Isaiah 64

“How do you think of God, & yourself?”

1. **Intro:**
   1.1. **Read:** How do you think of God?

2. **How do you think of God, & yourself?** (1-12)

   2.1. **How can we be Saved?** (1-5)
   2.2. (1) Pick up context in 63:18 – Enemies broke down Jerusalem.
      2.2.1. And God DIDN’T intervene on their behalf! He held His peace! (12)
      2.2.2. The Jews were defeated & disgraced before their foes!
         2.2.2.1. Q: Sound a little like the church today???
      2.2.3. They petition God to come down like He did on Sinai, so the Nations would tremble.
   2.3. It’s as easy for God to rend the heavens as for us to tear a piece of cloth.
      2.3.1. Great mountains of difficulty dissolve before Him.
   2.4. Maybe we can pray for God to “come down” again in reviving, revitalizing, energizing, enlivening power!
   2.5. (2) **When** Jesus rode into Jerusalem, it was on a donkey, & in peace. **When** He rides in the next time, it will be on a white horse, in majesty!
      2.5.1. The nations will learn that the Prince of Peace is also a Man of War, judging sin & delivering His people!
   2.6. (3) Remembrance of the past will always give hope for the future!
      2.6.1. God intervened in the Exodus when the people of God were desperate.
      2.6.2. Man’s extremity is God’s opportunity!¹
   2.7. (1-3) Exodus 19
      2.7.1. No lesson could have been more impressively taught!
         2.7.1.1. And it is for all time.
      2.7.2. **We learn:**
         2.7.3. [1] The personal relationship God desires (4)
         2.7.4. [2] The special affection God has for us (5,6)

¹ Philip Hacking, pg.203
2.7.5. [3] **Hearing** is believing, not seeing (9,21)

2.7.5.1. “Many want a **Peek** at God yet not the **Perfection** of God; A **Glance**, but not **Grace**! - A **Peep** at God, ye not **Pardon** of God; Some want a **Glimpse**, others want to **Glow**!”

2.7.5.2. Q: Are you content for now to hear & not see?

2.7.6. [4] Here was the **awful contrast** between God & man (16-20)

2.7.6.1. The immeasurable chasm between the divine & human!

2.7.6.2. “From ancient times the **Thunder** was spoken of by the Hebrews as the **voice of Jehovah**, & the **Lightening** as His **messenger**, or as His flaming Dart!”

2.7.6.3. It was worse than facing “**OZ**”! (Scary as a kid/ “I need courage!”)

2.7.7. [5] Here was God’s ultimate purpose “**so you would not sin**” (20:20).

2.8. We must face the **OZ** of **Sinai**, before we enjoy the beauties of **Zion**!

2.8.1. 1**st** we face our sinfulness {Peter in boat w/Jesus – Lk.5:8 “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O lord”; Tax collector, “God be merciful to me a sinner!”}

2.8.2. Then we can enjoy **Zion**.

2.8.2.1. Picture where you feel most at home most comfortable: favorite couch, recliner, vacation spot.

2.9. (4) God is unequalled, transcendent.

2.9.1. He has no peer, yet seeks fellowship w/those who trust Him.

2.9.2. But sin presents a problem!

2.10. See 1 Cor.2:9 as Paul uses it.

2.10.1. No referring to heaven but to the Christian life here & now! (vs.10)

2.10.2. Read the Word & let the Spirit teach you, you will find out wonderful things God has done for you, & will do for you, as you trust & obey.

2.11. **God works**, as we **wait**!

2.11.1. So while we are waiting God is moving...oh!!! (Is.40:31)

2.12. (5) The plea for salvation!

2.12.1. Here are the sore needs of his people! (and people today!)

2.12.2. Q: How then can we be saved?

2.13. **Our Problem!** (6,7)

2.14. (6) (NIV) All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.
2.15. Mans 2 greatest problems are:
2.15.1. [1] How he views God!
2.15.2. [2] How he views himself!

2.16. Unclean – Like a Leper in scripture. Like an unclean animal.
2.17. Dirty Rag – menstrual rag 🕵️‍♂️
2.17.1. If our righteousness is black, what must our sins be!
2.17.2. Even righteous acts done w/ wrong motivation are seen in God’s sight as filthy rags.

2.18. Leaf – fade, wither, shrivel up.
2.19. Wind – our sins sweep us away like the wind does leaves.

2.20. Q: Is this how man views himself today?
2.20.1. Man today is more intent with developing a “healthy self-image” rather than a “biblical view of ourselves”!
2.20.2. Verse 6 is not a pretty verse, but it is biblical!
2.20.3. We need to be reminded of “who we are” apart from his intervening Grace!

2.21. The Parable of Speedo man, & Trench Coat man.
2 men worship together & both were brought under conviction by the same sermon. Speedo man was led to rejoice in pardoning mercy immediately. Trench coat man, for a long time, was in anguish, and at times depressed; but he was at last brought also to a comfortable experience of forgiving love.

Some time after, meeting his brother, he addressed him, "How is it that I should be so long under conviction, when you found comfort so soon?"

"O brother!" replied the Speedo man, "There came along a rich Prince. He proposed to give you His Royal Coat. You looked at your coat, and said, "I don't know: my coat is pretty good. I think it will do a little longer."

He then offered me a new coat. I look on my old Speedo & thought, This is good for nothing, and accepted the new coat on the spot.

Just so, brother you tried to keep your own righteousness for some time; you loath to give it up; but I, naked & cold, had none: therefore I gladly at once received the offer of His new coat!"

2.22. (7) No one to pray! - No one to get stirred up about confessing sin & seeking God’s face!

2.23. Our Solution! (8-12)
2.24. (8) Potter & clay – The hand at work is still the hand of our Father.
2.24.1. Remember a potter can fashion his work even using distress.
2.24.1.1. Like with blows from the mallet to get out all air bubbles.
2.24.2. Suffering can be a very powerful weapon in fashioning beauty!
2.24.3. Working with clay there is: trimming/cutting off excess; digging/out the gunk in the middle; bumping/wobble or off center.

2.24.4. Q: Are you as submissive as clay? Q: Ever seen clay talk back?

2.25. (9) Here is where prayer ought to begin…w/asking for forgiveness.

2.26. (10) God’s judgment: Jerusalem & even Mnt. Zion are deserted cities; the temple was burnt down; & treasured hopes have been dashed.

2.27. (11) Our pleasant things – we are reminded His blessings are never deserved but only humbly claimed!

2.28. (12) Ends with a question.
2.28.1. Will you hold yourself back, or rescue us?

2.29. The goal is to build a new city out of the ruins of the old.
2.29.1. Q: Isn’t that God’s goal for you personally?
2.29.2. Q: Isn’t that God’s goal for our church?

2.30. If God is going to “come down” w/His power, we must fall down in surrender to Him.