

A Trek Through Isaiah 87 - 64:1-12

Bruce Pike

Mar 25, 2018

<u>The New Heavens and New Earth: Prayers and Promises 63:7 - 66:24</u>
The watcher praying 63:7 - 64:12
The Lord responding 65:1 - 66:24

- In the book of the Conqueror (56 - 66)
 - Question: How will God's people fulfill their promise?
 - Three areas of emphasis
 - The contrast between the ideal community and the actual community
 - God's glorious promises for the faithful.
 - A Conqueror: the third messianic figure who accomplishes God's purpose and fulfills His promises.
- This section: The New Heavens and New Earth: Prayers and Promises 63:7 - 66:24
 - The work is completed. Now what?
 - The watcher praying 63:7 - 64:12
 - The Lord responding 65:1 - 66:24
- Today:
 - The watcher praying (part 2) 64:1-12

The watcher praying 63:7 - 64:12

- 63:7-14 Remembering who God is

- V7 His steadfast love

7 I will recount the steadfast love of the LORD,

- V8-9 His commitment to His people

8 For he said, "Surely they are my people,

- V10-14 His ongoing patience with their failings

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,

- 63:15 - 64:12 Intercession

- Seven parts

- 63:15-16 Where is Your love?

- 63:17-19 Why do You remain distant?

- 64:1-3 Why didn't You act?

- 64:4-5 Is it too late to hope?

- 64:6-7 We have sinned and are helpless before You.

- 64:8-9 You are our Father; we are your people.

- 64:10-12 Will You ignore these things?

- Last week

- 63:15-16 Where is Your love?

15 Look down from heaven and see, from your holy and beautiful habitation. Where are your zeal and your might?

- 63:17-19 Why do You remain distant?

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...

○ 64:1-3 Why didn't You **act**?

1 Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at your presence— 2 as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil— to make your name known to your adversaries, and that the nations might tremble at your presence! 3 When you did awesome things that we did not look for, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.

■ V1 Lament

- rend the heavens...come down...the mountains quaked.
 - As at Mt Sinai in Ex 19:18 Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly.
- Looking back at Israel's sorry history.
- God can do all things.
- If He had intervened then things would have been different.

■ V2 What could have been

- as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil
 - A picture of cause and effect
 - Quick
 - Intense
 - Effectual
- to make your name known to your adversaries.
 - God's adversaries were afflicting His people and His city, acting as if there was no God.
- that the nations might tremble at your presence!
 - Acknowledge Him as God.

■ V3 Past experience

- In times past when God visited His people, He came with mighty deeds that were completely unexpected (Red Sea parting, water out of the rock, manna, etc)

- 64:4-5 Is it too late to **hope**?

4 From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides you, who acts for those who wait for him. 5 You meet him who joyfully works righteousness, those who remember you in your ways. Behold, you were angry, and we sinned; in our sins we have been a long time, and shall we be saved?

- Note the structure: From of old.., a long time are the same word; bracketing the passage.
- V4 The only God
 - From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides you who acts
 - God is eternal.
 - Contrasting Him with pagan idols.
 - He does works in the world.
 - They do nothing.
- V5 Is there still hope?
 - for those who wait for him.
 - God is holy. There are requirements to come to Him
 - Wait for Him
 - Joyfully work righteousness
 - Remember Him according to His ways
 - Behold, you were angry, and we sinned; in our sins we have been a long time, and shall we be saved?
 - These requirements have never been met.
 - For a long time His people have been in their sins and He has been angry with them.
 - Is salvation still possible?

- 64:6-7 We have **sinned**

6 We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. 7 There is no one who calls upon your name, who rouses himself to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have made us melt in the hand of our iniquities.

■ V6-7a Sin and its effects

- We have all become like one who is unclean.
 - Technical word to indicate legal impurity
 - The leper's cry Lev 13:45-46 The leprous person who has the disease shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of his head hang loose, and he shall cover his upper lip and cry out, 'Unclean, unclean.' 46 He shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease. He is unclean. He shall live alone. His dwelling shall be outside the camp.
 - Excluded from God and from His people.
- all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment
 - Lit garment of menstruation.
 - Bodily discharges were considered unclean since they came from a fallen human nature.
 - An extreme picture of defilement
 - Here is a true believer acknowledging their total depravity: they can bring nothing pure to God..
- We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
 - A picture of leaves in the fall.
 - Decay and death
 - Swept away
- There is no one who calls upon your name,
 - Sin brings a lack of interest in the Lord
 - No one was exerting themselves to lay hold of Him.
- who rouses himself to take hold of you
 - Life without God is a life of sleep.
 - No one was waking up to seek God.

■ V7b Abandoned

- you have hidden your face from us,
 - Lost fellowship with God due to their sin.
 - When He hides His face, the people cannot come to Him.
- and have made us melt in the hand of our iniquities.
 - Given over to sin.
 - As Ro 1:24-28 "God gave them up" to sin 3x
 - Also the first part of Ro 6:23 The wages of sin is death...

- 64:8-9 You are our **Father**

8 But now, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. 9 Be not so terribly angry, O LORD, and remember not iniquity forever. Behold, please look, we are all your people.

■ V8 You are our Father

- But now, O LORD
 - Change in direction
 - Not a denial of what was said before.
 - A plea to consider a new aspect.
- you are our Father;
 - Asserting the relationship.
 - God does not change.
 - He remains wrathful at sin.
 - He also remains the Father of His people
- we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand.
 - A picture of the potter making pots
 - You are our potter. Lit “You are the One who forms us”
 - Not blaming God
 - Asserting a permanent relationship
 - The pot can always seek refashioning by its Maker..

■ V9 Please relent and have mercy

- Be not so terribly angry, O LORD,
 - Lit “angry unto muchness”: Do not let your anger have its full course
- and remember not iniquity forever.
 - Not denying that they have sinned.
 - Asking that God decide not to bring what their iniquity deserves, but to set their iniquity aside.
 - Here is faith that a holy God can find a way to do this and still be just.
 - As Abraham in Heb 11:17-19 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, 18 of whom it was said, “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” 19 He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.
- Behold, please look, we are all your people.
 - Please look. No basis other than God’s mercy.
 - We are all. Repeated for emphasis
 - Your people. Asserting the relationship

- 64:10-12 Will You keep **silent**?

10 Your holy cities have become a wilderness; Zion has become a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. 11 Our holy and beautiful house, where our fathers praised you, has been burned by fire, and all our pleasant places have become ruins. 12 Will you restrain yourself at these things, O LORD? Will you keep silent, and afflict us so terribly?

- V10-11 looks like the return from exile but returning exiles could not pray the prayer in v12 since they would be experiencing God acting on their behalf.
- Better read as perfects of certainty: "Your holy cities are to become a wilderness."
- v10-11 The coming devastation
 - Cities a wilderness and a desolation
 - The temple burned with fire. "Holy and beautiful" because that's where they met with God.
- V12 Appeal
 - At these things. "In response to these things"
 - Will you restrain yourself ...Will you keep silent.
 - As Is 63:15. Where are your zeal and your might?
The stirring of your inner parts and your compassion are held back from me.
 - There the restraint was due to sin. Now the sin has been confessed and forgiveness sought. Will God not act to create a new situation out of the present ruin?
 - Here is supplication out of extremity. Isaiah, speaking for the people, brings nothing to God but their sin.
 - In the last two chapters God will reply.

Discussion

We will break into three groups for discussion. The questions are

- 1. Is it too late to hope? 64:4-5**
 - a. God acts in the world**
 - b. There are requirements to come to Him**
 - c. For a long time we have sinned.**
 - d. Can we still be saved?**
- 2. We have sinned. 64:6-9**
 - a. We have become like one unclean**
 - b. You have hidden Your face.**
 - c. We fade like a leaf.**
 - d. No one calls upon Your name.**
 - e. We melt in the hand of our iniquities; they take us away.**
 - f. You are our Father**
- 3. Will You keep silent? 64:10-12**
 - a. Our house has been burned with fire.**
 - b. Our pleasant places have become ruins.**
 - c. Will You restrain Yourself?**

Remember to worship the Lord: (1) See (2) Know (3) Respond

For next week: The Lord responding (part 1) 65:1-10

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