

THE GREAT DAY OF GOD'S VENGEANCE AND MERCY: A PICTURE OF ARMAGEDDON ISAIAH 63:01–64:12

Introduction

Armageddon is the last, decisive battle or war among the nations of the earth. Because it is known to be the last battle, a discussion of Armageddon arouses keen interest among many, in particular true Christian believers. Armageddon is where human history, under the government of human leaders, will end. Why then and there? Because at Armageddon the Lord Jesus Christ will return to earth. He will intervene and stop the madness of the human race. In that climactic day, all the wicked of this earth will face the blazing fire of God's holiness and be consumed, doomed to spend eternity in hell separated from Him. But the righteous of this earth will receive the mercy of God. They will be delivered and receive their eternal inheritance promised by God through the ages. This is, *The Great Day of God's Vengeance and Mercy: A Picture of Armageddon*, Isaiah 63:1–64:12.

- I. The great day of God's vengeance, (vv. 63:1-6).
- II. The great mercy of God: proves that He will execute judgment and redeem or save His people (vv. 63:7-14).
- III. The great cry for deliverance (vv. 63:15-64:12).

I. *Isaiah 63:01–06 The Great Day of God's Vengeance*

The great day of God's vengeance, the day of Armageddon, is coming. Furthermore, it cannot be stopped. In fact, this prophecy by Isaiah is a picture of Christ returning from the battle of Armageddon. The battle has already taken place, and the nations of the world who have sought to destroy God's people have just been crushed by the Lord Himself. Isaiah's Prophecy answers the major questions about Armageddon:

1. Who will be judged? Edom and its capital Bozrah. These sites symbolize all the nations and strongholds in the world that reject God and persecute His people (vv. 1, 3, 6). Edom was chosen as a representative of the wicked nations of the earth because its people had always been bitter enemies of the LORD and His people. An unyielding hostility and deep-seated animosity flowed through the veins of the Edomites. Thus they became a symbol of the nations who defied the Lord and mistreated His people. All nations — governments, leaders, citizens — who take a stand against the LORD and His people will face the hand of God's judgment. They will be destroyed in the future battle of Armageddon.
 2. Who will execute judgment? The LORD Himself (vv. 1-2). This is a clear reference to Jesus Christ. Christ is returning, coming back to earth a second time. When Christ came the first time, He came as a baby born in a manger. He came as the Saviour to
-

rescue people from their sins and from death, offering eternal life to all. But when Christ comes the second time, He will come as judge of the entire earth. He will come clothed in the majestic glory and awesome power of God Himself. Note that He identified Himself as the One who speaks "in righteousness, mighty to save" (v. 1). His purpose for coming will be to execute justice on earth. Executing justice includes rewarding those who truly believe and have been faithful to the LORD as well as punishing those who have lived wicked lives. In the great day of God's vengeance, the Battle of Armageddon, He will demonstrate His mighty power to save His people from their oppressors.

Note that the LORD's clothes will be stained red with blood, looking like the clothing of a person who has been trampling the grapes of a wine press. The ancient wine-press was usually a shallow pit with a hole at one end through which the juice; flowed out into containers. As people trampled the grapes, juice would naturally splatter their clothing. The picture being clearly painted is that of the LORD's robe being completely covered with the blood of the wicked. Note that Christ Himself is speaking, declaring that He has trampled the nations under His foot. He makes two declarations:

- => In executing judgment, God acted alone (v. 3). Unlike His practice in the past, He did not use nations or people to accomplish the punishment of the wicked. In the great day of vengeance, God will execute His wrath against all the wicked nations and peoples of this earth.
 - => God will personally destroy the evil and oppressive people of the earth. He will crush them as grapes are crushed in a wine-press.
3. Why will the LORD execute judgment (vv. 4-6)? First, because two things are in His heart: vengeance against evil and redemption for His people (v. 4). His very nature is that of holiness and love. His holiness demands the execution of righteousness or judgment, and His love demands that He redeem and save His people. The immoral, lawless and violent of this earth must bear the consequences of their wicked behaviour. They must pay the penalty for having broken God's law. Thus true justice must be executed against them. But redemption is also in the heart of God. Because of His perfect love, He will return to earth to save His people from the oppression of their enemies and from sin and death.

Second, in the last days of human history, God will find no one who can step forth to help His people (v. 5). The day is coming when the vast majority of the world's population will oppress and seek to stamp out God's people. In that day the LORD's arm of power and His wrath will save His people. Raising His arm in might and fury, the LORD will crush the nations. Every evil nation of this earth will be made drunk with the wine of God's wrath, and their blood will be poured out on the ground (v. 6; also see 29:5-8. See outline and notes, Rev 14:14-20; 16:12-16; 19:11-21.)

Thought 1. The day of God's vengeance is coming. All the nations and peoples of this earth who have opposed God and persecuted His people will face the judgment of God's hand.

John 3:36 "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

Rom 1:18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness.

Rom 2:8-9 But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

Rom 12:19 Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

Eph 5:3-6 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person — such a man is an idolater — has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient.

1 Th 5:1-3 Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you. For you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labour pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

2 Th 1:7-10 And give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power.

Psa 2:12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Psa 94:1 O Lord, the God who avenges, O God who avenges, shine forth.

Micah 5:15 "I will take vengeance in anger and wrath upon the nations that have not obeyed me."

Nahum 1:2 The Lord is a jealous and avenging God: the Lord takes vengeance and is filled with wrath. The Lord takes vengeance on his foes and maintains his wrath against his enemies.

II. *Isaiah 63:07–14 The Great Mercy and Love of God*

The great mercy and love of God has been demonstrated down through history. Therefore God's people can rest assured, His day of redemption will come. As Isaiah just predicted, all the oppressors of God's people will be crushed and true believers will be redeemed by God's mighty hand. The LORD will save His people. A quick glance at the history of Israel shows His unfailing love for all who truly trust Him:

- 1) The LORD had chosen Abraham and his descendants to be His people. They were to be God's family, His sons and daughters who would be true to Him. But down through history Israel had gone astray time and again. Nevertheless, the LORD had always held out hope that they would not continue to disobey and break His holy commandments.
- 2) Seeking to hold His family together, the LORD had always stepped forth as their Saviour (vv. 8b-9). Despite their wayward lives He had always identified with their distress and sufferings. He had saved, redeemed and carried them through all the years, never failing to show His love and mercy.
- 3) When the people rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit, God always disciplined them as a loving Father (v. 10). Sometimes His hand of discipline had to be strong, so strong it appeared as though He was their enemy and was fighting against them. But contrary to appearance, He was merely disciplining His people, seeking to arouse them to correct their behaviour.
- 4) The LORD had used His discipline to stir the people to repent and to remember His care in days of old (vv. 11-14). Often His discipline was effective. His people remembered God's love and mercy down through the centuries. In particular, they remembered the days of Moses...
 - when God gave them the great gift of a shepherd, a leader like Moses (v. 11)
 - when God gave His Holy Spirit to dwell among them (Num 11:17, 25; also see Exo 31:3, 6; 35:30-35)
 - when God's awesome power divided the Red Sea (v. 12; Exo 14:21-29)
 - when God guided and led them step by step, keeping them from stumbling as long as they followed His leadership (v. 13)
 - when God gave them both spiritual and physical rest in the promised land (Jos 23:1)

No greater demonstration of God's love could be given to the human race than His leadership of Israel down through the centuries. He poured His love out upon them in order to glorify His Name among the nations of the earth. By demonstrating His love and mighty power, some people were aroused to repent of their sins and to trust Him as their Saviour.

God's great acts of compassion on behalf of Israel prove that He will execute judgment and redeem or save His people.

Luke 1:50 His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.

John 3:16-17 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

Rom 2:4-10 Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance? But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. God will give to each person according to what he has done. To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honour and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. But glory, honour and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

Rom 5:8-10 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!

Eph 2:4-8 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.

Titus 3:5-7 Not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy, He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

Psa 33:5 The Lord loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfading love.

Psa 63:3 Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you.

Psa 103:17 But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children.

Psa 106:1 Praise the Lord. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.

Lam 3:22 Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.

Hos 2:19 I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion.

Joel 2:13 Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.

Micah 7:18 Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy.

Nahum 1:7 The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him.

III. Isaiah 63:15–64:12 The Great Cry of God's People for Deliverance

The cry of God's people for deliverance was great. But as is often the case, Isaiah's writings are applicable to all generations of believers. There has never been nor will there ever be a generation that does not need to cry out the appeals of these verses. Note that a fourfold cry was lifted up to the LORD:

1. There was a cry for God to look down, to hear and help His people (vv. 15-19). They needed His help as much as their forefathers had. Therefore they were begging the LORD to look down, to remember their hardships and distress in the same way He had remembered their forefathers. Appealing to the LORD, Isaiah listed six reasons why the people needed God's help:
 - a. The people needed God's help because His zeal and strength seemed to be withheld from them as well as His mercy and compassion (v. 15). Simply stated, God seemed to be far away, off in the distance and untouchable. There was no evidence or sense of His presence among them. No acts of God's love, miracles or works were taking place in their midst.
 - b. The people confessed they needed God's help because He was still their Father and Redeemer (v. 16). Note the acknowledgement of the people: they knew that Abraham and Jacob (Israel) would disown them, the present generation, due to their sins. Acknowledging this fact is a clear indication that a true confession was being made.
 - c. The people cried out for help because they had turned away from God. In fact, their hearts had become so hardened they no longer feared the LORD (v. 17). None of the people seemed to reverence the LORD, to esteem Him as the Creator, the sovereign LORD and Majesty of the universe. Neither did they fear the judgment, the holy wrath and vengeance of God.
 - d. The people cried out for God's help because they knew there were still some servants, that is, true believers, among them (v. 17b). Not all Israelites were genuine and righteous followers of the LORD. But there were always a few sincere disciples who trusted the LORD with all their hearts and obeyed His holy commandments. Thus the cry is for God to help His people for the sake of these few. Moreover in considering the cry for deliverance, the LORD needed to take into account His promise to true believers, that He would always deliver them.

- e. The people cried for God's help because their enemies had destroyed the LORD's holy temple (v. 18). Of course, this refers to the future destruction of the temple by the Babylonians and then centuries later by the Romans. With the temple destroyed, it was as though the LORD was powerless to stop the nation's hostility against His people and their worship of the LORD. Therefore the LORD needed to arise to prove His power, for His very honour was at stake.
- f. The people cried out to the LORD because of their own appalling sinfulness. It was as if they had never belonged to God (v. 19). Their sins had separated them from God, alienated and cut them off from His presence, guidance and blessings. All because they had broken the covenant between the LORD and themselves.

Mat 6:33 *"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."*

Luke 11:9-10 *"So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened."*

Deu 4:29 *But if from there you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you look for him with all our heart and with all our soul.*

Psa 105:4 *Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always.*

Prov 8:17 *"I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me."*

Isa 55:6 *Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near.*

Jer 29:13 *You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.*

Hos 10:12 *Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unploughed ground; for it is time to seek the LORD, until he comes and showers righteousness on you.*

Amos 5:4 *This is what the LORD says to the house of Israel: "Seek me and live."*

Zep 2:3 *Seek the LORD, all you humble of the land, you who do what he commands. Seek righteousness, seek humility: perhaps you will be sheltered on the day of the Lord's anger.*

- 2. There was a cry for God to come down, to display His power on behalf of the people (64:1-5a). First, the people cried for the LORD to come down to execute judgment (vv. 1-3). To the people, the LORD seemed far away, far out beyond the heavens, completely out of reach. Thus they cried for Him to burst forth from the heavens to come to their aid. They desperately needed a demonstration of His awesome power, the kind of power that had been so evident on Mount Sinai (Exo 19:16-19). They needed the LORD to forcefully make His Name known to those who defied and opposed Him. The secular, godless nations needed to tremble before the LORD, just as

the mountains had quaked when He appeared on Mount Sinai. A similar appearance — a dramatic, flaming, visible intervention by the LORD — is urgently needed today.

Second, the LORD needed to come down because He alone had proven He was God (v. 4). Since the beginning of the world, no ear had ever heard nor eye ever seen any God other than the LORD Himself. There is only one true and living God, the LORD Himself (Jehovah, Yahweh).

Third, the LORD needed to come down to help those who had waited on Him. In other words, those who had waited truly believed in God and His promises and obeyed His holy commandments. It is a known fact that God helps those who willingly do what is right (vv. 4b-5a). A righteous individual is one who follows the teachings of the LORD, His holy Word. In addition, the righteous know the promise of God that He will help or rescue those who truly wait on Him.

Acts 1:4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about."

Gen 49:18 "I have waited for your deliverance, O LORD."

Psa 37:7 Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; do not fret when people succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes.

Psa 40:1 I waited patiently for the LORD; he turned to me and heard my cry.

Psa 119:147 I rise before dawn and cry for help; I have put my hope in your word.

Psa 130:6 I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning.

Isa 25:9 In that day they will say, "Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the LORD, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation."

Isa 26:8 Yes, LORD, walking in the way of your laws, we wait for you; your name and renown are the desire of our hearts.

Isa 33:2 LORD, be gracious to us; we long for you. Be our strength every morning, our salvation in time of distress.

3. There was the cry of confession (vv. 5b-8). God is able to rescue His people anytime, no matter how difficult the trial or hardship. But God will not save His people if they are continuing in sin, denying and rebelling against Him, disobeying His commandments and living wicked lives. Isaiah as well as the other righteous believers down through the centuries, knew this fact. Thus Isaiah made a confession of sin on behalf of the people, a confession that stands as a model for believers of all generations. Identifying himself with the people, Isaiah made six confessions:

- a. Isaiah confessed that they were habitual sinners, that is a people who sinned over and over again. The idea is that sin had become a habit, ingrained in the very nature of the people. Sadly, when they needed to repent of their sins, they continued right on sinning, disobeying God's commandments. As a result, they did not deserve to be saved, neither could they expect to be rescued by God. The thought being conveyed is that of total depravity, being totally undeserving of God's salvation.
- b. Isaiah confessed that they were infected with sin and were unclean, impure (v. 6). In fact, their righteousness was no better than filthy rags. Filthy rags refers to dirty, contaminated cloth that has been wrapped on a cancerous or contagious sore on a person's body. It could also refer to a cloth used during a woman's menstrual period, which meant that she was ceremonially unclean under the law (Lev 15:19-24; Eze 36:17). When measured against God's holy righteousness, a person's righteous acts are no better than filthy rags in God's sight. All human beings are infected with sin; therefore, they are all unclean, impure, corrupted in the sight of God. This image may be distasteful to some readers; nevertheless, it is the picture painted by Holy Scripture. A person's dislike of the description is nothing compared to the repulsion and loathing God feels toward sin.
- c. Isaiah confessed that the people were weak, unstable (v. 6). Like leaves that are blighted by disease or shrivelled with age, so people are blighted by the disease of sin. As diseased leaves shrivel up and are driven by the wind to the ground, where they rot and return to the dust of the earth, so people shrivel up due to the disease of sin. They too fall to the ground where they decay and return to the dust of the earth. Human beings are so weak that they can expect to live for only a few decades.
- d. Isaiah confessed that no one sought God's mercy and forgiveness (v. 7). People were enjoying the pleasures of sin too much to be overly concerned about the LORD and His cause. Little if any thought was even given to the LORD and His demand for righteousness. For many people, sin and evil were outdated concepts, beliefs that belonged to the religion of antiquity or to their forefathers. They felt that sin and righteousness — what is right and what is wrong — were subjective issues, issues determined by each person for him or herself. What may be sin to one person is acceptable behaviour to another. It was such rationalizing, such explaining away of the truth, that people used to justify their sinful behaviour. Due to their flawed reasoning, the people were able to participate in the wicked behaviour of idolatry practiced by their neighbours. Thus bad behaviour was called good and sin was called righteousness in Isaiah's day. Regrettably, this same perverted thinking has only grown stronger down through the ages. As Isaiah confessed, no one sought God's mercy and forgiveness, for sin was no longer sin in the eyes of many. Immorality, covetousness, greed and a plurality of religions were acceptable to the majority of the population.
- e. Isaiah confessed that God was forced to turn His face away from the people (v. 7b). God was left with no choice due to His holiness and the people's terrible sins. Sin

separated, alienated the people from God. Giving them up to their sins, the people became more and more corrupted (see Rom 1:22-32). Hence their alienation was not due to the LORD, but rather to their horrible, detestable sins.

- f. Isaiah confessed that God was their Father. He was the Potter; they were the clay, the work of His hand (v. 8). For this reason, they owed Him their very lives. All they were and had was owed to the LORD. He was the Father, and they were the children. As children, they were duty-bound to obey their Father. His instructions were for their own good, to protect them and keep them safe. He longed to give them sound guidelines for living victorious lives and conquering all the trials that confronted them.

Mat 10:32-33 *“Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.”*

Mark 8:38 *“If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels.”*

Luke 12:8-9 *“I tell you, whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God. But he who disowns me before men will be disowned before the angels of God.”*

Rom 10:9-10 *That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.*

Phil 2:5-11 *Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

1 John 2:22-23 *Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist — he denies the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.*

1 John 4:15 *If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God.*

Ezra 10:11 “Now make confession to the LORD, the God of your fathers, and do his will. Separate yourselves from the peoples around you and from your foreign wives.”

Prov 28:13 He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

Jer 3:13 “Only acknowledge your guilt — you have rebelled against the LORD your God, you have scattered your favours to foreign gods under every spreading tree, and have not obeyed me,” declares the LORD.

4. There was the cry for forgiveness. Isaiah knew that many people would fear God's anger, that He would remember their sins forever (vv. 9-12). Obviously, when this realization strikes a person, the person needs to go before the LORD, praying and seeking His forgiveness. Isaiah's prayer for Israel is a pattern for all believers of every generation.
 - a. Isaiah pleaded for forgiveness because the Israelites were God's people (v. 9). Apparently, Isaiah was pleading for the whole nation, realizing that this was the longing of God's heart. God is long-suffering, not wanting any person to perish but rather for all to be saved. Therefore, Isaiah cried out for God not to remember their sins forever. They were the descendants of Abraham, the very people whom God had chosen to be His true followers.
 - b. Isaiah cried for forgiveness because the cities of Israel, including the Holy City of Jerusalem, had been destroyed by their enemies (v. 10). Keep in mind that this is a prophecy, that the Babylonian invasion and destruction had not yet taken place when Isaiah wrote this. But through the inspiration of God's Spirit, God's prophet foresaw the coming destruction of the nation by the Babylonians. Thus the prophet offered up this prayer in behalf of the future exiles in Babylon, asking God to forgive their sins. He wanted God to forgive their sins and return them to the promised land so they could rebuild the nation.
 - c. Isaiah prayed for forgiveness because the holy, beautiful temple of God had been burned and ruined (v. 11a). In the future all that Israel treasured would lay in ruins due to the destruction carried out by their enemies. Again, the prophet wanted God to forgive the people's future sins so they could return to rebuild the temple and the other treasured sites of the nation.
 - d. Isaiah prayed for forgiveness because the people would desperately need the LORD's deliverance (v. 12). In light of these four great cries, cries that included a genuine confession of sin and a request for forgiveness, how could God keep silent? Would He refuse to help His people in the future, punishing them beyond measure?

Luke 13:3 “I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.”

Acts 5:30-32 The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead — whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince

and Saviour that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.

Acts 8:22 Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive you for having such a thought in your heart.

Eph 1:7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 2:1-2 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defence — Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

2 Chr 7:14 If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

Psa 51:12-13 Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

Psa 130:4 But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared.

Isa 43:25 "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more."

Isa 44:22 "I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you."

Isa 55:7 Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.

Jer 3:22 "Return, faithless people; I will cure you of backsliding." "Yes, we will come to you, for you are the LORD our God."

Ezek 18:31 Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, O house of Israel?

Hosea 14:4 "I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them."

Micah 7:18 Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy. ■