

Isaiah ended the last chapter with a prayer question. He was wondering if God would ever be gracious again to Israel (Isaiah 64:12). God's response is that He is going to be gracious, but it is to a people who never sought Him and weren't called by His name. Fortunately, we have the Apostle Paul's use of this verse in Romans 10:20 to clarify that this is about the Gentiles.

¹ I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me; I was ready to be 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. Isaiah 65:1 This is a wonderful truth I've shared on several occasions, that God's love and grace go out to everyone in the world, even if they don't ask for it. Then each one must decide what he or she will do with it. We could translate the Hebrew of the first line to read, "I permitted myself to be consulted" (Edward Young), which is a consultation that results in the desired knowledge. The people who never sought God found Him anyway. In other words, God's free grace reached out to those who could care less about God. These discovered God. Undeserving people who had no concern for God found the freely given grace of God and acted on it.

In the previous chapter, Isaiah's prayer was pleading with God to have mercy on the Jews by asking God, "Behold us; look on us." But that was the problem; when He looked He saw sin. They needed to look at God again like they once did. God's repetition of "Here I am," or we could read it, "Behold me!" emphasizes God's revelation of Himself to those who are not called by His name. It is Israel that is called by His name (Genesis 48:16). That means God is telling the rest of world He is there for them. Israel saw Him and went their own way. Now He is reaching out to the Gentile world. See Him in the wonder of nature and the sciences. See Him in the revelation of Scripture. See Him in those who are filled with His love. God is continually reaching out to everyone saying, "Look at me! Here I am!" He is not willing that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9). But will we allow ourselves to see Him?

I was reading about DNA the other day. A microscopic speck of DNA smaller than a grain of dust could hold the information of the DVDs of every movie ever made and have enough storage capacity left to hold the movies created in the next 100 years! That screams out, "Here I am!" With all our advances in science we know the exact composition of DNA but we can't reproduce it. Only living things can do that. But somehow we are supposed to believe it was an accident of time and chance? All I hear is God saying, "Here I am! Behold me!" A thunderstorm rolls through the canyon and the sound of the thunder echoing on the canyon walls says to me, "Here I am!" I see the birth of a baby, the miracle of what the human body does before, during, and after that child is born... I'm awestruck with wonder. But other people can see the same things and have no response to God's thundering voice (Job 37:4-5).

² I spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, following their own devices; Isaiah 65:2 Paul applies this verse to the Jewish people. He is continually reaching out to them as well. The difference is that they knew

Commented [PW1]: Isaiah 64:12 (ESV)

¹² Will you restrain yourself at these things, O LORD? Will you keep silent, and afflict us so terribly?

Commented [PW2]: Romans 10:20 (ESV)

²⁰ Then Isaiah is so bold as to say, "I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me."

Commented [PW3]: Genesis 48:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ the angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the boys; and in them let my name be carried on, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."

Commented [PW4]: 2 Peter 3:9 (ESV)

⁹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

Commented [PW5]: Job 37:4-5 (ESV)

⁴ After it his voice roars; he thunders with his majestic voice, and he does not restrain the lightnings when his voice is heard.

⁵ God thunders wondrously with his voice; he does great things that we cannot comprehend.

God's will and rebelled against it. Though they were taught by God the way that is good, they still followed their own devices (Isaiah 55:8-9). The Hebrew for devices is often translated "thoughts." They just follow their own plans instead of God's. James 4:17 tells us, *whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.* They had found God. They were called by His name. But they did whatever they wanted and misrepresented Him to the world. But it gets worse than that.

³ a people who provoke me to my face continually, sacrificing in gardens and making offerings on bricks; Isaiah 65:3 God now describes their way that was not good. They provoked God to His face by continually worshiping idols as if all their blessings came from a carved rock or molten image. Instead of sacrifices in the temple to the God who revealed His laws and an acceptable form of worship, they offered sacrifices to idols in gardens and put their offerings on bricks. It's as if they turned a defiant face toward the temple while they carried out their sacrifices in the gardens, just daring God to act (Exodus 23:21).

⁴ who sit in tombs, and spend the night in secret places; who eat pig's flesh, and broth of tainted meat is in their vessels; Isaiah 65:4 It sounds as if they were consulting the dead and eating pork, both of which were forbidden by God (Deuteronomy 18:11; Leviticus 11:7-8) The rotten meat in their vessels was some sort of disgusting pagan ritual. God has His welcoming arms stretched out to them, ready to forgive, even while they practice this perverseness. Most idolatry is a form of trying to get what we want without too much commitment. What would cause someone to think that these things would ever result in something good?

⁵ who say, "Keep to yourself, do not come near me, for I am too holy for you." These are a smoke in my nostrils, a fire that burns all the day. Isaiah 65:5 While practicing this vile idolatry, they see themselves as super-spiritual. Christianity humbles us (Luke 18:9). We see the great need for a Savior and recognize we can do nothing without Him. Paganism exalts self with the idea that we can manipulate God. This verse is where we get the phrase, "holier than thou." It can be Christianity or any religion without recognizing our sinful nature and the mercy and grace of God. New Age folks have shared with me a number of times that they used to be where I am, but evolved to higher level. In other words, they used to attend a Christian church, but then they realized they are a gods (Ezekiel 28:9).

We have to watch out it in the Christian world for statements like these: "I have the right interpretation and everyone else is wrong." Woe (Philippians 2:3)! "We are the only church that has the whole truth." Yikes! "Our church is the instrument through which God is going to do this mighty work!" Well, I hope so, but not to the exclusion of your other brothers and sisters in Christ in your community. Exclusivism is the sure sign of a cult. It feeds our pride. It says, "We are doing it right and no one else really is."

⁶ Behold, it is written before me: "I will not keep silent, but I will repay; I will indeed repay into their lap" Isaiah 65:6 Ignoring Him is the sin of the people (Jeremiah 17:1). God keeps records. Every idle word is recorded (Matthew 12:36). God's response to this

Commented [PW6]: Isaiah 55:8-9 (ESV)

⁸ For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD.

⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Commented [PW7]: Exodus 23:21 (ESV)

²¹ Pay careful attention to him and obey his voice; do not rebel against him, for he will not pardon your transgression, for my name is in him.

Commented [PW8]: Deuteronomy 18:11 (ESV)

¹¹ or a charmer or a medium or a necromancer or one who inquires of the dead,

Commented [PW9]: Leviticus 11:7-8 (ESV)

⁷ And the pig, because it parts the hoof and is cloven-footed but does not chew the cud, is unclean to you.

⁸ You shall not eat any of their flesh, and you shall not touch their carcasses; they are unclean to you.

Commented [PW10]: Luke 18:9 (ESV)

⁹ He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt:

Commented [PW11]: Ezekiel 28:9 (ESV)

⁹ Will you still say, 'I am a god,' in the presence of those who kill you, though you are but a man, and no god, in the hands of those who slay you?

Commented [PW12]: Philippians 2:3 (ESV)

³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

Commented [PW13]: Jeremiah 17:1 (ESV)

¹ "The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron; with a point of diamond it is engraved on the tablet of their heart, and on the horns of their altars,

Commented [PW14]: Matthew 12:36 (ESV)

³⁶ I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak,

defiance and stubborn rebellion is the promise to give retribution. God will always balance the books in His time. Always! He repays blessing to those who serve God, and judgment upon those who refuse to repent and continue to rebel. The retribution will be poured onto their lap (Ruth 3:15). There is no escaping it. The wheels of God's justice often grind exceedingly slow, but they grind exceedingly fine (Jeremiah 16:18).

⁷ both your iniquities and your fathers' iniquities together, says the LORD; because they made offerings on the mountains and insulted me on the hills, I will measure into their lap payment for their former deeds." Isaiah 65:7 The above mentioned sins of the people who were going into exile, and the sins of their fathers, who are those who were first to read Isaiah's work are the reason for this pouring out of judgment. God repeats it to be certain that they hear the reason and the consequence. They insulted God through their idolatry on the hilltops, so God will measure out the justice they deserve and lay it on their laps.

⁸ Thus says the LORD: "As the new wine is found in the cluster, and they say, 'Do not destroy it, for there is a blessing in it,' so I will do for my servants' sake, and not destroy them all." Isaiah 65:8 Now the tone changes to the survivors, often referred to as the remnant (Ezra 9:8; Isaiah 11:11; Romans 9:27). They are the Jews God has kept from going astray. I want to warn you of that term, "remnant," because it is often used today by groups that claim they are God's special work, the only ones that God has spared from the world's corruption. In another sense, everyone who has come to Jesus for salvation and trust in Him alone is part of the remnant out of this world. Yet, there are those who will claim that if you do this activity or learn these secrets, you can become part of this elite end-time group. It is often based on some kind of works. That appeals to our pride. Our boast should be in the Lord (1 Corinthians 1:31). Every child of God is special. Be led by and convicted by the Holy Spirit, not man. Don't follow me or any other man. Follow Jesus. **What any worthwhile pastor shares is not a special revelation or something new, but the teaching of the church through the ages.**

The vineyard is Israel (Isaiah 5:7), and the fruit is bad. It's time to pluck up the vines. But there is one cluster that is good. There is a blessing in that cluster. I believe the blessing is the line of the Savior that God is going to preserve. God's servants are those who would survive captivity and return to the Land. But in a more general sense they include all those redeemed, forgiven, and set apart.

⁹ I will bring forth offspring from Jacob, and from Judah possessors of my mountains; my chosen shall possess it, and my servants shall dwell there." Isaiah 65:9 While this was surely read by those in captivity as a promise their offspring would return to the Promised Land, it is ultimately about the people of faith consisting of both Jew and Gentile as we read in verse one. Paul explains in Romans 4 that the offspring of Abraham are the people of faith. We inherit the heavenly Canaan. The geographical features are symbols of that heavenly land.

¹⁰ Sharon shall become a pasture for flocks, and the Valley of Achor a place for herds to lie down, for my people who have sought me." Isaiah 65:10 Sharon is on the far west of

Commented [PW15]: Ruth 3:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ And he said, "Bring the garment you are wearing and hold it out." So she held it, and he measured out six measures of barley and put it on her. Then she went into the city.

Commented [PW16]: Jeremiah 16:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ But first I will doubly repay their iniquity and their sin, because they have polluted my land with the carcasses of their detestable idols, and have filled my inheritance with their abominations."

Commented [PW17]: Ezra 9:8 (ESV)

⁸ But now for a brief moment favor has been shown by the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant and to give us a secure hold within his holy place, that our God may brighten our eyes and grant us a little reviving in our slavery.

Commented [PW18]: Isaiah 11:11 (ESV)

¹¹ In that day the Lord will extend his hand yet a second time to recover the remnant that remains of his people, from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros, from Cush, from Elam, from Shinar, from Hamath, and from the coastlands of the sea.

Commented [PW19]: Romans 9:27 (ESV)

²⁷ And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved,

Commented [PW20]: 1 Corinthians 1:31 (ESV)

³¹ so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

Commented [PW21]: Isaiah 5:7 (ESV)

⁷ For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting; and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry!

Commented [PW22]: Romans 4:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,

Israel and Achor on the far eastern side. The entire land will return to God's people who seek Him. It will have everything they need for their support. So while these verses would give hope for return of the captives to the Promised Land and all they need when they return, it speaks to the children of God of spiritual provision and heaven's abundance.

¹¹ But you who forsake the LORD, who forget my holy mountain, who set a table for Fortune and fill cups of mixed wine for Destiny, Isaiah 65:11 Isaiah now returns to a description of those who turn against God. They turn their back on the God who brought their ancestors out of Egypt and gave them His words. They forgot the temple where God dwelt among them. Instead they serve the gods of fortune and fate with food and drink offerings.

How easily we can do the same. We turn away from the cross and devote ourselves to amassing a fortune and controlling our destiny. When we make wealth and security the priority of our lives, and put them above God, we are forgetting that holy mountain of the cross where the Word made flesh died for us. We pour out our time and effort to obtain what will inevitably fail us one day (Isaiah 2:20).

¹² I will destine you to the sword, and all of you shall bow down to the slaughter, because, when I called, you did not answer; when I spoke, you did not listen, but you did what was evil in my eyes and chose what I did not delight in." Isaiah 65:12 There was a word play in the first word translated "destine." The Hebrew word "to number," as in God numbering our days, sounds like the name of the god of Destiny. So the ESV translators went ahead and used the word "destine." They worshiped destiny, but God is the One who determined their destiny was to be cut down when Babylon invaded. The worshipers of idols would die in the siege.

The reason for this is clearly stated here and throughout Jeremiah (Jeremiah 7:13). God called, but they would not answer. He spoke, but they did not listen. This is the unpardonable sin (Mark 3:29). God reaches out to us all, Jew and Gentile. He yells, "Here I am!" But if we refuse His voice, the conviction of the Holy Spirit, the grace to turn and repent, then we will face justice. I can't emphasize enough the need to be still and let the Word of God and the voice of the Holy Spirit speak to our hearts and respond to Him (John 10:3).

I recall a true story, perhaps from the Daily Bread devotional. A man was impressed by the rich truths his friend was sharing with him. One day he asked, "I learned what I know of the Bible from seminary, but where did you learn these rich truths you are sharing with me?" The man replied, "On my knees in prayer each morning before my open Bible." Education can be very helpful, but rich spiritual truths are learned in times of quiet meditation on the Word of God. Spiritual growth requires that we listen to God. He delights in you hearing His voice and taking it to heart (John 10:3-4).

¹³ Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, my servants shall eat, but you shall be hungry; behold, my servants shall drink, but you shall be thirsty; behold, my servants shall rejoice, but you shall be put to shame;" Isaiah 65:13 Here is the spiritual and

Commented [PW23]: Isaiah 2:20 (ESV)

²⁰ In that day mankind will cast away their idols of silver and their idols of gold, which they made for themselves to worship, to the moles and to the bats,

Commented [PW24]: Jeremiah 7:13 (ESV)

¹³ And now, because you have done all these things, declares the LORD, and when I spoke to you persistently you did not listen, and when I called you, you did not answer,

Commented [PW25]: Mark 3:29 (ESV)

²⁹ but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin"—

Commented [PW26]: John 10:3 (ESV)

³ To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

Commented [PW27]: John 10:3-4 (ESV)

³ To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.

eternal contrast. Those who serve God will eat, drink, and rejoice. But those who reject His voice and do evil, who chose what God hates, will be hungry, thirsty, and put to shame. The world will not satisfy. It just leaves you hungry and thirsty for more. It may bring the honor of man, but in the end, it only brings the shame of investing their lives in vanity (Ecclesiastes 1:2).

¹⁴ behold, my servants shall sing for gladness of heart, but you shall cry out for pain of heart and shall wail for breaking of spirit. Isaiah 65:14 God's servants will sing in this world and in our heavenly home for gladness of heart. But those who rebel against God and refuse His call to them will cry out in pain of heart. When we try to stuff the world into the emptiness of our heart, it just leaves us emptier than before. There is the wailing of a breaking spirit that is chilling. It is a cry of hopelessness. When one rejects God and then finds the world will never satisfy, they are left with nothing but lonely pain.

¹⁵ You shall leave your name to my chosen for a curse, and the Lord GOD will put you to death, but his servants he will call by another name. Isaiah 65:15 The very name of the rebels against God is a curse. Think of the name Judas. But we will receive a new name. We went over that when we studied [Isaiah 62:2](#). The name is both a personal name known only to us and God, and collectively the name is the very name of our God and the city of God that will be on our foreheads ([Revelation 2:17](#); [3:12](#)).

¹⁶ So that he who blesses himself in the land shall bless himself by the God of truth, and he who takes an oath in the land shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten and are hidden from my eyes. Isaiah 65:16 Those who survive the captivity, and perhaps this applies to those believers who survive the tribulation, who want to declare a blessing, will do so by the God of truth, or literally "the God of Amen." The same is true for taking an oath. The difficulties of the past will be forgotten. The faithfulness of God to His Word and His promises will be clear for all to see. All will realize there is but one God and that all others are a lie.

Do you know the God of truth? Is it His blessing you seek? Will you listen and respond to the God who stretches out His nail pierced hands to you? Are you willing to hear His voice today and every day ([Mark 1:35](#))?

Questions

- 1 How is verse 1 used in the New Testament?
- 2 Have you heard God say, "Here I am?" When?
- 3 What was wrong with the people of verse 2?
- 4 How could they think they were holy?
- 5 Can we be that way? Signs?
- 6 Why must God repay?
- 7 What is the remnant?
- 8 What is described in verse 10?
- 9 What was worshiped in verse 11?
- 10 Why do we need to listen to God?
- 11 Contrast the servants with idolators.

Commented [PW28]: Ecclesiastes 1:2 (ESV)

² Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity.

Commented [PW29]: Isaiah 62:2 (ESV)

² The nations shall see your righteousness, and all the kings your glory, and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will give.

Commented [PW30]: Revelation 2:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.'

Commented [PW31]: Revelation 3:12 (ESV)

¹² The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.

Commented [PW32]: Mark 1:35 (ESV)

³⁵ And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.