

December 9th, 2018
"The Prayer of a Watchman"
Isaiah 63

BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN

Dec 2	1 Cor 12-14	Dec 6	2 Cor 10-13
Dec 3	1 Cor 15-16	Dec 7	Galatians 1-3
Dec 4	2 Cor 1-4	Dec 8	Galatians 4-6
Dec 5	2 Cor 5-9	Dec 9	Ephesians 1-3

Lesson Introduction: Our passage this week begins with a stunning depiction of the Lord's wrath against His enemies. **Verses 1-6** speak to the vengeance Christ will pour out on the world. No longer will sin be tolerated when that day comes, rather, the wicked will meet their end, and the Lord will reign with His people. Our study this week will cover Isaiah's response to these realities. We will see in **verses 7-19** how Isaiah prays to God as he considers the state of Israel, and impending judgment. As we go, we will consider how this watchman of Israel pleaded with God for His mercy and grace through remembrance, confession, and lament.

Key Memory Verses: Isaiah 63

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS OF THE PASSAGE:

- **The Lord's faithfulness in the past gives us hope for the future (V. 7-14)**
- **The Lord is faithful even when we are not (V. 10-14).**
- **The Lord listens to the laments of His people (V. 15-19)**

Isaiah 63:7-19

7 I will recount the steadfast love of the Lord,
the praises of the Lord,
according to all that the Lord has granted us,
and the great goodness to the house of Israel
that he has granted them according to his compassion,
according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

8 For he said, "Surely they are my people,
children who will not deal falsely."
And he became their Savior.

9 In all their affliction he was afflicted,
and the angel of his presence saved them;
in his love and in his pity he redeemed them;

he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

10 But they rebelled
and grieved his Holy Spirit;
therefore he turned to be their enemy,
and himself fought against them.

11 Then he remembered the days of old,
of Moses and his people.
Where is he who brought them up out of the sea
with the shepherds of his flock?
Where is he who put in the midst of them
his Holy Spirit,

12 who caused his glorious arm
to go at the right hand of Moses,
who divided the waters before them
to make for himself an everlasting name,

13 who led them through the depths?
Like a horse in the desert,
they did not stumble.

14 Like livestock that go down into the valley,
the Spirit of the Lord gave them rest.
So you led your people,
to make for yourself a glorious name.

15 Look down from heaven and see,
from your holy and beautiful habitation.
Where are your zeal and your might?
The stirring of your inner parts and your compassion
are held back from me.

16 For you are our Father,
though Abraham does not know us,
and Israel does not acknowledge us;
you, O Lord, are our Father,
our Redeemer from of old is your name.

17 O Lord, why do you make us wander from your ways
and harden our heart, so that we fear you not?
Return for the sake of your servants,
the tribes of your heritage.

18 Your holy people held possession for a little while;
our adversaries have trampled down your sanctuary.

19 We have become like those over whom you have
never ruled,
like those who are not called by your name.

Discussion Section 1: *The Hope of Remembrance (V. 7-14)*

-In **verse 7** What does Isaiah turn to as a comfort after proclaiming the truths of **verses 1-6**?

-What do **verses 7 and 14** tell us about why the Lord granted mercy to the Israelites in the past?

-What specific event does Isaiah recall in these verses to remind the people of God's past mercy?

Note: As stated in the introduction, **V. 1-6** begin this passage with a strong statement concerning the coming wrath of the Lord against His enemies. It is in that light that Isaiah turns to the past, to consider the **steadfast love of the LORD,** and proclaim the mighty deeds of faithfulness that He has done for Israel throughout history. In the shadow of proclaiming God's wrath, Isaiah hopefully points out that, even as Israel has sinned against God time and time again, the Lord has continually shown compassion on them, and abundantly given them His steadfast love.

We see in **verse 7** that the basis of the continual pouring out of mercy on the Israelites **was according to the compassion of the Lord.** As we have seen plainly throughout the book of Isaiah, the Israelites had only earned God's wrath (which is also true of us), and yet, He reminded faithful to them, always preserving for Himself a remnant of His people (**Isaiah 10:21, 46:3**). We see later in this passage that the Lord has continually shown mercy to His people, that He would **make for Himself a glorious name (V. 14).** Isaiah remembers how the Lord has continually preserved His people, that He might be glorified through them. In remembering all that the Lord had done, Isaiah finds hope. He recognized that it is only by the faithfulness and compassion of God that they would be delivered from His wrath, just the same as it had always been.

Discussion Section 2: *Recognition of Rebellion (V. 10)*

-What does Isaiah's recognition of Israel's past rebellion tell us about how we should approach God?

-What does it mean to **grieve the Holy Spirit**?

-Why should we confess our sins to God?

Note: Even as Isaiah remembered God's faithfulness to Israel in the past, this did not stop Him from also recognizing the failures of the nation, and the consequences they faced as a result. **Verse 10** states that, even as the Lord continually showed mercy to His people, still, **"they rebelled and grieved the Holy Spirit."** Isaiah knew that, as a watchman of Israel, it was important to recognize their sin before Holy God. There was no attempt to soften the level of Israel's sin, or try to deflect, and draw attention that they had done a lot of good things that made them worthy of mercy, but rather, an owning of the rebellion that marked the nation's past.

As Christians, it is important that we recognize the seriousness of our sins and turn to the Lord in a spirit of humble repentance. Our sin is not merely a mistake that we can make right by some other good actions, rather, our sins grieve the Spirit of God (**Ephesians 4:30**). The Spirit is not some abstract force in the world, He is a person, and indeed is God. When we sin, we grieve Him, for by doing so we are failing to walk by His power in obedience to the commands of the Lord. Therefore, as the children of God, it should grieve us to grieve the Spirit. Our response to our grieving of the Spirit should be repentance, which leads to the forgiveness and cleansing of God (**1 John 1:9**).

Discussion Section 3: *Humble Lament (V. 15-19)*

-What does it mean to "lament"?

-What do these verses tell us about where Isaiah found His hope?

Note: The passage closes with a tone of humble desperation. To lament is to "passionately express grief or sorrow" (Meriam-Webster). We see in these last several verses the grief that Isaiah has over the hardness of heart that has plagued Israel. Verse 17 reveals that Isaiah recognized the only way that Israel would be freed from their wandering hard-heartedness, would be by the grace of God intervening, changing their hearts (**Ephesians 2:1-5**). The passage ends with the humble admission that Israel had become like the rest of the world and was worthy of the same wrath spoken of in **verses 1-6**. As we close out this lesson, may we humbly examine our hearts, recognizing that it is only by the power and zeal of God that we are saved from His wrath.