

## When God Is Your Enemy (Isaiah 63:1–64:12)

By Pastor Jeff Alexander (7/21/2019)

### Introduction

1. Today's message is but an introduction to the text before us. It will probably take two or three more messages to do it justice.
2. The truth set forth in chapter 63 is that God will judge and punish His people for their failure to live unto Him and to honor Him in righteous obedience before the world.
  - a. One essential but difficult truth—one that is especially lost on many modern Christians—is that while God loves and seeks their salvation, He will also be angry and judge them for their neglect and failure to seek Him with the whole heart (Ezra 8:22; Hebrews 12:11).
  - b. Some may argue, “Judgment and punishment may have been true for Old Testament believers, but Jesus’ grace covers New Testament believers for all their sins and failures under the gospel.” That is partially true, but a failure to understand the how and why of God’s relational dealings with His people may cause careless believers lots of pain, shame, and great loss at the judgment (1 Corinthians 3:15).
  - c. Israel’s problem was that they were “*a people who [went] astray in their hearts*” because they did not know the Lord’s *ways*, thus, God “*swore in His wrath, ‘They shall not enter my rest’*” (Psalm 95:10, 11). Paul warned New Testament saints not to make the same error in unbelief (Hebrews 3:12, 14).
  - d. This issue is expressed in our text, but many will fail to understand the truth revealed here.
3. The chapter begins with a *theophany*; the Lord’s coming from Edom and follows on the revelation of the Lord’s purpose to save His people (62:10–12).
4. An outline of chapters 63 and 64
  - I. A mighty warrior in blood-stained royal attire coming from the south (63:1–6)
  - II. A holy Sovereign turned to be the enemy of His careless people (63:7–14)
  - III. A prayer of repentance—a plea for mercy and revival (63:15–64:11)

### I. The Disturbing Vision

1. Who is this coming from Edom (v. 1)?
  - a. His direction and destination—coming from the south and marching to Zion
    - 1) What is revealed here is true for both Israel and the church (Romans 9:25, 26).

Note, however, a difference. The Deliverer cited by Paul comes *from* Zion. The Divine warrior of our text comes *to* Zion.
    - 2) Moses had a prophetic vision of this coming in his final blessing of Israel. However, the ultimate fulfillment awaits Christ’s visible return (Deuteronomy 33:2–5).
  - b. His appearance: The Divine Warrior is clothed “*in crimsoned garments from Bozrah.*”
  - c. His approach: “*marching [or literally crouching and stalking, like an advancing warrior on His enemy] in the greatness of His strength.*” (See also Mark 13:26.)

- d. His declaration: “*It is I [the Servant/Messiah], speaking in righteousness, mighty to save.*” To allay any fears of His terrible and ominous, He speaks as if to say, “Fear not; my attire and approach are not designed to your hurt but to your good.”
2. If His coming is for good, why then is His apparel stained blood red (vv. 2–6)? Despite His assurance, His approach still raises alarms, as voiced in the question, “*Why is your apparel red [bloodstained, if you mean no harm to your people]?*”
- a. The treading of the winepress is universally symbolic of wrath and judgment in Scripture, which is explained in the verses that follow.
- b. The Warrior/King’s explanation (vv. 3–6).
- 1) Observe first, His *self-sufficiency* in His work as the Savior of His church—treading the winepress *alone*, conquering all her enemies and freeing her from the wrath of God (vv. 3, 4)
  - 2) Observe second, His great *disappointment* in those He has commanded to follow and serve Him in the work He has call for them to do (v. 5; Isaiah 62:6 and 7).
  - 3) Observe third, the failure of His careless and disobedient people ends in *their judgment of discipline*, causing the unrepentant great grief and hurt: “*I trampled down the peoples [my kinsmen] in my anger; and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth*” (v. 6).

## II. The Explanation

1. If the people of God are to be holy and obedient, judgment must come to the church to prepare Her for Christ at His visible return (1 Peter 4:17; Matthew 16:24–27).
2. Jesus will make His people holy before He comes to receive them to Himself (Revelation 22:7, 12, 20 with respect to v. 14).
3. This judgment of His people is *a gracious work* involving correction and reformation (Revelation 19:7, 8).
4. How is the church prepared for this wedding (Ephesians 5:26, 27; Matthew 5:48)?
5. The sad state of the modern churches

Leonard Ravenhill: “When a man who has crept along for years in conventional Christianity suddenly zooms into spiritual alertness, becomes aggressive in the battle for the Lord, and has a quenchless zeal for the lost, there is a reason for it. (But we are so subnormal these days that the normal New Testament experience seems abnormal.) The secret of this “jet-propelled fellow” we have just mentioned is that somewhere he has had Jacob like wrestlings with God and has come out stripped, but also “strengthened by the Holy Ghost!”

Do you love Jesus with all your being? Is He of supreme worth to you? Do you love His bride with something of the passion that Jesus has for her? What would you sacrifice for her welfare and revival?