

September 4 Su Reading 247 — Isaiah 64:1-12 — Waiting for Restoration

- 1 *Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down,
that the mountains might quake at your presence—*
- 2 ^[fn]*as when fire kindles brushwood
and the fire causes water to boil—
to make your name known to your adversaries,
and that the nations might tremble at your presence!*
- 3 *When you did awesome things that we did not look for,
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.*
- 4 *From of old no one has heard
or perceived by the ear,
no eye has seen a God besides you,
who acts for those who wait for him.*
- 5 *You meet him who joyfully works righteousness,
those who remember you in your ways.
Behold, you were angry, and we sinned;
in our sins we have been a long time, and shall we be saved?* ^[fn]
- 6 *We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.
We all fade like a leaf,
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.*
- 7 *There is no one who calls upon your name,
who rouses himself to take hold of you;
for you have hidden your face from us,
and have made us melt in* ^[fn] *the hand of our iniquities.*
- 8 *But now, O LORD, you are our Father;
we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand.*
- 9 *Be not so terribly angry, O LORD,
and remember not iniquity forever.
Behold, please look, we are all your people.*
- 10 *Your holy cities have become a wilderness;
Zion has become a wilderness,
Jerusalem a desolation.*
- 11 *Our holy and beautiful* ^[fn] *house,
where our fathers praised you,
has been burned by fire,
and all our pleasant places have become ruins.*
- 12 *Will you restrain yourself at these things, O LORD?
Will you keep silent, and afflict us so terribly?*

ESV Footnotes

(64:2) Ch 64:1 in Hebrew

(64:5) Or *in your ways is continuance, that we might be saved*

(64:7) Masoretic Text; Septuagint, Syriac, Targum *have delivered us into*

(64:11) Or *holy and glorious*

Waiting to Act — The uniqueness of God is stressed in verse 4, that throughout history “...no one has heard ... no eye has seen a God besides you, who acts for those who wait for him.” God

responds to those who wait for Him. That is a picture of trust: knowing that God is able and willing to help, and that He is waiting in patience for us to wait in trust. He might be waiting, leaving us in the mess we have brought upon ourselves, until it is painful enough to later remember the serious penalties of sin. God might also be waiting to maximize the timing of other circumstances, so that even “*the nations might tremble*” (v. 2) at what He does. We just need to make sure that God is not waiting on us to be willing to forsake a certain sinful relationship, act, or attitude before He is willing to act on our behalf. I know of a former missionary to Brazil who suffered for years with elbow pain. She had two different surgeries to fix the problem, but the pain stubbornly continued. Then one day during her devotional time, God revealed to her the bitterness she had been holding in her heart for many years toward another person. She was convicted, admitted her sin to God, asked for His forgiveness, and she was immediately and permanently healed of the pain in her elbow. Let’s not make God wait because of us!

[My Soul in Stillness Waits - YouTube](#)

O Lord of Light, our only hope of glory,
Your radiance shines in all who look to You.
Come light the hearts of all in dark and shadow.

For You, O Lord, my soul in stillness waits.
Truly my hope is in You.

— Marty Haugen (1982)

September 5 M Reading 248 — Isaiah 65:1-25 — New Heavens and a New Earth

- ¹ *I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me;
I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me.
I said, “Here I am, here I am,”
to a nation that was not called by^[fn] my name.*
- ² *I spread out my hands all the day
to a rebellious people,
who walk in a way that is not good,
following their own devices;*
- ³ *a people who provoke me
to my face continually,
sacrificing in gardens
and making offerings on bricks;*
- ⁴ *who sit in tombs,
and spend the night in secret places;
who eat pig’s flesh,
and brot of tainted meat is in their vessels;*
- ⁵ *who say, “Keep to yourself,
do not come near me, for I am too holy for you.”
These are a smoke in my nostrils,
a fire that burns all the day.*
- ⁶ *Behold, it is written before me:
“I will not keep silent, but I will repay;
I will indeed repay into their lap*
- ⁷ *both your iniquities and your fathers’ iniquities together,
says the LORD;
because they made offerings on the mountains*

*and insulted me on the hills,
I will measure into their lap
payment for their former deeds.”^[fn]*

8 *Thus says the LORD:*

*“As the new wine is found in the cluster,
and they say, ‘Do not destroy it,
for there is a blessing in it,’
so I will do for my servants’ sake,
and not destroy them all.*

9 *I will bring forth offspring from Jacob,
and from Judah possessors of my mountains;
my chosen shall possess it,
and my servants shall dwell there.*

10 *Sharon shall become a pasture for flocks,
and the Valley of Achor a place for herds to lie down,
for my people who have sought me.*

11 *But you who forsake the LORD,
who forget my holy mountain,
who set a table for Fortune
and fill cups of mixed wine for Destiny,*

12 *I will destine you to the sword,
and all of you shall bow down to the slaughter,
because, when I called, you did not answer;
when I spoke, you did not listen,
but you did what was evil in my eyes
and chose what I did not delight in.”*

13 *Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:*

*“Behold, my servants shall eat,
but you shall be hungry;
behold, my servants shall drink,
but you shall be thirsty;
behold, my servants shall rejoice,
but you shall be put to shame;*

14 *behold, my servants shall sing for gladness of heart,
but you shall cry out for pain of heart
and shall wail for breaking of spirit.*

15 *You shall leave your name to my chosen for a curse,
and the Lord GOD will put you to death,
but his servants he will call by another name.*

16 *So that he who blesses himself in the land
shall bless himself by the God of truth,
and he who takes an oath in the land
shall swear by the God of truth;
because the former troubles are forgotten
and are hidden from my eyes.*

17 *“For behold, I create new heavens
and a new earth,*

*and the former things shall not be remembered
or come into mind.*

- 18 *But be glad and rejoice forever
in that which I create;
for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy,
and her people to be a gladness.*
- 19 *I will rejoice in Jerusalem
and be glad in my people;
no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping
and the cry of distress.*
- 20 *No more shall there be in it
an infant who lives but a few days,
or an old man who does not fill out his days,
for the young man shall die a hundred years old,
and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed.*
- 21 *They shall build houses and inhabit them;
they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.*
- 22 *They shall not build and another inhabit;
they shall not plant and another eat;
for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,
and my chosen shall long enjoy^[fn] the work of their hands.*
- 23 *They shall not labor in vain
or bear children for calamity,^[fn]
for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the LORD,
and their descendants with them.*
- 24 *Before they call I will answer;
while they are yet speaking I will hear.*
- 25 *The wolf and the lamb shall graze together;
the lion shall eat straw like the ox,
and dust shall be the serpent's food.
They shall not hurt or destroy
in all my holy mountain,"
says the LORD.*

ESV Footnotes

(65:1) Or *that did not call upon*

(65:7) Or *I will first measure their payment into their lap*

(65:22) Hebrew *shall wear out*

(65:23) Or *for sudden terror*

Ready, Willing, and Able — This chapter seems to be a mix of promises for this life and the next. Jerusalem would be restored after Israel's return from Babylon in the near future, but when God said, "*I create new heavens and a new earth*" (v. 17), He spoke of the eternal future of all God's people. Overall, it speaks of God's willingness and ability to provide good for those who follow Him. There were two attributes of God that stood out to me in this passage, one at the beginning and the other at the end. The first is His *initiation*: "*I said, 'Here I am, here I am' ... I spread out my hands all the day...*" (v. 1-2). God lovingly makes Himself available to people who don't know Him. He also is continually reaching out to us believers, calling us into a closer relationship and a greater understanding of Him. God initiates relationships. Jesus said that "*No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him*" (John 6:44). The second attribute of God, emphasized at the end of our passage for today, speaks of His *anticipation*: "*Before they call I will answer; while they are yet speaking I will hear*" (Isa. 65:24). God anticipates our needs because of His great love for us and His desire to give us good gifts. He is waiting for us to ask. What an amazing advantage that is! We have a relationship with One who takes the initiative to reach out to us and He then anticipates our every need that we bring to Him.

Only Trust Him - YouTube

Come, every soul by sin oppressed,
There's mercy with the Lord;
And He will surely give you rest,
By trusting in His word.
Only trust Him, only trust Him,
Only trust Him now.

— John Stockton (1874)

September 6 Tu Reading 249 — Isaiah 66:12-24 — My Glory Among the Nations

¹² *For thus says the LORD:*

*“Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river,
and the glory of the nations like an overflowing stream;
and you shall nurse, you shall be carried upon her hip,
and bounced upon her knees.*

¹³ *As one whom his mother comforts,
so I will comfort you;
you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.*

¹⁴ *You shall see, and your heart shall rejoice;
your bones shall flourish like the grass;
and the hand of the LORD shall be known to his servants,
and he shall show his indignation against his enemies.*

¹⁵ *“For behold, the LORD will come in fire,
and his chariots like the whirlwind,
to render his anger in fury,
and his rebuke with flames of fire.*

¹⁶ *For by fire will the LORD enter into judgment,
and by his sword, with all flesh;
and those slain by the LORD shall be many.*

¹⁷ *“Those who sanctify and purify themselves to go into the gardens, following one in the midst, eating pig’s flesh and the abomination and mice, shall come to an end together, declares the LORD.*

¹⁸ *“For I know^[fn] their works and their thoughts, and the time is coming^[fn] to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and shall see my glory,¹⁹ and I will set a sign among them. And from them I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, who draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands far away, that have not heard my fame or seen my glory. And they shall declare my glory among the nations.²⁰ And they shall bring all your brothers from all the nations as an offering to the LORD, on horses and in chariots and in litters and on mules and on dromedaries, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, says the LORD, just as the Israelites bring their grain offering in a clean vessel to the house of the LORD.²¹ And some of them also I will take for priests and for Levites, says the LORD.*

²² *“For as the new heavens and the new earth
that I make
shall remain before me, says the LORD,
so shall your offspring and your name remain.*

23 *From new moon to new moon,
and from Sabbath to Sabbath,
all flesh shall come to worship before me,
declares the LORD.*

24 *“And they shall go out and look on the dead bodies of the men who have rebelled against me. For their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.”*

ESV Footnotes

(66:18) Septuagint, Syriac; Hebrew lacks *know*

(66:18) Hebrew *and it is coming*

Final Worship — The book of Isaiah closes with an emphasis similar to that of the previous chapter. It includes the comfort of God’s people in the Promised Land (v. 13) and severe judgment against God’s enemies (vv. 14-16). It looks ahead to the spreading of the gospel following the Incarnation of the Messiah, when *“they shall declare my glory among the nations”* (v. 19). And it also looks even further into the future, to *“the new heavens and the new earth”* (v. 22), when *“all flesh shall come to worship before me”* (v. 23). John saw a vision of this still-future scene when he saw *“a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’”* (Rev. 7:9-10). That will be the beginning of our worship with literally all the saints of faith. What a choir!

[For All the Saints - YouTube](#)

But, lo! there breaks a yet more glorious day;
The saints triumphant rise in bright array;
The King of glory passes on His way.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

— William W. How (1864)

September 7 W Reading 250 — Nahum 1:1-15 — Nineveh is Doomed

¹ *An oracle concerning Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum of Elkosh.*

² *The LORD is a jealous and avenging God;
the LORD is avenging and wrathful;
the LORD takes vengeance on his adversaries
and keeps wrath for his enemies.*

³ *The LORD is slow to anger and great in power,
and the LORD will by no means clear the guilty.
His way is in whirlwind and storm,
and the clouds are the dust of his feet.*

⁴ *He rebukes the sea and makes it dry;
he dries up all the rivers;
Bashan and Carmel wither;
the bloom of Lebanon withers.*

⁵ *The mountains quake before him;
the hills melt;
the earth heaves before him,*

the world and all who dwell in it.

- 6 *Who can stand before his indignation?
Who can endure the heat of his anger?
His wrath is poured out like fire,
and the rocks are broken into pieces by him.*
- 7 *The LORD is good,
a stronghold in the day of trouble;
he knows those who take refuge in him.*
- 8 *But with an overflowing flood
he will make a complete end of the adversaries,^[fn]
and will pursue his enemies into darkness.*
- 9 *What do you plot against the LORD?
He will make a complete end;
trouble will not rise up a second time.*
- 10 *For they are like entangled thorns,
like drunkards as they drink;
they are consumed like stubble fully dried.*
- 11 *From you came one
who plotted evil against the LORD,
a worthless counselor.*
- 12 *Thus says the LORD,
“Though they are at full strength and many,
they will be cut down and pass away.
Though I have afflicted you,
I will afflict you no more.*
- 13 *And now I will break his yoke from off you
and will burst your bonds apart.”*
- 14 *The LORD has given commandment about you:
“No more shall your name be perpetuated;
from the house of your gods I will cut off
the carved image and the metal image.
I will make your grave, for you are vile.”*
- 15 ^[fn]*Behold, upon the mountains, the feet of him
who brings good news,
who publishes peace!
Keep your feasts, O Judah;
fulfill your vows,
for never again shall the worthless pass through you;
he is utterly cut off.*

ESV Footnotes

(1:8) Hebrew *of her place*

(1:15) Ch 2:1 in Hebrew

Finding Good in Trouble — Assyria, with its capital in Nineveh, had conquered the northern kingdom of Israel and was threatening Jerusalem in the south. Would Jerusalem fall like Samaria? No, not at this time, because God was in control. There is an interesting sequence of descriptions of God in this chapter. First, it says that “*the LORD is avenging*” (v. 2). He pays back those who are

“his adversaries ... his enemies” (v. 2). As Paul reiterated later, *“the wages of sin is death”* (Rom. 3:23). That points to the justice of God. The next verse adds that *“The LORD is slow to anger”* (Nahum 1:3). That shows the patience and grace of God. Although it often looks like the guilty are getting away with their wickedness, God is delaying their punishment. The Ninevites might realize their error and change their ways as they did at the warning of Jonah about 140 years earlier. If not, *“the LORD will by no means clear the guilty”* (v. 3). God is patient with us as well. The patience of God postpones His justice. Thirdly, Nahum adds that *“The LORD is good...”* (v. 7). This includes the security of God because the verse continues by saying that God is *“a stronghold in the day of trouble, he knows those who take refuge in him.”* Is your “city” sometimes surrounded by evil enemies? God not only sees the trouble, but He knows and loves us. He is our security and can protect us in a day of trouble.

God is Our Refuge and Strength - YouTube

God is our refuge and strength;
A present help in time of trouble.
Though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;
Though the waters roar and foam, we will not fear.
Come and behold the work of the Lord;
The awesome acts of God.
He is in the midst of His people, in all the earth.
He is the Word; we are His hands,
He will lead us.

— Jay Johnson & Allen Poe (b. 1945)

September 8 Th Reading 251 — Zephaniah 3:9-20 — God Purifies His People

- 9 *“For at that time I will change the speech of the peoples
to a pure speech,
that all of them may call upon the name of the LORD
and serve him with one accord.*
- 10 *From beyond the rivers of Cush
my worshipers, the daughter of my dispersed ones,
shall bring my offering.*
- 11 *“On that day you shall not be put to shame
because of the deeds by which you have rebelled against me;
for then I will remove from your midst
your proudly exultant ones,
and you shall no longer be haughty
in my holy mountain.*
- 12 *But I will leave in your midst
a people humble and lowly.
They shall seek refuge in the name of the LORD,*
- 13 *those who are left in Israel;
they shall do no injustice
and speak no lies,
nor shall there be found in their mouth
a deceitful tongue.
For they shall graze and lie down,*

and none shall make them afraid.”

- 14 *Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion;
shout, O Israel!
Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
O daughter of Jerusalem!*
- 15 *The LORD has taken away the judgments against you;
he has cleared away your enemies.
The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst;
you shall never again fear evil.*
- 16 *On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:
“Fear not, O Zion;
let not your hands grow weak.*
- 17 *The LORD your God is in your midst,
a mighty one who will save;
he will rejoice over you with gladness;
he will quiet you by his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing.*
- 18 *I will gather those of you who mourn for the festival,
so that you will no longer suffer reproach.^[fn]*
- 19 *Behold, at that time I will deal
with all your oppressors.
And I will save the lame
and gather the outcast,
and I will change their shame into praise
and renown in all the earth.*
- 20 *At that time I will bring you in,
at the time when I gather you together;
for I will make you renowned and praised
among all the peoples of the earth,
when I restore your fortunes
before your eyes,” says the LORD.*

ESV Footnote

(3:18) The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain

At That Time — This prophecy seems to be intended for multiple fulfillment applications. It may partially point ahead to the return of God’s people from the Babylonian exile, but many of the details would have to be taken figuratively. It may also look forward to the first coming of the Messiah when “*The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst*” (v. 15). But it certainly also has the End Times in view, because four times in this passage, it uses the eschatological expression, “*at that time*” (vv. 9, 19-20), and twice, “*on that day*” (vv. 11, 16). When “*that day*” comes and “*The LORD your God is in your midst*” (v. 17), a tender characteristic of God will be seen, i.e., we make God happy. At that time, “*he will rejoice over you with gladness ... he will exult over you with loud singing.*” God sings! This goes beyond knowing that we can *please* God—we *thrill* Him. What enthusiastic joy! He delights in us. If He rejoices in us, we ought also to rejoice in Him.

[Rejoice, the Lord is King - YouTube](#)

<p>Rejoice, the Lord is King! Your Lord and King adore! Rejoice, give thanks and sing, And triumph evermore. Lift up your heart; lift up your voice! Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!</p> <p>— Charles Wesley (1744)</p>
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¹ *The words of Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, one of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin,* ² *to whom the word of the LORD came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign.* ³ *It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, and until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the captivity of Jerusalem in the fifth month.*

⁴ *Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying,*

⁵ *"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
and before you were born I consecrated you;
I appointed you a prophet to the nations."*

⁶ *Then I said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth."* ⁷ *But the LORD said to me,*

*"Do not say, 'I am only a youth';
for to all to whom I send you, you shall go,
and whatever I command you, you shall speak.*

⁸ *Do not be afraid of them,
for I am with you to deliver you,
declares the LORD."*

⁹ *Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the LORD said to me,*

"Behold, I have put my words in your mouth.

¹⁰ *See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms,
to pluck up and to break down,
to destroy and to overthrow,
to build and to plant."*

Adequate — Jeremiah had a tragic life, preaching for 40 years to mostly stubborn people who didn't want to accept his message. God called him to warn a nation that was sliding toward destruction. King Josiah made great strides in restoring proper worship of Yahweh, but soon after his death, the slide continued. In this first chapter, we see the omniscience of God in calling Jeremiah: "*Before I formed you in the womb I knew you ... I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet...*" (v. 5). God also knew us before He made us. We are uniquely designed to be what God wants us to be. Jeremiah's reaction to God's call ("*I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth*"—v. 6), also says something about the ones God chooses to accomplish His purposes. He specializes in using what mankind considers to be inadequate. Paul wrote that "*God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong*" (1 Cor. 1:27), and then he claimed for himself that "*when I am weak, then I am strong*" (2 Cor. 12:10). God can and will use people who think they are too young (or too old) or too lacking in any ability that the world considers to be necessary. Look how He has used paralyzed Joni Eareckson Tada and also Nick Vujicic, who motivates others even though he has neither arms nor legs! God's response to Jeremiah's hesitation was, "*Do not say, 'I am only a youth' ... you shall go ... you shall speak ... I am with you*" (Jer. 1:7-8). We are never inadequate when God is with us.

[Before the Sun Burned Bright - YouTube](#)

Though you have sent me, Lord, to every land,
I can't find words to speak Your ways of love.

Before the sun burned bright and rivers flowed,
I called you each by name to share My home.
No longer be afraid; I am your God.
My love will never end, Alleluia.

— Dan Schutte (1979)

September 10 Sa Reading 253 — Jeremiah 3:11-18 — God Offers Forgiveness to Israel

¹¹ *And the LORD said to me, "Faithless Israel has shown herself more righteous than treacherous Judah. ¹² Go, and proclaim these words toward the north, and say,*

*"Return, faithless Israel,
declares the LORD.
I will not look on you in anger,
for I am merciful,
declares the LORD;
I will not be angry forever.*

¹³ *Only acknowledge your guilt,
that you rebelled against the LORD your God
and scattered your favors among foreigners under every green tree,
and that you have not obeyed my voice,
declares the LORD.*

¹⁴ *Return, O faithless children,
declares the LORD;
for I am your master;
I will take you, one from a city and two from a family,
and I will bring you to Zion.*

¹⁵ *"And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding. ¹⁶ And when you have multiplied and been fruitful in the land, in those days, declares the LORD, they shall no more say, "The ark of the covenant of the LORD." It shall not come to mind or be remembered or missed; it shall not be made again. ¹⁷ At that time Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the LORD, and all nations shall gather to it, to the presence of the LORD in Jerusalem, and they shall no more stubbornly follow their own evil heart. ¹⁸ In those days the house of Judah shall join the house of Israel, and together they shall come from the land of the north to the land that I gave your fathers for a heritage.*

Merciful Master — The ten northern tribes of Israel had been conquered and scattered by their northern enemy, the Assyrians. About 100 years later, God reached out to them through Jeremiah in a call for repentance: *"Return, faithless Israel ... acknowledge your guilt, that you rebelled..."* (vv. 12-13). And in this plea, God revealed something about Himself: *"...for I am merciful"* (v. 12). This is only the second time in the OT this Hebrew word for *"merciful"* is used about God's character. It is the word *chasid*, which is closely related to the word *chesed*, the steadfast love of God we have read about many times. A merciful God reaches out to the lost with His steadfast love. He still does that today, rescuing those bound for hell, if they acknowledge their guilt and turn to Him. God's call to rebellious Israel shows that He is not only merciful, but He is also master: *"Return, O faithless*

children ... for I am your master" (v. 14). The Hebrew word for "*master*" here is also very interesting. It is the word *bā-al*, the verb form of the noun *ba-al*, the name of the god Baal, to whom the Israelites had bowed. But the word translated "*master*" here can also be translated "*husband*." God's call to Israel was not only to be their "*master*" in the sense of ruling over them, but also to be their "*husband*" in a loving relationship. He would be their loving "*master*." Do you think of God more in a ruling sense than in a relationship sense? He is both.

[God is Love, His Mercy Brightens - YouTube](#)

God is Love; His mercy brightens
All the path in which we rove;
Bliss He wakes and woe He lightens:
God is wisdom, God is love.

— John Bowring (1825)