

# Vengeance and Redemption

*Book of Isaiah*

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**Bible Text:** Isaiah 63:1-6

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I would like to invite you to look with me in your Bibles to Isaiah chapter 63. And I want to read from verse one down to verse six and speak with you about vengeance and redemption.

Some may wonder about a Scripture reading like Bob read for us in Revelation chapter 14 particularly for a time of worship. Some might think, well, I have come here to be comforted and that portion of Scripture that he read speaks of vengeance, thrusting in of the sickle and gathering the clusters of the vine of the earth and God casting them into the great winepress of his wrath. That is a message which is missing today. A lot of times when the subject of God's wrath arises with people I hear some say, "Well, that is just Old Testament. That is the old God. Today what we have is a God of love." But what we need to understand from Scripture, number one, is God does not change. He is who he has always been from eternity and will be. And he did not just change from being a God of wrath to a God of love. If that is how we view him, then we really do live in darkness and ignorance. And the Scriptures still say that his wrath abides upon men. I believe this is why people struggle whenever there is a tragedy or there is a bombing or something that affects men's lives, whether it is a hurricane or whatever it may be. And people always say, "Well, how could a God of love allow this?"

Well, God is a God of love, but he is a God of truth and he is a God of justice. And how he has taught me from these Scriptures—because I have wrestled with these very same questions over the years—but what the Lord has been pleased to show me is that he loves a sinner like I am. It must mean, then, that his justice was satisfied on my behalf, otherwise he couldn't love me. And that is the message of the Scripture.

You notice in the chapter that Bob read in Revelation 14 it began with the Lord marking out those that were his. It is referred to as the 144,000. That is a symbolic number. It just means that the 12 represents the 12 tribes of the Old Testament, 12 times 12, the New Testament saints, times 1000. Right? That word thousand the number thousand means infinite. But you notice when he read it defined who they were. The redeemed out of the earth. And he has those that he has redeemed out of this earth that have already passed through his judgment. In other words, his wrath has already been poured out on them.

You say, "Well, how did they escape?"

Well, it fell on their substitute. It fell on his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all that we might... he might freely give us all things in him.

So the point of this is that there is never redemption. There never has been redemption without his wrath having been poured out. Vengeance. That is why those two terms go together. Vengeance and redemption go all the way back to the fall when Adam and Eve first fell and they clothed themselves with those fig leaves in that garden, what did God do? He took away the fig leaves, killed an innocent animal. You talk about Adam and Eve watching blood shed for the first time, flowing out of an innocent victim and then God taking those skins and clothing them and giving by that a demonstration of what he would do thousands of years later. See, God can't just overlook sin. He is just. He ever is just. His wrath must be against sin and the sinner.

I hear some kind of skirt around and say, "Well, he hates the sin, but he loves the sinner." You can't separate the sinner from the sin. That if he loves any one of us, then it must be that that vengeance which I deserve fell on another. And if we don't hear anything other than that today, that is the gospel. God taking the wrath and vengeance that I deserved and putting it to the substitute. And then, upon completion of his work, that righteousness, so complete was Chris's work, so fully did he absorb and take upon him that wrath that there remains nothing but righteousness, declaration of being just before him.

So here in Isaiah 63 in verses one through six we have the picture of that right here. It says:

Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?  
this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his  
strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou  
red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the  
winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was  
none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my  
fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain  
all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of  
my redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help; and I  
wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought  
salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me. And I will tread down the  
people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring  
down their strength to the earth.<sup>1</sup>

What we have here is a picture of one going forth to war, to conquer and to return victorious. And that is what is described here very simply. The first thing that I would have you note in here is that this particular victory that is described, the one going forth. It says there, there was none to save among men. So the picture here is of one of God

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<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 63:1-6.

going forth to accomplish this salvation and coming again victorious, because he says there in verse six, whatever enemy opposes him, he says, “I will bring down their strength to the earth.”

And so you might look at this historically as some did and they said, “Well, it pertains to one of the victories that one like David or another may have accomplished in their day.” And certainly it could relate to a number of historical battles. But as we read on in these matters, particularly verse five, what this is about where he says:

“...therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me.”<sup>2</sup>

This is talking about something far greater than just an earthly battle. This is a spiritual battle, a spiritual victory that was fought and won and, I believe, as we look at it here more closely, we are going to see that it pictures. It describes the Lord Jesus Christ. It describes him coming to this earth and taking upon him the responsibility, the mission to accomplish salvation for his people in defeating the enemy that stood in our way. You can think of Satan. You can think of sin. You can think of the world that opposed him. But you can think also of the very law of God, that as long as that law stood as a standard—and it does... God’s law, God does not lower his standard. He does not lower his law in order to save his people. That law had to be satisfied in order for God to be just and justify sinners such as we are. And Christ said that. He said, “I didn’t come to set the law aside. I came to fulfill it.” He didn’t come to destroy, but to fulfill it. And I believe all of this is a picture here.

But when you think of Edom, go back to verse one. It says there:

“Who is this that cometh from Edom?”<sup>3</sup>

So the question is asked to build anticipation and to show us where the focus is to be. A lot of people worry about what is salvation or how does salvation accomplish. A lot of debate, but, you notice the very first word, who. You can know a lot about the truth and still not know Christ. And there are some that do. You know, I had one person say to me, “Well, I believe that Christ came, lived, died and rose again, ascended on high and that he died.” He is describing all these things that Christ did. And you can imagine the shock on their face when I said, “Well, everything you have said, the devil believes.” Even the devil knows that. This is a matter of who is this, that cometh from Edom. Who is this that is the redeemer? Who is it that has done this work to satisfy God’s law and justice in order for God the Father to be just and justifier?

When you think about who the Edomites were, they were the descendants of Esau. They lived in a portion of land southeast of the land of Israel. And God has forever put a separation between Jacob and Esau. If you look over in Romans chapter nine... and this is the very first thing we begin to learn about God and about his justice, because most people we talk to today believe that God loves everybody equally. And yet when we

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<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 63:5.

<sup>3</sup> Isaiah 63:1.

come to the Scriptures in Romans nine, particularly in verse 13 and if anybody is to wrestle with God and they will, if the Lord is going to deliver them, he is going to reveal those things about himself that they are going to struggle with. This is not the popular God of today that we are reading about here when it says in verse 13:

“As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.”<sup>4</sup>

And I know people automatically think, well, what did Esau do for God to hate him? Actually when you compare their lives, he was probably a whole lot more stable than Jacob was on the outward. Jacob was a supplanter. Jacob was the liar. Jacob was the cheat. And yet here it says:

“Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.”<sup>5</sup>

And it goes back up to verse 10 and 11, what the Lord revealed unto Rebekah their mother. They were both in the same other. They were twins. And yet it says verse 11:

(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.<sup>6</sup>

And so what we have this picture here in Isaiah 63 and verse one when it says:

“Who is this that cometh from Edom...”<sup>7</sup>

Well what is he coming from but that he went forth first and, as you read on in there, it was to pour out his wrath. It was to accomplish his wrath upon his enemies. And that is the picture that we have there.

Now you can look in the history of Edom when Israel was brought out of Egypt and they went to go into the land, these Edomites stood against them. They wouldn't even let them pass through the land. And so some people say, “Well, that is the reason why God poured out his wrath upon them.”

No. They were just manifesting in their nature what happens when God leaves sinners to themselves. As tragic as some of the events that we read about and hear about and see now in the media with bombings and killings and all these things going on and everybody wonders. How could one person do that to another person in humanity? The Scripture has been telling us over and over and over again. That, what you are seeing is exactly what happens when God leaves people to their own reprobate mind, takes his hand off of them and lets them go the way they would go. That is the manifestation of the fall. And as

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<sup>4</sup> Romans 9:13.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Romans 9:11-13.

<sup>7</sup> Isaiah 63:1.

much as you or I might be astonished and surprised at one fellow creature could do that to another fellow creature, this is nothing but a picture of what is in their heart toward God himself. This is a manifestation of their rebellion toward God himself. And so we should not be—and I don't mean to be callous in saying this—but we should not be surprised when God executes judgments in this world, no matter how serious and evil it appears to be. Every person that dies is God executing his judgment. And I am going to shock some people in saying this, but it is true that there really aren't any innocent people that die. The wages of sin is death. Why do people die? It is because they are sinners.

And so we all have that lot, me included. I am standing up here preaching for you right now full of life. I don't know what God has purposed, but I just know that unless Christ comes in my life time and takes me into glory without passing through that river of death, my days are numbered. Your days are numbered. And this is what startles us so many times, because we hear of somebody today that was alive and healthy and seemed to be vibrant and the next thing you know they are gone. Either taken out in an accident or an illness or... but all of that is God accomplishing his will, executing his judgment. Our days are already written in his book.

So from that standpoint, we all are equal. I don't care whether it is a serial killer out there or Ken Wimer. We all are sinners by nature. And if there is any difference that is put between us it is this right here.

“Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.”<sup>8</sup>

But now when you say that people say, “Well, on what basis would God forgive Jacob? Does he just over look his sin or on what basis would he forgive a Ken Wimer? Is Ken any better than Ted Bundy?” No. I have the same nature. You do. All of us do. We have that same nature within us, but God. And so the question has to be answered, then, who is this? When you see in Isaiah 63. Who is this one who stands as the representative, as the substitute, as the Savior, as the strong man, as the warrior? Whatever term you want to use. Who is this that defends his people? Because that is the picture here of one going forth and for the salvation of one people which in this context happened to be Israel, but Israel being a picture of the Church. Who is this that stands as their strength, as their defense over against the enemy, those that he destroys and casts into utter darkness?

You know, before Christ went to the cross in John 17 he prayed this. He said, “I thank the Father. I glorify the Father that he has given me authority over all flesh.” So this one going forth could not be any but Christ, because he has authority over all flesh to... what did he say in his prayer? To give eternal life unto as many as the Father hath given him. Why would these of Edom be the stain of his garment? Why would they be condemned and Israel saved? It wasn't because Israel was any better. We know that. Read the history of Israel.

Ultimately when you compare Edom, Esau's descendants and Israel, Jacob's descendants, Israel was full of idolatry, just like Edom was. I will tell you. It is just like

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<sup>8</sup> Romans 9:13.

anybody out there. the only difference is the grace of God in the Lord Jesus Christ and what he has accomplished. That is it. I don't care how severely someone may fall, if you ever approach them to speak to them, you have to put your arm around them and say, "You know what? The only difference between you and me is the grace of God. it is the fact that the Lord has kept me from going that way. Otherwise I would. That is all."

Who maketh thee to differ, is the way the scriptures ask the question. But, you see, again, who, now.

"Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?"<sup>9</sup>

Notice the answer.

"...this that is glorious in his apparel."<sup>10</sup>

So we have here the picture of garments that are covered in blood, basically. The picture here is of a warrior that goes forth to war and comes back victorious, his garments covered with blood. Do you see how that pictures the Lord Jesus Christ? I go back to the picture of the priest in the Old Testament. And I know when you look in story books they are pristine clean. They have got white garments and they just look like Mr. Clean. I really don't believe that that is the way it was. When you think about what their job was, what their task was, think about the butchers that you find in the meat markets when you go in and they... I have yet to figure out why they wear white. Everybody you go back there and talk to the butcher, he has got his white coat on. But that thing is stained with blood. I don't know whether they throw that thing out at the end of the day or if they really try to get those stains out or whether they don't even worry about it. He just comes in the next day and puts it back on. I don't know. I have thought about that. But their garment is stained with blood. They are around bloody meat day in and day out.

You think about the priests of the Old Testament, what it must have been like, because those scarifies had to be offered day and night, 24/7. That was their job. They would have been covered with blood and when you think about taking meat and offering on a burnt offering, right up front, that burnt offering that was constantly before the Lord. Now when we walk into the house and smell some meat cooking in the oven when it is ready it has got a nice smell, but try cooking it too long. Try going beyond to where it starts to burn. And you forgot it in there or the preacher preached too long and you walk in and all of the sudden the house is filled with smoke, fire alarm going off. It has got a distinct odor. And you think about what that must have been like in that camp of the Old Testament how there was the blood. See, this is a bloody gospel. There was blood being shed and meat being offered and priests going in and their garments being stained. That is the picture that we have here of vengeance.

You know, you stop and think about when it says here in verse four:

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<sup>9</sup> Isaiah 63:1.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

“For the day of vengeance is in my heart.”<sup>11</sup>

Yes, there is that day of vengeance against God’s enemies, against all those that he has ordained and purposed to destruction, the Esaus. But do you realize that in order for God to have saved such as we are here if we are the Lord’s, it took a day of vengeance. It took the Lord Jesus Christ staining his garment. It took a working out of righteousness that would require him the holy one to shed his blood that his garment would be stained, if you will, with the blood of those sinners that he came to represent.

Christ didn’t die on the cross for his sin. He died on the cross for the sin of his people. And so do you have his garments stained? As it says there in verse two.

“Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?”<sup>12</sup>

Think of back how they used to do it, taking the grapes off the vine and putting them down in this stone pit and then getting down in there and crushing that until the juice flowed out into another receptacle, how they were stained with that. Our Lord in coming was stained with the blood, if you will, of that sin that was due the justice and condemnation that was due unto us. He bore it. That is the picture that we have here. Garments dipped in blood.

Look over in Revelation chapter 19. Here is a reason why I know this is describing the Lord Jesus Christ, because here in Revelation 19 that is how he is described. Notice in verse 11.

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.<sup>13</sup>

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”<sup>14</sup>

So, as we are reading here in Isaiah 63 there is no question that this one in answer to that question—who is this—see, there are several questions. Who is this? None other than the Son of God himself, the Lord Jesus Christ. And the answer to the question in verse two.

“Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Isaiah 63:4.

<sup>12</sup> Isaiah 63:2.

<sup>13</sup> Revelation 19:11-13.

<sup>14</sup> John 1:1.

Well, the reason they are red is because he had to undertake a work. This matter of working out the salvation of sinners was not done by decree from heaven. It wasn't done by remote with God just saying, "Ok, these are saved and these I pass by." No. There was an actual coming and a working out of their salvation in time where the Savior himself bloodied himself with their stains, with the stains of ... you stop and think about it. We were his enemies. It wasn't that we were his friends and therefore he came and died for us, but we were his enemies. While we were yet sinners, Scripture says, Christ died for us. While we were yet enemies he laid down his life.

Beware of thinking, oh, no, not me. I hear people saying, "Well if I had been there that day, I wouldn't have crucified him." Oh, yeah, you would have. It is just that you haven't seen your nature. You haven't seen who you are truly before a holy God yet to say that. Because as the Lord shows you who you are and opens your eyes to look at Christ, you are brought to cry unto him and say, "My sins nailed him there. That is my blood that stained his garment." But why did it stain his garment? That I might be delivered. See, that is substitution.

And so it tells us here who he is. It tells us what he came to accomplish. But it also tells us of the efficacy of his power in that salvation that he came to work out. Here, again, you will hear all kinds of commentary about Christ. It is just not in line with what we read here in the Scripture. Christ is presented almost as a victim to people that he came and alas he tried to do some work, but in the end they ended up putting him to death. Poor Jesus. That is the way most preachers try to get people to follow their Jesus. It is evoking things that would cause them to be drawn to him in pity. Remember when Christ was going to the cross and the women were crying out and weeping? What did the Lord say to them?

"Don't weep for me. Weep for yourselves, because your house has been left to you a desolation."

He was speaking to some that would know nothing but God's vengeance and wrath even as described here in verse 63. Now, he is not to be pitied. We are. We are the ones that stand in need of his work. And that is why he came and that is what I want you to see here. When he says in verse three it says here:

"I have trodden the winepress alone."<sup>16</sup>

You remember Peter even boasted when it came time for Christ to die. He said, "I will go with you." And what did the Lord say to him? Before the cock crows, you will deny me thrice, Peter. Did he? He did. Why? Why was it necessary that when this time came for Christ to die that every one of his disciples would have made it? Smite the shepherd and what? The sheep scatter. Well, here is the reason right here in verse three. This was a winepress that Christ had to trod alone. He says of the people there was none with me.

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<sup>15</sup> Isaiah 63:2.

<sup>16</sup> Isaiah 63:3.



That is because there is none righteous, no, not one, but him. Therefore it was necessary that he by himself should accomplish this work and that he should cause that his garments, his holy garments, he was just and holy. He died the just for the unjust that they be stained with the blood of his enemies as described here.

If you look over in Hebrews chapter one and I will wrap this up here. This is how vengeance and redemption go hand in hand. It took God pouring out his wrath upon his Son, actually staining his Son's garments with the wrath, with the blood of his enemies in order that God might be just to declare righteous, to redeem. There is no redemption without payment of a price. That is why those that he has redeemed the efficacy of it, there are none in hell for whom Christ died. Every one for whom he laid down his life he will have. And that is what we read here in Hebrews one and verse three. It says:

“Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.”<sup>17</sup>

Think about the garment of Christ, the brightness of the very glory of God the Father.

“...and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins.”<sup>18</sup>

That is what is being described here. I have trodden the winepress alone and the people

“I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.”<sup>19</sup>

“...when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”<sup>20</sup>

This is a work that he alone could accomplish. It is not a cooperation. See, that is how it is being presented by many preachers. It is a cooperation. God did his part. Now you do yours. No, it says, “And of the people there was none with me.” So this is a work that Christ alone had to accomplish. And so if he accomplished this victory, that is what we see here, he accomplished this victory on his own straight, in his own strength, by his power, by the fact of who he is as the sovereign God.

And that, coming back to Isaiah 63 is the summit. You see in verse five and six.

“And I looked, and there was none to help.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Hebrews 1:3.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Isaiah 63:3.

<sup>20</sup> Hebrews 1:3.

<sup>21</sup> Isaiah 63:5.

And I have had some say, “Well, why didn't God just leave the choice up to us?” Right here is the answer.

“And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold.”<sup>22</sup>

Had God determined that anybody that wanted salvation could have it, but I will leave it up to you, there would have been none that sought him. And so it says there.”

“...therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me.”<sup>23</sup>

That fury is that wrath. We all deserve the wrath. It had to be accomplished. But it was accomplished in his Son and what he worked out and therefore, verse six:

“And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.”<sup>24</sup>

You know, when we talk about Christ having died for such as we are, as I stand here before you, I didn't feel that wrath. It is something I will never know. And yet it says here:

“And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury.”<sup>25</sup>

So when did God pour out that wrath? How is it that I as that sinner for whom Christ died suffered that wrath of God? Well, it is when Christ died. It is like Noah and his family. Didn't they have to go through the same judgment that the rest of the world did? They went through the same.

You say, “Why were they saved and the world lost?”

Well, it is because they were in the ark. That ark bore the wrath. There is not going to be in the day of judgment anybody being able to stand up and say to God, “Well, you are unfair, because you saved these and you condemned these. So you are showing favoritism.”

No, every sinner has had to and will have to face the wrath of God. This fury, this anger of God due to their sin. So why are some saved and some lost? It is because of the person of Christ and his work. That wrath fell on him. And if it didn't fall on him, all those for whom Christ did not die, they will know nothing but this wrath. They will know nothing but eternally this condemnation.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Isaiah 63:6.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

I pray that the Lord in hearing this message would if you are his, one of these for whom he has paid the debt, cause you to see you are no better than anybody else. I am no better than anybody else, to see that I deserve this wrath as much as anybody else. But to see that if God has saved me, he has done it on the merits of Christ alone and he has done it because Christ paid that debt. His garments were, indeed, stained with the blood of his enemies in order that God might be just and the justifier. What a great Savior he is.