

The background features a central diamond shape with a fine grid pattern. This diamond is set against a larger, multi-colored background of overlapping geometric shapes like triangles and rectangles in shades of yellow, green, and red. The overall effect is a vibrant, abstract composition.

BEHOLD – TAKE A GOOD LOOK!

Isa. 63:15-16

“Behold, We Miss You!”

Isa. 63:15 Look down from heaven, and **behold** from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where *is* thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies toward me? are they restrained?

16 Doubtless thou *art* our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O LORD, *art* our father, our redeemer; thy name *is* from everlasting.

Our theme this year is...

VISION 20/20
HIS VISION. OUR FOCUS.

During the last couple of months, we have been observing situations where men and women in the Scriptures faced unforeseeable circumstances and walked by faith as they encountered them. Several weeks ago we shifted our focus to begin a new series...

BEHOLD – TAKE A GOOD LOOK!

A few weeks ago, we began looking at Isaiah, chapter 40, which is packed full with wonderful truth about the greatness and power of God. This morning we will return to the Book of Isaiah and our “Behold” series to consider “Behold – We Miss You!”

The Prophet Isaiah has been given by God a vision of his nation’s destruction by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. He has warned the people, and in our text he is praying to God for His deliverance.

I. BEHOLD, WE MISS YOUR COUNTENANCE, v. 15a –
“Look down from heaven, and **behold...**”

- Think of the opening statement in the model prayer...“Our Father, which art in heaven...”

Mt. 6:9 After this manner therefore pray ye: **Our Father which art in heaven**, Hallowed be thy name.

Isa. 64:1 Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens,
that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains
might flow down at thy presence,

2 Chron. 7:14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and **seek my face**, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

A. The Prayer – “Look down from heaven...”

- Consider the *hoopla* of the media at present – how often have you heard the mention of prayer?
- Too often, even among professing Christians, little interest is given to our most potent force in our spiritual arsenal – PRAYER!

1 Thess. 5:17 **Pray without ceasing.**

Jer. 33:3 **Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.**

Mt. 7:7 **Ask**, and it shall be given you; **seek**, and ye shall find; **knock**, and it shall be opened unto you:
8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

Jas 5:16b “...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

B. The Perspective – “...and **behold** from the habitation of **thy holiness** and of **thy glory**:”

- When engaging in prayer, regardless of the motive, the perspective of God’s holiness and glory must be considered.

Mt. 6:9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, **Hallowed be thy name.**

- A shallow respect for God’s holiness and glory will lead to a shallow life of selfishness.

- Sin separates God from an individual, and a nation, and from His blessings:

Psa 66:18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, **the Lord will not hear *me***:

Job 8:13 So *are* **the paths of all that forget God**; and **the hypocrite's hope shall perish**:

Psa. 9:17 The wicked shall be turned into hell, *and* **all the nations that forget God**.

Isa. 59:1 **Behold**, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:

2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and **your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear.**

- Before entering into the Promised Land, Israel was warned about turning away for God.

Deut. 31:17 Then **my anger shall be kindled** against them in that day, and **I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them**, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, **Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us?**

18 And **I will surely hide my face in that day** for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods.

- In the midst of a nation's backslidden condition, some, like Isaiah, remain faithful.

- The heart of the faithful is to pray for the spiritual renewal of their country.
- “Lord, we miss Your countenance.”

II. BEHOLD, WE MISS YOUR CARE, v. 15b – “...where *is thy zeal* and *thy strength*...”

A. Missing the Passion – “...where *is thy zeal*...”

Original Word: קִנְיָה

Transliteration: qinah

Definition: ardor, zeal, jealousy

<https://biblehub.com/hebrew/7068.htm>

Isa. 42:13 The LORD shall go forth as a mighty man, **he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war**: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies.

- Zeal and jealousy are passionate expressions of care and concern.

Zech. 1:14 So the angel that communed with me said unto me, Cry thou, saying, **Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy.**

Ex. 20:5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: **for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God**, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me; (Deut. 5:9)

- Isaiah knew that sin was smothering God's zeal and passion toward Israel. He was missing God's attention!

B. Missing the Power – "...where *is*...**thy strength**..."

- Israel experienced the power of God like no other nation in history.

Isa. 63:12 That led *them* by the right hand of Moses **with his glorious arm**, dividing the water before them, to make himself an everlasting name?

13 That **led them through the deep**, as an horse in the wilderness, *that* they should not stumble?

14 As a beast goeth down into the valley, **the Spirit of the LORD caused him to rest: so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name.**

- Israel's northern 10 tribes had already been defeated by the Assyrians in 722 B.C.

- Over 130 years passed, with God sending many prophets, but Israel continued to rebel, turning their back upon God.
- Israel was powerless to stand against Babylon.
- Isaiah knew that God's power was missing –
“...where *is*...**thy strength**...”

Psa. 42:3 My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, **Where is thy God?**

10 As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, **Where is thy God?**

Psa. 79:10 Wherefore should the heathen say, **Where is their God?** let him be known among the heathen in our sight *by* the revenging of the blood of thy servants *which is* shed.

- Spiritual analysis of our nation reveals powerless churches.

2 Tim. 3:1 **This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.**

2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

4 Traitors, heady, highminded, **lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;**

5 **Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof:** from such turn away.

A record 137.5 million Americans voted in the 2016 presidential election, according to new data from the U.S. Census Bureau. Overall voter turnout – defined as the share of adult U.S. citizens who cast ballots – was 61.4% in 2016, a share similar to 2012 but below the 63.6% who say they voted in 2008.

Eighty-three percent of Americans identify themselves as Christians.

<https://abcnews.go.com/US/story?id=90356&page=1#:~:text=Eighty-three%20percent%20of%20Americans%20identify%20themselves%20as%20Christians.,Muslims%2C%20Buddhists%20and%20a%20smattering%20of%20individual%20mentions>

United States Population
331,596,600

<https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/us-population/#:~:text=the%20United%20States%202020%20population%20is%20estimated%20at,the%20list%20of%20countries%20%28and%20dependencies%29%20by%20population>

83% = 275,225,178

There are about 2,154,000 evangelical/born again Christians in America as of 2008. This is according to the 2010 Statistical Abstract of the U.S. Census Bureau, which sourced its data from the American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS) 2008. This number reflects an almost two-fold increase in the number of evangelical/born-again Christians since 2001.

<http://infomory.com/numbers/number-of-evangelical-christians-in-america/>

- Like Israel, the USA is missing the power of God.
- Worldliness dominates churches, anemic Bibles permeate the congregation, and miscreants run our nation.
- Impotent Bibles used by cravens in the pulpit lead to weakened and ineffective constituents in our nation.
- Lord, we miss Your care.

III. BEHOLD, WE MISS YOUR COMPASSION, v. 15c –
“...where *is*...the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies toward me?”

A. The Loss – “...where *is*...toward me?”

- Broken fellowship always leads to diminished intensity of shared love.

Prov. 13:15 Good understanding giveth favour: but **the way of transgressors *is* hard.**

- When fellowship is missing, spiritual dissatisfaction dominates the soul.

B. The Love – “the sounding of thy bowels” is a typical Hebrew expression for the yearning of the heart = compassion.

- Isaiah was missing God’s compassion – did God cease His love toward Israel?
- Broken fellowship hinders expressions of love, but does NOT eliminate love.
- Sin → broken fellowship → dissatisfaction → confusion → vulnerability.

- Repentance → reconciliation → restoration of fellowship → rejoicing.
- Lord, we miss Your Compassion.

Conclusion

Rom. 8:35 **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?**
shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or
nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day
long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

37 Nay, in all these things **we are more than conquerors
through him that loved us.**

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor
angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present,
nor things to come,

39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, **shall be
able to separate us from the love of God, which is in
Christ Jesus our Lord.**