

Verse 24 reminds us, by contrast, of the long delay before responding favorably to the prayer of chapter 64. The people have called to God for His mercy, but the answer seems to be long postponed. During seemingly endless centuries they wait in misery and sorrow for the reestablishment of the blessings which have been removed. In this present age of sin and misery it is often necessary that we pray for years before we see the full answer to our prayers, but in the age described in our present chapter this condition will no longer exist. There will be such communion between God and His people that a prayer will find immediate answer and God's people will always realize that they are living in His very presence. "Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."

This is a blessing which can be secured to quite an extent by God's people in the present day, but which can never as yet be entirely ours. There are always problems which we do not understand. There are always matters concerning which it is necessary that we pray over long periods of time before being able to see the answer to our prayers. This will no longer be true in the wonderful period described here.

We have noticed the striking similarity of verse 25 to Isaiah 11:6-9. Every phrase in this verse except one is exactly paralleled there. That one is interesting: "And dust shall be the serpent's meat." If there was any question in our minds as to whether this verse described the removal of the curse of Genesis 3, all doubts would be removed by this phrase. In Genesis 3 the serpent was cursed by being told that he should eat dust. Here we are told that the curse upon the serpent is not to be removed, as in the case of the rest of the animal creation. Not only must the serpent eat dust, but his food is to be exclusively dust. No longer will he bruise the heel of mankind. No longer will sin and wickedness reign in this earth.

In our consideration of Isaiah 11 we noticed that Romans 8:18-23 declares that the curse is to be removed from the earth -- that the whole creation groans and travails waiting for that glorious time. Here we have another prediction of the physical removal of the curse. It parallels the statement in Revelation 20:1-6 that Satan will be bound for a thousand years.