

Lesson 11

Isaiah 65:1-25

Isaiah assembled an impressive list of charges against those who, he said, were provoking the Lord to anger: all manner of religious defection and disloyalty, abhorrent practices, and, believe it or not, spiritual snobbery and elitism (vv. 2-5). Yet, remarkably, when all comes to all, none of these things are mentioned when the sword arrives to inflict judgment and sin issues in death (v. 12). The real problem, the 'killing' sin, is to have failed to listen to the Word of God: he called and spoke; they refused to respond or hear. How did that voice come to them? Was it in the preaching and writing of the prophets? Was it in the instruction of the priests? Was it the careful counsel of the Wise? (cf., 30:8-11; Jer. 18:18; Mal. 2:7.) Undoubtedly so, and their cardinal sin, the final nail in their coffin, the sin that could not be overlooked, was, as Amos put it (Amos 2:4), spurning the teaching of the Lord, and failing to keep his commandments. The people of God have always been marked out by possession of the Word of God, his revealed truth, and the transition from their very different circumstances to our own day is obvious and easy. The deadly sin of the Lord's people is neglect of his Word — the Bible set aside, or doubted, or half-believed, or denigrated, or left as a closed book gathering dust. How it hurts the Lord when we let a day start without opening the Book (Isa. 50:4)! What loss to us and damage to our souls when the Word of God has not been hidden in the heart to guard us against sin (Ps. 119:11)! Here is a lover who gets a letter from his beloved and says, 'Oh, I can't be bothered with that!' Imagine the feelings of the beloved on finding all those love-letters, oh yes, carefully kept, and, yes indeed, tied round with red ribbon, but the envelopes never opened (Isa. 29:11). What made the people of Berea 'more noble' — as the AV says — in Acts 17:11? They received the Word; they searched the Scriptures daily. Here indeed is true Christian nobility!

1. In Isaiah 64:1-12 what do we learn about Israel and humanity's need for redemption? What do we learn about the God who redeems?
2. In 64: 1-4 what is the prophet asking God to do? Why? What does it mean to 'wait for him' (4b)? What the right attitudes toward God are as described in verses 8-12?
3. Read verses 66:1-7. With whom is God Angry? Why is He angry? What is God's response? How do these verses speak to you personally?
4. Isaiah 65: 1-16 presents a clear contrast between God's faithful remnant and those who forsake Him. What word is repeated in verses 8, 9,13,14,15 when referring to God's Remnant?

How is their character and destiny contrasted throughout this passage with those who reject God?

5. How will you apply this week's lesson to your personal life this week? What attitudes will you change or affirm in your own life?