



ISAIAH 63

THE DAY OF VENGEANCE ~ GOD’S ENDLESS MERCY ~ THE DAY OF REMEMBRANCE ~ THE DAY OF PRAYER

H.L. Willmington writes: “As a blood-soaked warrior approached, a watchman asked his identity. He identified himself as the one who all alone had conquered Israel’s foes and was ready to redeem his people (63:1–6). Isaiah responded with praise for the God who throughout history had shown grace toward his people, no matter how often they rebelled against him (63:7–9). When he recalled the Exodus, however, Isaiah wondered why God had not yet delivered his people once again (63:11–17), and begged him to do so quickly (63:17–19) 63:1–6 can be seen as foreshadowing Christ’s second coming and victory at Armageddon (see Rev. 14:18–20; 19:11–21).

English Standard (ESV)	Passion Notes	Passion Translation (TPT)
<p>Isaiah 63:1 Who is this who comes from Edom, in crimsoned garments from Bozrah, he who is splendid in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength? “It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save.”</p> <p>2 Why is your apparel red, and your garments like his who treads in the winepress?</p> <p>3 “I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with me; I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath; their lifeblood spattered on my garments, and stained all my apparel.</p>	<p>a 63:1 Bozrah means “sheepfold” or “fortress.”</p> <p>b 63:1 Although Edom was an ancient kingdom in Transjordan, the general consensus of scholars is that Edom here is a symbolic term for the enemies of God—a collective archetype of that which stands in God’s way. It is possible, since Edom is a variant form of Adam, sharing the same Hebrew root, that we are seeing how God triumphs over “Adam” by the crimson blood of the Last Adam, Jesus Christ. Additionally, the Edomites were bitter enemies of the Jews and typify the warfare of flesh vs. the spirit (Gal. 5:17). Isaiah sees this mystery man coming on the road from Bozrah to Zion, clothed in crimson garments, having conquered his enemies, not weary or fainting. He comes in the greatness of his strength.</p> <p>c 63:1 Or “majestic in attire.”</p> <p>d 63:1 This points to Jesus Christ, who is mighty to save those who come to him in faith. Alone, he conquered sin, death, Satan, sickness, fear, and the grave. Isaiah’s focus seems to be on the finished work of Jesus on the cross. See John 19:30; Eph. 1:20–23; Col. 2:15, 1 John 2:14–18.</p>	<p>The Day of Vengeance</p> <p>Isaiah 63:1 Who is this coming from the city of Bozrah a in Edom? b He is dressed in garments of bright scarlet, c robed in a garment dyed bright red, marching like a champion in his great power and might. “It is I! I am the one who announces righteousness, I am mighty and ready to save!” d</p> <p>2 Why are your robes so red, like those of one treading grapes?</p> <p>3 “I have been treading in the winepress alone, and there was no one there from the nations to help me. I stomped on the nations in my anger and trampled them down in my wrath.” “Their blood soaked my clothing and stained all my robes.</p>

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<p>⁴ For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and my year of redemption 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 brought me salvation, and my wrath upheld me. ⁶ I trampled down the peoples in my anger; I made them drunk in my wrath, and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth.”</p> <p>⁷ I will recount the steadfast love of the LORD, the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD has granted us, and the great goodness to the house of Israel that he has granted them according to his compassion, according to the abundance of his steadfast love. ⁸ For he said, “Surely they are my people, children who will not deal falsely.” And he became their Savior. 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; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.</p> <p>¹⁰ But they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit; therefore he turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them. ¹¹ Then he 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, 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, 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 the LORD gave them rest. So you led your people, to make for yourself a glorious name.</p>	<p>e 63:4 A “day of vengeance” has multiple applications. It can refer to the release of the Jews from Babylon, the release of the church from the Dark Ages, the release of creation from the bondage of corruption brought by sin (Rom. 8:19–21), or, as some would claim, a future war of Armageddon. But the context favors a prophetic fulfillment when Jesus Christ was crucified and rendered judgment on principalities and powers by the blood of his cross and his triumphant resurrection.</p> <p>f 63:5 Or “my own arm,” a symbol of God power.</p> <p>g 63:5 Some Hebrew manuscripts have: “My victorious [right hand] sustained me.”</p> <p>h 63:6 As translated from most Hebrew manuscripts and Targum (Aramaic); however, some manuscripts read “I made them drunk with my fury.”</p> <p>i 63:7 Literally “the loving-kindnesses.”</p> <p>j 63:7 Or “the praiseworthy deeds.”</p> <p>k 63:7 See Ps. 145:7.</p> <p>l 63:8 See Matt. 1:21–23.</p> <p>m 63:9 Or “Neither an elder or an angel, but the Lord himself saved them.” See Ex. 23:20–23; 33:14–15; Deut. 4:37. The Angel of His Presence is literally “the Angel of His Faces.” God has many faces that he reveals to his people. Most scholars conclude that this phrase, a hapax legomenon, is not referring to one of the angelic host but to the Lord himself. Others see this angel as Gabriel, for he is described as the angel who comes from the presence (face) of God (Luke 1:19).</p> <p>n 63:9 See Deut. 1:31; 32:10–12.</p> <p>o 63:10 The Holy Spirit has feelings that can be hurt, leaving him grieved. See Gen. 6:6; Ps. 78:40; Eph. 4:30.</p> <p>p 63:11 Or “shepherds” (plural), indicating that it would be Moses, Aaron, and the leaders of Israel.</p> <p>q 63:11 See Num. 11:17.</p> <p>r 63:12 Or “who made his majestic arm march at the right hand of Moses.” This may be a figurative way of saying that God put his power in Moses’ right hand.</p> <p>s 63:14 See Ps. 23:1–3.</p> <p>t 63:14 See Eph. 1:20–23; Phil. 2:5–11.</p>	<p>⁴ For a day of vengeance e was in my heart, and the time for my redeeming work had come. ⁵ I looked, but there was no one to help me. I was amazed that there was no one to support me. So my own power f accomplished salvation, and my wrath g sustained me. ⁶ So I trampled down nations in my anger and shattered them h in my fury and spilled their blood on the ground.”</p> <p>God’s Endless Mercy</p> <p>⁷ I will tell again of the faithful, gracious acts i of Yahweh and praise him for everything j he has done for us—the wonderful goodness, k the riches of his mercy, which he has shown to the house of Israel, and the abundance of his endless love. ⁸ For he said, “Truly, they are my loyal children who will not act deceitfully.” He became their Savior. l ⁹ When they suffered, he suffered with them. The Angel of His Presence m saved them. Out of his enduring love and compassion he redeemed them. He lifted them up, carried them in his arms, n and cared for them all the days of old. ¹⁰ But they rebelled against him and grieved his Holy Spirit. o Only then did he turn against them. He became their enemy and fought against them.</p> <p>The Day of Remembrance</p> <p>¹¹ Then they remembered God’s deeds in days past, the days of Moses and his people. And they asked: “Where now is Yahweh, who brought them miraculously through the Red Sea along with Moses, the shepherd-leader p of his flock, and put his Holy Spirit among them? q ¹² Where now is the one who linked his magnificent power to Moses, r who divided the waters before them to gain everlasting fame for himself? ¹³ Who led them through the depths of the sea? They were as sure-footed as horses on dry, level ground—they did not stumble. ¹⁴ As a herder leads his cattle to find rest in a fertile valley, the Spirit of Yahweh led them into rest. s In the same way, you led your people to win for yourself a glorious name!” t</p>

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<p>¹⁵ Look down from heaven and see, from your holy and beautiful habitation. Where are your zeal and your might? The stirring of your inner parts and your compassion are held back from me. ¹⁶ For you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us, and Israel does not acknowledge us; you, O LORD, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name.</p> <p>¹⁷ O LORD, why do you make us wander from your ways and harden our heart, so that we fear you not? Return for the sake of your servants, the tribes of your heritage. 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.</p>	<p>u 63:15 Or “yearnings.” God has deep feelings toward us, for the Hebrew is literally “[Don’t hold back] the agitation of your intestines.”</p> <p>v 63:15 The Hebrew word for compassion is a homonym that can also be translated “womb.” They both speak of nurturing love, care, and tenderness.</p> <p>w 63:16 Or “Israel.”</p> <p>x 63:16 See Deut. 32:6.</p> <p>y 63:17 The Hebrew word is tatenu (“make us”). Similar to the tolerative form of the Hiphil of ta’ah in Jer. 50:6, it is best seen as “allow us” versus causative, in its usual form, “make us.”</p> <p>z 63:17 Or “fear you.”</p> <p>aa 63:18 Or “Jerusalem.”</p>	<p>The Day of Prayer</p> <p>¹⁵ Lord, look down from heaven, from your holy, glorious dwelling place, and see us. What happened to your passion for us and your mighty acts of power? Why are you withholding from us your feelings u of tender compassion? v</p> <p>¹⁶ For you are our loving Father. Even if our ancestors, Abraham and Jacob, w don’t acknowledge us, you, O Yahweh, are our loving Father! x From ancient times your name is our Redeemer.</p> <p>¹⁷ Yahweh, why do you allow us y to wander from your ways and harden our hearts to be so stubborn that we do not obey you? z Please come back to us, for the sake of those who serve you, for the sake of your people, the tribes that are your inheritance. ¹⁸ For a short time your holy people possessed a holy place. aa But now our enemies have invaded and trampled down your sacred sanctuary. ¹⁹ You treat us as though we had never been your people, called by your name, or ruled by you.</p>

Bible Knowledge Commentary

JOHN A. MARTIN

- **The coming of the Lord (63:1-6)**

- 63:1. When the Lord returns two questions will be asked of Him: Who is this? (twice in v. 1) and “Why are Your garments red?” (v. 2) He will be coming from Edom (cf. 34:5-9), the wicked nation southeast of Israel that often opposed God’s people and therefore is under God’s wrath (Mal. 1:4), and from Bozrah, a city (modern-day Buseirah) in Edom. Coming from there God’s garments will be crimson (Isa. 63:1) and red (v. 2) because they are stained with blood (v. 3) from slaughtering His enemies (the nations, vv. 3, 6) in Edom. Robed in splendor signifies His power and glory as He will stride forward toward Israel to save (deliver) her (cf. Rom. 11:26).
- **63:2-6.** The Lord’s garments spattered with blood will appear red as if He had been in a winepress. “Red” (a wordplay on “Edom.” A winepress was usually a shallow pit with a hole on the side leading out to a container. As individuals trampled on grapes in the press, the juice flowed through the hole into the container. Obviously some juice would also splatter on the workers’ clothes. As the Lord will fight and defeat the nations (cf. 34:2) in the Battle of Armageddon (cf. Zech. 14:3; Rev. 16:16; 19:15-19), He will take vengeance on them (cf. Isa. 34:8; 35:4; 61:2) in His anger and wrath. God’s wrath is also pictured as being like a winepress in Revelation 14:19-20. Though that day will bring doom to the Lord’s enemies, it will mean deliverance (redemption and salvation, Isa. 63:4-5) for those of His covenant people who turn to Him.

- **THE NATION'S PRAYER AND THE LORD'S RESPONSE** (63:7-65:25)

- This section records a pathetic prayer of the Jewish remnant and the Lord's appropriate response. Isaiah was writing for the exiles in Babylon who would view their situation as somewhat hopeless. They would not be able to sense how God could possibly help them in their distress. However, they would remember the way the Lord had helped His people in bringing them out of bondage in Egypt. This would encourage them to pray for release from their bondage. In responding to their prayer, the Lord explained that their sin caused their distress and promised that He would deliver them and bring them into the promised kingdom.
- **The prayer of the nation** (63:7-64:12)
 - **63:7-9.** Before stating their two requests—that God be compassionate toward them (vv. 15-19) and that He punish their enemies (64:1-7)—the righteous remnant said it would recite (tell of) the Lord's goodness in the past. (The word I refers to Isaiah, representing the nation.) Because of their distress, recalling God's past help in the nation's Exodus would reassure them of the Lord's concern. His actions on their behalf (for us) would be kindnesses (pl. of dRsRj, meaning expressions of His covenantal "loyal love"), extended to Israel because of His compassion (63:7), love, and mercy (v. 9). As His people and His sons, they would know God as their Savior (see comments on 43:11). Seeing their ancestors in distress in Egypt (cf. Ex. 2:23-25; 3:7), God redeemed ("to buy out of slavery"; cf. Isa. 43:1) them. The angel of His presence is probably the Angel of the Lord, the Lord Himself (cf. Ex. 33:14; see comments on Gen. 16:10).
 - **63:10.** In spite of all God did for Israel, she rebelled against Him. "Rebelled," "to revolt or rebel against a covenant stipulation, "to be contentious, to be rebellious" (cf. Ps. 78:8; Jer. 5:23). From almost the beginning of the wilderness experience Israel rebelled against God (Ex. 17:1-7). This grieved the Holy Spirit (cf. Eph. 4:30), the only place in the Old Testament where this statement is made. (Cf. references to the Spirit in Isa. 63:11, 14; see comments on 11:2.) Because of this rebellion God fought against them, bringing troubles, distresses, and enemies to discipline them.
 - **63:11-14.** At various times in her history Israel, when disciplined by God, would recall how in the great Exodus He used Moses like a shepherd to bring them out of Egypt by His ... arm (v. 12; see comments on 40:10) of power, leading them through the sea (63:11; cf. Ex. 14:16), also referred to as the waters (Isa. 63:12) and the depths (v. 13). Being freed from Egypt was like giving a horse free rein in open country or like letting cattle graze on a wide plain. As God gave them rest and guidance, His reputation was made known.
 - **63:15-19.** The remnant would beg God to look down on them and remember their plight in the same way He had remembered the distress of their forefathers in Egypt (cf. v. 9). They would long for a display of both His strength and His love. Though they had not been following in the tradition of Abraham or Israel (i.e., Jacob), God was still their Father (cf. 64:8) and Redeemer (see comments on 41:14). Penitently the remnant would ask that God sovereignly return them, His servants, to Him, reminding Him that the temple (Your sanctuary) was destroyed (63:17-18). (This is one of many places in chaps. 40-66 which shows that Isaiah, living more than 100 years before the Babylonian Captivity, wrote prophetically to prepare that future generation of exiles for it.) Though the nation had belonged to God for centuries (from of old), it had been a long time since the people were in a proper relationship with God and His theocratic rule over them.

TONIGHT'S DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. The "warrior" in this story is Jesus, himself, coming out of the Battle of Armageddon (Zech. 14:3; Rev. 16:16; 19:15-19). This is called, "The day of his vengeance." What is it Jesus avenging?

2. Have you ever “fought” on behalf of someone else? What was that battle like? How did it end?
3. Sometimes we go to battle for our friends and family and we can get pretty beat up in the process. How do you feel when you contend for someone and they not only don’t appreciate your help, but they actually **turn away from you** in the process? How do you get through situations like that, when someone “rebels” against your help?
4. Who are **your** “enemies?” Who fights for **you** when you are in a battle with **your** enemies?
5. When you feel alone in your battles, how do you typically respond? If someone you love was fighting a spiritual battle and felt all alone, what encouragement would you give them? How could you help them?