of this broken reed, Egypt,** on which if a man leans, it will go into his hand and pierce it. So is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him.

7 “**But if you say to me, “We trust in the LORD our God**

Isaiah 36

13 Then the Rabshakeh stood and called out with a loud voice in Hebrew, and said, **“Hear the words of the great king, the king of Assyria!**

14 Thus says the king: **“Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you;**

15 **nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD,** saying, “The LORD will surely deliver us; this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.”’

16 **Do not listen to Hezekiah; for thus says the king of Assyria:** “Make peace with me by a present and come out to me

18 **Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, “The LORD will deliver us.” Has any one of the gods of the nations delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria?**

19 Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Indeed, **have they delivered Samaria from my hand?**

20 **Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their countries from my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?’**”

Pretty discouraging, but notice how Hezekiah handles all this:

Isaiah 37

14 And **Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD.**

15 **Then Hezekiah prayed** to the LORD, saying:

16 “O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, the One who dwells between the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth.

17 Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God.

36 Then the angel of the LORD went out, **and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand;** and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead.

37 So **Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away,** returned home, and remained at Nineveh.