

ISAIAH 63 | *Bloodbath in Bozrah*

A Great Warrior from Bozrah

1 Who is this who comes from Edom (אֲדוֹם), in crimsoned garments from Bozrah (בּוֹצְרָה), he who is splendid in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength (גְּבוּרַת כֹּהֵן)? It is I [Messiah], speaking in righteousness (צְדָקָה), mighty to save (רַב לְהוֹשִׁיעַ).

The Year of Messiah's Blood-Revenge

2 Why is your apparel red (אָדָם), and your garments like his who treads in the winepress? 3 I [Messiah] have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples (עַמִּים) no one was with me. I trod them in my anger (אַף) and trampled them in my wrath (חֲמָה). Their juice-blood (נֹצֵחַ) spattered on my garments, and stained all my apparel. 4 For the day of vengeance (נִקְמָה) was in my heart, and the year of my blood-revenge (גְּאוּלִּים) had come. 5 I looked, but there was no one to help. I was appalled, but there was no one to uphold. So my own arm (זְרוֹעַ) brought me salvation (יִשׁוּעַ), and my wrath (חֲמָה) upheld me. 6 I trampled down the peoples (עַמִּים) in my anger (אַף). I made them drunk in my wrath (חֲמָה), and I poured out their juice-blood (נֹצֵחַ) on the earth.

Yahweh's Loyal Love for Israel

7 I [Isaiah] will recount/mention/make known (זָכַר) the loyal love (חֶסֶד) of Yahweh, the praises of Yahweh, according to all that Yahweh has granted us [Israel], and the great goodness (טוֹב) to the house of Israel that he has granted them according to his compassion/feelings of love/mercy (רַחֲמִים), according to the abundance of his loyal love (חֶסֶד). 8 For he said, Surely they are my people, children who will not deal falsely. And he became their Saviour/Deliverer (מוֹשִׁיעַ). 9 In all their affliction (צָרָה) he was afflicted (צָר), and the angel of his presence (מַלְאָךְ פְּנִיּוֹ) [the preincarnate Jesus] saved (יִשׁוּעַ) them. In his love (אַהֲבָה) and in his compassion (חַמְלָה) he redeemed (גָּאֵל) them. He lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

Rebellion and Remembering the Exodus

10 But they [Israel] rebelled (מָרָה) and grieved/hurt the feelings of (עִצְבָּה) his Holy Spirit (רוּחַ קְדוֹשׁ). Therefore he [Yahweh] turned/changed (הִפְךָ) to be their enemy, and himself fought against them. 11 Then he [Israel] remembered the days of old, of Moses and his people. Where is he who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock? Where is he who put in the midst of them his Holy Spirit (רוּחַ קְדוֹשׁ), 12 who caused his glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses, who divided the waters before them to make for himself an everlasting name (שֵׁם עוֹלָם), 13 who led them through the depths? Like a horse in the desert, they did not stumble. 14 Like livestock that go down into the valley, the Spirit of Yahweh (רוּחַ יְהוָה) gave them rest (נוּחַ). So you led your people, to make for yourself a glorious name.

Appeal to the Father-Redeemer

15 Look down from heaven and see, from your holy and beautiful habitation. Where are your zeal (קִנְיָה) and your strength (גְּבוּרָה)? The stirring of your inner being/intestines (מַעֲעָה) and your compassion (רַחֲמִים) are held back from me [Israel]. 16 For you [Yahweh] are our Father (אָב), though Abraham does not know us, and Israel does not acknowledge us. You, Yahweh, are our Father (אָב), our Redeemer from of Old (גְּאֻלְנוּ מִיְּעוֹלָם) is your name. 17 Yahweh, why do you make us wander/stagger (תַּעֲהֶה) from your ways and harden our heart, so that we fear you not? Return (שׁוּב) for the sake of your servants (עַבְדֶּיךָ), the tribes of your inheritance. 18 Your holy people held possession for a little while. Our adversaries have trampled down your sanctuary. 19 We have become like those over whom you have never ruled, like those who are not called by your name.

Commentary

1. Introduction.

- a. Is 63-66 go together and match Is 56-59 chiastically.
 - (1) Is 56-59 begins with a discussion of foreign converts (Is 56:1-8) and ends with a description of the divine warrior who battles for his people (Is 59:15b-21), Is 63:1-6 begins with the description of the divine warrior and ends discussing foreign converts (Is 66:18-24).¹
 - (2) The emphasis of these chapters is man's inability compared to God's ability.
- b. We will continue to follow a literal, grammatical, historical hermeneutic.
 - (1) Many have not followed this hermeneutic when interpreting this chapter.
 - (a) "Tertullian, Origen, Jerome, and other church fathers boldly applied this passage to Christ, asserting that the blood that spattered his garments was his own and that the winepress he trod was on Golgotha. Reacting against anything that might smack of allegorization, Calvin spoke out strongly against this interpretation, and virtually all commentators since have followed him."²
- c. The theme of this chapter matches the theme of Is 34.
 - (1) **Is 34:5-8** 5 For my sword has drunk its fill in the heavens. Behold, it descends for judgment upon Edom, upon the people I have devoted to destruction. 6 Yahweh has a sword. It is sated with blood. It is gorged with fat, with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams. For Yahweh has a sacrifice in *Bozrah*, a great slaughter in the land of *Edom*. 7 Wild oxen shall fall with them, and young steers with the mighty bulls. Their land shall drink its fill of blood, and their soil shall be gorged with fat. 8 For Yahweh has a day of vengeance, a year of recompense for the cause of Zion.
 - (2) End times judgment has been already explained in great detail in Is 2:6-22, 24:1-23, and 34:1-15, so the message of judgment here is not new.³ What Isaiah prophesied in Is 34 and briefly hinted at in Is 59:17-18, is now actually happening.
 - (a) **Is 59:17-18** 17 He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on his head. He put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak. 18 According to their deeds, so will he repay, wrath to his adversaries, repayment to his enemies. To the coastlands he will render repayment.
 - (3) The purpose of God's righteous judgment on unbelievers is connected with his plan to save believers. The day of vengeance on some is also the day of redemption for others. Messiah will proclaim both the "year of grace" and the "day of vengeance."⁴

¹ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 593.

² John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 595.

³ Gary Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, vol. 15B, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2009), 656.

⁴ Gary Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, vol. 15B, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2009), 656.

- (a) **Is 61:2** 2To proclaim the year of the Yahweh's grace, and the day of vengeance of our God....
- d. The second half of this chapter (vv. 7-19) begins a community lament (up to Is 64:11).⁵
 - (1) Ps 106 and Ne 9 are close cross references to this lament.⁶

2. A Great Warrior from Bozrah (Is 63:1).

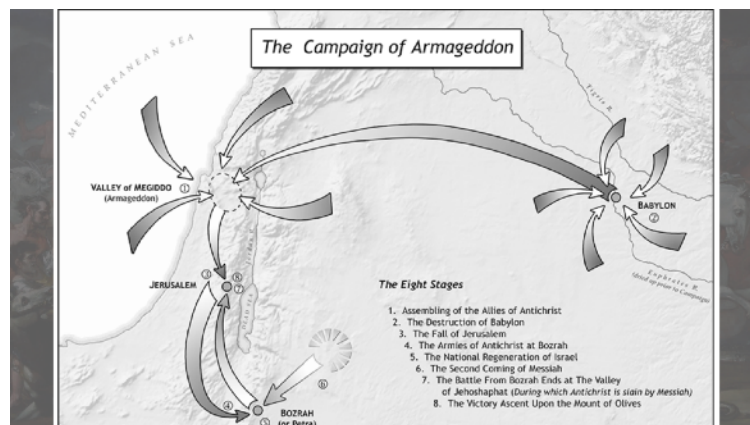
- a. **Is 63:1** 1 Who is this who comes from Edom (אֲדוֹמִים), in bright-red (תְּמוּרֵץ) garments (בְּגָדִים) from Bozrah (בּוֹצְרָה), he who is honoured (הַדָּר) in his apparel (לְבוּשׁ), marching in the greatness of his strength (בְּרִבְבֵי כֹהֵן)? It is I [Messiah], speaking in righteousness (צְדָקָה), mighty to save (רַב לְהוֹשִׁיעַ).
- b. Someone comes from Edom, specifically Bozrah, its capital, in red garments (v. 1a).
 - (1) It is Zion's sentinels who are seeing this.
 - (a) **Is 62:6** 6 On your walls, Jerusalem, I have set *watchmen*. All the day and all the night they shall never be silent.
 - (2) Edom, Israel's perennial enemy, came to represent all Israel's enemies.
 - (a) **Ps 137:7** 7 Remember, Yahweh, against the Edomites the day of Jerusalem, how they said, Lay it bare, lay it bare, down to its foundations!
 - 1) The Edomites were vigorously anti-Zion.
 - (b) **Am 1:11** 11 Thus says Yahweh: For three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because he pursued his brother [Israel] with the sword and cast off all pity, and his anger tore perpetually, and he kept his wrath forever.
 - 1) As Cain was to Abel, so was Edom to Israel.
 - (c) **Ob 10-16** 10 Because of the violence done to your brother Jacob, shame shall cover you [Edom], and you shall be cut off forever. 11 On the day that you stood aloof, on the day that strangers carried off his wealth and foreigners entered his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem, you were like one of them. ...15 For the day of Yahweh is near upon all the nations. As you have done, it shall be done to you. Your deeds shall return on your own head. 16 For as you have drunk on my holy mountain, so all the nations shall drink continually. They shall drink and swallow, and shall be as though they had never been.
 - (d) **Eze 35:10-15** 10 Because you [Mount Seir] said, These two nations [Israel and Judah] and these two countries shall be mine, and we will take possession of them—although Yahweh was there— 11 therefore, as I live, declares Lord Yahweh, I will deal with you according to the anger and envy that you showed because of your hatred against them. And I will make myself known among them, when I judge you. ...14 Thus says Lord Yahweh: While the whole earth rejoices [in the Messianic kingdom], I will make you desolate. 15 As you rejoiced over the inheritance of the house of Israel, because it was desolate, so

⁵ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 603.

⁶ Gary Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, vol. 15B, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2009), 665.

I will deal with you. You shall be desolate, Mount Seir, and all Edom, all of it. Then they will know [in the Millennium] that I am Yahweh.

- (3) The Old Testament several times pictures Yahweh coming up from Edom. This probably has something to do with
- (a) **Dt 33:2 2** ... Yahweh came from Sinai and dawned from Seir upon us. He shone forth from Mount Paran. He came from the ten thousands of holy ones, with flaming fire at his right hand.
 - (b) **Jdg 5:4 4** Yahweh, when you went out from Seir, when you marched from the region of Edom, the earth trembled and the heavens dropped, yes, the clouds dropped water.
 - (c) **Hab 3:3 3** God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah His splendor covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise.
- (4) Bozrah likely is where Jesus will begin slaying the Antichrist and his armies.
- (a) **Is 34:6 6** For Yahweh has a sacrifice in Bozrah, a great slaughter in the land of Edom.
 - (b) **Re 14:17-20 17** Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. 18 And another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has authority over the fire, and he called with a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle, Put in your sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe. 19 So the angel swung his sickle across the earth and gathered the grape harvest of the earth and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. 20 And the winepress was trodden outside the city [of Jerusalem], and blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse's bridle, for 1,600 stadia.
 - 1) The battle will begin in Bozrah and end in Jerusalem.
- (3) **Re 19:14-21 14** And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following [Jesus] on white horses. 15 From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress [Is 63:2-3] of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. ...19 And I saw the beast [Antichrist] and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him [Jesus] who was sitting on the horse and against his army. 20 And the beast [Antichrist] was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire



that burns with sulphur. 21 And the rest were slain by the *sword* that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

- c. He wears an honourable uniform and swaggers with great strength (v. 1b).
- d. He speaks righteously and saves powerfully (v. 1c). It must be Messiah!
 - (1) **Is 52:8-10** 8 The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice. Together they sing for joy. For eye to eye they see the return of Yahweh to Zion. 9 Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem, for Yahweh has comforted his people; he has redeemed Jerusalem. 10 Yahweh has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the Yeshua/salvation of our God.

3. The Year of Messiah's Blood Revenge (Is 63:2-6).

- a. **Is 63:2-6** 2 Why is your apparel (לְבוּשׁ) red (אָדָם), and your garments (בְּגָדִים) like his who treads in the winepress? 3 I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples (עַמִּים) no one was with me. I trod them in my anger (אָרַץ) and trampled them in my wrath (חֲמָה). Their juice/blood (נִצָּחָה) spattered on my garments, and stained all my apparel. 4 For the day of revenge (נִקְמָה) was in my heart, and the year of my blood-revenge/redeemed (גְּאוּלְיִים) had come. 5 I looked, but there was no one to help. I was appalled, but there was no one to uphold. So my own arm (זְרוֹעִי) brought me salvation/Yeshua (יֵשׁוּעַ), and my wrath (חֲמָה) upheld me. 6 I trampled down the peoples (עַמִּים) in my anger (אָרַץ). I made them drunk in my wrath (חֲמָה), and I poured out their juice/blood (נִצָּחָה) on the earth.
- b. Messiah's apparel is red, like one who treads grapes in a winepress (v. 2).
 - (1) Treading grapes in a winepress is symbolic of judgment upon the wicked.
 - (a) **Joe 3:13** 13 Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Go in, tread, for the winepress is full. The vats overflow, for their evil is great.
 - (b) **La 1:15** 15 Yahweh has trodden as in a winepress the virgin daughter of Judah.
 - (c) **Re 14:20** 20 And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse's bridle, for 1,600 stadia.
 - (d) **Re 19:13** 13 He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God.
 - (e) **Re 19:15** 15 He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.
- c. Messiah treads the winepress alone (v. 3a).
 - (1) Only Jesus can remove evil from this world.
 - (a) **Is 59:16** 16 He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no one to intercede. Then his own arm brought him salvation/Yeshua, and his righteousness upheld him.
 - (2) In politics, we are to have constrained vision, not an unconstrained vision.
- d. Messiah tramples his enemies in his anger and wrath (v. 3b).
 - (1) The enemies here are not sin and death in the abstract, but literal armies attacking the remnant of Israel in the tribulation.
 - (2) God's wrath is the expression of his righteous and just anger upon sin and sinners.

- (a) **Ro 2:8** 8 ...For those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.
- (3) God is not emotionless.
 - (a) “Aristotle’s passionless Unmoved Mover is the farthest thing from the God of the Bible, whose love is more enduring than the mountains and whose fury is more white-hot than molten steel.”⁷
- (4) Wrath nearly always refers to God’s execution of justice in time, not in eternity.
- e. The juice-blood of the wicked spatters on Messiah’s garments (v. 3c).
 - (1) The blood is not that of Messiah but of Messiah’s enemies. This isn’t talking about the cross. Jesus didn’t die on Seir but on Calvary.
- f. This happens on the day of Messiah’s revenge/redeemed ones (v. 4a).
 - (1) **Is 34:8** 8 For Yahweh has a day of vengeance, a year of recompense for the cause of Zion.
 - (2) Whether we like it or not, a day will come when all of us are held accountable.
 - (a) **Is 59:18** 18 According to their deeds, so will he repay, wrath to his adversaries, repayment to his enemies. To the coastlands he will render repayment.
- g. This day has been on Messiah’s heart for a long time (v. 4b).
 - (1) **Is 61:2** 2 ...To proclaim the year of Yahweh’s grace, and the day of vengeance of our God....
 - (2) It is the day of Jesus’ second coming.
 - (a) **Mt 24:29-30** 29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.
 - (3) Remember the fifth seal of Revelation. Jesus will answer the voice of the martyrs.
 - (a) **Re 6:9-11** 9 When [Jesus] opened the fifth seal, I [John] saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. 10 They cried out with a loud voice, O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth? 11 Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.
- h. There is no one able or worthy enough to assist Messiah in his revenge (v. 5a).
 - (1) “The hope of the world lies in no system, whether Jewish or Christian or whatever. It lies solely in the hand of the one who ‘speaks in righteousness.’ Until he defeats our enemies, both within and without, there is no hope for us. But when he does, then the hope of the world is born anew.”⁸
 - (a) We must not place our hope in winning the next election.

⁷ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 597.

⁸ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 598.

- i. Messiah's own power brings him salvation, according to his just wrath (v. 5b)
 - (1) As human beings, we are unable to right the wrongs of this world. The hope of humanity is not through gentle diplomacy, compromise with evil nations, or an idealistic hope that a human organisation of nations will right the wrongs and control evil nations. God's strong arm is the only source of real strength and true salvation against the forces of evil in this world.⁹
- j. Messiah:
 - (1) Tramples down the enemy peoples in his anger (v. 6a).
 - (2) Makes them drunk in his wrath (v. 6b).
 - (a) With their own blood.
 - 1) **Is 49:26** 26 I will make your oppressors eat their own flesh, and they shall be drunk with their own blood as with wine.
 - (b) "The picture is somewhat astonishing for in their stupor of drunkenness and self-deception, these people are caused to drink more and more wrath, bringing greater and greater destruction on themselves."¹⁰
 - (3) Pours out their juice-blood on the earth (v. 6c).
 - (a) **Re 14:20** 20 And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse's bridle, for 1,600 stadia.

4. Yahweh's Loyal Love for Israel (Is 63:7-9).

- a. **Is 63:7-9** 7 I will recount/mention/make known (זכר) the loyal love (חֶסֶד) of Yahweh, the praises of Yahweh, according to all that Yahweh has granted us, and the great goodness (טוב) to the house of Israel that he has granted them according to his compassion/feelings of love/mercy (רַחֲמִים), according to the abundance of his loyal love (חֶסֶד). 8 For he said, Surely they are my people, children who will not break faith (שקר, piel). And he became their Saviour/Deliverer (מוֹשִׁיעַ). 9 In all their anxiety (צָרָה) he was not anxious (צָר), and the angel of his presence (מַלְאָךְ פְּנִיָּו) saved (ישע) them. In his love (אַהֲבָה) and in his compassion (חַמִּלָּה) he redeemed (גאל) them. He lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.
- b. Isaiah, on Israel's behalf, brings to remembrance:
 - (1) Yahweh's loyal love (v. 7a).
 - (a) In the original Hebrew, חֶסֶד is the first and last word of this verse.
 - (b) It is important for us to remember God's character and activity in our lives.
 - 1) "The emphasis on memory, both here and again in v. 11, is at the heart of biblical faith. Because God had chosen to reveal himself in the context of human experience...and because he had shown himself to be utterly consistent, the primary way to come to know him was through reflecting on what he had said and done in the context of that experience."¹¹
 - (2) Yahweh's praises for what he has given Israel (v. 7b).

⁹ Gary Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, vol. 15B, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2009), 661.

¹⁰ Gary Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, vol. 15B, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2009), 661.

¹¹ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 605.

- (a) **Ps 106:1-2** 1 Oh give thanks to Yahweh, for he is good, for his loyal love endures forever! 2 Who can utter the mighty deeds of Yahweh, or declare all his praise?
- (3) Yahweh's great goodness to Israel (v. 7c), according to:
- 1) **Ps 145:7** 7 They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.
 - (b) His compassion (v. 7d).
 - (c) His abundant loyal love (v. 7e).
 - 1) **Ps 51:1** 1 Have mercy on me, God, according to your loyal love, according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.
- (4) Israel was Yahweh's people who were to not break faith with his covenant (v. 8a).
- (a) שָׁקֵר: "[T]o break faith with a covenant or with the community" (*HALOT*, 1647).
 - (b) Yahweh entered a covenant relationship with Israel in order to bless the nations through her.
 - 1) **Ex 6:7** 7 I will take you [Israel] to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am Yahweh your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.
 - 2) **Dt 28:9** 9 Yahweh will establish you [Israel] as a people holy to himself, as he has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of Yahweh your God and walk in his ways.
 - a) This refers to the Mosaic covenant, which was conditional.
- (5) Yahweh became their Saviour (v. 8b).
- (a) He saved the nation of Israel at multiple points in her history, including from Egypt, from the surrounding nations, and from Assyria.
- (6) When Israel was afflicted, Yahweh was, too (v. 9a).
- (a) God suffers or is distressed when his people suffer affliction.
 - 1) **Jdg 10:15-16** 15 And the people of Israel said to Yahweh, We have sinned. Do to us whatever seems good to you. Only please deliver us this day. 16 So they put away the foreign gods from among them and served Yahweh, and he became impatient over the misery of Israel.
 - (b) God even participates in the afflictions of his afflicted people.¹²
 - 1) **Is 53:4-6** 4 Surely [the Servant] has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned—every one—to his own way. And Yahweh has laid on him the iniquity of us all.
- (7) The angel of Yahweh's presence saved them (v. 9b).
- (a) The angel of Yahweh is Yahweh himself as visibly present.
 - 1) **Ex 33:2** 2 I [Yahweh] will send an *angel* [the preincarnate Jesus] before you, and I will drive out the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

¹² John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 607.

- 2) **Ex 33:14-15** 14 And [Yahweh] said, My *presence* will go with you, and I will give you rest. 15 And [Moses] said to him, If your *presence* will not go with me, do not bring us up from here.
 - 3) **Nu 20:16** 16 And when we cried to Yahweh, he heard our voice and sent an *angel* and brought us out of Egypt. And here we are in Kadesh, a city on the edge of your territory.
 - 4) **Jos 5:13-15** 13 When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a *man* was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, Are you for us, or for our adversaries? 14 And he said, No, but I am *the commander of the army of Yahweh*. Now I have come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, worshiped, and said to him, What does my *Lord* say to his servant 15 And *the commander of Yahweh's army* said to Joshua, Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy. And Joshua did so.
 - 5) **Jdg 13:6** 6 Then the woman came and told her husband, A man of God came to me, and his appearance was like the appearance of *the angel of God*, very awesome. I did not ask him where he was from, and he did not tell me his name....
 - 6) **Jdg 13:21-22** 21 *The angel of Yahweh* appeared no more to Manoah and to his wife. Then Manoah knew that he was *the angel of Yahweh*. 22 And Manoah said to his wife, We shall surely die, for we have seen God.
- (b) This is the second person of the Trinity, Jesus, in preincarnate form.¹³
- 1) **Col 1:15** 15 [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.
 - 2) **He 1:3** 3 [Jesus] is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature....
- (8) Yahweh redeemed Israel based on his love and compassion for her (v. 9c).
- (a) **Dt 7:7-8** 7 It was not because you were more in number than any other people that Yahweh set his *love* on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, 8 but it is because Yahweh *loves* you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that Yahweh has brought you out with a mighty hand and *redeemed* you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.
 - (b) **Eze 16:5-6** 5 No eye pitied you, to do any of these things to you out of compassion for you, but you were cast out on the open field, for you were abhorred, on the day that you were born. 6 And when I passed by you and saw you wallowing in your blood, I said to you in your blood, Live! I said to you in your blood, Live!
 - 1) God rescued Israel as one rescues an abandoned baby.
- (9) Yahweh lifted up and carried Israel all the days of old (v. 9d).
- (a) Like a mother eagle.
 - 1) **Dt 32:10-12** 10 [Yahweh] found [Israel] in a desert land, and in the howling waste of the wilderness. He encircled him, he cared for him, he

¹³ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 607.

kept him as the apple of his eye. 11 Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that flutters over its young, spreading out its wings, catching them, bearing them on its pinions, 12 Yahweh alone guided him, no foreign god was with him.

- 2) **Ex 19:4** 4 You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.
- 3) **Dt 32:11** 11 Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that flutters over its young, spreading out its wings, catching them, bearing them on its pinions....
 - (b) Like a good shepherd.
 - 1) **Is 40:11** 11 He will tend his flock like a shepherd. He will gather the lambs in his arms. He will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.
 - (c) God has pledged to carry his people to the end.
 - 1) **Is 46:4** 4 ...Even to your old age I am he, and to gray hairs I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear. I will carry and will save.

5. Rebellion and Remembering the Exodus (Is 63:10-14).

- a. **Is 63:10-14** 10 *But* they rebelled (מרה) and grieved/hurt the feelings of (עצב) his Holy Spirit (רוּחַ קְדוֹשׁ). Therefore he turned/changed (הפך) to be their enemy, and himself fought against them. 11 Then he [Israel] remembered the days of old, of Moses and his people. Where is he who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock? Where is he who put in the midst of them his Holy Spirit (רוּחַ קְדוֹשׁ), 12 who caused his glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses, who divided the waters before them to make for himself an everlasting name (שֵׁם עוֹלָם), 13 who led them through the depths? Like a horse in the desert, they did not stumble. 14 Like livestock that go down into the valley, the Spirit of Yahweh (רוּחַ יְהוָה) gave them rest (נוח). So you led your people, to make for yourself a glorious name.
- b. Israel, however, rebelled and hurt the feelings of Yahweh's Holy Spirit (v. 10a).
 - (1) This is the same Holy Spirit as the Holy Spirit of the New Testament.
 - (a) "Most commentators recognize that the understanding of the Holy Spirit here and in v. 11 is close to the fully developed NT concept of the third person of the Trinity. Here he is clearly a person who is capable of being hurt by human behavior, and in v. 11 he is the empowering and enabling presence in the human spirit."¹⁴
 - (2) This happened in the wilderness, on the way to Canaan, and afterwards, too.
 - (a) **Ex 15:24** 24 And the people grumbled against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?
 - (b) **Nu 14:22-23** 22 ...None of the men who have seen my glory and my signs that I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have put me to the test these ten times and have not obeyed my voice, 23 shall see the land that I swore to give to their fathers. And none of those who despised me shall see it.
 - (c) **Ps 78:17** 17 Yet they sinned still more against [Yahweh], rebelling against the Most High in the desert.

¹⁴ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 607–608.

- (d) **Ps 78:40** 40 How often they rebelled against him in the wilderness and grieved him in the desert!
- (e) **Da 9:5-9** 5 ... We have sinned, done wrong, acted wickedly, and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules. 6 We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. 7 To you, Yahweh, belongs righteousness, but to us open shame, as at this day, to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to all Israel, those who are near and those who are far away, in all the lands to which you have driven them, because of the treachery that they have committed against you. 8 To us, Yahweh, belongs open shame, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against you. 9 To Yahweh our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him.
- (f) **Ac 7:51** 51 You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears. You always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you.
- (3) When we disobey God's instructions, we, too, grieve the Holy Spirit.
 - (a) **Eph 4:30** 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.
 - (b) **1 Th 5:19** 19 Do not quench the Spirit.
- c. So Yahweh became Israel's enemy and fought against her (v. 10b).
 - (1) **Is 1:20** 20 ... But if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword, for the mouth of Yahweh has spoken.
- d. Then Israel remembered the days of Moses (v. 11a), when Yahweh:
 - (1) Brought up Israel and her shepherd-leaders out the sea (v. 11b).
 - (a) **Ps 77:11-20** 11 I [Asaph] will remember the deeds of the Lord. Yes, I will remember your wonders of old. 12 I will ponder all your work, and meditate on your mighty deeds. 13 Your way, O God, is holy. What god is great like our God? 14 You are the God who works wonders. You have made known your might among the peoples. 15 You with your arm redeemed your people, the children of Jacob and Joseph. Selah 16 When the waters saw you, O God, when the waters saw you, they were afraid. Indeed, the deep trembled. 17 The clouds poured out water. The skies gave forth thunder. Your arrows flashed on every side. 18 The crash of your thunder was in the whirlwind. Your lightnings lighted up the world. The earth trembled and shook. 19 Your way was through the sea, your path through the great waters. Yet your footprints were unseen. 20 You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.
 - (2) Put his Holy Spirit in their midst (v. 11c).
 - (a) **Nu 11:16-25** 16 Then Yahweh said to Moses, Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. 17 And I will come down and talk with you there. And I will take some of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them, and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you may not bear it yourself alone. ... 24 So Moses went out and told the people the words of Yahweh. And he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tent. 25 Then Yahweh came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took

some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. But they did not continue doing it.

- (b) **Ne 9:20** 20 You gave your good Spirit to instruct them and did not withhold your manna from their mouth and gave them water for their thirst.
- (3) Caused his powerful arm to go at Moses' right hand (v. 12a).
 - (a) **Ps 77:20** 20 You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.
 - (b) **Mic 6:4** 4 For I brought you up from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.
- (4) Divided the waters before Israel to make for himself an everlasting name (v. 12b).
 - (a) Waters divided.
 - 1) **Ex 14:21-22** 21 Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and Yahweh drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and *the waters were divided*. 22 And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.
 - 2) **Jos 3:16** 16 ...The waters coming down from above stood and rose up in a heap very far away, at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan, and those flowing down toward the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were completely cut off. And the people passed over opposite Jericho.
 - (b) Making a name for himself.
 - 1) **2 Sa 7:23** 23 And who is like your people Israel, the one nation on earth whom God went to redeem to be his people, *making himself a name* and doing for them great and awesome things by driving out before your people, whom you redeemed for yourself from Egypt, a nation and its gods?
 - 2) **Ne 9:10** 10 ...And performed signs and wonders against Pharaoh and all his servants and all the people of his land, for you knew that they acted arrogantly against our fathers. And you *made a name for yourself*, as it is to this day.
 - 3) Father, make a name for yourself in our generation.
- (5) Led Israel through the depths, so that they did not stumble (v. 13).
- (6) Gave them rest, like livestock descending into a valley (v. 14a).
 - (a) **Nu 10:33** 33 And the ark of the covenant of Yahweh went before them three days' journey, to seek out a resting place for them.
 - (b) **Dt 3:20** 20 ...Until Yahweh gives rest to your brothers, as to you, and they also occupy the land that Yahweh your God gives them beyond the Jordan.
 - (c) **Dt 12:9** 9 ...For you have not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance that Yahweh your God is giving you.
 - (d) **Jos 1:13** 13 Remember the word that Moses the servant of Yahweh commanded you saying, Yahweh your God is providing you a place of rest and will give you this land.
 - (e) **Jos 22:4** 4 And now Yahweh your God has given rest to your brothers, as he promised them. Therefore turn and go to your tents in the land where your possession lies, which Moses the servant of Yahweh gave you on the other side of the Jordan.

- (7) Led Israel to make for himself a glorious name (v. 14b).
 (a) “If God did those wonderful things in the past because of his name, does it not follow that he would want to do similar things again? Of course it does, and on that ground there is hope, great hope.”¹⁵

6. Appeal to the Father-Redeemer (Is 63:15-19).

- a. **Is 63:15-19** 15 Look down from heaven and see, from your holy and beautiful habitation. Where are your zeal/pugnacity (הַקְּנָאָה) and your strength/mighty deeds (הַגְּבוּרָה)? The stirring of your inner being/intestines (מִעֵינָהּ) and your compassion (רַחֲמִים) are held back from me. 16 For you are our Father (אָב), though Abraham does not know us, and Israel does not acknowledge us. You, Yahweh, are our Father (אָב), our Redeemer from of Old (גֹּאֲלֵנוּ מֵעוֹלָם) is your name. 17 Yahweh, why do you make us wander/stagger (תַּעֲהֶה) from your ways and harden our heart, so that we fear you not? Return (שׁוּב) for the sake of your servants (עַבְדֶּיךָ), the tribes of your inheritance. 18 Your holy people held possession for a little while. Our adversaries have trampled down your sanctuary. 19 We have become like those over whom you have never ruled, like those who are not called by your name.
- b. Isaiah, speaking on Israel’s behalf, asks Yahweh to see Israel’s plight (v. 15a).
 (1) Perhaps this will be a lament of the remnant of Israel during the tribulation.
 (2) God’s habitation in the third heaven is holy and beautiful.
 (a) **Dt 26:15** 15 Look down from your holy habitation, from heaven, and bless your people Israel and the ground that you have given us, as you swore to our fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey.
 (b) **Ps 33:14** 14 ...From where he sits enthroned he looks out on all the inhabitants of the earth....
- c. Isaiah wants Yahweh to act with zeal and strength (v. 15b).
 (1) Don’t be like Oprah, hating God’s zeal.
 (a) הַקְּנָאָה: “God striving to achieve his goal: ...zeal...pugnacity” (*HALOT*, 1111).
 (b) **Is 9:7** 7 Of the increase of [Messiah’s] government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The *zeal* (הַקְּנָאָה) of Yahweh of hosts will do this.
 (c) **Is 59:17** 17 He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on his head. He put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped himself in *zeal* (הַקְּנָאָה) as a cloak.
 (d) **Zec 1:14** 14 So the angel who talked with me said to me, Cry out, Thus says Yahweh of hosts: I am exceedingly *zealous* (קָנָא) for Jerusalem and for Zion.
- d. The stirring of Yahweh’s inner being and compassion are being held back (v. 15c).
 (1) **Ps 22:1** 1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?
 (2) This is Isaiah’s (and Israel’s) “dark night of the soul.”
 (a) “Once God had been so full of zeal for his name (vv. 12, 14) and for his people’s welfare. His might was displayed on every hand, it seemed. Where is it now? Beyond that, on an even more elemental level, where is the affection

¹⁵ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 609.

- (*rumbling of your innards*) and the compassionate feelings that have characterized God's dealings with his people from the beginning (v. 7)? It seems as though God is withholding even these tokens of his love and care."¹⁶
- e. Yahweh is the Father of Israel, Israel's Redeemer from of Old (v. 16a, c).
- (1) **Dt 32:6** 6 Do you thus repay Yahweh, you foolish and senseless people? Is not he your *Father*, who created you, who made you and established you?
 - (2) **Is 64:8** 8 But now, Yahweh, you are our *Father*. We are the clay, and you are our potter. We are all the work of your hand.
- f. Abraham and Jacob may not admit their paternity of Israel, but Yahweh will (v. 16b).
- (1) **Is 49:15** 15 Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I [Yahweh] will not forget you [Israel].
 - (2) **Ps 27:10** 10 For my *father* and my mother have forsaken me, but Yahweh will take me in.
 - (3) **Ps 103:13** 13 As a *father* shows compassion to his children, so Yahweh shows compassion to those who fear him.
- g. Yahweh has made Israel wander from his ways and hardened her heart, so that she does not fear him (v. 17a).
- (1) **Is 6:10** 10 Make the heart of this people dull and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.
 - (2) **Jn 12:40** 40 He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes, understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them.
 - (3) God judicially hardens the heart of people who harden their own hearts.
 - (a) "God's hardening of people like Pharaoh (Exod 7:3, 13; 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10) took place only after Pharaoh hardened his own heart (Exod 7:22; 8:15, 19, 32)."¹⁷
- h. Isaiah asks Yahweh to turn back/return for Israel's sake (v. 17b).
- (1) Here the remnant of Israel are Yahweh's servants.
 - (a) **Ps 90:13** 13 Return, O Lord! How long? Have pity on your servants!
 - (2) Israel is and always will be the people of God's own inheritance.
 - (a) **Dt 4:20** 20 But Yahweh has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be a people of his own inheritance, as you are this day.
- i. When Israel was dispossessed from the land, her enemies trampled the temple (v. 18).
- (1) **Is 5:5** 5 And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured. I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down.
 - (2) **Is 64:11** 11 Our holy and beautiful house, where our fathers praised you, has been burned by fire, and all our pleasant places have become ruins.
- j. Israel has become like a nation that has no special relationship with Yahweh (v. 19).

¹⁶ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 612.

¹⁷ Gary Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, vol. 15B, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2009), 682.

- (1) **Jer 14:8** 8 O you hope of Israel, its Savior in time of trouble, why should you be like a stranger in the land, like a traveler who turns aside to tarry for a night?
- (2) This was the situation of Israel in 586 bc, in ad 70, and during World War II. It will be so again in the tribulation.

7. Reflections.

- a. God's day of vengeance against the nations who oppose him will happen in our space-time universe. Unbelievers need to know about this coming day of judgment (vv. 1-9).
 - (1) "If foreigners are worshiping in the new Jerusalem, it is only those who have chosen to do so. Those who have refused this gracious choice will experience another side of the power of God, the side depicted here."¹⁸
 - (2) **Ac 10:42** 42 And [Jesus] commanded us [apostles] to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead.
- b. When we rebel and suffer the consequences of that rebellion, we may turn back and appeal to God to save us, even when we don't deserve it (vv. 10-18).

8. Special Message for Seekers.

¹⁸ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 595.