

Prayer from Captivity

Isaiah 63

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Isaiah 63:1-6 – The day of vengeance (NIV)

Who is this coming from Edom, from Bozrah, with his garments-stained crimson? Who is this, robed in splendor, striding forward in the greatness of his strength? "It is I, proclaiming victory, mighty to save." ² Why are your garments red, like those of one treading the winepress? ³ "I have trodden the winepress alone; from the nations no one was with me. I trampled them in my anger and trod them down in my wrath; their blood spattered my garments, and I stained all my clothing. ⁴ It was for me the day of vengeance; the year for me to redeem had come. ⁵ I looked, but there was no one to help, I was appalled that no one gave support; so my own arm achieved salvation for me, and my own wrath sustained me. ⁶ I trampled the nations in my anger; in my wrath I made them drunk and poured their blood on the ground."

v1 – Who is this who comes from Edom?

This prophecy describes the day of the LORD's vengeance. He has come from Edom (Jordan) in the sense that He has judged there first, and now comes to the land of Israel. As the LORD arrives, He is glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength.

- The important city of Bozrah is singled out because its name means 'grape-gathering,' and Isaiah developed a detailed comparison between treading grapes and pouring out blood.
- The Edomites took advantage of Judah's weakness after the Fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians.
- The Lord Himself rescues Israel at the end of the Tribulation who is in exile at Petra in Edom.

What is the significance of the Lord pointing out that He is *mighty to save*?

The Lord's focus is on our salvation, not on judgment.

v2-3 – Why are the clothes of the Lord red?

I have trodden the winepress alone...their blood is sprinkled upon My garments: This promise is fulfilled when Jesus returns to the earth at the end of the Tribulation...

Revelation 19:13-15 – *He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God... He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.*

What is the significance of the Lord treading the winepress alone?

This reminds us that this work of judgment belongs to Jesus Christ and He alone. Though we will be part of the heavenly armies that accompany Jesus (Revelation 19:14), the work of judgment belongs to Him alone.

- Not only does the Lord atone for our sin alone, He judges the world alone.
- God does not need us to execute His ultimate judgment; we leave that to Him.

v4 – What does it tell us that *the day of vengeance is in the heart of the Lord*?

The time is coming when God will pour out His wrath on the world. There is a New World Order coming that the Lord Himself initiates to usher in utopia that will eclipse man's fatally flawed effort to do that. The transition to the Lord's NWO will be His Great Reset during the Tribulation.

What is *the year for me to redeem*?

This is the time that Israel will receive a new heart for Him and be rescued from the tyranny of the Times of the Gentiles. He also will rescue creation from the tyranny of the curse during the Millennium.

- Notice the comparison: it is a mere day of vengeance, but an entire year of My redeemed.

v5 – Why was there no one to achieve salvation but by His own arm?

There is no one righteous but Himself... righteousness is essential for salvation.

How was the Lord sustained by His wrath?

The Lord has had to put up with a lot of sin on the part of mankind... what sustained Him was knowing the time would come when He would pour out His wrath and restore true justice.

v6 – How will God express His wrath?

The nations will be trampled on, made drunk (senseless), and many will die. This will happen during the Tribulation.

Isaiah 63:7-19 – The exile’s prayer (NIV)

⁷ *I will tell of the kindnesses of the Lord, the deeds for which he is to be praised, according to all the Lord has done for us— yes, the many good things he has done for Israel, according to his compassion and many kindnesses.*
⁸ *He said, “Surely they are my people, children who will be true to me”; and so he became their Savior.* ⁹ *In all their distress he too was distressed, and the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and mercy he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.* ¹⁰ *Yet they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit. So he turned and became their enemy and he himself fought against them.* ¹¹ *Then his people recalled the days of old, the days of Moses and his people— where is he who brought them through the sea, with the shepherd of his flock? Where is he who set his Holy Spirit among them,* ¹² *who sent his glorious arm of power to be at Moses’ right hand, who divided the waters before them, to gain for himself everlasting renown,* ¹³ *who led them through the depths? Like a horse in open country, they did not stumble;* ¹⁴ *like cattle that go down to the plain, they were given rest by the Spirit of the Lord. This is how you guided your people to make for yourself a glorious name.* ¹⁵ *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.* ¹⁶ *But you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us or Israel acknowledge us; you, Lord, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name.* ¹⁷ *Why, Lord, do you make us wander from your ways and harden our hearts so we do not revere you? Return for the sake of your servants, the tribes that are your inheritance.* ¹⁸ *For a little while your people possessed your holy place, but now our enemies have trampled down your sanctuary.* ¹⁹ *We are yours from of old; but you have not ruled over them, they have not been called by your name.*

v7 – What will Israel remember?

the lovingkindnesses of the LORD: When Israel turns back to the Lord, they will remember how kind God has been to them even when they were afflicted.

- Lovingkindnesses “is the Hebrew word *hesed*, it can also be translated “steadfast love.” It is one of the great words of the Old Testament, probably the closest Hebrew equivalent to the Greek word *agape*.

v8 – Why would the Lord become Israel’s Savior?

They were, after all, His people who would, in the end, be honest with Him.

v9 – How was God afflicted in Israel’s affliction?

In all their affliction He was afflicted: God is not a dispassionate, unfeeling observer when His people suffer. He suffers with them when they are afflicted.

How was Israel saved?

And the Angel of His Presence saved them: This refers to the presence and work of Jesus among ancient Israel, especially among those delivered from Egypt.

- The angel of His presence is the Messiah.
- Angel of His presence: literally ‘of his face’.

v10 – Why did Israel need saving?

But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit: Despite this outpouring of love and mercy from God, His people responded with cold, rebellious, unresponsive hearts. God had to deal with this in His people, so He fought against them.

- There are Trinitarian overtones in the passage: God the Father (*My people, children who will not lie*), God the Son (*the Angel of His Presence*), and God the Holy Spirit (*His Holy Spirit*).

v11 – What will Israel remember?

Then he remembered the days of old: In the midst of the LORD’s discipline — in this case, the Babylonian exile — the praying one remembered the mighty hand of God in days of old and knew that mighty hand could be raised again for His people.

v12 – What deliverance was remembered here?

He remembered what the LORD did in the days of Moses and the Exodus. Since now they were in a place of exile (Babylon), the story of God’s deliverance from Egypt had special relevance.

v13-14 – What was Israel’s deliverance from Egypt like?

As a horse in the wilderness...as a beast goes down into the valley: Isaiah speaks of the ease of progress that Israel made during the Exodus, and how God will bless Israel again in their regathering and restoration.

v15-18 – Why was the praying one questioning God?

Where are Your zeal and Your strength: Sometimes it feels that the zeal and the strength of the LORD are far away, and when we feel like that, we should do just what the praying one did: cry out to God.

For what “return” was the praying one looking?

The word ‘return’ may suggest the return of the shekinah glory to the temple as the symbol of God’s dwelling among his people (as in Ezekiel 43:6-12).

v19 – How had Israel become like those of old?

The praying one looks at the condition of God’s people and cries out in agony. Why has God allowed this? The praying one is expressing the pain of the human heart.

What applications come to mind from our discussion?

- God’s day of vengeance is coming; the best way to be ready is to be one of His children.
- Israel will be redeemed; He is not done with them, the church has not replaced Israel.
- As God delivered Israel from the tyranny of Egypt; He will also deliver them from Babylon (and ultimately the Daughter of Babylon).