

Isaiah Chapter 63

Verses 1-6: In having listed God's conditions for peace (chapters 58–59), and by having described the nature of that peace (chapters 60-62), the prophet now describes the consummation of that peace (chapters 63-66).

“Edom” represents all who hate Israel. “Bozrah” was Edom's capital city. “Dyed garments,” the color of “red,” are reminiscent of Revelation:

Revelation 19:13 “And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.”

The red-stained condition of the garments has been caused by his trampling “blood” in the “winepress” of God's judgment. The “vengeance” of God is further described as a judgment so severe that the very lifeblood of the nations will be poured out in the earth.

The entire passage is strikingly similar to (Revelation 19), where Christ comes to “judge and make war ... clothed with a vesture dipped in blood ... treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.” The flowing of the blood is similar to the description (in Revelation 14:20).

Isaiah 63:1 "Who [is] this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this [that is] glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save."

“Edom ... Bozrah”: Edom represents a God hating world (34:5). Bozrah was a capital city in Edom at one time (34:6). Messiah, coming as the avenger approaching Jerusalem to reign after having avenged His people on His and their enemies, is presented in imagery taken from the destruction of Edom, the representative in this picture of the last and most bitter foes of God and His people. He alone is “mighty to save.”

This is speaking of the destruction of Edom (Idumea). Bozrah is a place in Edom. This is, possibly, speaking of Edom literally, and it could also be speaking spiritually of those who do not regard God. Edom would not let the children of Israel pass through their land, and God's wrath was against them. They symbolize the rebellious against God.

Their leader (Esau), sold his birthright for a bowl of soup. Edom then symbolizes those who reject the Lord for the worldly things. It appears these garments were blood red. The One glorious in His apparel would be the Lord. It is the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Savior. He is full of righteousness.

Isaiah 63:2 "Wherefore [art thou] red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?"

Revelation 14:19 "And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast [it] into the great winepress of the wrath of God."

This winepress is speaking of the judgment of God against this evil people.

Revelation 14:20 "And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand [and] six hundred furlongs."

The red in the apparel could be from this blood.

Isaiah 63:3 "I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people [there was] none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment."

"Anger ... fury ... blood": The Savior explains the red coloring of His clothing (verse 2), as resulting from His judgmental activity against Israel's enemies (61:2). The splattered grape juice staining His clothing is, in reality, "blood" from those destroyed in judgment. John alludes to (verses 1-3), in describing the second coming of Christ, the Warrior-King. (Rev. 19:13, 15).

This is speaking of the Lord, who brings judgment on these evil people. The Christians are in heaven around the throne of God when this happens.

Isaiah 63:4 "For the day of vengeance [is] in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come."

"Day of vengeance ... year of my redeemed": The Messiah's future reckoning with the wicked will coincide with His redemption of Israel (61:2).

This is the same time that is mentioned when the sickle is put in the earth, and the wheat is separated out to be with God in heaven, and the evil ones are gathered as tares.

Matthew 13:30 "Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."

The barn, spoken of here, is heaven. When God redeems the Christians from the earth, it will be time for God's wrath to be poured out on the wicked.

Isaiah 63:5 "And I looked, and [there was] none to help; and I wondered that [there was] none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me."

"There was none to help ... mine own arm": The future salvation of Israel will be a singlehanded accomplishment of the Lord (verse 3; 59:15-16).

God's arm is Jesus Christ. Salvation is by none other but Jesus.

Acts 4:12 "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Isaiah 63:6 "And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth."

"Make them drunk" (see 51:17, 21-23). Revelation compares God's wrath to wine several times (Rev. 14:10, 19; 16:19; 19:15).

This destruction was a judgment from God. It was absolute destruction. God's fury has come up in His face, because of the sin. They are of the earth. They are not of heaven.

Verses 7-19: The rest of this chapter and the following one contain a prayer of thanksgiving, confession, and intercession. "I will mention" can be translated "I will celebrate." "Goodness" refers to God's beneficent goodness, and "mercies" refers to His sympathizing tenderness.

"The angels of his presence" refers to the presence of the Lord Himself. (See Exodus 33:14). The reference to the "Holy Spirit" indicates His activity and ministry on behalf of Old Testament believers.

From 63:7 to 64:12: As one of Israel's watchmen, Isaiah, on behalf of the faithful remnant, prays this penitential confession and prayer for Israel's restoration (62:6-7).

In verses 7-14, the prayer reviews God's compassionate acts toward His people in spite of their unfaithfulness to Him.

Then in verses 7-8: "Loving-kindnesses ... loving-kindnesses": All the plurals in this verse imply that language is inadequate to recite all the goodness and undeserved mercies God has showered on the nation time after time because of His everlasting covenant with them.

By His elective choice, they became His people and He their Savior (43:1, 3); this guarantees that they will not always be false, but someday true and faithful to God because of His sovereign election of them. (Eph. 1:3-4).

Isaiah 63:7 "I will mention the loving-kindnesses of the LORD, [and] the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his loving-kindnesses."

God is longsuffering, as we see in the following verse.

2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

(Verse 7 above), is a moment set aside to praise God for all of His goodness and kindness. God offered salvation to everyone, not all accepted His salvation.

1 Timothy 4:10 "For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe."

The house of Israel is all who believe, Jew and Gentile. The word bestowed shows us we did not earn salvation, it is a free gift from God. We do however, have to accept the free gift.

Isaiah 63:8 "For he said, Surely they [are] my people, children [that] will not lie: so he was their Savior."

The Savior is Jesus. We are His people. He created us. He breathed the breath of life into us to give us life. Our new birth in the spirit is through Jesus.

John 3:6 "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

Isaiah 63:9 "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old."

“Angel of his presence”: The angel, who delivered the Israelites from Egypt, was none other than the Lord Himself (Exodus 14:19; 23:20-23; 33:12, 14, 15; Numbers 20:16). He is sometimes identified as the Angel of the Lord. He was close enough to His people that He felt their afflictions as if they were His own.

To me, this is speaking of Jesus taking the punishment we deserved. He became our Substitute. He did it all for us.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Isaiah 53:5 "But he [was] wounded for our transgressions, [he was] bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace [was] upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."

Angel of His presence is speaking of Jesus, I believe.

Isaiah 63:10 "But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, [and] he fought against them."

“Rebelled ... vexed his holy Spirit”: In spite of the Lord’s loving choice and sympathy, Israel continually turned their backs on Him and spurned His loving-kindnesses toward them (Num. 20:10; Psalms 78:40; 106:33; Acts 7:51; Eph.4:30). Here is an illustration of the reality that the Holy Spirit is a person, since only a person can be grieved.

Israel rebelled against God over and over. Every time they repented, He forgave them. "Vexing the Holy Spirit" means they grieved God. God appeared to be their enemy, when He punished them for their unfaithfulness. He still loved them, but was trying to make them repent, and turn back to Him.

Verses 11-13: "He remembered ... should not stumble": The Lord, in spite of their perversity, did not forget His covenant nor fully forsake them (Lev. 26:40-45; Psalm 106:45-46). In contrasting their present state of destitution with that of blessing experienced by Moses' generation, the people of Israel lamented the loss of God's mighty works on their behalf and pleaded with the Lord that He would not forsake them.

"Brought them up out of the sea ... put his Holy Spirit within him ... dividing the water": Letting the people pass through the sea on dry ground was a typical mighty work of God (Exodus 14:29-30), and the Holy Spirit ministered among them (Num. 11-17, 25, 29). Another reference is made to the miracle of the Red Sea (Exodus 14:21-22).

Isaiah 63:11 "Then he remembered the days of old, Moses, [and] his people, [saying], Where [is] he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of his flock? where [is] he that put his holy Spirit within him?"

God remembered them as He did at the Red Sea when He took them over to safety on the other side. The Holy Spirit was sent by Jesus after His crucifixion.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the risen Christ. He was from the beginning of the world the same as God the Word, and God the Father. The Shepherd, or the Flame by night and the Smoke by day that led them across the desert, was the LORD.

Isaiah 63:12 "That led [them] by the right hand of Moses with his glorious arm, dividing the water before them, to make himself an everlasting name?"

It was actually breath from the nostrils of God that held the Red Sea back for the children of Israel to cross safely.

Exodus 15:8 "And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as a heap, [and] the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea."

The crossing of the Red Sea was symbolic of water baptism. They went into the sea as worldly men. They came out of the sea to new life in Him. The crossing of the Red Sea still lives on today showing the power of God to the unsaved world.

The miracles done on the journey to the Promised Land were to bring honor and raise to the name of God.

Exodus 9:16 "And in very deed for this [cause] have I raised thee up, for to show [in] thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth."

Isaiah 63:13 "That led them through the deep, as a horse in the wilderness, [that] they should not stumble?"

God went before them. His presence led them. A horse must be guided, or he will get lost. God is our Guide. When you walk in the Light of God, you can see the path clearly. You will not stumble.

Isaiah 63:14 "As a beast goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of the LORD caused him to rest: so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name."

“Make thyself a glorious name”: The Lord’s purpose for Israel was and is to make them great so as to magnify His name in the world (verse 12).

A beast finds a restful place in the valley to lie down and rest. The Spirit of God decided when the children of Israel should move on. When the presence of the smoke and fire, stood still they rested. When the presence of God in the fire and smoke moved, they moved.

God, in all of this, made Himself a name with even the heathen nations around them.

Verses 15-19: After having extolled God’s goodness (verses 7-9), and rehearsed God’s past faithfulness to Israel for the sake of His glory (verses 11-13), the prophet offered a prayer of repentance by the nation in its desolate condition.

Isaiah 63:15 "Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where [is] thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies toward me? are they restrained?"

“Thy mercies ... toward me”: On behalf of the people, Isaiah asked if God had changed how He felt about Israel and prayed for new mercies such as He had exhibited toward the nation in the past.

This is the beginning of a prayer from God's people to help them. The habitation of God is heaven. When Isaiah wrote this, the people were in captivity in Babylon.

The temple in Jerusalem was out of service. They would automatically assume that God was seated in heaven. They felt forgotten of God. They are pleading for God to once again be merciful to them.

Isaiah 63:16 "Doubtless thou [art] our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O LORD, [art] our father, our redeemer; thy name [is] from everlasting."

“Abraham ... Israel”: The nation’s physical ancestors, Abraham and Jacob (Israel), played a crucial role in Jewish thinking. It had been the besetting temptation and sin of the Jews to rest on the mere privilege of descent from Abraham and Jacob (Matt. 3:9; John 4:12; 8:39), but at last they renounce that to trust God alone as Father.

They were physical descendants of Abraham, but that did not get them any help. God had redeemed them over and over. Moses had actually been a type of the great Redeemer Jesus Christ, when he redeemed them from Egypt.

The only time they looked to God, was when they were in trouble.

Isaiah 63:17 "O LORD, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, [and] hardened our heart from thy fear? Return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance."

“Made us to err ... hardened our heart”: The sense is that God allowed them to stray and be burdened in their hearts. They were not denying their own guilt, but confessing that because of it, God gave them up to the consequences of the iniquitous choices. (6:9-10; Psalm 81:11-12; Hosea 4:17; Rom. 1:24-28).

They are trying to blame their sins on God, here. They say He made them err. They readily admit that they have erred, but they want to know why God let them do it. I can answer. They rebelled against God with their own free will.

When they turned their back on God, He stopped seeking them, until they repented. The tribes of thy inheritance they thought were all of the Jews. God's inheritance was actually in those who were faithful to Him.

Isaiah 63:18 "The people of thy holiness have possessed [it] but a little while: our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary."

“Possessed ... trodden down ... sanctuary”: The Babylonians among others, had possessed the land given to Israel and desecrated God’s sanctuary (Psalm 74:3-7).

Now they are saying that the enemy trod down the sanctuary. Really, the problem with the sanctuary was caused by them. They had not kept it holy, as God wished. In a sense, they brought the sanctuary down with their sin.

Isaiah 63:19 "We are [thine]: thou never barest rule over them; they were not called by thy name."

“Never ... not called”: Israel’s complaint was that her desolate condition was comparable to that of nations who had no unique relationship with the Lord.

This is saying, the people who had captured them were not God's people. God allowed the heathen to take them to teach them a lesson. God controls everyone, even these Babylonians. They did not realize it, but it was God's wishes that the Babylonians take them, to cause them to repent.

We and the Jewish people are God's chosen, as long as we obey Him and are faithful to Him.

Isaiah Chapter 63 Questions

1. What is another name for Edom?
2. Where is Bozrah?
3. Who is verse one speaking of spiritually?
4. Who was Edom's leader?
5. What had he done that angered God?
6. Who was the One glorious in His apparel?
7. The red in the apparel could be from _____.
8. Who brings judgment on these evil people.
9. What is the time mentioned in verse 4?
10. What is the barn in the above verse?
11. Who brought salvation?
12. The destruction was a _____ from God.
13. Who is Jesus the Savior of?
14. What does "vexing the Holy Spirit" mean?
15. What is the Holy Spirit?
16. What led God's people in the wilderness?
17. When you walk in the Light, you will not _____.
18. Who decided when the children of Israel should move during their wilderness wanderings?
19. Verse 15 is the beginning of what?
20. Who did they accuse of making them err?
21. Who really had trodden down the sanctuary?
22. Why had God allowed the heathen to capture them?