

Isaiah 65:1–10

Grace to Overcome Wrath-Provoking Religion

Wednesday, August 14, 2024 • Read Isaiah 65:1–10

Questions from the Scripture text: By whom was the Lord sought (v1a)? Found (v1b)? To whom did He present Himself (v1c–d)? How does He describe His relation to Jacob and Judah (v2a, cf. Rom 10:20–21)? In what way have they been rebellious (v2b–c)? What else have they done (v3a)? In what ways did they provoke Him to anger (v3b–4)? What have all these things said to the Lord (v5a–c)? With what effect (v5d–e)? What are we to consider (v6a)? Where has this condemnation been recorded? What will the Lord do (v6b–d, 7e)? What will He repay? Into what? Who speaks in v8a? From where does new wine originate (v8b)? What mustn't be done if it is to be obtained (v8c)? What is in the cluster (v8d)? Who will bring forth what from whom (v9a)? From whom will He bring forth what else (v9b)? What does He call these descendants and heirs in v9c? What in v9d? What formerly marred/cursed places will be restored (v10)?

**To whom does the Lord give Himself?** Isaiah 65:1–10 looks forward to the first serial reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these ten verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **the Lord gives Himself, by sovereign grace, to sinners from all nations.**

**Beginning to finish.** v1 forms a bookend with 66:19–20, letting us know that we are now in the conclusion to the whole of Isaiah's prophecy.

**Grace to the nations** (v1). The Lord is sought, found, and known by people from the nations. "Not called by My Name" means those who began outside the church—in this case, outside Jacob and Judah. In Rom 10:20, the apostle quotes this verse to show that it was the Lord's plan all along to save from among the nations. His description of them shows that this saving is only by sovereign, electing, regenerating grace: "ones not asking" and "ones not seeking Me."

**Wrath to church members** (v2–7). v2 sharply contrasts v1. The people called by His Name have refused all of His overtures to them. They are rebellious (walking according to their own thoughts, rather than God's good thoughts, v2). And they have provoked YHWH continually to anger to His face (v3a)!

Immediately, dear reader, you should know how these members of the visible church have so provoked the wrath of the Lord, lest you/we now repeat the same. What are "their own thoughts" that have replaced God's Word?

First, they worshiped in the beauty of creation ("who sacrifice in gardens," v3b). Rather than worshiping in the assembly that the Lord calls at the place the Lord has called it and the time that the Lord has called it, these people thought the beauty of the creation could enhance or even substitute for the ordinary worship of God. And this provoked God to wrath!

Second, they worshiped by the efforts and skills of men ("burn incense on altars of brick," v3c). Rather than following God's simple design for the altar, they have employed the creativity and skill of man to produce worship that man finds more impressive. But what impresses man, here provokes God to wrath!

Third, they attributed power or knowledge to the dead ("who sit among the graves, and spend the night in the tombs," v4a–b). Even in branches of the visible church today, there are those who look for spiritual power or insight in dead saints and what they leave behind. But their graves themselves remind us that they are helpless sinners dependent entirely upon the same grace that we are! Looking to the dead for help may seem spiritual, but it provokes God to wrath!

Finally, they cared much more to indulge themselves than to consecrate themselves separate from the world. Bacon sounds delicious, as does lobster broth, but God had proscribed these things (v4b–c) as part of their being holy.

In sby following their own ideas for worship, spirituality, and pleasure, they were basically saying that they enjoyed religion without God Himself (v5a–b), as if they could have a holiness that didn't derive from Him and was even better than His (v5c)! It is no wonder that He was continually furious with them (v5d–e) and decreed that He would repay them in full measure into the core of their being ("their bosom," v6–7).

**Grace to elect church members** (v8–10). Toward the beginning of the prophet's book, this rebellious and wrath-provoking people were described as a disappointing vineyard (cf. 5:1–7). Now, the illustration returns with the Lord refusing to destroy some clusters from the vineyard, because there will yet be new wine in them. For His Servant's sake, which is to say, for the sake of Christ, there are some who will not be destroyed.

Whereas we might have said before "even from the nations the Lord will preserve a remnant!" At this point in the prophecy of Isaiah, we find ourselves saying, "Even from Jacob and Judah, the Lord will preserve for Himself a remnant!" (v8–9). These are His elect (v9c), whose being conformed to Christ is implied in the phrase "My servants" (v9d). Whereas Sharon and Achor are both to be devastated in Israel's punishment, yet the covenant blessing will return. Those seeking from the nations in v1 are now joined in v10 by those elect whom the Lord makes to be "My people who have sought Me." Glorious grace!

So, in glorious grace, the Lord saves into His church from outside; and, in glorious grace, the Lord converts those from within His church. If we find in ourselves inclinations toward the things that provoked His wrath in v2–7, let us repent in dependence upon His Spirit, looking for His grace to change our minds about worship and life.

What do you think is most beautiful in worship? What do you find most impressive in worship? What does God Himself think about these things, according to this passage? Did you begin your life inside the church, or outside the church? How is God glorified by the way that you have come to know Him?

*Sample prayer: Lord, forgive us, for all day long You have stretched out Your hands to us, but how often we have walked according to our own thoughts! This has shown up very specifically in how we have thought and felt about worship, delighting in creaturely beauty rather than the beauty of the Creator, and rejoicing in our own skill rather than Your design and power. Through much of our spirituality has deserved wrath, grant now that, for the sake of Your Servant Jesus Christ, You would bring forth Christ-likeness in us, so that we might not be destroyed, we ask in His Name, AMEN!*

**Suggested songs:** ARP67 "O God, Give Us Your Blessing" or TPH425 "How Sweet and Awesome Is the Place"

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. **PLEASE BE AWARE** of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via [hopewellarp.org](http://hopewellarp.org))

Isaiah 65 verses 1 through 10. These are God's words. I was sought by those who did not ask for me. I was found by those who did not seek me. I said, here I am here, I am to a nation. That was not called by my name. I have stretched out my hands all day long to a rebellious people.

Who walk in a way that is not good according to their own thoughts. Are people who provoke me to anger continually to my face? Who sacrifice in Gardens and Burn incense on altars of brick. Who sat among the graves and spend the night in the tombs. Who eats wine's flesh and the broth of abominable things.

Is in their vessels who say, Keep to yourself, do not come near me for, I am Holier than you. These are smoke and mine nostrils. A fire that burns all the day. Behold, it is written before me. I will not keep silence, but will repay. Even repay into their bosom.

Your iniquities and the iniquities of your fathers together. Who have burned incense on the mountains and blasphemed me on the Hills. Therefore, I will measure their former work. Into their bosom. Thus says, Yahweh as the new wine is found in the cluster and one says, Do not destroy it for a blessing is in it.

So, I will do for my servant's sake. That I may not destroy them. All I will bring forth descendants from Jacob. And from Judah, an heir of my mountains, my elect shall inherit it. And my servants shall dwell there? Sharon, shall be a fold of flocks in the valley of acor a Words to lie down.

For my people who have Salt me. Amen. Listens this reading of Inspired and an errant worked.

The beginning of chapter 65 starts. the last section of the book of Isaiah talking about God gathering in his Remnant and making the new heavens. And the new Earth. There's an inclusio. the beginning of our passage today, I was sought by those. Who did not ask for me, I was found by those who did not seek me.

And he said here, I am here. I am to a nation. That was not called by my name. And then at the end of the section or just about at the end of Chapter 66. He's going to say, I will set a sign among them and those among them who Escape, I will send To the Nations.

Who have not heard my fame? Or seen my glory? They shall declare. My glory among the Gentiles. Then they shall bring all your brethren. Etc. And United Church from the Nations and the remnant of Israel together, with the new creation is how Chapter 66 and therefore the whole book of Isaiah closes off.

So we are in entering the last portion here and there is This contrast here. All of humanity is divided into two groups, the one Who turned to the Lord. Repentance, the ones who seek Him and find him to whom he says, here I am here. I am in verse 1.

And these are not Israelites in verse 1, although some Israelites are added For the sake of the servant. In verse 8, through 10. But to Israel in the center and of course, To all the nations as well. But Israel is the worst offender in verses 237. These are the ones.

Who are not repentant, who do not seek him? Who are not the elect Remnant and so he doesn't Grant them. Repentance. So, Of the remnant from the Nations. He said, I was sought by those who did not ask for me of Israel. He says, in verse 2, I have stretched out my hands all day long.

To rebellious people who walk in a way that is not good. And so, ideally we would say That the human race is or the all of humanity is divided up into two races, really? Those who seek God and those who are rebellious against him. And we would like to be able to say that, The church and the world.

But there are those in the visible church today. Just as Israel being the visible church at the time that that this is written, who have his name upon them. Which at that time was. by way of circumcision. And now is, especially, by way of baptism, baptism into the name.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God has revealed himself now. Ultimately by this name, having revealed himself, especially in his son. Our Lord, Jesus. There are those who are called by his name. But are rebellious. And who will have repaid into their bosom, the fullness of how they have treated the Lord and since they have sinned against God's glory, that fullness will be great, indeed.

The sins of of professed Believers, the sins of church members are much more heinous and incur much more wrath Than that of the rest of the world. And so of the Israelites who are not of this Remnant, that we're going to hear about in verses 8 through 10. He says, I have stretched out my hands all day long to a rebellious people.

And so, when the Apostle Paul, you remember in that section in Romans, Romans chapters 9-11 when he gets round to. Dealing with how it is. That the Messiah could have come to Israel and so many Israelites rejected him. he quotes, this reminding them. That Not only was this true throughout the history of Israel and how they treated the Lord.

And so we're not surprised when the Lord reveals himself and his son and they treat the son the same way. But that God had also prophesied that this would this would be something that accompanied the coming of the servant and would accompany even Of what we now, call the second coming, the consummation of all things.

So God says, in verse two, I've stretched out my hands all day long to rebellious people. So, It then is something that we really want to know. What do rebellious church members look like? If being in the church, Is not necessarily saving. Then what does it look like? To be near to God, but to be wicked in his face in a way that deserves wrath Than to be near to him.

By his grace in Christ and receive his smile and receive his Blessing. Well one they walk according to their own thoughts rather than walking in his way. Verse 2, who walk in a way that is not good according to their own thoughts. So they come up with their own way of doing worship they come up with their own way of doing church to come up with their own way of doing family.

They come up with their own way of doing or not doing private worship and family worship. They come up with their own way of doing life. They invent a morality that Loosely. Symbols. The morality that God commands in his word but makes all kinds of exceptions for whatever exceptions they feel.

Like making. And so, rather than walking in the good way that is according to God's thoughts, given to us in God's word. They walk instead according to their own thoughts. There's three. What does it look like to be in the church and under wrath? Of people who provoke me to anger continually to my face.

Who sacrifice and Gardens. And burn incense on altars of brick two different things that they think. Legitimize or even amplify worship that are against what God has commanded. The first by making use of the beauty of creation And so, here they worship, and they sacrifice in Gardens. We don't need to.

Go to church in a building today we are out camping. And so, we are going to enjoy God in the midst of his creation. Well, that's not how God said to worship him on his day. And so you you Using Christian sounding language. Basically to do the same thing as in verse three here to sacrificing, Gardens the other thing.

Is almost. Opposite. But from the same spiritual place burn incense and Alters a brick. You remember. God had described Construction of the altar very specifically but now they are Using their own Ingenuity and effort to build what they think is beautiful and impressive. And so, they construct worship and the place of worship the way of worship.

Out of that. So the one tries to make use of the supposed beauty of the creation but it's not beautiful. If God has commanded something else for his worship and the other tries to make use of the beauty that man produces in his perhaps very sincere and that makes it even worse.

Because it's hateful to God and the sincerity of it does not take away from the hatefulness that makes it worse. And so God calls their worship a provoking hymn can to anger continually to his face. As they sacrifice in these Gardens and burn insights on altars of brick. Sit among the graves and spend the night in the dooms.

So they think that These dead people. And being near their bodies. Can somehow Give them. Spiritual power, or maybe spiritual knowledge. There are all sorts of sorcery and necromancy, and mediums and familiar spirits. And all of All of those satanic things, illegitimate ways of getting knowledge, illegitimate ways of acquiring spiritual power.

Supposedly, don't actually get But that's what people think because they're deceived by demons into thinking. And, There are entire branches of the visible Church. That have become synagogues of Satan. By doing similarly. You think of all of the saint worship? That is in the papacy and in eastern Orthodoxy.

and yet the fact that there are tombs and Graves is not because these people were so great and they can help you. If they were so great and could help you, they would not have died. The fact that there are tombs and Graves reminds you That every child of Adam is a sinner needing atonement by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Who eats wines flesh and the broth of abominable things? Is in their vessels. Disregard God's instruction. For how to be consecrated unto God. And to be holy, they prefer self-indulgence over Holiness to God. I agree. Swine's flesh is very tasty. I'm glad to live this side of the tearing of the curtain of the temple into from top to bottom, the

canceling of the abrogating of the ceremonial law.

So we can have pork and ham and bacon and sausage and, you know, all those wonderful things. But if we lived in a season in an Administration of the Covenant of Grace in which God has said, this is one of the ways that you are consecrated to me as holy.

You do not eat this. Then it doesn't matter how tasty it might be or how good it smells. We must value Holiness unto God in the ways. That he says, To be holy. Unto him. And so, in verse 5, it's not that they are saying to others. Keep to yourself, do not come near me for, I am Holier than you.

That indeed would be. Offensive among people. All of whom who Need the righteousness and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. But in the context, it is the Lord to whom they are saying. I am Holier than you. This is. What we say to the Lord, if we come up with our own way of worship.

He has said, what Holiness is? He has said, what the beauty of the Holiness of worship is. He has given us. That, which consecrates? from the world and to be separate from the world. And if we do not follow his instruction in these things, we are saying I am Holier than you And so he refers to the worship of Israel.

As a smoke in his nostrils. A fire that burns all the day and he will repay. In fullness. The point of verse 6 and 7, when he uses the word repay. The fullness of his wrath. And when he uses the word into their bosom, The intensity of his wrath that is felt.

in the very being of the person, And he repeats it again. In verse 7, I will measure. Their former work into their bosom. So great is the wrath of God. Against much of the visible. And wood that it would have been different with the visible Church, in the age of the Gospel.

But as we can see, throughout church history, and even today, Whether it is old Abominations. Following the ideas of man that had been around for some thousands of years now, or new Abominations. Current Innovations and worship. It is a smoke in the nostrils of God. A fire that burns all the day and the sincerity of it or the natural beauty of it or the man-made.

Effort. And diligence and skillfulness of it. Doesn't make it better. But worse. And yet for all of this, even from Israel. And when you began the book of Isaiah, you might have said, wow, isn't it amazing? God is going to save even from among the Gentiles but by the time you're done, seeing what Israel has been like from the perspective of God, you're saying, isn't it amazing?

God's even gonna save some Israelites. Despite all of their idolatry. And so verses 8 through 10, give us that. And of course, why is he doing it? It's for his servant sick. It's for his son's sake. It's for Christ's sake. This Covenant of redemption, this determination to elect some this electing of some from before the world began.

Thus says, Yahweh as the new wine is found in the cluster. Okay, it's not new wine yet. It's still a cluster of grapes. It hasn't the Vintage hasn't been trampled out, hasn't yet been begun to ferment as just grapes so far. And yet. The Lord even though there's nothing in it.

That is yet new wine. He has to work upon it. Similarly, with Israel, Israel, you remember earlier in the book was being compared to wild grapes by God. Sour grapes, not new wine at all. not ready to become new wine at all. And, The Lord. Is saying there's potential, but the potential.

Is because of what he is going to do. So verses 8 through 10 the elect Remnant. Now not from the Nations like we had in verse 1 But an elect Remnant, even from that Wicked Israel. That is described in verses 2 through 7. There are some whom he is going to bring to repentance.

And so he says as the new wine is found in the cluster and note and one says do not destroy it for a blessing is in it. So will I do for my servant's sake? That I may not destroy them all. I will bring forth descendants from Jacob and from Judah and Heir.

Of my mountains, my elect shall inherit it and my servants shall dwell there. So even there you can see for Christ's sake. He is going to make those who are christ-like. Who are his elect servants? Just as Christ as Redeemer. Is the elect servant. Sharon Shelby. A fold of flocks.

And the valley of acor a place for herds to lie down. he will restore. Covenant blessing. To his people for my people who Sought me. And so, those who sought him in verse 1 from the Nations, Are now joined by those whom he is going to make to seek.

Verse 10 from Jacob. And from Judah. And even the restoration of the Covenant blessing. In which? The flocks and herds are multiplying. Again, is beginning to anticipate, what we will? what we will see. The new heavens and The new Earth. And so may the Lord give us. To hear the warning.

There are those in the church. Who are provoking him to wrath. rather than genuinely seeking him. And to seek him, according to his word independence upon his grace. Remembering that it is. God Alone for the sake of Christ alone, who even produces the desire. And if we find ourselves Desiring in God's worship.

that which is creaturely beautiful. Above that, which he is beautiful because he has commanded it, or that which Would produce by his skill. Rather than that, which God gives by his grace. redeeming Grace. Then let us look to him. To give us the repentance that we need.

For the sake of Christ. Let's ask him for that help and prayer. Our Father in heaven. We do pray that There would be blessing even in. By. Purpose by your election. We do pray that you would, Make us heirs together with Christ. Of yourself. Help us to find beautiful.

What you have commanded. And help us to call. Beneficial. What you have commanded and what you have given Grant that your spirit would. Not permit us to be impressed with ourselves or to let ourselves. Off the hook of your word and to rationalize, Things that Have some resemblance but are really departing from you.

Especially Lord, since you have put your name upon each one of us, And we know that this would make our sin more heinous. Grant instead that your gracious work by your spirit in us and our minds, and our hearts and our lives. Would correspond to that name. That you have put upon us.

That your Covenant that you have made would be honored. And you would be glorified as the one who produced it by your grace. And the means that you have appointed would be honored and dignified by your using them, to do this work of Grace. So Grant it. So with each one of us, we pray and grant it.

So with our household as a whole And grant that it would be. So with our congregation, We ask in your name, Lord Jesus. Amen.