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All Our Righteous Acts Are Like Filthy Rags

64: 5-12

All our righteous acts are like filthy rags **DIG: Why do the Jews realize that they must confess their sin before Yeshua can return? Why does the faithful remnant need mercy? What is the difference between mercy and grace? How does Isra'el confessing her sins in 59:1-15a parallel Isra'el confessing her sins in 63:7 to 64:11?**

All our righteous act are like filthy rags **REFLECT: Was there a time when all your righteous acts were like dry leaves or filthy rags because you lacked humility or did not call upon the name of the LORD? What did you do? In that case, what hope do you have that He will relate to you with mercy and grace (Romans 3:21-26)? Learning from Isaiah, choose one area of your own prayer life, which might benefit from attention: repentance, faith, zeal, relationship, boldness, humility, contentedness, or concern for God's honor. How will you strengthen this area?**



These verses contain Israel's prayer at the end of the Great Tribulation that brings about the Second Coming of Christ. The actual words of this prayer are found in four key passages of Scripture, first, in **Psalm 79:1-13**, secondly in **Psalm 80:1-19**, thirdly in **Isaiah 53:1-9**, and **63-7** ending here. **Isra'el** will finally recognize **her** hopeless condition. The spiritual scales fall from **her** eyes and she will see that it was **ADONAI** bringing **her** to a place where **she** could no longer rely upon the antichrist or **herself**, but instead, the only place left for **her** to look was up - to **Him**. **You come to help those who gladly do right, who remember Your ways (64:5a).** **Come** is in the perfect tense, showing a future so

certain, that **Isaiah** views it as having already taken place. **The believing remnant** now remembers that **God's** favor in the past was based upon **their** righteousness (**Deut 28**). But instead of claiming righteousness, **Isra'el** confesses that **she** had **continued to sin against God's ways**. And because of **her** great **sin**, which continued for centuries, **God** was justifiably **angry (64:5b)**.

So **they** ask the question: **How can we be saved (64:5c)?** The answer is of course, to confess their **sin** and to cry out to **the LORD** for mercy (**64:8-12**). **They** see **themselves** as totally **unclean**. **All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags (64:6a)**. **Unclean** was the leper's cry. It spoke of unfitness for the fellowship of **God**, and exclusion from **His people (Leviticus 13:45)**. The word **filthy** here indicates **rags** that soak up menstrual blood. Bodily fluids were considered a defilement (see the commentary on **Leviticus**, **to see link click Cn - Female Menstrual Uncleaness**), because they were the *outflow* of a sinful, fallen human nature. **They** will see **themselves** as very mortal at the end of the Great Tribulation. **We all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away (64:6b)**. Just as an old, dry shriveled **up leaf** is helpless before **the wind**, so we can become captive to **sin** and are no more able to choose our direction than **a leaf in the wind**. The **sin** seems to take on a life of its own (**James 1:13-15**). We think we can control it, but it ends up controlling us. Even worse, it cuts us off from **God**. **The Psalmist** declares that **the wicked are like chaff that the wind blows away (Psalm 1:4)**.

The Israelites also admit that **no one calls on Your name or strives to lay hold of You (64:7a)**. The evidence of **their** hopeless condition will be that **no one** is even concerned enough about **their** spiritual condition to cry out to **the LORD** for help. Finally, **they** understand that **God** has **hidden His face from them, and made them waste away because of their sins (64:7b)**. Rabbi Shaul wrote about how **God** gives sinners **over** to the **sin** they have chosen (**Romans 1:18-24**). So all **their** best thinking had gotten **Isra'el** was a covenant with the antichrist who had the faithful remnant pinned down at Bozrah (**63:1-6**). It took a lot of pain and suffering but at last **she** had a moment of spiritual clarity and confessed **her sin** of rejecting **Yeshua Messiah (64:5-7)**. After admitting **her sin**, **she** will then cry out for mercy (**64:8-12**).

***LORD, You** have cared for us, your **children**, as a loving **Father**, providing discipline, direction, and encouragement. When earthly fathers fail us, **You** remain steadfast, molding us with **Your** everlasting love.*

The final part of the prayer by the faithful remnant is a confession of trust in **the LORD**.

But now, ADONAI, You are our Father. We are the clay, You are the potter (Romans 9:20-21); we are all the work of Your hands (64:8 CJB). When **the remnant** finally has spiritual eyes to see, **they** will be like obedient children, and as submissive as **clay (29:16, 45:9)**. **She** sees **God** as her **Father** and **herself** as **the work** of **His hand**. **He** is **the Potter**, the one who creates. When a man makes a pretty vase, in a sense, he is **the father** of it because he created it. **The LORD** is **Israel's Father** in the sense that **He** is responsible for **her** existence. It is as though the believing remnant were saying to **God**, "Although our **sin** cannot be denied, neither can the fact that **You are our Father**."

Paul makes this distinction in his speech in Athens: **For in Him we live and move and have our being. As some of your own poets have said: We are His offspring. Therefore, since we are the LORD's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone - an image made by man's design and skill (Acts 17:28-29)**. From the Bible, we understand that **ADONAI** is **our Father** by creation, but mankind lost that image. You and I can become **the children of God (John 1:12)** only through adoption (see the commentary on [The Life of Christ Bw - What God Does for Us at the Moment of Faith](#)). All the **people** in the world are not brothers and sisters. There are only two families in the world; the family of **God** and the family of Satan. If you aren't in one, you're not in the other. You will either be eternally blessed or eternally condemned depending on which spiritual family you are in.

But then **the believing remnant** will pray for **ADONAI's** anger to cease and to **look** upon **them** as **His** own. **They** will ask forgiveness of **their** iniquities: **Do not be angry beyond measure, O LORD; do not remember our sins forever. Oh, look upon us, we pray, for we are all your people (64:9)**. **The faithful remnant** had already suffered the wrath of **God** for the last three-and-a-half years of the Great Tribulation. **Two-thirds** of **them** had died (**Zechariah 13:8**). Now **they** plead for mercy that **their** well-deserved discipline not be carried out **beyond measure**. This is a major theme in **Isaiah**. **God's** judgment will fall on sinful **people**; there is a point where it cannot be averted. Nonetheless, judgment is not an end to itself. Its ultimate purpose is to restore the of **people** of **ADONAI** to purity (**4:2-6, 30:18-22, 54:7-8**). Therefore, **the faithful remnant**, like **the psalmist** who said: **Hear my voice when I call, O LORD; be merciful to me and answer (Psalm 27:7)**, will **pray** that **God** remembers them in light of **His** unending love, not in light of **their** unending **sin (79:8)**.

***ADONAI** wants us to be just like **Jesus**. Isn't that good news? You aren't stuck with today's personality. You aren't condemned to be the thing that you dislike about yourself the most. You are tweakable. Even if you've worried each day of your life, you don't have to worry the*

rest of your life. So what if you were born to be negative. You don't have to die that way.

*Where do we get this idea that we can't change? Where do we get the statements like, "It's just my nature to worry," or "I'll always be pessimistic. I'm just that way." Well who says? Would we talk like that about our bodies? "It's just my nature to have a broken leg. I can't do anything about it." Of course not. If our bodies fall apart, we look for help. Shouldn't we do the same with our hearts? Shouldn't we seek first aid for our sour attitudes? Can't we ask for treatment for our selfish tirades? Of course we can. **Jesus** can change our hearts. He wants us to have a heart like **His**.*

Earlier, **Isaiah** declared that **Jerusalem** would **no longer be spoken of as abandoned or the LORD's land be spoken of as desolate**, but rather **Zion** would **be called My delight is in her and the Land married (62:4a)**. Here, **the believing remnant** is acknowledging the fact that **Jerusalem** had been made **desolate** by the Gentile nations after three-and-a-half years warfare between the Jews and the antichrist ([Kh - The Eight Stage Campaign of the Battle of Armageddon: the Fall of Jerusalem](#)), and between the antichrist and **ADONAI**. **Your sacred cities have become a desert** as a result of the attacks from the antichrist; **even Zion is a desert, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and glorious Temple, where our fathers praised You, has been burned with fire, and all that we treasured lies in ruins (64:10-11)**. As a result, **the Temple** was still defiled.

All the hopes and anxieties of the faithful remnant are finally summed up in two questions: **After all this, O LORD, will You hold Yourself back? Will you keep silent and punish us beyond measure (64:12)?** The word **after** suggests a chronological order of time . . . like, *after these things happened*. But the Hebrew word **after** means *in response to such events*. Can **God** keep silent in light of the fact that the Gentiles have devastated the Land and **the Temple**? In that **Isra'el** had confessed **her sins** in general and **her national sin** of the rejection of **Yeshua** in particular, could **ADONAI keep silent after all this?** The answer is no.

Therefore, the events of **Chapter 62:1** through **Chapter 63:6** are going to be brought about by **Israel's** national confession of **sin**. **The remnant** will declare that **God's sacred cities have become a desert; even Zion is a desert**, and even **Jerusalem** had become a **desolation**. But back in **Chapter 62:4**, **the LORD** had said that **Isra'el** would **no longer be called Abandoned, but will be called My delight is in her**. So the change from *Abandoned* to *My delight is in her*, is going to come about by **Isra'el's** national confession of **sin** and the Second Coming of **the Messiah**.