

A Trek Through Isaiah 86 - 63:7-19

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<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 1) 63:7-19

The watcher praying 63:7 - 64:12

- Structure
 - V7 I will recount. Singular of 62:6 You who put the Lord in remembrance. One of the watchmen at prayer.
 - 63:7-14 Remembering who God is
 - 63:15 - 64:12 Intercession

- 63:7-14 Remembering who God is

- V7 His **steadfast** love

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.

- I will recount
 - Cause to be remembered.
- Steadfast love.
 - Heseḏ.
 - Plural for emphasis
 - At start and end
- the praises of the Lord
 - The response of faith
- Three aspects of His steadfast love that give occasion for praise
 - according to all that the Lord has granted us,
 - Shown in His deeds
 - the great goodness to the house of Israel
 - Abundantly good
 - according to his compassion
 - Of the heart

- V8-9 His **commitment** to His people

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.

- The watchman recounts how God’s hesed was manifested to His people.
- Several references to the Exodus
 - My children. Ex 4:22
 - became their Savior. Ex 15:2
 - In all their affliction he was afflicted. Ex 3:7
 - My people. Ex 3:10
- Surely they are my people,
 - He chooses them as His.
- children who will not deal falsely.
 - Looking to the eternal state.
- And he became their Savior.
 - He commits to saving them
 - Celebrated in the song of Moses after the Red Sea deliverance. Ex 15:2
The LORD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation
- In all their affliction he was afflicted,
 - He shared their sorrows
 - As Jn 11:35 Jesus wept
- and the angel of his presence saved them;
 - He acted to fulfill His commitment
 - Love in both word and deed.
- In his love and in his pity
 - Love that delights in the loved one.
 - Pity: gentle mercy that spares.
- he redeemed them;
 - As their next of kin He rescued them
- he lifted them up and carried them
 - He bore them through all their trials
- all the days of old.
 - He did not give up on them but persevered

- 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, 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.

- Recounting the Exodus experience

- V10 Rebellion and result

- But they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit;
 - Israel's faithlessness contrasted with God's faithfulness.
 - Recalled by Stephen at his defense Acts 7:51 You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you.
 - All the persons of the Trinity were active
 - Father
 - Son. V9 the angel of the Lord
 - Holy Spirit.
- he turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them.
 - Result of their rebellion

■ V11-13a Remembering

- A difficult passage. Young: “This verse bristles with difficulties.”
- Then he remembered
 - Who does “he” refer to?
 - Maybe God. Then the following questions are God speaking to Himself through the prophet, saying, “Have I changed?”
 - Maybe the people. Then the following questions are them lamenting the loss of the blessings of their earlier days.
- the days of old, of Moses and his people
 - May refer to Moses’ people or to God’s people.
 - Refers to the Exodus
 - God called Israel “My people”.
 - He became their Savior.
 - He sent Moses and Aaron to deliver them.
 - He defeated all of Egypt’s gods, one by one.
 - Finally, at the Red Sea, he destroyed Pharaoh’s army and delivered His people.
 - All the world heard how Israel’s God had delivered them.
 - Later at Mt Sinai, Moses turned aside God’s wrath by reminding Him of His name and His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
Ex 32:11-14
- Where is he.
 - If God is speaking: a divine soliloquy: have I changed?
 - If the people are speaking: a lament: where is God?
- who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock
 - Deliverance at the Red Sea
 - Shepherds: Moses and Aaron.
- who put in the midst of them his Holy Spirit
 - God’s presence with them
 - Moses asked for this in Ex 33:15-16 And he said to him, “If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here. 16 For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?”
- who caused his glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses
 - God’s might works in response to Moses wielding his rod
- who divided the waters before them...who led them through the depths
 - Maybe refers to the crossing of the Red Sea
 - Maybe refers to the crossing of the Jordan River
- to make for himself an everlasting name
 - God’s nature and character Forever known among men and angels

■ V13b-14 summary

- Two pictures of the Lord's consistent care for His people.
 - Like a horse in the desert, they did not stumble.
 - Swift
 - Stately and majestic
 - Not stopped by any obstacle
 - Like livestock that go down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord gave them rest.
 - Cattle descending into a wadi where there is plenty of food and water.
 - Finding rest and refreshment.
 - Accomplished by the Holy Spirit
- Summing up
 - So you led your people
 - Encompasses all that God has done
 - to make for yourself a glorious name
 - The result: a glorious name
- Implied questions
 - The work is not done.
 - Was this all for naught?
 - What will happen to Your name?

- 63:15 - 64:12 Intercession
 - The watchman has considered the nature of his God
 - Always on the side of His people
 - His steadfast love never ends
 - He feels their distress while He is grieved by their sin.
 - They merit wrath but He provides mercy.
 - He remains the same; He does not change.
 - He will always act for the sake of His name
 - Now he can turn to supplication for himself and his people.
 - 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 You act for those who wait for You. 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 Your city Zion is a wilderness. Will You ignore these things?
 - 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? 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.

- V15 Call to see
 - Look down from heaven and see
 - Call to God to see the condition of His people.
 - From heaven
 - The God of heaven
 - Reigning over all the earth
 - Is 40:22-23 It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in; 23 who brings princes to nothing, and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness.
 - From your holy and beautiful habitation
 - God's presence brings holiness and beauty

■ V15 Where is your love?

- Where are your zeal and your might?
 - God's commitment and power.
 - Love manifested in mighty deeds
 - Is 42:13 The LORD goes out like a mighty man, like a man of war he stirs up his zeal; he cries out, he shouts aloud, he shows himself mighty against his foes.
- The stirring of your inner parts and your compassion are held back from me.
 - Love manifested in emotions and kindness.

■ V16 You are our Father

- You are our Father.
 - 2x for emphasis
- Abraham does not know us, and Israel does not acknowledge us
 - In Is 48:1 the charge was made that the people could no longer claim to be Israel: Hear this, O house of Jacob, who are called by the name of Israel, and who came from the waters of Judah, who swear by the name of the LORD and confess the God of Israel, but not in truth or right.
 - Here the people acknowledge that this charge is true.
- you, O LORD, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name
 - Reminding God of His promises during the Exodus
 - Father. Ex 4:22 ...Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD, Israel is my firstborn son,
 - Redeemer. Ex 6:6-7 Say therefore to the people of Israel, 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. 7 I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.
 - Eternal name. Ex 3:15 God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.

- 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, 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.

- V17 why do you make us wander from your ways
 - Not an accusation against God
 - Rather an admission that their sin made it necessary for God to drive them far from Him.
- V17 harden our heart, so that we fear you not
 - Again, the result of their sinful choices
 - The example of Pharaoh shows the hardening of the heart that comes with sin
 - Ex 5:2 But Pharaoh said, “Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and moreover, I will not let Israel go.”
 - Ex 7:3 But I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and though I multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, 4 Pharaoh will not listen to you.
 - But here Isaiah laments. Calvin notes “...Believers always look at the goodness of God, even when they acknowledge that they suffer justly on account of their sins.”
- V17 Return for the sake of your servants, the tribes of your heritage.
 - Return
 - After a long absence
 - God’s return can save His people.
 - Only His return can save them
 - Your heritage.
 - God’s heritage
 - Ex 9:29 For they are your people and your heritage, whom you brought out by your great power and by your outstretched arm.’
- V18 Your holy people held possession for a little while; our adversaries have trampled down your sanctuary.
 - Prophetic past tense: Speaking of a future event as if it had already happened.
 - Speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Babylonians
 - Sanctuary. The place where the people could meet with God.
- V19 We have become like those over whom you have never ruled, like those who are not called by your name.
 - No longer in God’s kingdom or family
 - Heb makes the clauses into titles: We have become “You did not rule them”, “Your name was not given to them.”

Discussion

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

1. **Steadfast love 63:7**
 - a. **The praises of the Lord**
 - b. **His great goodness granted to us**
 - c. **According to His compassion**
2. **Where is He? 63:10-12**
 - a. **They rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit**
 - b. **He turned to be their enemy**
 - c. **Where is He?**
3. **You are our Father**
 - a. **Why do you make us wander from your ways?**
 - b. **Our adversaries have trampled down your sanctuary.**
 - c. **We have become like those over whom you have never ruled.**
 - d. **You, O LORD, are our Father.**

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

For next week:

- The watcher praying (part 12) 64:1-12

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