

than-thou attitude of feeling entitled to God's blessing, rather than an attitude of true penitence or devotion to Him.

This prayer is followed by fifteen verses of as strong denunciation and rebuke as occur anywhere in the Scripture. The necessary conclusion is that 63:8-64:12 is not a godly prayer but rather the presentation of an attitude on the part of individuals who claim to be God's people -- an attitude which must receive as its first answer a declaration of rebuke and punishment!

In Romans 10:20 Paul quotes Isaiah 65:1 as showing that God had predicted the turning to the Gentiles. Even without this corroboration it would seem reasonable to consider that the passage from 63:7 to 64:12 is a picture of a wrong attitude taken by those who claim His blessing simply on the basis of ancestry or of previous relationship rather than on the basis of a penitent heart and a desire to be brought into line with God's desires.

Isaiah 65

In the passage that we have just discussed the speaker referred several times to the great difference between those who considered themselves to be "all thy people" and those outsiders who "were not called by thy name" (cf. espec. 63:19). In a startling answer, in 65:1-2, God declares that His mercy is to be poured out upon "a nation that was not called by my name," while those who have been His people must go through a period of purging and condemnation. The contrast between these two groups is stressed throughout the first 15 verses of the chapter. It reminds us vividly of the striking prediction of the turning of God's favor to the Gentiles in Isaiah 29, and of Paul's discussion in Romans 11. In Romans 10:20-21 Paul quotes these very verses to introduce his discussion of God's calling of the Gentiles. As always, he does not quote a few words out of context, but applies and explains the very matter which is under discussion in the Old Testament passage from which he quotes.

In these 15 verses God severely condemns His erring people for their sin and describes the coming change in His economy which is to occur. The rest of the chapter 65 portrays a later time of great blessing.