

THE ASSURANCE OF ISRAEL'S SALVATION

ISAIAH CHAPTER 62

As we start to look at chapter 62, we need to keep in mind that the Lord Himself is the speaker. We know that from verse 6. God promises to keep speaking and working till His purposes for Jerusalem are fulfilled. This is not only for the sake of Zion but also for the sake of the nations of the world. There will be no righteousness and peace on this earth till Jerusalem gets her new name and becomes a crown of glory to the Lord.

Once again we see the use of marriage as an analogy for the relationship between God and His people. As an unfaithful wife, Israel was “*forsaken*” by the Lord, but not “*divorced*” (Isaiah 50:1-3). Her trials will all be forgotten when she receives her new name, “*Hephzibah*,” which means, “*my delight is in her*.” God delights in His people and enjoys giving them His best. The old name, “*Desolate*,” will be replaced by “*Beulah*,” which means “*married*” (see also Isaiah 54:1). When a bride marries, she receives a new name. In the case of Israel, she is already married to Jehovah; but she will get a new name when she is reconciled to Him. [footnote] So now let's look at the chapter in greater detail.

Isaiah 62:1-5 NAS:

1 For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, And for Jerusalem's sake I will not keep quiet, Until her righteousness goes forth like brightness, And her salvation like a torch that is burning.

*2 The nations will see your righteousness, And all kings your glory; And you will be called by a **new name** Which the mouth of the Lord will designate.*

3 You will also be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, And a royal diadem¹ in the hand of your God.

4 It will no longer be said to you, “Forsaken,” Nor to your land will it any longer be said, “Desolate”; But you will be called, “My delight is in her,” And your land, “Married”; For the Lord delights in you, And to Him your land will be married.

5 For as a young man marries a virgin, So your sons will marry you; And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, So your God will rejoice over you.

God announces here that He will continue to work on Jerusalem's behalf until her righteousness, salvation, and glory are observed by the rest of the world (Isaiah 61:10-11) and the city is called by a new name. In the ancient Near East names often signified one's anticipated or present character. So Jerusalem's having a new name means it will have a new righteous character. Did you know that, if you have asked Christ to be your personal

¹ Crown.

Savior, you too have been given a new name to signify your new relationship with God? (See Revelation 2:17 and 3:12.) When we receive Christ we become a brand new person inside (2 Corinthians 5:17) and this new name seems to go along with that. Like a crown, Jerusalem will be an adornment to the Lord. She will be a lighthouse to the world, displaying His splendor; that is, her inhabitants will make evident Christ's character by their conduct.

The beauty seen in Jerusalem's reflection of Christ's righteousness is seen in these verses, as well as her new status as Christ's holy bride. God will not be permanently thwarted in his plan to create a holy nation, despite Israel's sorry record of failure and disobedience. In the last days of the Tribulation she will display Christ's righteousness and rather than being called *Deserted* (62:12) or *Desolate*, previous characteristics of the city, Jerusalem will be named *Hephzibah*, meaning "My delight is in her," and *Beulah*, meaning "Married one." The words "so will your sons marry you" imply that people again will live in Jerusalem and God will be happy that His plan for the ages has been fulfilled.

Isaiah 62:6-9 NAS:

6 On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen; All day and all night they will never keep silent. You who remind the Lord, take no rest for yourselves;

7 And give Him no rest until He establishes And makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

8 The Lord has sworn by His right hand and by His strong arm, "I will never again give your grain as food for your enemies; Nor will foreigners drink your new wine for which you have labored."

9 But those who garner it will eat it and praise the Lord; And those who gather it will drink it in the courts of My sanctuary.

These verses are telling us that God's persevering grace guarantees that this matchless event will be conferred on Israel at Christ's Second Coming. Faithful prophets who call to mind God's words will persist in preaching and prayer until Messiah's earthly kingdom is established. From that time on, no invasions will ever again be successful against the nation of Israel. A prediction which will be fulfilled during the earthly Millennium.

In the Old Testament times, God gave His people leaders to guide them, but most were not faithful (56:10). Now He gives them faithful watchmen, who constantly remind God of His promises. "Give Him no rest till He establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth" (62:7, NIV). What an encouragement to us to "pray for the peace of Jerusalem" according to Psalm 122:6.

God promises that the Jews will never again lose their harvests to the enemy but will enjoy the fruit of their labors in the very courts of His sanctuary, which is a reference to the Millennial temple. What a privilege! According to Ezekiel 40-48, there will be a millennial temple, and the Jews will worship the Lord there. Having received their

Messiah, they will now clearly understand the spiritual meaning of their worship. Today, their minds are veiled as Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 3:14–18; but then, their eyes will be opened.²

Isaiah 62:10-12 NAS:

10 Go through, go through the gates, Clear the way for the people; Build up, build up the highway, Remove the stones, lift up a standard over the peoples.

11 Behold, the Lord has proclaimed to the end of the earth, Say to the daughter of Zion, “Lo, your salvation comes; Behold His reward is with Him, and His recompense before Him.”

12 And they will call them, “The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord”; And you will be called, “Sought out, a city not forsaken.”

Isaiah 62:10 is another reference to “*the highway*” (11:16; 40:3–5), and there is an urgency about these words. The Lord is about to arrive, and the people must get the road ready. When the work is completed, they must lift a banner to signal they are ready. This is a proclamation that goes to the ends of the earth. And when He comes, He shares more new names: Israel is called “*the Holy People*” and “*the Redeemed of the Lord*”; and Jerusalem is called “*Sought After, the City No Longer Deserted*” (verse 12, NIV).

God will have no rest until He accomplishes His purposes for His people, and the world will have no peace until He succeeds. He asks us to “*give Him no rest*” but to intercede for Israel and Jerusalem, for the prayers of His people are an important part of the program of God.³ That makes it especially important for us to be praying for Israel and for Jerusalem during this current conflict with Hezbollah.

Secondly, He calls on those who are in bondage to claim their liberty, and to give a lead to the distant *nations* from whom and with whom He would bring Zion’s citizens home. In verse 10 we have a summons to repentance very similar to that in 57:14. The *standard*, or *ensign*, is the cross of Christ.

JUDGMENT FOR UNBELIEVERS; SALVATION

² Wiersbe, Warren W.: Be Comforted. Wheaton, Ill. : Victor Books, 1996, c1992 (An Old Testament Study), S. Is 62:1

³ opCit.

FOR BELIEVERS

ISAIAH CHAPTER 63

Now a dramatic dialogue takes place, a watchman cries out to an approaching Warrior who is drenched in blood. Is he friend or foe? The answer is that this Warrior, who is actually the Messiah, has personally defeated the Gentile world powers and now appears to save God's people (63:1–6).

We see here Isaiah's personal response to this incredible revelation. He first breaks out in praise to God for His kindnesses, His covenant faithfulness (verses 7–10). But Isaiah's vision of the future brings to his mind God's deliverance of Israel in the time of Moses (verses 11–14). Sorrowfully he asks why God has delayed so long in acting for Israel again (verses 15–19). Isaiah yearns for God to act, as we'll see in Isaiah 64:1–3, but he is terribly aware that God's people have continued to sin against Him. How can God act to save a people whose righteous acts are filthy rags in God's sight? (Isaiah 64:6).

Yet God is not only moral governor of His universe, He is also a Father to His people. In His love and grace the Lord will save those who appeal only to His mercy (verses 8–12).⁴

Isaiah 63:1-6 NAS:

1 Who is this who comes from Edom, With garments of glowing colors from Bozrah, This One who is majestic in His apparel, Marching in the greatness of His strength? "It is I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save."

2 Why is Your apparel red, And Your garments like the one who treads in the wine press?

3 "I have trodden the wine trough alone, And from the peoples there was no man with Me. I also trod them in My anger And trampled them in My wrath; And their lifeblood is sprinkled on My garments, And I stained all My raiment.

4 "For the day of vengeance was in My heart, And My year of redemption has come.

5 "I looked, and there was no one to help, And I was astonished and there was no one to uphold; So My own arm brought salvation to Me, And My wrath upheld Me.

6 "I trod down the peoples in My anger And made them drunk in My wrath, And I poured out their lifeblood on the earth."

⁴ Richards, Larry: The Bible Reader's Companion. Wheaton, Ill. : Victor Books, 1991, S. 444

When the Lord returns two questions will be asked of Him: “*Who is this?*” and “*Why are Your garments red?*” He will be coming from Edom (Isaiah 34:5-9), the wicked nation southeast of Israel that often opposed God’s people and therefore is under God’s wrath (Malachi 1:4), and from Bozrah, Edom’s capital city, which is now Buseirah (Busayrah) in modern-day Jordan. Here Edom is representative of the people of the world who hate God. Coming from there Jesus’ garments will be crimson and red because they are stained with blood from slaughtering His enemies in Edom. The phrase in verse 1, “*majestic in His apparel,*” can also be translated “*Robed in splendor*” and signifies Christ’s power and glory as He will stride forward toward Israel, to save and deliver her (Romans 11:26).⁵

Isaiah’s vision of the Messiah in bloody robes, trampling the nations as a farmer tramples grapes to make wine, is the background for our Civil War’s most famous song, “*The Battle Hymn of the Republic.*” Despite the complaints of those who cannot conceive of a God of love taking vengeance, the image of God’s Servant, the Messiah, putting down mankind’s rebellion to establish justice is fully in keeping with the Old Testament’s revelation of the character of God. What should give us major concern is not this vision of divine judgment, but our own insensitivity to the injustices God hates.⁶

At the Messiah’s coming, He will execute His wrathful judgment on the unbelieving enemies of his people. The picture presented by the prophet was of a divine warrior returning from judgment. His garments were red from the blood of those He had judged. The imagery is precisely that of Revelation 14:18–20 and 19:3.⁷

The Lord’s garments spattered with blood will appear red as if He had been in a winepress. 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 (Isaiah 34:2) in the Battle of Armageddon,⁸ He will take vengeance on them⁹ 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 Jesus’ enemies, it will mean deliverance, redemption, and salvation, for those of His covenant people who turn to Him.¹⁰

⁵ Walvoord, John F. ; Zuck, Roy B. ; Dallas Theological Seminary: The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures. Wheaton, IL : Victor Books, 1983-c1985, S. 1:1117

⁶ Richards, Larry: The Bible Reader's Companion. Wheaton, Ill. : Victor Books, 1991, S. 444

⁷ Hughes, Robert B. ; Laney, J. Carl ; Hughes, Robert B.: Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary. Wheaton, Ill. : Tyndale House Publishers, 2001 (The Tyndale Reference Library), S. 268

⁸ Zech. 14:3; Rev. 16:16; 19:15-19.

⁹ Isa. 34:8; 35:4; 61:2.

¹⁰ Walvoord, John F. ; Zuck, Roy B. ; Dallas Theological Seminary: The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures. Wheaton, IL : Victor Books, 1983-c1985, S. 1:1117

The scene here is the same as in Rev 14:18, 19. A Christ-rejecting, Gospel-spurning world leaves the Lord no other alternative but to send fearful and terrible destruction when the time of His longsuffering is past.¹¹

Isaiah 63:7-9 NAS

7 I shall make mention of the lovingkindnesses of the Lord, the praises of the Lord, According to all that the Lord has granted us, And the great goodness toward the house of Israel, Which He has granted them according to His compassion And according to the abundance of His lovingkindnesses.

8 For He said, "Surely, they are My people, Sons who will not deal falsely." So 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 mercy He redeemed them, And He lifted them and carried them all the days of old.

As one of Israel's watchman, Isaiah, on behalf of the faithful remnant of Jews, prays this confession and prayer for Israel's restoration. The prophet recalls Israel's ungrateful rebellion, which compelled the Lord to punish His chosen people as if they were His enemies.

Verses 7 and 8 recite the goodness and undeserved mercies God has showered on Israel over and over again because of the everlasting covenant He has made with them. Because of God's promise they became His people and He their Savior and will one day be true and faithful to Him. The angel who delivered the Israelites out of Egypt was none other than Jesus Himself.¹² He is sometimes identified as the *Angel of the Lord*. He was so close to His people that He felt their afflictions as if they were His own.

Isaiah 63:10 NAS:

10 But they rebelled And grieved His Holy Spirit; Therefore He turned Himself to become their enemy, He fought against them.

In spite of all God did for Israel, she rebelled against Him. From almost the beginning of the wilderness experience Israel rebelled against God.¹³ Because of this rebellion God fought against them, bringing troubles, distresses, and enemies to discipline them.¹⁴

Isaiah 63:11-14 NAS:

11 Then His people remembered the days of old, of Moses. Where is He

¹¹ Pfeiffer, Charles F.: The Wycliffe Bible Commentary : Old Testament. Chicago : Moody Press, 1962, S. Is 63:1

¹² Ex. 14:19; 23:20-23; 33:12, 14, 15; Num. 20:16.

¹³ Ex.17:1-7; Num. 20:10; Pss. 78:40; 106:33; Acts 7:51; Eph. 4:30.

¹⁴ Walvoord, John F. ; Zuck, Roy B. ; Dallas Theological Seminary: The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures. Wheaton, IL : Victor Books, 1983-c1985, S. 1:1118

who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of His flock?

Where is He who put His Holy Spirit in the midst of them,

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 the horse in the wilderness, they did not stumble;

14 As the cattle which 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.

Then the prophet *looks back* at what God has done for Israel. He praises God for His loving-kindness and goodness, for the pity and love bestowed on Israel. God identified with their sufferings¹⁵ as He does with His people today (1 Peter 5:7). The Jews asked, “*Where is our God who did wonders for His people? Why is He not working on our behalf?*”¹⁶

The bloody image that we just saw in verses 1-6 is now balanced by the image of a compassionate shepherd in verses 7-14. God punishes the rebellious, but He is ready, willing, and able as their Savior to forgive those who ask forgiveness, even when they wander from Him.¹⁷ Redeemed Israel acknowledged God’s past mercies and prayed for Him to deal kindly with His repentant people. The phrase, “*divided the waters*” (verse 12), is an allusion to one of the great miracles of the Exodus, the parting of the Red Sea (Exodus 14:16). 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 and lead them through the sea, which is also referred to as the *waters* and the *depths*. As God gave them rest and guidance, His reputation was made known. God’s purpose for Israel was then, and is now, to make them great in order to glorify His name throughout the rest of the world. It is a good practice, especially when you are going through troubling times, to look back and remind yourself of the great things that God has done in your life. It can give you encouragement and hope.

Isaiah 63:15 NAS:

15 Look down from heaven and see from Your holy and glorious habitation; Where are Your zeal and Your mighty deeds? The stirrings of Your heart and Your compassion are restrained toward me.

In verse 15, Isaiah, on behalf of the people, asked God if He had changed how He felt about Israel and prayed for new mercies such as He had exhibited toward the nation in the past. Isaiah asks God to “*look down*” and later in Isaiah 64:1 to “*come down.*” Isaiah 63 and 64 give us one of the greatest “*revival prayers*” found in Scripture. After having spoken of God’s goodness and past faithfulness to Israel for the sake of His glory, Isaiah offered a prayer of repentance by the nation in its dismal condition. Just as God came

¹⁵ Isa. 34:8; 35:4; 61:2.

¹⁶ Wiersbe, Warren W.: *Be Comforted*. Wheaton, Ill. : Victor Books, 1996, c1992 (An Old Testament Study), S. Is 63:1

¹⁷ Richards, Larry: *The Bible Reader's Companion*. Wheaton, Ill. : Victor Books, 1991, S. 444

down in fire at Sinai (Exodus 19:16–19), so let Him come down again and reveal His awesome power to the rest of the world who trust in dead idols. Let them see what the living God of Israel can do.¹⁸

Isaiah 63:16-19 NAS:

16 For You are our Father, though Abraham does not know us And Israel does not recognize us. You, O Lord, are our Father, Our Redeemer from of old is Your name.

17 Why, O Lord, do You cause us to stray from Your ways And harden our heart from fearing You? Return for the sake of Your servants, the tribes of Your heritage.

18 Your holy people possessed Your sanctuary for a little while, Our adversaries have trodden it down.

19 We have become like those over whom You have never ruled, Like those who were not called by Your name.

The nation's physical ancestors, Abraham and Jacob, who was also called Israel, played a decisive role in Jewish thinking. It had been the continuing sin of the Jews to believe their salvation was based on their being descendants of Abraham and Jacob.¹⁹ This remnant of Jews is now ready to renounce that belief in order to trust in God alone as their Father. The indication here is that they recognize that God allowed them to stray and be burdened in their hearts. They weren't denying their own guilt but confessing that because of it God gave them up to the consequences of their own choices.²⁰

The Babylonians, among others, had taken the land Israel had possessed and destroyed Israel's temple. Israel's complaint here as we close out Isaiah chapter 63, is that her desperate condition was comparable to other nations who had no unique relationship with God. Next time we'll see how prayer and repentance will lead to Israel's salvation.

¹⁸ Wiersbe, Warren W.: *Be Comforted*. Wheaton, Ill. : Victor Books, 1996, c1992 (An Old Testament Study), S. Is 63:1

¹⁹ Matthew 3:9; John 4:12; 8:39.

²⁰ Isaiah 6:9, 10; Ps. 81:11, 12; Hos. 4:17; Romans 1:24-28.