

# Further up, Further in

## Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT  
MOUNTAIN  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH

### “LONGING FOR RENEWAL AND RESTORATION”

For individual study or group discussion

In Isaiah 64:1-12, we continue our examination of the prophet’s corporate prayer of lament that began in chapter 63, verse 15. **Longing for renewal and restoration** and acutely aware of their sins, Isaiah’s intercessory prayer on behalf of Israel is an appeal to God’s covenant faithfulness.

*True renewal in the hearts of God’s people comes as we earnestly long for God’s unmistakable intervention (vv. 1-5a).*

Note the desire of God’s repentant remnant who are seeking renewal in verse 1, “Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down.” Remembering how Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:17-18), the captives yearn for a visible manifestation of God’s power before their enemies.

- Why is it that we yearn to see God intervene and show himself to us visibly, even while recognizing that we “walk by faith and not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7)? Read 2 Corinthians 4:17-18. What encouragement does Paul give?
- Read Romans 8:22-28. When the burden of sin weighs heavy on our hearts, we long for intercession. When the ache of suffering wreaks havoc on our bodies, we long for redemption. In what invisible ways has God promised to intervene on your behalf?

*True renewal in the hearts of God’s people comes as we honestly face our longstanding sins (vv. 5b-7).*

In verses 5b-7, we encounter Isaiah’s confession for the community as a whole. They were corporately unclean and in need of restoration. The language of ceremonial contamination (“polluted garment”) rendered even their righteous acts as repulsive and unacceptable before God. The poetic images used by Isaiah depict a communal lack of vitality because of their iniquities (v. 6b).

- Scripture often describes God “anthropomorphically”, with human features, so that we might better understand how he interacts with his people. God’s “face” typically represents his favor, and when he turns his face away from his people, it is an act of discipline and judgment. Read Deuteronomy 31:17-20. God foresees his children rebelling against him and has Moses write a song for the future generations. Read the song in Deuteronomy 32. Discuss the parallels with Isaiah’s prayer. How does *Moses’ Song* relate to our church today? What are the longstanding sins of which we need to repent corporately?
- We cannot seek the face of God without mourning (Joel 2:12; Daniel 9:3). Read James 4:8-10. According to James, how does renewal occur in the hearts of God’s people?

*True renewal in the hearts of God’s people comes as we desperately cry out for God’s restorative work (vv. 8-12),*

The prayer ends with affirmations of trust and a renewed petition for the restorative work that only God can bring. By calling God “Father,” the prophet is asserting the remnant’s covenantal relationship with the God whose tender watch care over his people was unlike any other god. The use of the analogy “potter and clay” depicts a dependence upon God as their Creator. In verse 12, the humble plea for God to act prods him to remember his promises of old, “I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God” (Exodus 6:7).

- Use Isaiah 63:15-64:12 as a model for your prayers this week. “Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down!” Does the prospect of God’s fullest presence in your life fill you with hope for renewal?

DATE: October 23, 2022

SPEAKER: Brian/Frank

SERIES: Isaiah: RENEW

PASSAGE: Isaiah 64:1-12

## Family Dinner Table

### The Return of the King

Restoration. All of creation groans for the promised redemption, when it will be set free from bondage (Romans 8:21-22). Revelation 19:11-21 describes the glorious day as Christ the King arrives in all his splendor, “Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True.” Here we see King Jesus “rend the heavens and come down” in majesty and in power to judge, heal, and bring restoration to the world. J.R.R. Tolkien’s *Return of the King* tells the story of Eowyn, while recovering from her battle with the Witch-King in the Houses of Healing, anxiously awaiting any news from the war. When she asks the Warden for a report he responds, “‘There are no tidings,’ said the Warden, ‘save that the Lords have ridden to Morgul Vale; and men say that the new captain out of the North is their chief. A great lord is that, and a healer; and it is a thing passing strange to me that the healing hand should also wield the sword.’”<sup>1</sup>

- Read Malachi 4. When Christ returns we find that he bears a sword for his enemies, but what does he bring for those who fear his name? How does Isaiah 63-65 describe Christ’s return?
- Recall our studies in the Gospel of Luke and look back on the *Song of Zechariah* (Luke 1:68-79). How does Isaiah’s prophecy point us to the promise of renewal and restoration of which Zechariah sings?

### PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

First Things First, supported partner ministry

### PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Lydia and Robbie Sweet, supported MTW missionary partners in Glasgow

<sup>1</sup> Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Return of the King*. 1955. Boston. Houghton Mifflin Company. 236.