

Isaiah 1-5 Introduction How can one be spared judgement and live happily ever after?	Isaiah 6-39 New Creation God will rule over a new, perfect and eternal creation	Isaiah 40-55 New relationship God will restore his people from exile to a permanent relationship	Isaiah 56-66 Who God will choose the humble and reject the proud
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Isaiah 63:7-64:12 (NIVUK)

Sunday 3 May 2026

⁷ I will tell of the kindnesses of the LORD,
the deeds for which he is to be praised,
according to all the LORD has done for us –
yes, the many good things
he has done for Israel,
according to his compassion and many kindnesses.

⁸ He said, ‘Surely they are my people,
children who will be true to me’;
and so he became their Saviour.



- ‘God kindly rescued us with the 1st Exodus!’

⁹ In all their distress he too was distressed,
and the angel of his presence saved them.^a
In his love and mercy he redeemed them;
he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

¹⁰ Yet they rebelled
and grieved his Holy Spirit.

So he turned and became their enemy
and he himself fought against them.

¹¹ Then his people recalled^b
the days of old,
the days of Moses and his people –
where is he who brought them through the sea,
with the shepherd of his flock?



- ‘then God kindly re-engaged with a 2nd Exodus!’

Where is he who set his Holy Spirit among them,

¹² who sent his glorious arm of power
to be at Moses’ right hand,
who divided the waters before them,
to gain for himself everlasting renown,

¹³ who led them through the depths?

Like a horse in open country,
they did not stumble;

¹⁴ like cattle that go down to the plain,
they were given rest by the Spirit of the LORD.

This is how you guided your people
to make for yourself a glorious name.

^a Or *Saviour* ⁹ in their distress.

It was no envoy or angel but his own presence that saved them

^b Or *But may he recall*

A model prayer of humility, part #1
Looking back at God’s record with Israel (63:7-14)

(definitely a *promise*, not our current *experience*)

Looking back at God’s record
For us today, would it be more faithful to Isaiah 63:7-14 to reflect on:
1. God’s kindness to *Israel* in the 1st Exodus, and promise (including to us) of the 2nd Exodus; or
2. God’s kindness to *us*, through e.g.
- sending Jesus to die on the cross for our sin
- opening our blind eyes by the Holy Spirit
- gifting us church family?

Isaiah 56-66	<u>56:1-8</u>	<u>56:9-57:21</u>	<u>58:1-14</u>	<u>59:1-21</u>	<u>60:1-22</u>	<u>61:1-11</u>	<u>62:1-12</u>
Who gets in?	Any humble 'outsider'	The lowly and contrite, even if extremely wicked	The selfless, not the selfish	Jews who acknowledge their many sins	In wealth, comfort and luxury	With no more sadness	In a secure relationship with God
Where do they end up?							

A model prayer of humility, part #2
Asking God to rend the heavens and come down (63:15-64:12)

- 'we are so sinful that you're our only hope'

- 'we yearn for your presence'

- 'please tear the skies and come!'

- '...like you did in the 1st Exodus!'

- 'we kept on sinning and deserved your wrath'

¹⁵ Look down from heaven and see,
from your lofty throne, holy and glorious.

Where are your zeal and your might?

Your tenderness and compassion are withheld from us.

¹⁶ But you are our Father,
though Abraham does not know us
or Israel acknowledge us;

you, LORD, are our Father,
our Redeemer from of old is your name.

¹⁷ Why, LORD, do you make us wander from your ways
and harden our hearts so we do not revere you?

Return for the sake of your servants,
the tribes that are your inheritance.

¹⁸ For a little while your people possessed your holy place,
but now our enemies have trampled down your sanctuary.

¹⁹ We are yours from of old;
but you have not ruled over them,
they have not been called^c by your name.

64^d Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down,
that the mountains would tremble before you!

² As when fire sets twigs ablaze
and causes water to boil,
come down to make your name known to your enemies
and cause the nations to quake before you!

³ For when you did awesome things that we did not expect,
you came down, and the mountains trembled before you.

⁴ Since ancient times no one has heard,
no ear has perceived,
no eye has seen any God besides you,
who acts on behalf of those who wait for him.

⁵ You come to the help of those who gladly do right,
who remember your ways.

But when we continued to sin against them,
you were angry.

How then can we be saved?

^c Or *We are like those you have never ruled, / like those never called*

^d In Hebrew texts 64:1 is numbered 63:19b, and 64:2-12 is numbered 64:1-11.

<u>63:1-6</u> On YHWH's side, after he executes his enemies	<u>63:7-64:12</u> Those who pray like Isaiah's model humble prayer	<u>65:1-16</u> The humble, not the proud	<u>65:17-25</u> In a wonderful New Creation (compilation!)	<u>66:1-6</u> Those with humility, not external religion	<u>66:7-14</u> In YHWH's peace and flourishing	<u>66:15-24</u> On the right side of YHWH's judgement day
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⁶ All of us have become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags;
we all shrivel up like a leaf,
and like the wind our sins sweep us away.

⁷ No one calls on your name
or strives to lay hold of you;
for you have hidden your face from us
and have given us over to^e our sins.

⁸ Yet you, LORD, are our Father.

- 'creator YHWH:'

We are the clay, you are the potter;
we are all the work of your hand.

⁹ Do not be angry beyond measure, LORD;
do not remember our sins for ever.

- 'have mercy!'

Oh, look upon us we pray,
for we are all your people.

- 'look at our plight!'

¹⁰ Your sacred cities have become a wasteland;
even Zion is a wasteland, Jerusalem a desolation.

¹¹ Our holy and glorious temple,
where our ancestors praised you,
has been burned with fire,
and all that we treasured lies in ruins.

¹² After all this, LORD, will you hold yourself back?
Will you keep silent and punish us beyond measure?

- 'will you keep on cursing us?'

Sin and wrath

Isaiah appears to acknowledge sin and God's wrath a lot in this prayer. To what extent is 'normal Christian prayer' weighted like this? Why?

^e Septuagint, Syriac and Targum; Hebrew *have made us melt because of*

For reflection on Isaiah 63:7-64:12

- 63:7-14
1. What do you make of God's character in these verses?
 2. What difference does it make to the Christian life that the 2nd Exodus is much more *promise* than *present experience*?
 3. Consider what you instinctively think a 'normal Christian prayer' ought to sound. How does this passage challenge that instinct?
 4. When Isaiah recalls God's past acts in the 1st Exodus, what feels distant or unfamiliar to you? Why?
 5. The original readers of Isaiah would have found praying about the 1st Exodus a lot easier than people reading Isaiah 2600 years later. What would help us be able to pray about the 1st Exodus with sincerity and conviction?
- 63:15-64:12
- Sin (63:16-17a, 64:5-7)
6. How do you feel about the way Isaiah confesses sin?
 7. Why does praying about sin/unworthiness matter? What difference would it make if we didn't?
- 'Rend the heavens' (63:15, 63:17b-19, 64:1-4)
8. To what extent do you feel able to pray like these verses? Why?
- 'Please be angry no more' (64:8-12)
9. What difference does it make to pray for (a) God to relent from anger, compared to (b) merely asking God for blessing?
 10. What makes us reluctant to pray like this?
- Prayer
11. Where do you need to repent or pray?
 12. How might your church family help you?

Next Sunday (10 May) | Isaiah 65 | No car parking restrictions