

1932a - REVIVAL by ISAIAH - Isaiah 64

INTRODUCTION. The ecclesiastical pundits tell us that last century was the first century since the Reformation that there was **no revival** that affected the **nation** to any great degree (as at the Wesleys)! In Biblical times, e.g. at Ephesus the **economic/political/social** fabric of the town was so **altered** the Trade Unions met to discuss the **effects!**

So some Xns are in earnest prayer just now begging God for revival! Just like the Psalmist ***It is time for the Lord to act, for Your law has been broken*** (Psa 119:126) Prayer that the Lord would **intervene** in national affairs and reveal Himself! Isaiah here cried to God *Oh that You would **rend** the heavens and come down* - 'we need a demonstration of Your might and power' - **as You did in the past** *When You **did awesome things** that we did not look for, You came down, the mountains quaked at Your presence* (3)! Isaiah is **recalling** past revivals!

Isaiah is **impatient** for **revival!** He believes that God does answer prayer and that He comes *to make His Name known* to the **nations** and to His **adversaries!** *no eye has seen a God besides You who **acts** for those who **wait** for Him* (4) Isaiah feels he has waited long enough! Because *Your **holy** cities have become a **wilderness**... Jerusalem a **desolation*** (10) - ie, they are **public disgrace**. So Isaiah cries and calls upon God and **reminds** us about true revival.

SO - WHEN DOES REVIVAL COME?

1. When the People of God cheerfully and joyfully live righteous lives! Isaiah reminds himself and his readers that God only communicates and meets with those who **live righteous lives!** *You meet him who joyfully works righteousness, those who remember You in **Your ways*** (5). Isaiah is speaking to those who are the true children of God, *You O Lord are our **Father** our Redeemer from of old* (63:16). But Isaiah is also **confessing** to the Lord they are **not** living righteous lives (saved but not walking with God). ***WE** have all become like one who is **unclean**...**all our righteous deeds** are like a **polluted garment*** (6) - never mind our sins!! Isaiah is saying they have lost their **fear** of God and are living to please themselves! He says our sins have **carried us away** from Your presence, *our iniquities like the wind **take us away*** (6c).

APP are we in UK not in the same situation? Our sins have carried us away to live as the non-Christian nations around us! We dishonour God by enacting laws **diametrically opposed** to His laws, and we the Church, have **not** made any **substantial difference** to national life - and yet we are **supposed** to be the **means** of bringing revival! God has appointed the Church as the means for changing the world! Jesus said *You are the **light** of the **world**, you are the **salt** of the earth!* *We must ask ourselves, Are we being faithful to our calling as Xns to be witnesses to Christ? *God **responds** to Xn witness! He hears our prayers when we are **walking with Him**.

2. When we seriously call on God and rouse ourselves from spiritual deadness and grab hold of God in prayer! *There is no one who calls upon Your Name who rouses himself to take hold of You* (7) Israel were pretty casual in their prayer life! They had plenty services and meetings - see chapter one re solemn meetings! But they were not too serious about it - their prayers did not reach heaven! *even though you make many prayers, I will **not listen*** (1:15) They lacked **earnest** prayer. Plenty repetitious words/phrases lacking **zeal!**

APP So we too need to be much **more serious** and **passionate** about our prayers. God wants to see how passionate we are for His Cause and kingdom! We may be passionate about sport or politics - we need to be passionate about God! Remember Hannah in the temple? People thought she was **drunk!** At Pentecost, the disciples seemed **drunks!** Listen to the apostles:- *let us consider how to **stir up** one another to love and good works* (Heb 10:24) + *I think it **right**, as long as I am in this body, to **stir you up** by way of reminder* (2P 1:13) We are **not upset enough** at God's name being **dishonoured!**

3. When we persevere in spite of discouragements! *You have hidden Your face from us and have made us **melt** in the hand of our iniquities* (7b). What can be more **discouraging** than God hiding His face from us! When you see someone **avoiding** you in the street, that can be most discouraging! Like the Psalmist *My friends and companions **stand aloof** from my plague, and my nearest kin **stand far off*** (Psa 38:11). They were ashamed of him and did not want to be seen as associated with him! God has every right to be ashamed of us! *Remember close friend (JJ Mu) 'avoiding' me at Conference! It

was very **hurtful** - and **discouraging!** What have I done wrong?

Earlier God's people, Zion said *The Lord has forsaken me; my Lord has forgotten me* (Isa 49:14). Do you know how God responded to that saying? With **Christ's love/forgiveness!** *Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of My hands; your walls are continually before Me* (Isa 49:15,16). What a **promise to remain faithful** to God and to have faith, trust and to **wait** on God!

ARE WE PREPARED for REVIVAL?

Because it is going to mean **changes!** *Awesome things that we did not look for* is going to happen when revival comes!(3). It is going to mean **leaving our comfort zone!** We will likely have to do things that we are not doing now! For one thing, we will have to make God's name known to his adversaries!!(2). We will need wisdom, grace, patience, love. 'If you Want to Walk on the Water, you've Got to Get Out of the Boat!' We will need to take risks and evangelise and counselling people will be demanding on our personal time!

(1) When we step out of the boat to walk on the water, we step out in **faith** - but that **also means** we will **very likely have fear!** Having fear is **not incompatible** with serving the Lord **in faith!** Moses, Gideon, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and so on, all experienced fear, **even when called,** in serving God in faith! If you do not have fear, when speaking to the world who hate God, you are either, **ignorant** of the **enmity** in the human heart towards God; or you have an **extraordinary measure/degree** of faith that **not many Xns have!** So do not allow anyone persuade you, that because you have fear you will not be an effective witness and servant of God. All saints have fear! Amazed at **David Robertson** at Scottish Parliament last week!!

(2) When we start doing something for God (getting out the boat), we will also **very likely have many failures!!** 'The man who never made a mistake, never made anything'! Edison's bulb 232 failures! @32 lessons he learned! **Pride** can be a terrible barrier to serving God. Many Xns do not 'get involved' in case they make a mistake! Do you know that it is **through failures** that God **sanctifies** us! We

learn from our mistakes in spiritual things as well as in material things. Remember the man whose child needed healing and he went to the disciples but they **failed to heal** the child. How did they feel? Maybe they had **boasted** they could do it! But *This kind **cannot be driven out by anything but prayer*** (Mar 9:29 **A lesson!**)

In obeying God's call, you might **very likely be made to look stupid!** The fear of failing and looking stupid before your friends and those you admire and respect, **prevents** many saints from being **obedient!** Who knows how **much unrealised potential** is out there in the Church because of **fear of failure** and **pride!** The saints before you were made to look **stupid!** Paul said *we have become a **spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men.** We **are fools** for Christ's sake* (1Cor 4:9), and also at Athens on Mars Hill he was made to feel silly!

(3) **We will need to commit our future into God's Hands!** *But now O Lord You are our Father, **we are the clay,** and **You** are our **Potter,** we are all the **work of Your hand*** (8). **Total surrender** to God! Not easy! We need to **persuade God with His own arguments?** Ans: **remember not iniquity forever ...please look we are all Your people** (9). What is **significant** about that? God **promised** to **bless** Israel! Moses' father-in-law Hobab? How did Moses try to persuade Hobab to join Israel? *Come with us and we will do good to you, **for** the Lord has **promised good** to Israel* (Num 10:29).

Do you know the **result** of this prayer of Isaiah? Look at the next chapter!! What does it tell us? It was a **promise** that God would not only bless Israel, but the **rest of the world** - the **Gentiles!** *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...to a nation that was **not called by My Name*** (65:1). Paul in quoting this verse was able to say *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* (Rom 10:20). And although Paul adds *But of Israel he says 'All day long I have **held out my hands** to a **disobedient and contrary people** - yet Israel **WILL YET** come to faith in Jesus Christ!* Paul in **Romans chapter 11** to tell us how/when? (*I will make you jealous with a foolish nation*) God is **gracious** in holding out His hand to us!!