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Keep Your Distance, Don't Come Near Me Because I am Holier Than You

65: 1-7

Keep your distance, don't come near me because I am holier than you **DIG:** Who is receiving the grace here? Jews or Gentiles? Who is being temporarily set aside for a time? These verses depict the practice of spiritual adultery. How does God react to these practices? Why did judgment have to come upon Isra'el? Although her sin of idolatry is the focus here, what other sins have led up to judgment (see 59:9-12, 58:3-4, 59:3-4)? How might these sins all stem from the practice of idolatry?

REFLECT: When have you been so caught up with chasing after modern "idols" that you have been unable to hear God calling you? What did it take for Him to finally break through and get your attention? Is there any area of your life today where God is holding out His hands, calling, "Here am I?" How will you respond?

The fervent prayer of the believing remnant in Chapter 64 is answered by God in Chapters 65 and 66. ADONAI makes it very clear that their sins and unfaithfulness were responsible for the judgment they had endured during the Great Tribulation.



Constantly reaching out to Isra'el, ADONAI revealed Himself to those who did not even ask for that revelation. He said: I revealed Myself to Gentiles who did not ask for Me; I was found by Gentiles who did not seek Me. To a nation that did not call on My

name, I said, "Here am I, here am I" (65:1). When **Isaiah** wants to emphasize something, **he** uses this doubling. **Isaiah** also quotes **Deuteronomy 32:21** which is a parallel to this verse. **They made Me jealous by what is no god and angered Me with their worthless idols. I will make them envious by those who are not a people; I will make them angry by a nation that has no understanding. God** was going to provoke **Isra'el** to jealousy **by those who are not a people**, or the Church. It is not a nationality, or a nation, but is composed of **every tribe and language, and people and nation (Revelation 5:9)**. So the prediction is that **the Gentiles** will be brought into the Kingdom of **God** while **Isra'el** will be temporarily set aside (**Romans 11**).

When **Paul** traveled throughout the region of **Phrygia and Galatia**, they went down to **Troas**. During the night he had a vision of a man of **Macedonia** standing and begging him, "**Come over to Macedonia and help us**" (**Acts 16:6-10**). However, when **he** reached **Macedonia** he didn't find a man wanting to hear the Gospel, but a woman named **Lydia**. On the Sabbath, **Paul, Silas and Timothy** went to the river to find a place of prayer. They sat down and began to speak to the **Gentile women** doing their washing. One of those listening was a woman named **Lydia**, who was a worshiper of **God**. The Lord opened her heart to respond to **Paul's** message of salvation, and since they were down at the river she and the members of her household were baptized immediately (see the commentary on **Acts**, to see link [click By - Lydia's Conversion in Philippi](#)). Therefore, **Paul** quotes **Isaiah 65:1-2** in **Romans 10:20-21**, showing that the TaNaKh predicted a period of time when **the Gentiles** would be coming to a saving knowledge of **Jesus** while **Isra'el** did not.

Looking back on **her** long history, **ADONAI** states that one of the reasons that **Isra'el** was to be set aside is because of **her** sinfulness. While **the Gentiles** had been coming to **God**, **Isra'el** had been in rebellion. **God** laments at the indifference of **Isra'el** to **His** calling. **The LORD** gave the Gospel first to the Jew, then to the Gentile (**Romans 1:16**). But **Isra'el** failed to respond. In response to the faithful remnant's prayers, **the LORD** said: **All day long I have held out My hands to an obstinate people, who walk in ways not good, pursuing their own imaginations (65:2)**. The phrase **held out (spread) my hands** is used elsewhere of prayer (**Isaiah 1:15; First Kings 8:22**). **ADONAI** wanted **His** wife to desire **Him** so much rather than commit spiritual adultery, that it was as if **He** was praying for **her** rather than **Isra'el** praying to **Him**! **God** set **Isra'el** aside only after **she** rejected **Him**.

On **his** first missionary journey, **Barnabas and Paul** traveled to **Pisidian Antioch**. On the Sabbath they went to the local synagogue where, as was the custom, they were given an

opportunity to give an encouraging message. Well, they caused such a stir that **on the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear them. When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and talked abusively against what Paul was saying. Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly, saying: We had to speak the word of God to you [Jews] first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. For this is what the Lord has commanded us, "I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth."** When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord. And all who were appointed for eternal life believed. The word of the Lord spread through the whole region (see the commentary on [Acts Bo - Paul's Message in Pisidian Antioch](#)). Thus, God predicted a period of time called the Church Age when the Gentiles called on His name, rather than Isra'el.

God points out Israel's history of spiritual idolatry. **A people who continually provoke Me to My very face, offering sacrifices in pagan gardens (1:29, 57:5, 66:17) and burning incense on altars of brick (65:3).** As ADONAI looks back at her long history, the LORD points out to the believing remnant that the Jews had continually provoked Him with their spiritual adultery. During Isaiah's day they had rebelled (1:2-14); during the days of Jeremiah and Ezekiel idolatry was even practiced in the Temple itself (Ezekiel 8); the Messiah Himself said to them: **Woe to you, teachers of the Torah and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness (Matthew 23:27-28);** and during the first three-and-a-half years of the Great Tribulation the Jews had supposedly worshiped in the wicked Tribulation Temple (see [Ks - The Rejection of the Tribulation Temple](#)). Consequently, during her long, sad history, Isra'el continually provoked God with her spiritual adultery.

Isra'el was continually involved with witchcraft. Consequently, God addresses them as those **who sit among the graves and spend their nights keeping secret vigil (65:4a, also see 8:19).** The Jews in the time of Isaiah were guilty of necromancy, or supposedly communicating with the dead through a medium while sitting among the graves! He chastised those **who eat the flesh of pigs, and whose pots hold broth of unclean meat (65:4b; 66:3 and 17).** In addition, they were guilty of eating grossly unclean food. It is interesting to note that during the Talmudic period and up to today that these types of things have been prevalent among the Jewish people. In the Hebrew prayer book, praying for the dead is still practiced today. There are concepts in Jewish thinking, like the "evil

eye" concept, that come out of the occult because there is nothing biblical about it. This is merely a partial list of the reasons for **Isra'el's** rejection. One by one, they broke all of the 613 commandments of the Torah.

On the one hand **Isra'el** have been in a state of disobedience, yet **she** had a pride that **she** was **holier** than others were. **She** had said: **Keep your distance, don't come near me because I am holier than you (65:5a CJB)**. We would say, they have a "holier than thou" attitude. Even today secular Jews look down upon messianic Jews and Christians because they think we are involved in polytheism, while they themselves have been involved in spiritual adultery down through the centuries. **ADONAI** tells **the Jews** at the end of the Great Tribulation, that as a consequence of **their** religious arrogance **they** had become as repulsive and irritating to **Him** as **smoke in My nostrils, a fire that keeps burning all day (65:5b)**. **The LORD's** punishment did come and **God's** wrath will be moved against **their** sin.

See, it stands written before Me, I will not keep silent but will pay back in full; I will pay it back in a righteous and holy manner **into their laps - both of your sins and the sins of your fathers**, says **the LORD (65:6-7a)**. **ADONAI** will continue to speak until **Israel's** affliction is complete. For all **the Jews** still alive at the end of the Great Tribulation, judgment will precede deliverance. **In the whole land, declares the LORD, two-thirds will be struck down and perish; yet one-third will be left in it. This one-third I will bring into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on My name and I will answer them; I will say, "They are My people, and they will say, "ADONAI is our God" (Zechariah 13:8-9)**.

Because they burned sacrifices on the mountains and defiled Me on the hills, I will measure into their laps the full payment of the Great Tribulation **for their former deeds (65:7)**. There is no suggestion that **the faithful remnant** was punished for the sins of **their** ancestors. Rather, the point is one of continuity, just as **Jesus** said to the people of **His** day, **Jerusalem has always killed the prophets and is just about to do so again (Luke 13:34-35)**. For far too long, **Isra'el** was just going through the motions of **their** religious duties, but **their** hearts were far from **God**. They practiced wickedness as easily as they practiced the rituals in the Temple. But in reality, **they** cursed **ADONAI**.

This was a picture of **the Gentiles** receiving favor from **the LORD**, coming to a saving knowledge of **Yeshua Messiah**, while at the very same time **Isra'el** has been totally set aside. The consequences of **her** sin had to be faced. **God** would **pay her back** through the judgment of the Great Tribulation for **her** idolatrous worship.