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Return for the Sake of Your Servants, the Tribes of Your Inheritance

63: 15-19

Return for the sake of your servants, the tribes of your inheritance DIG: Who is the remnant? Where are they? Why? How are they different now than in the past? What has changed their attitude toward God?

REFLECT: When you pray, do you express to ADONAI the full range and intensity of your emotions (joy, anger, sorrow, doubt, fear)? Or do you go through the motions? Have you ever wanted to say something like, "Lord, return for the sake of Your servants?" Why? Why not?

These verses contain Isra'el's prayer at the end of the Great Tribulation that brings about the Second Coming of Christ. The actual words of this prayer are found in four key passages of Scripture, first, in **Psalm 79**, secondly in **Psalm 80**, thirdly in **Isaiah 53:1-9**, and lastly here. As the armies of the antichrist close in around them, **one third of the Israelites, those that are left (Zechariah 13:8), will cry out to Jesus Christ to return and save them.**

When **the Israelites** left Egypt at the time of the **Exodus**, Pharaoh's army bore down on them. **God** had told Moses: **I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them. But I will gain glory for Myself through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD (Exodus 14:4).** As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to ADONAI (Exodus 14: 10). But they did so in unbelief. They said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die" (Exodus 14:11)? Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance God will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still" (Exodus 14:13).



The Israelites at the end of the Great Tribulation will face the same situation, but this time **they** will respond in faith. **The LORD** will again fight for **them**; they only need to **be still**. As **they** cry out to **Jesus Christ**, **they** say: **Look down from heaven and see from Your lofty throne, holy and glorious. Where are Your zeal and your might? Your tenderness and compassion are withheld from us (63:15).** **They** begin to pray for **God** to **look down from heaven and** take note of **their** situation. **They** appeal for **ADONAI** to use **His** zeal and **might** as **He** did in the past. **Their** wish was that the mighty acts of the **Exodus (Exodus 14:26-31; Deuteronomy 4:32-38; Psalm 44:1-2)** be repeated at the time of **Isra'el's** final restoration. **They** plead to **God** to show His **tenderness and compassion** toward **Isra'el** as **He** had in the past.

This is an appeal for mercy to God as Father, *Abba*, and redeemer, recalling His compassionate dealings with Jacob in the past. In Egypt **He** claimed: **Isra'el is My firstborn (Exodus 4:22)**, pledged **Himself** to **redeem you with an outstretched arm (Exodus 6:6-7)**, and declared that **His** name **the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob**, was eternally true (**Exodus 3:15**). **But You are our Father, though Abraham does not know us or Jacob acknowledge us (63:16a).** Although **they** had been blinded by **their** sin and not been following in the teaching of the Torah, **ADONAI** was still **their Father and Redeemer**.

You, ADONAI, are our *Abba*, Father (63:16b): *The relationship we have with our **Father** is one of intimacy and familiarity, awe and respect, obedience and delight. **Our Father** loves to hear us call **His** name. **He** takes great delight in us and when we are troubled, **He** will quiet us with **His** loving arms. What a privilege it is to be a child of **God**.*

The concept of **God the Father** in the TaNaKh was never used individually, only collectively as a group or a nation (**Deuteronomy 32:6** and **Isaiah 9:6**). But they even felt cut off from the nation. Although every good Jew calls **Abraham** their father, they will feel like even **Abraham** would **not know** them because of their unfaithfulness. Two thirds of the nation of **Isra'el** throughout the Great Tribulation will be apostate (**Zechariah 13:8-9**). Yet even though they felt like **Abraham** would not **know** them and Jacob **would not acknowledge** them because of their unfaithfulness, they knew **ADONAI** was their **Father from ancient times**. **He** has proven **Himself** to be faithful to them in the past. Would **He** now let **His** people perish from the face of the earth? Would **He** allow Satan the final victory? Would **He** allow **His** name to be put to shame? Certainly not. **He** will do whatever is necessary to protect and preserve the great name **He** has made for **Himself**.

He is also their ***Go'ali, or their Redeemer***. They cry out: **Our Redeemer from of old is Your name (63:16c)**. What was the relationship of the remnant to **God**? The one third that will remain faithful to **ADONAI** will begin to make their plea for **Yeshua Messiah** to return. **Why, O LORD, do you make us wander from Your ways, and harden our hearts so we do not revere you (63:17a)?** This is not an attempt to lay the blame for their sin on **God**, rather a recognition that their guilt is such that **He** had no option but to drive them from **Him** because **He** is a holy **God** who cannot tolerate sin in **His** presence. Likewise, **harden our hearts** does not blame **the LORD** for their sin. We must remember **ADONAI** hardened Pharaoh's heart only after the Egyptian king hardened his own heart (**Exodus 9:12**).

But **they** are not finished yet; **they** have one more basis for appeal: **Return for the sake of Your servants, the tribes that are Your inheritance (63:17b)**. This is the ancient language of the **Exodus** and the conquest of the Land by **Joshua**. Yes, **God** might have given **them** the Promised Land as **their** heritage, but **they** were **His** heritage (**Deuteronomy 4:20**), **the apple of His eye (32:10)**! Could **ADONAI** now refuse to rescue **His people, His heritage, in their time of need**? This is the prayer of intercession, the passionate entering into the needs of those for whom we are praying, and a storming of the gates of heaven with every tool we can use. Why? Because **God** is callous and uncaring? No, because we are callous and uncaring, and until our passion is in some small way connected to the great passion of **the LORD, His power is in some way restrained**. This seems almost unimaginable, but the testimony of history and of Scripture confirms it.²⁵⁴

For a little while Your people possessed Your holy place, but now our enemies have trampled down Your sanctuary (63:18). The final reason that they were pleading for **Jesus** to return and to save them will be because of the Abomination of Desolation in the wicked Tribulation Temple (**Dani'el 11:31** and **Second Thessalonians 2:1-4**). They had

signed a seven-year covenant with the antichrist (**Dani'el 9:27**) when everything seemed to be going smoothly before the Great Tribulation began. But after three and a half years, the antichrist set up an image of himself in the Most Holy Place and demanded to be worshiped as God (see the commentary on **Revelation, to see link click Dn - All Inhabitants of the Earth will Worship the Beast**). They thought they had been offering sacrifices to **God**, but they had only been fooling themselves. As a result, their **enemies** had **trampled down** their phony **sanctuary (Revelation 11:1-2)**. So they plead that **ADONAI** would forgive and save them by returning.

We are Yours from of old; but You have not ruled over us, and we have not been called by Your name because of our sin (**63:19**). But if **He** did not return and save them, what would the world say about **Him**? The world would surely conclude that the stories about **Isra'el's** glorious past were lies. They would say that **the LORD** had never **ruled over Isra'el**; they would say that **Isra'el** had never **been** truly **called** by **God's** name. Is this what **ADONAI** wants? Does He want the world to have this false impression? Of course not. Then what is the implied solution? First, confess their sin (**First John 1:8-10**), then plead for the Second Coming.

At that point they completely surrender to **ADONAI**. This should be the attitude of every believer today - complete yielding to **God**. Most of us are afraid to give **the LORD** the steering wheel of our lives because we are afraid **He** will be hard on us. **He** wants to be gentle with us if we will give **Him** a chance. But we must never forget that **He** is also a holy **God** of judgment. **He** is **the Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Revelation 5:5)** who is coming to the earth **to trample the winepress of His wrath (63:3-6)**. **He** is not trying to scare you; **He** is trying to save you from **the wrath** that is to come.