

The Clay And The Potter.

Isaiah 64:8-12.

Sunday, April 26, 2009.

I. "But now..." Vs. 8.

They are words of contrast.

They look back on what previously has been asserted, and build on it.

A. Isaiah and the faithful remnant of his day have become sensible to the great need for salvation: "Oh that You would rend the heavens..." Vs. 1.

B. They have become sensible to the wrath of the Lord which has been poured out upon them as they continue in sin. "You are indeed angry, for we have sinned, and

in these ways we continue..." Vs. 5.

C. They have become sensible to the nature and extend of their fallenness.

1. "We are like an unclean thing. (A reference to leprosy.)" Vs. 6.

2. "All our righteousnesses are like a filthy garment." Vs. 6.

3. "We fade like a leaf... which the wind takes away." Vs. 6.

4. "There is no one who calls on Your name... who takes hold of You." Vs.7.

II. But now... Vs. 8.

These words of contrast also look forward.

A. You are our Father...

1. This is a powerful argument; will not a father correct his children in measure? What glory is it to a father to destroy his own children?

What will the world say about such a father? That he was not able to handle his own children; all he could do was destroy them?

2. Moses employed this argument, although not in these exact words, when he appealed to the Lord not to destroy his people in the wilderness because of what the Egyptians would say and think about God. He could not handle

them

so He had to destroy them?

B. "We are the clay..."

A dirty and base material that men trample under their feet.

It alludes to the fallen and base state of the nation.

C. "You are our Potter (literally, Former.)"

Here Isaiah and the godly remnant put themselves and their nation once more into the hands of their God.

They take their rightful place before God.

They do so with the implied request that God form something useful out of them.

Application:

1. Have you learned with Isaiah and the godly remnant to see the fallenness of your own life? Can you identify with the leprous thing; with the filthy garment; with the faded leaf blowing in the wind, and with the failure to call upon the Lord's name and to take hold of Him?

2. Has that knowledge induced you to place yourself before the Lord as a lump of dirty

clay with the request for Him to make something useful out of it?

III. Regarding the Lord's anger... Vs. 9.

"Do not be furious O Lord..." Literally "Let not Your anger grow to full strength."

In the parallel clause the same idea is expressed in slightly different words.

"Nor remember iniquity forever." Literally "and do not to eternity remember iniquity."

- A. In the first clause the request is made that the Lord should hold back His anger to some extent; that He should not let it grow to the measure their sins deserve.
- B. In the second clause the request is made that a time should come in which the Lord would put His anger away, and that a time in which His grace and favor are once more remembered would come.
- C. Because the Lord Jesus has come the Lord God can positively answer such a prayer. The Lord Jesus is God's answer to the sin problem of man. It is dealt with effectively only in the cross of Christ.
- D. Apart from Christ, and outside of Christ, humanity faces these two aspects of the wrath of God:
 - 1. The Lord's anger will grow to full strength; in accord with what sin deserves.
 - 2. To all eternity will the Lord remember man's iniquity.Here is a powerful argument for the doctrine of conscious eternal punishment.

IV. A further argument is advanced. Vs. 10-12.

- A. Isaiah describes to the Lord what his nation has become. The vision is prophetic in nature; not fully realized in Isaiah's day as yet, but heading in that direction.
 - 1. "Your holy cities are a wilderness..." These are the cities of Judah.
 - 2. "Zion is a wilderness and Jerusalem a desolation."
 - 3. "Our holy and beautiful temple... is burned up with fire."
 - 4. "All our pleasant things have become a ruin."
- B. In light of these conditions are You going to hold back and not do anything about it? Is this a testimony to Your great name and almighty power?
- C. Are You going to be silent toward us and not answer our cry?
Are You going to afflict us severely (literally, to the extreme; to the very end; in accordance with what our sins deserve)?
This statement looks back on Vs 9
- D. This is a powerful argument for two reasons:
 - 1. The Lord is very jealous over His name and reputation in the world.
 - 2. The Lord is full of compassion and pity toward those who humble themselves and penitently seek Him, even if it is only a remnant.

Application.

How does this give us hope and incentive to seek the Lord like Isaiah did?

What would the work look like that the Lord would form out of our lump of humble clay?

Remember the resistance to this forming work in the heart of the rich young ruler once he learned what the Lord would form him into?

What about our hearts? What would you want the Lord to form you into, and how does this line up with the image of Christ?