

“What’s Hanging in the Balance?”

Isaiah 63:1-14

Context: Isaiah uses the backdrop of the post-exilic rebuilding of a devastated Jerusalem under Ezra and Zerubbabel to construct a crescendo of deliverance. He includes the Remnant’s release from oppression, their redemption by the Lord and preservation by the Holy Spirit, the eternal glorification of Jerusalem, and the judgment of those who are defiant and hostile toward God. The Remnant’s struggles, hopes, successes, and failures foreshadow the experiences during the Church age of a Remnant still living under structures of sin and spiritual darkness. Our current discussion flows out of Isaiah 62:10, where the prophet calls on God to make good on His promise of deliverance and appoints intercessors to pray for the same. **Life Principle:** God’s measureless compassion awaits us, especially in our most undeserving times, for that is what proves it measureless (cp. Isaiah 63:7, 19).

- 1. Balance pan of God’s retribution and redemption – Isaiah 63: 1-6**

Isaiah uses blood spilled in the once impregnable city of Bozrah in Edom to symbolize the Lord’s vengeance upon those who willfully neglect His offer of salvation and despise His redeemed people. The Lord identifies Himself as the only one capable of redeeming humanity, as the only truly righteous One to mete out punishment, and as the only One powerful enough to save. Man’s sin and subsequent punishment are balanced by God’s mercy and grace.
- 2. Balance pan of God’s mercy – Isaiah 63: 7-14**

Verse 7 begins a prayer of community lament that carries through chapter 64. The taproot of revelation draws upon God’s life-giving nature of goodness, mercy, and loving-kindness. These serve as the source of the Remnant’s unmerited salvation. Thoughts of the Remnant’s salvation history found in Torah are recounted as thanksgiving in the beginning of this prayer. God as a Father picked them up when they stumbled in sin in the Sinai. He set His Spirit in their midst to shepherd them out of death’s blinding darkness. His actions in delivering them from the serpent’s bite symbolized Jesus Christ coming to bear their affliction unto death and thus serve as their Kinsman-Redeemer.

Further study:

- Isaiah 63:1 frames God’s vengeance and redemption using the symbolism of Edom and Bozrah. As a **Bible study method**, look up these names in the TWOT #26h and 270g. How is Edom’s history associated with loss of salvation, hostility toward the Remnant, and judgment (i.e. Psalm 137:7)?
- Chapter 63:1-6 gives a description of the Day of Vengeance, which is described in our doctrinal statement (cf. footnotes 1-8 ‘**On Last Things**’ in our **doctrinal statement** under **what we believe** at www.gracepointfellowship.org) and is found described in other passages like Isaiah 34:8; 35:4; 61:2; and Revelation 19. What warrant is given by God for Him, a God of love, to execute vengeance in wrath against the peoples of the earth (cf. Isaiah 63:1, 6)? From this warrant, what attributes would be necessary for a person to possess that they might sit in proper judgment of God?
- Chapter 63 stunningly reveals the action of God as Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This too is described in our doctrinal statement (cf. footnotes 3-4 ‘**On God**’ in our **doctrinal statement** under **what we believe** at www.gracepointfellowship.org). Using New Testament citations, identify the person of the Trinity that does the work described Isaiah 63:9. Look up the “Spirit” in the Ephesians passages in your concordance and compare the similarities of His work with that found in Isaiah 63:11, 14. In what sense is God the Father of their salvation in Isaiah 63:9 (cp. Isaiah 9:6)?

Transformation exercise:

Meditate on Isaiah 63:7 by verbally reciting instances where God showed you compassion, loving-kindness, and goodness during your morning quiet time. Look up these three words in a dictionary tonight or tomorrow morning to deepen your meditation. Ask the Holy Spirit to make you sensitive to “mention” an instance should someone need encouragement this week.