

A very strong presumption in favor of the idea that this is not a prayer of God's people but a picture of a false attitude held by a substantial portion of the nation, is found in the fact that it is not followed as some might expect by words of pity, and forgiveness, ^{of promise} and decision to remedy the situation, but ~~instead~~ ^{sixteen} by ~~fifteen~~ ^{that include} verses of a strong denunciation as can be found anywhere in the Scripture.

Isaiah 65:1-16 (particularly verses 2-5, 7, and 11-13) constitute a strong a denunciation as can be found in Scripture. Some commentators who take the prayer as a true plea of godly people for God's mercy say that one would expect God to immediately to give wonderful promises of remedy in answer to such a wonderful prayer but before He does so He first has to deal with something else.

When we examine the prayer more closely we find that indeed the third suggestion must be the right one. The prayer recognizes that there == that the people had turned away from God and that this was the reason for the beginning of their suffering, but contains no real statement of repentance, of sorrow for sin, or of desire == determination to live in a way that would be pleasing to God. Its primary basis for request is God did wonderful things for them in the past why doesn't He do them now. They are His people; nobody else has a right to claim God's goodness as they do. Beautiful as some of the expressions are, the general tone of the prayer must be conceded to be like that of the Pharisees prayer in the New Testament thanking God that ~~he~~ he is not like other men.

As one reads the prayer the prayer even seems at places to blame God for the fact that the people have fallen into sin. In 63:17 they ask why did He make them err from His ways and harden their hearts? God has done wonderful things in the past and trouble has come because of the people's iniquity described in 64:6-7 but after all they are His people and His temple has been destroyed, how can He keep from feeling sorry for them and restoring them and giving them again the great blessings that had been theirs in the past.