

OCTOBER 1

Isaiah 62:6-65:25

Isaiah 62:6-12

Vs. 6-12 The watchmen are to stay alert, watching for the coming of the Messiah. They are to give God no rest, crying out to Him. As disciples this is supposed to be our attitude of heart too. The Lord's Prayer has this in it. And I think of the first verses I memorized as an Awana worker, Titus 2:11-14, *For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹²training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, ¹³waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.*

V. 11 Read Revelation 22:12-17 and you will see v. 11. Those verses in Revelation have the same feel as these verses in Isaiah.

Isaiah 63

Vs. 1-6 This is the Messiah coming to Zion in victory. I wonder if v. 1 was the inspiration for the song, *Mighty To Save*?

Vs. 7-9 What would you call this? What a statement of God's *steadfast love* for Israel. In spite of what Israel has done in the past and what they are now, God will never stop loving these people; and He will fulfill His promise to use them in saving the world. *As regards the gospel they are enemies of God (now), for your sake; but as regards election they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers.* (Romans 11:28, RSV)

Vs. 10-14 These are the clearest references to the Holy Spirit I know of in the OT.

Vs. 15-19 The people are appealing to God, their Father, to return to them. Again, these are some of the only references in the OT where God is referred to as the Father. This is very special ground.

So in this chapter, we have the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This might be one of those portions of Scripture where the Jews developed their teaching of the Trinity.

Isaiah 64

Vs. 1-7 This sounds like a continuation of the last chapter where the nation is confessing their sin to God.

Vs. 8-12 They appeal to God for help because He is their Father and because of what has happened to Zion / Jerusalem.

You notice that all of this is prophetic. The city still looked pretty good during the time of this writing. It would be about another 100 years before everything looked like a wilderness and desolation.

Isaiah 65

Vs. 1-7 These verses seem to be God's reasons for rejecting that generation of Israel.

Vs. 1-2 Paul quotes these verses at the end of Romans 10. Believe it or not, these verses are referring to the mystery of the church; that is, that for a time, God would reach the world through the people of Christ, the church.

Vs. 8-10 This is the blessing of the obedient.

Vs. 11-12 This is the cursing of the disobedient.

Vs. 13-16 In this contrast between the obedient and disobedient, can you hear some of what Jesus said in the Beatitudes; i.e., blessed are, but woe to...?

Vs. 17-25 This will be the blessing of the people in the Millennial Kingdom.

As we've seen before, God's purpose in showing us what the end will look like is to give us hope now to keep going and to keep following in the harvest.

Philippians 2:19-3:4

Philippians 2:19-30

Vs. 19-24 Paul planned to *send Timothy* because Timothy was a pastor and teacher. Timothy wouldn't just visit, he would strengthen, encourage, and correct. From these verses you get some good words about Timothy, and you get the idea that Paul's trial wasn't far off and that he did think he would be released.

V. 21 While this must have been true about Timothy, I wonder if any of the other workers read it and felt bad. In 2 Timothy we'll find out that when Paul was arrested, many of the faithful fled. Maybe Paul was beginning to see that many of those he thought were solid were not.

Vs. 25-30 It might have been that Epaphroditus ("E") was to have stayed with Paul longer, but everyone was worried, so Paul decided to send him back. This would also show that "E" wasn't coming home because of adversity or being chicken-hearted. There are also some good words here about "E" and on how to treat people who have worked hard in the Lord and risked their lives.

Philippians 3:1-4

These verses are the prelude to some very challenging and wonderful verses. It is interesting that out of conflict and perversity, God can bring blessing.

V. 1 We will see *finally* again. Apparently what is happening here is that Paul is getting off on a very blessed rabbit trail.

V. 2 There is no political correctness here. These were often Jewish Christians of the circumcision party in Jerusalem, who followed and hounded (no pun intended) Paul and disrupted churches.

A note on *dogs*. For me the connotation that comes to mind is that dogs were scavengers. These teachers couldn't bear fruit and begin churches, but they could come in behind Paul like scavengers and build stubble on the foundation he had laid.

V. 3 What a great definition of what it means to follow Christ. No denomination, only the worship of God in the truth of the Spirit. We live in the glory of our salvation in this person, Jesus Christ, sharing it with others. And we are always only ever sinners saved by grace.

V. 4 is a springboard into tomorrow.

Doing correction in the harvest isn't what anyone wants to do; but as you see from these verses, it not only has to be done, but there is even blessing that comes from it. As a result of this conflict, tomorrow we will read some of the greatest verses written on following Christ as a disciple in the harvest.

Psalm 73

Earlier in the year when we read this psalm we hadn't yet read Job. Psalm 73 should "feel" a little different now, having sat with Job in his ashes and misery. The interesting thing is that when you read this again next year, you will see even more here.

Vs. 1-3 This is saying that the psalmist recovered from his trial, and he is telling us what it was that caused his faith to stumble.

Vs. 4-12 Why does God allow the proud and wicked to prosper for a time? Reading all of what we've read to date, you should have some good answers.

Vs. 13-15 Verse 13 sounds like Job, or me, when I'm in a self-piteous mood. Verse 15 is the bind we are in when we know the truth. Denying the truth becomes an impossibility, even though you could think that you should just give in.

Vs. 16-17 Here was Asaph's turning point. Where is that sanctuary for you? There is no temple. I have this time alone with God in His Word and in prayer. If not for that, where would any of us be?

Vs. 18-22 We understand that God is just and that He is to be trusted, both with rescue and with judgment. Our job is to trust and follow, not to tell God when and how He should judge. This son of Asaph got the message.

Vs. 23-26 Just like David did, this man learned to focus on God, not on those who were rejecting God. God's wisdom and purpose are beyond us. We are called to live with Him. With so much we don't understand about God's working day to day, what we know of God through our Lord has to be enough for us and all we need.

Vs. 25-26 are a beautiful, poetic declaration of our hope in God.

Vs. 27-28 Amen.

Proverbs 24:13-14

We need to seek wisdom. I like the idea of the visual of seeking honey, but who of us would really take this advice? Who of us hasn't learned wisdom because of constant stumbling, falling, running into the wall at 100 mph? We who are now older need to tell our stories to help the next generation of disciples "wise up" without having to hit the wall. Thankfully there is a very gracious Father who heals our self-inflicted injuries and patiently teaches us the wisdom of listening to Him.