

# **How to Wait for Redemption in the Midst of Ruin**

*Isaiah 64:1-12*

## **Introduction**

The Advent season is about waiting for the Lord with hope-filled anticipation. As the people of Israel waited for the Messiah to come, which happened at the birth of Christ, so now, we wait for Christ's return. Yet, we are waiting in a waiting room that is full of pain and sorrow. We are waiting in the midst of ruing, long for redemption and restoration.

Within our own hearts and the in the world around us, depression and disaster creep. We bury our loved ones, we lose our jobs, we watch our children rebel against everything they were taught. Our marriages struggle. Our children get bullied. We have hard bosses at work. We get sick and weak. Our joints hurt. Our society does not appear to be fairing any better, as it appears in the news that we are losing our collective mind. Sexual immorality and perversion of all sorts permeate our world.

We are waiting on the Lord in the midst of a whole lot of ruin. How does on wait for the Lord in such times? This morning, I hope to help us answer this question by considering Isaiah 64:1-12.

Isaiah 64:1-12 appears in a series of complaints and petitions from Isaiah the prophet regarding the failure of humanity to obey God and question of whether or not God would allow the people to persist in their disobedience. Isaiah is frustrated by the rebellion of the people who show no regard for God. A divine intervention needs to occur. The people are in tremendous need. They are waiting for God to show up and deliver them.

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Read Isaiah 64:1-12

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## **Exposition**

### I. We Must Wait Expectantly (Vss. 1-3)

As we look at verses 1-3, we must note Isaiah's affirmation of God's ability. He asks the LORD to "rend the heavens and come down." The language is reminiscent of the miracles in the wilderness and the giving of the law at Mt. Sinai when the earth quaked and the skies thundered at the sound of God's activity, leaving the people in awe-filled wonder and reverent fear. Isaiah knows that because He has done it in the past, the Lord can do it again. Thus, He calls upon the Lord with expectation, which is where we are instructed today.

As we find ourselves in this period of waiting, we must not forget what our God is capable of doing. We must wait with an expectancy that reflects confidence in His character and His ability. We must make bold request of our God, as Isaiah did, "O' Lord, would you rend the heavens and come down?" Would you shake the world again with your presence? Would you intervene in your mercy? This is what it means to wait expectantly.

As we wait expectantly, though, we must also go on about our lives, which verses 4-5a, teach us...

### II. We Must Wait Faithfully (Vss. 4-5a)

Specifically, I would direct your attention to the beginning of verse 5, where we read, "You come to the help of those who gladly do right, who remember your ways." The idea of "gladly doing right," which parallels "remembering your ways," refers to living faithfully. The point is not to suggest that God blesses us because we are perfect. Such a myth will quickly be dispelled in the next few verses. Instead, the idea is that those who place their trust in the ways of the LORD and seek to walk in them with faith and repentance, they can be certain that God will deliver them.

For us, this means that we must not allow the circumstances of our waiting to dictate our faithfulness to God. We do not judge God's goodness toward us on the basis of the difficulties that we face. He does not just love us; He is the very definition of love. We must wait with faithfulness to Him, not wandering away from Him because things get difficult. He has not promised us an easy life, but He has promised to be with us through the difficulty.

This leads us to the final lesson for how we should wait for redemption in the midst of ruin...

### III. We Must Wait Humbly (Vss. 5b-12)

Verses 5b-12 reveal that even when we seek to live faithfully before the LORD, we can never forget that we are always dependent upon His mercy and grace. We must wait humbly on the LORD, recognizing that He is God, not us. His ways are higher than our ways, and His thoughts are higher than our thoughts. The LORD is not indebted to us for our faithfulness. Even our righteous deeds are like “filthy rags” before His perfect holiness. As verse 8 so clearly tells us, “Yet you, LORD, are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.” This verse is absolute declaration of the sovereignty of God over His creation. We as God’s creation do not get to challenge His authority. The clay does not say to the potter, “I believe you got this wrong. I think you made a mistake.” Brothers and sisters, our God does not make any mistakes. He is working out His purpose even in the midst of the pain, the suffering, and the sorrow that we are facing in this waiting room of ruin. And yet, we also know that He is good and grace, slow to anger, and abounding in love and faithfulness. “Though He cause grief, He will have compassion, according to the abundance of His steadfast love, for the Lord does not willingly afflict or grieve anyone” (Lam. 3:31-33).

Thus, we can wait humbly because we know He is trustworthy.

#### **Conclusion**

The act of waiting is a theological statement. Waiting is not passive. Waiting is rooted in active trust in God. Ultimately, the ability to wait expectantly, faithfully, and humbly comes from Christ’s work for us.

The work of Christ reminds us that while our lives and our world are often a mess, He has not abandoned us or His plan. When all we had to offer were the filthy rags of our own works, Christ came and took our place under the judgment of God in order that we might be declared righteous, accepted into God’s family, not on the basis of our effort, but on the basis of His grace toward us. Now, as a result of this work, we can persevere and wait with hope because we have known and experienced the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Consider what Romans 5:1-5 teaches us about how this reality, “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,<sup>2</sup> through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.<sup>3</sup> Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance;<sup>4</sup> perseverance, character; and character, hope.<sup>5</sup> And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.”

Christ came down from the heavens to deliver us. And His arms are still open to receive any and all who will call upon His name in faith this morning. There is hope in waiting on the LORD. He will deliver those who wait on Him. Would you declare your trust in Him this morning? Would you place your trust in Christ, the One who did rend the heavens and come down, the One who will day again rend those heavens and come down? Will you receive Him today?