

Lesson 10

Isaiah 63:1-14

The Bible is meant to be our teacher in everything, and just as we search it to know the truth, and to know how to behave, so we should seek to learn from it how to pray. Think, for example, of Psalm 139. The last five verses reveal that David is 'up against it,' facing such hostility as can only be solved by asking for the destruction of his foes. Yet, pressing and deadly though the danger is, it takes him eighteen verses to get around to asking about it — eighteen verses telling God about God! Eighteen verses filling his mind with the glories of the God to whom he speaks! How very different is this prayer (v. 1, 'O Lord, you ...') from the rush we so often make into the presence of God with 'O Lord we or 'O Lord, I...!' It would seem that, in Bible prayers, the first concern is the truth about the God to whom we would bring our needs. In Isaiah, starting with today's passage, the proportions are not the same as in Psalm 139; eight verses of meditation on the Lord (63:7-14), followed by nineteen verses of request (63:15-64:12), but the truth about prayer is the same. Start with God: his abundant goodness (v. 7), his loving claim of his people (v. 8), his identification with us in our needs (v. 9), his forbearance (v. 10), and his faithfulness now to what he was then (vs. 11-14). Now that we know him we are better placed to speak to him of our needs, to know what to ask, and to be confident of a hearing. And does not 'The Lord's Prayer' reveal the same pattern: first, God's name, kingdom and will; then our needs — food, forgiveness and protection? The great man who would rather call himself 'poor George Muller' would kneel daily with open Bible, read, and turn what he had read into godly meditation and praise, before ever mentioning his own need and that of two thousand orphans in his care. Lord, make me like that!

Questions Isaiah 63

The Edomites were the ancient and constant enemies of God's people. They were descended from Esau, who is described in the Bible as a *godless* man (Hebrews 12:16). So, in the Bible, Edom comes to represent man in his rebellion against God, his hatred towards God and his antagonism toward God's people. What does the red color of the Messiah's garments indicate about what He will come to do?

Read Rev 19:11-16. How do these verses help you understand Isaiah 63:1-6? What is the Conqueror committed to? When will these things occur? Have you come to a new understanding about the Messiah's work and how it is accomplished? If so, how has it changed?

What does the conqueror teach us about how the work of righteousness, salvation and vengeance has been carried out? Why is this work necessary if Zion of Chapters 60 and 62 is ever to come into existence?

Isaiah 63:7-14 is a prayer talking to God about God. What do these verses tell us about :

- a) God's faithfulness towards Israel.
- b) Their faithlessness towards Him.
- c) longing for something better?

Verses 63:15-64:3 is a continuation of that prayer crying to God to intervene. On what basis do God's people cry out to Him for help? What do you learn about prayer from these verses? How can Isaiah's prayer in these verses help you to be more biblical in your prayer life?