

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
August 30, 2016

Isaiah 63:1–64:12. Isaiah’s prayer for the Jews.

Luke 23:26–24:12. Crucifixion, burial, and resurrection.

Job 14:1–10. Job’s bleak outlook.

COMMENTS:

Isaiah 63:1–64:12. This section can be divided into two parts. The first part (**63:1-6**) deals with the Lord’s return and defeat of hostile nations against Israel in the Battle of Armageddon (recorded in Revelation). The second part contains a prayer of lament that includes praise to God for His compassion, questions of why life is so difficult, confession of the sins of the people, and a call for God to show His power to save the people. Let’s note a rough outline: God has been so good to Israel in the past, caring for them in person (**63:7–9**). Israel has rebelled against God and become his enemy (**63:10**); but now she remembers the mighty deliverance of the exodus. She longs for those great days to return (**63:11–15**). Even if her ancestors, Abraham and Israel, disown her, will not God have mercy (**63:16**)? Israel attributes everything to God—even her own hard heart, her disobedience and lack of faith (**63:17**). Now she begs God to rescue, restore and rule her (**63:17–19**). Israel asks God to intervene by his mountain-moving power (**64:1**) and like fire in his awesome holiness (**64:2**). He is the only One who can act in this way, revealing himself in justice to those who wait for him (**64:3–5**). Israel admits her sin and guilt—even her best actions are filthy (**64:5–6**). She feels that she is dying in sin, and that God has turned away and left her to her fate (**64:7**). And yet she pleads that she is still in God’s hands. He can still reform her, like a potter with clay (**64:8**). Israel asks God to have pity on her desolate cities—and especially on the ruins of her temple. Is God’s silence really final (**64:10–11**)? This prayer ends with a question: Why is God silent? His temple has been destroyed, His glorious land has been ravaged, and His people are in exile. *“After all this, O Lord, will You hold Yourself back? Will You keep silent and punish us beyond measure?”* (**64:12**). God’s reply to this prayer is found in the next two chapters.

Luke 23:26–24:12. In **23:26-56**, we see the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Jesus was crucified between two thieves. One derides, but the other believes and receives the promise of life in paradise. Here is a picture of division of opinion and of eternal fate, which Jesus brings. It had been prophesied that the Suffering Servant would be “numbered with the transgressors” (Isa. 53:12), and two criminals were crucified with Jesus, men who were robbers (Matt. 27:38). The Greek word means “one who uses violence to rob openly,” in contrast to the thief who secretly enters a house and steals. These two men may have been guilty of armed robbery involving murder. We also have the incident of the centurion who confesses the righteousness of Jesus, the final word at the scene of the cross. Note the burial in **23:50-53**: When Jesus died, Joseph immediately went to Pilate for permission to have the body, and Nicodemus stayed at Calvary to keep watch. They tenderly took Jesus from the cross, quickly carried Him to the garden, washed the body, and wrapped it with the spices. It was a temporary burial; they would return after the Sabbath to do the job properly. When they laid Jesus into the new tomb, they fulfilled Isaiah 53:9, and they kept the Romans from throwing His body on the garbage dump outside the city.

Condemned criminals lost the right to proper burial, but God saw to it that His Son's body was buried with dignity and love. It was important that the body be buried properly, for God would raise Jesus from the dead. If there were any doubt about His death or burial, that could affect the message and the ministry of the Gospel. In **Luke 24** we have the triumphant of the Son of Man over death! Christianity is in its very essence a resurrection religion. The resurrection of Jesus Christ affirms to us that He is indeed the Son of God, just as He claimed to be (Rom. 1:4). It also proves that His sacrifice for sin has been accepted and that the work of salvation is completed (Rom. 4:24–25). Those who trust Him can “walk in newness of life” because He is alive and imparts His power to them (Rom. 6:4; Gal. 2:20). Our Lord's resurrection also declares to us that He is the Judge who will come one day and judge the world (Acts 17:30–31).

Job 14:1–10. With the added weight of Job's friends condemning him and preaching to him that if he would just confess his sins, then God would stop punishing him, Job's outlook becomes more bleak. In verses **1–12**, Job used several images to illustrate the hopeless condition of man in this world. He is like a flower that is soon cut down, a shadow that slowly disappears, a hired man that puts in his time and then is replaced. God knows the limits of our days. A suicide may foolishly hasten the day of death, but nobody will go beyond the limits that God has set for his or her life. Since man is only a flower, a shadow, and a servant, why should God pay any attention to him? Since life is so short, why should God fill man's few days with grief and pain? “So look away from him and let him alone,” prays Job (**6**). In other words, ‘Let me have some peace before my brief life ends!’ Job's strongest image is that of the tree (**7–12**). Chop it down, and its stump remains, and there is always a possibility that the tree might sprout again. The tree has hope, but man has no hope. When he dies, he leaves no stump behind. Man is more like water that evaporates or soaks into the ground; it can never be recovered again (**11**). Man may lie down at night and awaken in the morning; but when he lies down in death, there is no assurance that he will be awakened again. Only God can provide that kind of assurance.

Romans 11:36 For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

Pastor Don