

Pentwater Bible Church

Isaiah Message 137

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Jesus Handing The Keys to Peter by Pietro Perugino Cir 1481

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Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Isaiah

One-Hundred-Thirty-Seven

Isaiah's Concern for His People

November 21, 2021

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Isaiah 63:7–19

⁷I will make mention of the lovingkindnesses of Jehovah, and the praises of Jehovah, according to all that Jehovah hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses. ⁸For he said, Surely, they are my people, children that will not deal falsely: so he was their Saviour. ⁹In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.

¹⁰But they rebelled, and grieved his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them. ¹¹Then he remembered the days of old, Moses and his people, saying, Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock? where is he that put his holy Spirit in the midst of them? ¹²that caused his glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses? that divided the waters before them, to make himself an everlasting name? ¹³that led them through the depths, as a horse in the wilderness, so that they stumbled not? ¹⁴As the cattle that go down into the valley, the Spirit of Jehovah caused them to rest; so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name.

¹⁵Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where are thy zeal and thy mighty acts? the yearning of thy heart and thy compassions are restrained toward me. ¹⁶For thou art our Father, though Abraham knoweth us not, and Israel doth not acknowledge us: thou, O Jehovah, art our Father; our Redeemer from everlasting is thy name. ¹⁷O Jehovah, why dost thou make us to err from thy ways, and hardenest our heart from thy fear? Return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance. ¹⁸Thy holy people possessed it but a little while: our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary. ¹⁹We are become as they over whom thou never barest rule, as they that were not called by thy name (ASV, 1901).

GOD'S LOVE EVEN IN CORRECTION

Isaiah 63:7–9

⁷I will make mention of the lovingkindnesses of Jehovah, and the praises of Jehovah, according to all that Jehovah hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses. ⁸For he said, Surely, they are my people, children that will not deal falsely: so he was their Saviour. ⁹In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in

his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old (ASV, 1901).

This verse begins with a long prayer by Isaiah, that concludes with verse 64:11. Having prophetically witnessed God's boundless righteousness through the ages as given in Scripture Isaiah praises the Lord to all mankind for the multitude of kindnesses that He has displayed throughout all the generations. This prophecy, now addresses Israel's despair during the long and painful Babylonian exile. God responds by relating the broad context of His kindness from the time of the Egyptian Exodus, until Israel's misdeeds which finally compelled Him to cast them out of their Land.

Leviticus 26:44–45

⁴⁴And yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them; for I am Jehovah their God; ⁴⁵but I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God: I am Jehovah (ASV, 1901).

He assures them that ultimately the offspring from Jacob will enjoy the glorious future intended for the Chosen People. After prophesying about the future awaiting Israel, Isaiah proclaims that Israel should also look to the past, recognizing God's enormous kindness to them.

Isaiah explains God's kindness in this verse referring specifically to the miracles of the Exodus and the splitting of the Sea of Reeds. God's Attribute of Kindness was a prerequisite of Creation as was God's kindness to the nation Israel who were devoid of any merit. All believers both Jew and Gentile can relate to Him only in accordance with acts of kindness, which enable us to mention His praise bestowed upon them in His kindness, and not from their merit (Romans 5:8). Compassion applies to saving someone from danger or difficulty. Kindness applies at all times, and continues even as God deals with Israel with both during times of exile and suffering. That was exiled due to its own shortcomings, and they should realize that it is a display of love and kindness. That is because He wanted them to learn to obey Him in righteousness. The angel before Him saved them. He redeemed them. This is probably the Lord Jesus in a preincarnate appearance as The Angel of Jehovah.

Jacob on his death bed referred to his being 'redeemed from all evil' to 'the Angel,' and then gave his sons and Joseph's sons blessings.' 'The angel of the Lord' appeared to Moses out of the midst of the burning bush. On Sinai, Jehovah promised to send an 'angel' in whom was His own name, before the people. The promise was renewed after Israel's sin and repentance, and was then given in the form, 'My presence shall go with thee.' Joshua saw a man with a drawn sword in His hand, who declared himself to be the Captain of the Lord's host. 'The angel of the Lord' appeared to Manoah and his wife, withheld His name from them because it was 'wonderful' or 'secret,' accepted their sacrifice, and went up to heaven in a flame. Then Manoah said, 'We have seen God.' Hosea, looking back on the story of Jacob's wrestling at Peniel, says, first, that 'he had power with God, yea, he had power over the angel,' and then goes on to say that 'there He spake with us, even Jehovah.' This at times was the Shekinah Glory in the second person of the Trinity.

WHERE IS THE LORD IN TIMES OF PERSECUTION?

Isaiah 63:10–14

¹⁰But they rebelled, and grieved his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them. ¹¹Then he remembered the days of old, Moses and his people, saying, Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock? where is he that put his holy Spirit in the midst of them? ¹²that caused his glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses? that divided the waters before them, to make himself an everlasting name? ¹³that led them through the depths, as a horse in the wilderness, so that they stumbled not? ¹⁴As the cattle that go down into the valley, the Spirit of Jehovah caused them to rest; so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name (ASV, 1901).

These verses reflect a central theme of Judaism: The Jews view that they are under oppression. They are never alone; God is always with them. At the time of the Exodus from Egypt, God said to Himself, “Since I have rescued them, I would prefer that they will not deal falsely with Me”. Indeed, it was this prophetic understanding of Israel’s periodic fidelity that caused Him to rescue them.

That led them by the right hand of Moses with his glorious arm; rather, that caused his glorious arm to attend at Moses’ right hand—ready to grab him if he should stumble. Dividing the water before them; literally, cleaving the waters before their face Exodus (14:21). To make Himself an everlasting name (Exodus 15:11–16). It was one of the main purposes of the entire series of miracles wrought in Egypt, “that God’s Name might be declared throughout all the earth” (Exodus 9:16). Israel’s wandering for those forty long years through the Sinaitic peninsula into Canaan is compared to the movement of a herd of cattle from its summer pastures in the mountains to the valley at their base, where for a time it rests. So, God gave his people, after their many trials, “rest” in Canaan (Hebrews 3:11–18). So didst thou lead thy people. This refers to the entire description contained in verses 11–14. To make thyself a glorious name (Ezekiel 36:21–23; Malachi 1:11).

Although God knew of their future misdeeds, He dealt with them as if they would always remain true to Him. In all their troubles He is troubled. He was troubled He was troubled when they were troubled. He was not unconcerned by their suffering. He is troubled; He feels constrained, so to speak, as Scripture states (Judges 10:16). Even when He brought punishments upon them, He never brought it to the full extent of their sins. In all their troubles He would not trouble them as much as they deserved. He is more hurt that they will ever realize, so to speak. By making their travails His, they are inevitably diminished. He takes the pain of their sins upon Himself. God also suffered greatly when He brought the Flood on the world.

Genesis 6:6

⁶And it repented Jehovah that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. (ASV, 1901)

Here we see God “*grieved*” in His heart. God was painfully and deeply hurt that His creation was so sinful. The degree of pain was like that of a young person getting a spanking, and weeping with gasping breaths over the abrupt administration of a physical correction. God was genuinely pained over the earth’s sin as surely as He is today too.

He does not enjoy bringing punishment for correction to His Chosen ones. Someone in distress should direct the focus of his prayers toward the Divine suffering, rather than toward his own pain. Doing so will facilitate the ultimate salvation from his travails. God sends His Holy Spirit to aid in their guidance which connects them to Him through His Spirit (Numbers 11:16–26; Nehemiah 9:20, 30).

Since God the Spirit is holy, the rebellion of the people caused God to shift from being a Savior (63:8) to being an enemy (Deuteronomy 32:23; Jeremiah 30:14). So, within His steadfast covenant, love, compassion, and goodness toward Israel, He fought against them. Part of the covenant agreement was that if the nation did not worship God alone, did not love and serve Him, and did not follow His moral requirements in the Law, God would send a curse on them (Leviticus 26:1–46). This is similar to the admonitions of the Lord in the introduction to the book of Isaiah, for in 1:20 God warned His people that “*but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it.*”

So, the mighty Divine Warrior (Exodus 15:3; 22:13, 24; Isaiah 63:1–6; Jeremiah 21:5) brought war and His sword against His own people because they rejected Him. A similar explanation is shown for the outcome of the Syro-Ephraimite War in Isaiah 7:1–10, for Ahaz was told, “*If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.*”

Isaiah 63:15–19

¹⁵Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where are thy zeal and thy mighty acts? the yearning of thy heart and thy compassions are restrained toward me. ¹⁶For thou art our Father, though Abraham knoweth us not, and Israel doth not acknowledge us: thou, O Jehovah, art our Father; our Redeemer from everlasting is thy name. ¹⁷O Jehovah, why dost thou make us to err from thy ways, and hardenest our heart from thy fear? Return for thy servants’ sake, the tribes of thine inheritance. ¹⁸Thy holy people possessed it but a little while: our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary. ¹⁹We are become as they over whom thou never barest rule, as they that were not called by thy name (ASV, 1901).

From thanksgiving and confession, Isaiah leads the people to prayer, and supplication to God for Him to look down from heaven once more, to have compassion on them, to acknowledge them, and to save them alike from themselves and from their adversaries. It is a moving spiritual beauty of a prayer contained in this passage asking for the Lord’s Divine mercy, and of the strong realization of the union between Jehovah and his people. Look down from heaven (Deuteronomy 26:15; Psalm 80:14; 1 Kings 8:30). “*The Lord’s seat*” is “*in heaven.*” While the temple lay in ruins, the Jews would naturally address their prayers to God in His heavenly abode. From the habitation of thy holiness. Can be viewed from the *height* of thy holiness. *Where is thy zeal? i.e.* What has become of it? Has it ceased altogether, or is it only in abeyance for a time? Will not God

“stir it up” once more? And thy strength; rather, *and thy great acts* (Psalm 106:2; 145:4; 150:2). The sounding of thy bowels; *i.e.* their thrilling or vibration—an indication of sympathy. Jeremiah has a similar expression (Jeremiah 31:20). Are they restrained? rather, *they are restrained*. They no longer show themselves. There was no room for questioning the fact. In this they thought the Lord had forsaken them. This was one period in the life of the nation Israel when they were realizing that they caused their own judgment by the Lord.

The prophet Isaiah’s prayer is here speaking for all those who have at one time or another endured the dark night of the soul so to speak. Here the prophet knows the cause; it is sin that keeps God at a distance. Yet it does not seem that God is even helping the sinner to turn back to Himself. When we have these feelings, for whatever reason, we need not try to hide them from a disapproving God. The saints of the Bible have been there before us and point the way to a soul-baring honesty. Our sins are as a mask keeping us from realizing the fact that God wants to bless us but repentance must come first before restoration and blessing.

Who brought this nation into existence? It was not *Abraham* or *Israel* (Jacob). These men are not the real “fathers” of the people of God. It is God who fathered these people. This is a profound thought: Israel is not just an ethnic, or linguistic, or national entity, but primarily a spiritual one. God is their *Father*. God’s relations with His own are deeper than the deepest we humans know, that between a parent and a child. Although a human might deny his children, God cannot. This is why the prophet is so bold as to call on God to do what He should.

But there is another aspect for the appeal. Not only is God our Father but His *name* is precious to Him, His reputation, is inseparably tied to us. What is that name? Our Redeemer from ancient times. This is who God has been known to be. He is the one who has redeemed Israel not only from Egypt but also from hosts of other enemies. Can He continue to leave them in a condition where there is no distinction between them and the pagan peoples around them? Of course not! Surely, He will take whatever steps He needs to take in order to protect and preserve the great name He has made for Himself

Isaiah accompanies his prayer with a complaint. The people make three basic points.

1. We cannot break out of our pattern of sinning because you are not helping.
2. Your sanctuary is in ruins.
3. It does not appear that we even have any relationship to you.

It is not possible that Isaiah thought the people were forced to sin by God. At the same time, Isaiah as God’s emissary is in concert with the rest of Scripture, which insists that a person’s relationship with God is not a matter of human initiative with an essentially passive deity. If persons turn to God, it is because God in His grace has enabled them to do so. If persons do not turn to him, it is because God has not given them the desire to do so. God’s will causes events and here He allows them. These ideas are hard for the Western mind, steeped in human initiative, to accept. This is the cry of a man of God who has seen the fulfillment of the words God had spoken to him at the beginning of his ministry (6:9–10). He has cried out to his people with all his strength and has watched them turn away in amused contempt (Isaiah 5:19; 30:9–14). He has also seen the hugely addictive power of sin, and the stubbornness of rebellion. In the anguish of those kinds of experiences, he knows that if God were to remain uninvolved, far away in His holy and beautiful

throne, these people could not be delivered from their persistent sinning. If we continue to persist in our sin, cries the heartbroken prophet, it must be because God will not intervene to stop it, His permissive will.

So, he calls on God to *Return*, to turn back to the people whom He has apparently rejected. Isaiah demonstrates an intensity of the appeal throughout the stanza as he proffers every argument, he can to persuade God to intervene where no one else can or will (Isaiah 59:16; 63:5). He appeals to God's power and His affection; he reminds Him that he alone is their Father; he points out that His name is at stake, and now he recalls for God what God Himself has called His people: "My *servants*" (Isaiah 41:9; 42:19; 43:10; 44:1; 45:4), to whom He has promised to give "righteousness" (Isaiah 54:17). Can the Master abandon the servants to their sin? No!

Still, he has one more basis for appeal. These are *the tribes of your inheritance*. This is the ancient language of the exodus and the conquest. God might give the tribes of Israel the land of Canaan as their heritage, but *they* were what He wanted as His heritage (Deuteronomy 4:20). Can God now refuse to turn to His servants, His heritage, in their desperate situation? This is the prayer of intercession, the passionate entering into of the needs of those for whom we are praying, and a storming of the gates of heaven with every tool we can use. Why? Because God is callous and uncaring? No, because we are callous and uncaring, and until our passion is in some small way connected to the great passion of God, His power is in some way is fortunately for us restrained. This seems almost unimaginable, but the testimony of history and of Scripture is that it is so. Consider the parable of the unjust judge Jesus gave to epitomize this concept.

Luke 18:1–8

And he spake a parable unto them to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint; ²saying, There was in a city a judge, who feared not God, and regarded not man: ³and there was a widow in that city; and she came oft unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. ⁴And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; ⁵yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest she wear me out by her continual coming. ⁶And the Lord said, Hear what the unrighteous judge saith. ⁷And shall not God avenge his elect, that cry to him day and night, and yet he is longsuffering over them? ⁸I say unto you, that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth (ASV, 1901)?

God's response to the bondage to sin is dispossession. The sense is this: during the brief time that the holy people were *dispossessed* (i.e., the Babylonian exile), their adversaries trampled God's *sanctuary* (the temple was in a ruined state). The reality is that they are not so much redeemed as dispossessed. And when they were restored to the land after the Babylonian exile, they can hardly be said to possess it. This is because they were subjects of the Persian emperor and many regimes after up to and including the future absolute imperialism of the one world government ruler known as the Antichrist. God's holy place has been trampled. They will not have complete sovereignty of all the land granted them in the Abrahamic covenant until the final national regeneration and resultant Messianic kingdom.

Finally, Isaiah speaking for the nation says, “*We are become as they over whom thou never barest rule, as they that were not called by thy name.*” In other words, we have lost all our privileges—we have become in God’s sight no better than the heathen. It seems that He has forgotten that we were ever His people.

In this pathetic picture of Israel in those last days we can see a parallel of the latter stages of Christianity today. In the letters to the Churches the Lord Jesus give us in the second and third chapter of the book of Revelation He ended with the letter to the Church in Laodicea. The last letter, Laodicea provides an accurate picture of the apostasy of the visible Christian Church today.

Revelation 3:14-22

¹⁴ And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; ¹⁵ I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. ¹⁶ So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. ¹⁷ Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: ¹⁸ I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. ¹⁹ As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. ²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. ²¹ To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. ²² He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches (KJV).

This letter is directed to the Laodiceans This word means “people ruling.” This is diametrically opposed to God’s ruling in the church. It is a church entirely ruled by men. This is because the Holy Spirit is not present and doing His ministry of guiding, instructing and illuminating. The *description of Jesus* in this passage is taken from Revelation chapter one. There He is described as the faithful and true witness, whereas this church is neither faithful nor true to the Christ or His Word.

In verses 15-16, they are characterized by lukewarmness. The distinctions between hot, cold and lukewarm can be seen in the general context. The *hot* are the genuine saved believers. The *cold* are those who are not believers and don’t even claim to be believers. The *lukewarm* are those who claim to believe in Jesus but are not truly regenerate believers. They are impostors.

Next message: THE JEW’S PLEA FOR JESUS TO RETURN

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