

connotations of senseless madness, bitter revenge, and a selfish paying back that will even the score. These concepts are not part of God's vengeance or his day of vengeance (34:8; 61:2). Vengeance involves the establishment of justice, a paying of a recompense for what was done in the past (59:18). That day will be the time when people will be held accountable for their past action; it will be that time when God humbles the proud (2:11-17) and when God himself will be exalted (2:11-12,17)" (Smith 2009: 660).

v6 "If it is true that the Servant/Messiah will one day tread the wine press of earth and pour out the lifeblood of earth's rebels on the ground (cf. Rev. 14:17-20), we must never forget that before that, he is the same one who "poured out his soul unto death" (Isa. 53:12) for their sakes. Their death is only the result of refusing to avail themselves of his death" (Oswalt 1998: 599).

"When Gentile readers (from Marcion onward) look at the OT and see a God of wrath, the OT writers say to us in astonishment, 'Oh no, it's not surprising that God should have gotten angry with us. What is surprising is that he ever cared about us at all, and that he then continued to love us and care for us when we senselessly rejected him'" (Oswalt 1998: 604-5).

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

How should the reality of God's impending wrath affect your life this week?

Is the notion that God displays wrath troublesome to you? How does this passage address those concerns?

What does this passage say about the ultimate establishment of justice? How does this affect your thinking about the world today?

SOURCES CITED

John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, NICOT, 1998.
Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, New American Commentary, 2009.

ISAIAH 63: THE WINEPRESS OF GOD'S WRATH

OUTLINE OF ISAIAH 40-66

- III. The Holy One of Israel is sovereign over the restoration and salvation of his people (40:1-66:24).
 - A. The Holy One of Israel vindicates his glory over idols by predicting the restoration of his people from Babylon (40:1-48:22).
 - B. The Servant of the Lord will suffer to save his people (49:1-55:13).
 - C. The Holy One of Israel will return blessing to the righteous and retribution to the evil (56:1-59:21).
 - D. The Holy One of Israel will restore his people to a glorious new home (60:1-66:24).
 - 1. The Lord will bring his glory to the people and city of Zion (60:1-63:6).
 - a) The Lord will be the glory of Zion (60:1-22).
 - b) The Servant of the Lord will bring righteousness to Zion (61:1-62:12).
 - c) **The Lord will judge the nations in the winepress of his wrath (63:1-6).**
 - 2. **The nation prays for redemption of heart and home (63:7-64:12).**
 - 3. The Lord responds to the nation's prayer with the promise of a new heart and home (65:1-66:24).

OUTLINE OF ISAIAH 63

- I. God's End-Time Judgment of the Nations (63:1-6)
- II. The Community Laments Their Situation (63:7-19)
 - A. A Recollection of God's Faithfulness (63:7-10)
 - B. A Recognition of God's Absence (63:11-14)
 - C. A Plea for God's Return (63:15-19)

NOTES ON 63:1-6

Summary of 63:1-6: God will pour out his wrath on the nations when he brings salvation.

It's not clear if the speaker is God or the Servant. In favor of the former is the clear connection of God with the dispensing of wrath (Isa 34:2). In the book, the Servant has been associated with the satisfaction of God's wrath (53:4-6) but not with dispensing wrath. In short, everything here would work with the speaker being God. In favor of identifying the speaker as the Servant is the fact that the Servant was speaking in chapters 61-62. The anthropomorphic language also could support this being the Servant. In addition, the Servant has been closely associated with God previously in the book (7:14; 10:20, etc.) and that makes this possibility real.

“Tertullian, Origen, Jerome, and other church fathers boldly applied this passage [63:1-6] 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. But if one must resist allegorization, so must one resist an interpretation that does not pay adequate attention to the context in which the passage appears. Here, as in 59:15b-21, a major emphasis is on the aloneness of the Warrior, of his doing what no one else could do. Furthermore, both passages stress that it is the arm of God by which salvation appears, and it is apparent from chs. 49-53 that the arm of God is his Servant. Finally, it is evident in this section that the enemies of “the Holy People” are not so much external as internal. It is not the physical “Edoms” of the world that are keeping Israel from knowing the blessing of God but their own chronic rebelliousness (cf. 63:17; 64:5-7). To be sure, the enemies of God must be destroyed if the people of God are to know his blessing. But unless the enemy of sin that lodges in every heart is defeated, no amount of physical blessing will ever suffice, even if it be a return to the promised land from Babylon. How has the Mighty Warrior defeated sin and evil? By first taking it into himself and

defeating it there. If it is true that he will indeed destroy all those who stubbornly remain at enmity with him in the last day (Rev. 19:13-15), it is because he first submitted himself “to the point of death—even death on a cross” (Phil. 2:8)” (Oswalt 1998: 595).

v1 “Edom was the nation chosen to symbolize all the hostile nations because (a) it was a nation that epitomized what it meant to be an enemy of God's people (34:1-6; Amos 9:12); (b) its name (*'ēdôm*) “Edom” is spelled like “mankind” (*'ādām*) and thus becomes a convenient symbol for all nations; and (c) its name (*'ēdôm*) also allows for a wordplay on the word “red” (*'ādôm*) in 63:2 (cf. Gen 25:25)” (Smith 2009: 657-58).

v3 “He has attacked the enemies of his people and trodden them under foot like grapes, so that their lifeblood has spurted out and spattered his garments. Why has he done this? Because of his anger. God is not the cool judge impartially handing down verdicts on persons in whom he has no personal interest. God is a Father whose children have been abused and mutilated. He is a King whose subjects have revolted and tried to usurp the throne. He is the Creator whose creations have perverted themselves into the very opposite of the things for which they were created. 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” (Oswalt 1998: 597).

v4 Notice the contrast between “day of vengeance” and “year of my redemption.” Judgment is brief and once done, it is done. Redemption is the result (or the outcome) and it lasts a long time. This can easily be correlated with the brief period of the tribulation and the lengthy period of the millennium.

v4 “What is the *vengeance* about? God's hurt pride? No, it is about *redemption*, about breaking the power of sin and evil so that those who are held in its grasp may go free” (Oswalt 1998: 598-99).

v4 “The word “vengeance” (*nāqām*) is somewhat hard to translate because for many English readers this word often carries