

Isaiah 63, Hebrew Text with Translation and Footnotes

63:1¹ מִי־זֶה | בָּא מֵאֲדוּמִים

¹Oswalt entitles **63:1-6** “The Lone Warrior,” and comments that “Whereas **chapters 56-59** begin with a discussion of the foreign converts (**56:1-8**) and end with a description of the Divine Warrior Who battles alone for His people (**59:15b-21**)...**63:1-6** begins with the description of the Divine Warrior (using some of the same language...) and ends with a treatment of foreign converts (**66:18-24**)...Israel’s mission of being witnesses of God’s glory to the world is allowed to have the pride of place that it deserves in view of the emphasis of the **Book [of Isaiah]** as a whole.” (P. 593)

Oswalt adds that “If foreigners are worshiping in the new Jerusalem, it is only those who have chosen to do so. Those who have refused this gracious choice will experience another side of the power of God, the side depicted here.” (P. 595)

Alexander comments on **chapter 63** that “The influx of the Gentiles into Zion having been described in the preceding verses, the destruction of her enemies is now sublimely [in elevated or lofty thought] represented as a sanguinary [bloody] triumph of [YHWH] or the messiah (**verses 1-6**). The prophet then supposes the catastrophe already past, and takes a retrospective [looking back] view of God’s compassion towards His people, and of their unfaithfulness during the old economy (**verses 7-14**). He then assumes the tone of earnest supplication, such as might have been offered by the believing Jews when all seemed lost in the destruction of their commonwealth and temple (**verses 15-19**).” (P. 413)

Here Alexander changes from his normal use of “dispensation” to “old economy.” There is no such word in the text. But as he says, it is clear that the context of the passage is that of the destruction of Israel and Jerusalem and the temple.

Achtemeier states that “Here in this magnificent poem, which has so greatly influenced the literature and songs of the Western world [for example, ‘The Battle Hymn of the Republic’ by Julia Ward Howe, 1861], the Trito-Isaianic community enables its countrymen to see—to see Yahweh the victorious Warrior coming—marching [our ‘stooping’]—speaking (**verse 1**); to see Yahweh the lonely Conqueror trodding out ‘the grapes of wrath’; to see God in sovereign might, victorious over all His enemies...

“The promised destruction of Israel’s enemies in **60:12** is here pictured as an event of the past. The year of redemption and day of vengeance announced in **61:2** (compare **34:8; 35:4; 49:8; Jeremiah 51:6**) have now arrived...The prophetic community now verbally draws before Judah’s eyes the picture of its returning Savior, and what an overwhelmingly, totally strange picture it is both to them and to us!” (P. 106)

Slotki comments on **verses 1-6** that these verses depict the “execution of Divine vengeance upon Zion [‘upon Zion’? not ‘on behalf of Zion’?]. The passage forms an independent oracle on the final triumph of God over Israel’s enemies which is the preliminary to the redemption. ‘The image presented is one of the most impressive and

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awe-inspiring in the **Old Testament** and it is difficult to say which is most to be admired, the dramatic vividness of the vision, or the reticence which conceals the actual work of slaughter [but does it depict the 'actual work of slaughter'? See Knight's and our interpretations] and concentrates the attention on the Divine Hero as He emerges victorious from the conflict...

"A solitary and majestic figure, in blood-red vesture, is seen approaching from the direction of Edom. A question of surprise escapes from the prophet's lips as he contemplates the singular and startling apparition; and a brief reply comes from afar (Skinner). The Hero is none other than the God of Israel." (P. 305)

Oswalt comments on **verse 1** that "A watchman (see **Isaiah 62:6**) sees a figure striding up [our 'stooping'] from the direction of *Edom* in the south, from *Bozrah*, its capital...This person is obviously someone to be reckoned with: he is splendidly garbed in bright-colored garments, and there is nothing furtive [secretive] about his movements. He walks with the swagger of a mighty man [is this what 'stooping' means?]. Such a person must clearly be challenged. 'Who is it who comes from Edom?' the watchman calls. The answer leaves no question. 'I am the one who speaks in righteousness, strong in order to save'...

"The 1st person independent pronoun followed by a participle is the language of Divine Self-predication whereby God identifies Himself...What is the characteristic He chooses? It is that He speaks! From **Genesis 1:3** to **Revelation 21:5**, the main characteristic of the God of the **Bible** is that He speaks, revealing His character, His ways, and His will to His creatures." (P. 596)

Do you agree that this is "the main characteristic of the God of the **Bible**"? We remember Harvard **Old Testament** professor George Earnest Wright, who entitled one of his important theological works, "God Who Acts, Biblical Theology as Recital" in 1952. Did Wright get it wrong—should Biblical Theology be about "God Who Speaks"? What would you say is the "main characteristic of God in the **Bible**? How about for Second and Third Isaiah, "the God Who saves, and saves through His acts of righteousness"?

Knight comments on **verses 1-2** that "The question now arises: If Yahweh is Himself salvation, then how does He act to save? For example, does He act out of 'heaven,' by issuing a Divine fiat from on high like a Greek God? [We answer, No. Instead of issuing a fiat from on high, He Himself enters into human history, "stoops to conquer," to fight against His enemies and come out victorious.]

"Our poet offers us in this chapter a profound answer to this most basic of all questions—and does it in poetry too!...Remembering that God can act only in conformity with Himself, throughout the **Old Testament** God is shown to act in a 'passionate and aggressive concern for justice in the midst of conflict (M.C. Lind, **Yahweh Is A Warrior**,

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p. 169). Yet the human mind can only grasp this reality in terms of human warfare, so our poet takes up his theme on the basis of what he had before him in **chapter 34** and **43:3**.

“Our typical questioner asks (**63:1**) ‘Who is this that *has come* from Edom, in crimsoned garments from Bozrah?’ The verb speaks of completed action...because God’s redemption is already complete. These lines are, of course, an allusion to **34:6-7**,

6 A sword belongs to the YHWH—
 it was full of blood,
it was made fat from (their) fat,
 from blood of lambs and he-goats,
from fat of rams’ kidneys.

 Because a sacrifice belongs to YHWH in Bozrah,
and a great slaughtering in the land of Edom.

7 And wild oxen will go down with them,
 and bull calves with bulls.

And their land will be saturated from blood,
 and their dry earth will be made fat from (animal) fat.

[We observe that in these verses, **34:6-7**, there is no depiction of human blood—only the blood of lambs and goats, of oxen and bulls. However, the preceding verses depict slain people, whose carcasses stink, and whose blood flows in the mountains.]

Edom, to the southeast of the Holy Land, with Bozrah its chief town, was believed to be the homeland of the descendants of Esau (see **Genesis 36:8**). Esau, the brother of Jacob, was he who cared so little for God’s covenant and for his own birthright within it, that he sold the latter to Jacob for a mess of pottage (**Genesis 25:29-34**). Thereafter, down the centuries Israel had regarded the craftiness of Jacob to be a mere peccadillo [a small, relatively unimportant sin] in comparison with Esau’s contemptuous rejection of his calling to work with God in covenant for the redemption of the world, as well as Edom’s continued contempt for his brother-nation Israel (**Amos 1:11-12**). This became conspicuous especially after Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed Jerusalem in 538 B.C.E (**Psalms 137:7**). At that crisis Edom had simply walked in and looted and destroyed amongst the ruins (**Isaiah 34:4-17; Ezekiel 25:12; 35; 36:5-7; Obadiah 13-14, 16**).

“Now, the name Edom means ‘red,’ and the name Bozrah means ‘vintager,’ one who treads out the grapes with his feet. Thus we are being shown right from the first line that we are dealing not with a parable, for a parable makes only one point, but with an issue that can be understood ‘by the human eye’—one that is applicable, in the particularistic manner of the **Bible**, to just one nation yet at the same time to the whole world of mankind. We recall that for Isaiah, Israel is God’s vine situated in His chosen vineyard (**Isaiah 5:1-7**; compare **Psalms 80:8**). Thus it is in Israel that God is ‘trampling

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out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored'...But at the same time we discover that it is out of this 'holocaust' (and *not* 'from heaven') that Yahweh has here emerged.

"We note a further point. Not only is Edom 'red,' but so too is 'Man.' The name Adam employs in Hebrew the same consonants as does Edom. For since in biblical times Hebrew possessed no vowels, the three consonants composing this word could be read both ways...So while the poem clearly refers to Edom because of the name Bozrah coupled with it, it refers at the same time to all mankind.

[We think Knight is mistaken in this comment. In the Dead Sea scroll 1QIs^a, by far the oldest Hebrew manuscript of Isaiah in existence, the name Edom is spelled אֶדוֹם, not אֶדָם, and this manuscript, more than half a millennium before the Masoretic pointing of the Hebrew text, used the vowel letter ו.]

"We may go further, and see that Edom may be equivalent to the name Babylon, just as in the **New Testament** Babylon became a figure for Rome (compare **Psalm 137:7-8** [where Edom is called the 'daughter of Babylon,' in a terrifying **psalm** that in **verse 9** blesses those who take Edomite babies and smash their heads on the rocks!]). If such is the case, then in 'announcing vindication [our 'righteousness'], mighty to save,' the reference is to more than when God rescued Israel from Babylon; it must refer also to God's plan to rescue all mankind and vindicate them by His love and justice [not by smashing their babies' heads on the rocks!]-for God does not change (**Malachi 3:6**).

"We have learned from Deutero-Isaiah that God was 'in Israel' in His saving love; that is, He was present in His covenant people (**Isaiah 45:14-15**,

- 14 In this way YHWH spoke:
 Produce of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia, and Sabians, men of
 size,
unto you will cross over, and they will belong to you;
 they will come behind you; in the chains / manacles they will cross over.
And they will bow down to you, they will make intercession, (saying)
 Surely God is with you, and there is no other besides God!
- 15 Truly You (are) a God Who hides Himself;
 God of Israel, Savior!
[The confession of these foreigners who come to Israel as captives, is that
YHWH is present with the Israelites, a hidden God Who is Savior.]

He had thus 'clothed Himself with His servant people.' Here Trito-Isaiah describes God as 'glorious in His apparel' or, literally, 'swelling in His clothing,' wearing Israel as a king shows his majesty, his royal strength, by His glorious apparel." (Pp. 71-72)

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חֲמוּץ בְּגָדִים מִבְּצֻרָה
 זֶה הַדָּוָר בְּלְבוּשׁוֹ
 צִעָה בְּרֵב כַּחֲוִי
 אֲנִי מְדַבֵּר בְּצַדִּיקָה
 רַב לְהוֹשִׁיעַ:

Who (is) this,² coming from Edom,³

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But we ask, does the text actually depict YHWH as wearing the Israelites as His royal apparel? We understand **45:14-15** as depicting YHWH as hiddenly present with the Israelites, as Savior, but does this mean YHWH wears the nation as His royal robes? We think the text here in **Isaiah 63** depicts YHWH as wearing His red clothes when all alone they were spattered with life-blood in Edom / Bozrah—before there was anyone willing to help Him in His struggle, and before he is seen coming from Edom / Bozrah.

It seems to us that Knight is doing everything he can to get around this depiction of YHWH as Warrior. What do you think?

²Slotki states that this is “the startled prophet’s question on seeing the approach of the majestic blood-stained figure.” (P. 305)

³Slotki, as does Knight, holds that Edom is “a general term for all the lands of tyranny and oppression.” (P. 305) Perhaps—but the subsequent mention of Botsrah / Bozrah, the capital city of Edom, seems to make the reference more precise, as meaning the nation of Edom.

Alexander states that “Interpreters are much divided as to the Edom of this passage...While J. D. Michaelis...makes both the threatening and the promise alike future, and Henderson makes one distantly future, and the other distantly past, Knobel makes both past, and supposes [YHWH] to be here described merely as coming through the land of Edom from the slaughter of the nations confederate with Croesus [the king of Lydia who, according to Herodotus, reigned for fourteen years, from 560 B.C.E. until his defeat by the Persian king Cyrus the Great in 546 B.C.E.] who had just been overthrown by Cyrus in a battle near Sardis...

“With these exceptions, most interpreters...suppose Edom to be here, as in **chapter 34**, the representative of Israel’s most inveterate [deep-seated] enemies...The connection with what goes before...is that the restored Jews might apprehend the

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(his) clothes red,⁴ from Botsrah / Bozrah,⁵
this one honored / swollen⁶ in his dress,⁷
stooping⁸ with his great strength?⁹

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enmity of certain neighboring nations, who had rejoiced in their calamity; and that the prophecy before us was intended to allay this apprehension..” (P. 414)

⁴Slotki’s translation is “crimsoned,” which he says means “blood-stained.” He adds that the Hebrew root of the noun **בְּצִרָה**, **בְּצִר**, which means “to cut off,” i.e., to make inaccessible by fortifying, “is suggestive of **בְּצִיר**, ‘vintage,’ the cutting of the grapes from the vines, and also leads to the introduction of the *winevat* in **verse 2**.” (P. 305)

⁵Translations of this line vary, from “with dyed garments from Bozrah,” to “in crimsoned garments from Bozrah,” to “from Bozrah in garments stained crimson,” to “a redness of garments from Bozrah.”

⁶Slotki notes that “It has been suggested that **הִתְנַפֵּחַ** has the same meaning here as in **Isaiah 45:2**... ‘swollen,’ descriptive of the garment puffed out by the wind in the rapid movement of the wearer.” (P. 305)

⁷Translations of this line vary, from “this that is glorious in his apparel” (**King James**), to “Who is this, majestic in attire” (**Tanakh**), to “Who is this, so splendidly robed” (**New Revised Standard**), to “Who is this, robed in splendor” (**New International**), to “so magnificently dressed” (**New Jerusalem**), to “so beautiful in apparel” (**Rahfs**).

Knight comments that “Here Trito-Isaiah describes God as ‘glorious in His apparel’ or literally, ‘swelling in His clothing,’ wearing Israel as a king shows his majesty, his royal strength, by his glorious apparel.” (Pp. 71-72)

But we ask, Was Israel there with YHWH in Bozrah, when His garments were being stained with life-blood? Does not the text depict YHWH as being alone, with no one from the peoples to help Him. Does that only mean “no foreigners” to help Him?

⁸The qal active participle **לָעָה** means “stooping / bending / inclining.” It does not mean “marching,” even though commonly translated by this or in a similar way (see the next footnote). This can be understood in terms of a mighty conqueror, who, contrary to the custom of ordinary warfare, stoops to serve those with whom he is engaged, delivering them through his “righteousness,” getting himself blood-stained as he goes.

For this participle elsewhere in the **Hebrew Bible**, see:

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Isaiah 51:14, where it is used for the bowed down prisoner,

One bowed down made haste to be released;
and he will not die in the pit,
and he will not lack (for) his bread!

Jeremiah 2:20, where it is used of the prostitute, “stooping for sex”:

Because a long time ago I shattered your yoke,
I tore apart your bonds;
and you said, I will not serve / pass over,
because upon every high hill,
and beneath every luxurious tree
you are stooping / bending down (for sex), a prostitute!

Jeremiah 48:12, which uses the metaphor of those in a monastery who are responsible for provisioning and catering, bending over jars of wine to empty them—a metaphor for what YHWH is going to do to the nation of Moab:

Therefore look—days (are) coming, (it is) a saying of YHWH,
and I will send forth for him [Moab] those stooping / cellarers,
and they will pour him out,
and they will empty his vessels;
and their skin-bottles they will shatter!

The participle is certainly not language ordinarily used for mighty conquerors, or for kings. It is the language used for burdened prisoners, prostitutes, and lowly servants pouring out wine for others. And we ask, What kind of “conqueror” is this? Can it be a picture of the Divine Warrior as “Suffering Servant,” as “Stooping to conquer”?

Knight entitles **chapter 63** “God Stoops To Conquer.”

He comments that “there is no description here of a battle between warriors... The God Who ‘treads in the wine press’ is the One Who stoops to conquer, Who like the suffering servant of **Isaiah 53** empties Himself to win the victory. It is He Who has stooped to enter the wine-press, the ‘holocaust’ of blood and horror, and Who has borne the whole weight of His redemptive work on His Own stooping shoulders...”

“God sees that, although He is mighty in His strength (**verse 1c**), He has no more powerful way to redeem the peoples than by immersing Himself in their bloody activities. Trito-Isaiah thus makes crystal clear that God does not save ‘from above,’ by remaining impassive and remote; He does so by walking beside the prisoners in the burning fiery furnace (**Daniel 3:25**; compare **Isaiah 43:2-3a**,

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- 2 If you cross over in the water, I am with you;
and in the rivers, they will not overflow you.
If you walk through fire, you will not be burned,
and a flame will not burn you!
- 3 Because I (am) YHWH your God,
Israel's Set-apart One, your Savior!),

by descending into Edom (or Babylon), or by sharing the horrors of an 'Auschwitz' with His Own beloved people. The challenge to do this was terrible for even God to contemplate. He had to 'lean on' His Own passion (*chemah* ['wrath']) to bring Him through. So it was that 'My wrath upheld me' (63:5), in the light of 59:16, where we learned that God saw the necessity of acting alone. When humanity creates a Bozrah or an Auschwitz, only God can do something about it. On the other hand, **chapter 63** makes staggeringly clear that the demonic [fiercely energetic or frenzied] in God is an absolutely necessary part of His being and activity, else His saving love could not reach down to where evil exists even lower than mankind can reach. See:

Deuteronomy 32:39,

See now that I, I (am) He,
and there is no God beside Me!
I, I cause death, and I will restore life;
I wounded severely, and I, I will heal!
And there is no one delivering from My hand!

1 Samuel 2:6,

YHWH causes death, and brings to life;
(He is) One bringing down (to the) grave / underworld, and raising up!

Isaiah 45:7, where YHWH is depicted as saying of Himself, that He is:

One Who fashions light, and Who creates darkness,
Who makes peace / prosperity, and creates evil—
I (am) YHWH, One Who does all these (things)!

Amos 3:6,

Or will a ram's horn be blown in a city,
and people not tremble?
Or will there be disaster in a city,
and YHWH not have acted?

"In plain language, then, what this passage is saying is that God's righteous vengeance upon sinners takes the form of His acting to redeem them and to save them

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from their various hells. This is how Zechariah interprets this theological reality a generation of two later, **Zechariah 9:11**,

Also, you (feminine singular) with My covenant's blood I sent forth your
prisoners,
from a cistern / pit—there is no water in it.

Compare:

Exodus 24:8,

And Moses took the blood,
and he sprinkled (it) upon the people;
and he said, Look—blood of the covenant,
which YHWH cut with you people, according to all these words!

Mark 14:24,

And he (Jesus) said to them,
This is the blood of mine, of the covenant,
that is being poured out on behalf of many.

Hebrews 9:20-22, where the author is referring to Moses, who was

- 20 Saying—This (is) the blood of the covenant,
concerning which the God commanded for you (plural);
21 and the tent, then, and all the vessels of the (temple) service,
with the blood in like manner he sprinkled.
22 and almost everything is being cleansed with blood according to the law,
and with shedding of blood forgiveness doesn't happen!...

“Trito-Isaiah is saying that God is the victor in His war against evil, not by offering violence but by submitting to it. The prophet gives us a picture of God at a specific moment in history, as specific as C.E. 33 [the crucifixion of Jesus] or C. E. 1944 (the year of Auschwitz). This is a picture of God ‘going down’ [our ‘stooping’] into the seething vat, the arena of ‘man’s inhumanity to man,’ so that even as they spill each other’s blood the living God becomes soaked therewith. From their blinded view of life, mankind can discover no meaning or purpose in their own wars and bloodletting. God alone knows how to use mankind’s hellish activities for good; He does so by taking upon Himself the absurdity of human violence...

“For, being ‘in Israel,’ He allowed Himself to be defeated in 587 B.C.E., and to be defeated actually by ‘My servant Nebuchadnezzar’ (**Jeremiah 25:9**). We are grateful that the whole line of theologians in the **Book of Isaiah** was able to wrestle through the

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whole issue, and so to have provided for us today with a theology of God that interprets to us the cross of Christ (**Matthew 16:21**,

From that time the Jesus began to show to the disciples of his,
that it is necessary (for) him to depart to Jerusalem,
and to suffer many things from the officials and high priests and religious
experts,
and to be put to death,
and on the third day to be raised up.)

“Such then is a total picture of Divine grace. That it is a true revelation of grace has been questioned, of course, all down the centuries, simply because we are all sinful creatures who cannot believe that grace could be so wonderful. And so there were theologians who insisted that God must be impassible [incapable of suffering or feeling pain]. Throughout the Scholastic period, for example, and into and beyond the Reformation the debate continued. Johannes Duns Scotus was born in the year that Thomas Aquinas produced his **Summa Theologica** (C.E. 1265). It was Duns Scotus who reaffirmed the totality of Divine grace as against Thomist soteriology, as did Martin Luther and most of his followers. But then these scholars took the **Old Testament** as seriously as they did the **New Testament**. Yet even today the debate goes on.” (Pp. 72-74)

But we wonder. Does the text indeed depict YHWH as the Divine Pacifist, Who only suffers with those who suffer? Or does it not as well depict YHWH as the Divine Warrior Who also fights against human evil-doers, whose life-blood spatters His royal garments? As we think of Auschwitz and the Nazi holocaust, we believe that God was with those who entered the gas chambers, weeping with those who wept, but also receiving them into His heavenly home.

But we also believe that God was with the Allies who marched through Europe to conquer the Nazis, and then enabled the German people to rebuild their nation. We think such a depiction is more true to the text of **Isaiah 63**. We think that God was present in Jesus at the crucifixion, bringing salvation out of terrible suffering and apparent defeat. But we also believe that God was present with the Roman armies under Vespasian and Titus, as they brought destruction upon Israel and Jerusalem and the Jewish nation. We would depict God’s royal garments as spattered with the blood of Jesus Christ, but also with the blood of those Jews who died at the hands of their Roman conquerors. We agree with Knight that the God of the **Bible** is a God Whose royal garments are stained with blood—both the blood of salvation and the blood of devastating judgment on evil.

See, for example, **Revelation 19:11-21**, where the victorious Jesus Christ is depicted in war-like imagery:

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19.11 And I saw the heaven having been opened, and look--a white horse; and the One sitting upon it [is being called] "Faithful and True." And in right relationship He judges and makes war. 19.12 Now His eyes--[like] a flame of fire; and upon His head, many crowns; having a name having been written, which no one knew, except He; 19.13 and having been clothed (with) a robe having been dipped in blood. And His name has been called "The Word of God." 19.14 And the armies, [the ones] in the heaven was following Him upon white horses, having been dressed (with) linen, white, clean. 19.15 And out of His mouth comes out a sharp sword, so that with it He might strike the nations; and He, He will shepherd them with a rod of iron, and He, He treads the winepress of the wine of the anger of the wrath of the God, the Almighty. 19.16 And He has upon the robe and upon His thigh a name having been written: "King of kings, and Lord of lords."

19.17 And I saw one messenger / angel having stood in the sun; and it cried [with] a great voice, saying to all the birds, to the ones flying in mid-heaven, Come, be gathered together into the supper, the great one of the God, 19.18 so that you may eat flesh of kings and flesh of commanders, and flesh of strong people and flesh of horses, and of the ones sitting upon them, and flesh of all--both of free people and of slaves, and of little ones and of great ones! 19.19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, having been gathered together to make the war with the One sitting upon the horse and with His army. 19.20 And the beast was seized, and with him the false spokesperson, the one who worked the signs before him, by which he led astray those who received the mark of the beast and those who are worshiping his image. Alive, the two were thrown into the lake of fire that burns with sulphur. 19.21 And the remainder were put to death by the sword of the One sitting upon the horse, the one that came out of His mouth; and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

Here, the Divine Warrior, "The Word of God," Jesus Christ, is depicted as wearing a robe "dipped in blood." Is that blood only his own? Has it not also been spattered with the blood of the "winepress of God's wrath"?

What do you think?

⁹Translations of this line vary, from "traveling in the greatness of his strength" (**King James**), to "Pressing forward in his great might" (**Tanakh**), to "marching in his great might" (**New Revised Standard**), to "striding forward in the greatness of his strength" (**New International**), to "marching so full of strength" (**New Jerusalem**), to "in might, with strength" (**Rahlfs**). But in order to translate by "marching," the Hebrew must be changed to **לָעַד**, as **Brown-Driver-Briggs** suggests. However, changing the text of an ancient manuscript and re-writing it to make it say what we think is appropriate is a very subjective and oftentimes misleading practice!

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I am speaking in righteousness,¹⁰

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Achtemeier comments that the picture is that of “a solitary, majestic, apparently enormous Warrior, [Who] sways (such is the force of **לָעָה** in **1d** [we say ‘stoops’; see the preceding footnote]) back and forth as he strides out of the south towards Jerusalem. He is without weapons [unless ‘speaking righteousness’ is considered a weapon] or accompanying army. He is clothed in a robe and leather armor [does the text say this?]; his garments spattered with a purple-red not their own [**verse 3** makes it clear that the purple-red is the life-blood of those who have been trodden down]...He comes to deliver, mighty to save. The figure can only be God Himself.” (Pp. 106-07)

¹⁰Translation of the last two lines of **verse 1**, the words of the Divine Warrior, vary, from:

“I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save” (**King James**), to
“It is I, who contend victoriously, Powerful to give triumph” (**Tanakh**), to
“It is I, announcing vindication, mighty to save” (**New Revised Standard**), to
“It is I, proclaiming victory, mighty to save” (**New International**), to
“It is I, whose word is saving justice, whose power is to save” (**New Jerusalem**),
to
“I discourse / dispute about righteousness and judgment of salvation” (**Rahlf's**).

We insist that the Hebrew text, **אֲנִי מְדַבֵּר בְּצִדְקָה רַב לְהוֹשִׁיעַ** should be translated “I, One speaking in righteousness, great to save / deliver,” much as **King James** has it, with no reason for the translations “contend victoriously,” or “announcing vindication,” or “proclaiming victory,” or “whose word is saving justice,” or the Greek’s “I discourse / dispute [compare Isaiah 1:18] about righteousness and judgment of salvation.” The Divine Warrior’s voice is heard in His “speaking righteousness,” and His righteousness saves / delivers all it touches—quite the opposite of the typical warrior kings of human history! He is a God Who “stoops,” and in His “stooping,” speaks “words of righteousness” that “save and deliver” those that are touched.

As Knight comments, “It is the feminine *tsedaqah*, which portrays the effect of God’s action in the lives of those He has redeemed, rendering them loving and creative personalities the one toward the other.

“Note therefore that the questioner does not see the Savior God as a war-God, a Roman Mars marching to victory over the bodies of the slain” (p. 72), even though this is the way many interpreters have understood the biblical picture here in **Isaiah 63**. [We say the biblical picture is ambiguous at this point; it is the picture of a Divine Warrior Who speaks righteousness, but is also the picture of a Divine Warrior Who has the life-blood of those upon whom He has trodden on His royal robes. And we remember our study of **Isaiah 59:17** where the Divine armor is “righteousness as a breast-plate,” along with a “helmet of salvation / deliverance,” and we were led to remark that

(continued...)

great to save / deliver!¹¹

¹⁰(...continued)

there were no offensive weapons such as a sword or a spear or a lance. This powerful God is indeed a Warrior, but the weapons that He fights with are words of righteousness that save and deliver, not through offensive weapons that kill and maim; but still His royal robes are depicted as stained with the life-blood of those He has trodden upon in Bozrah / Edom.

Slotki notes that beginning with this phrase, this is “the answer of the Divine Warrior. None of the Divine names, but only two of God’s attributes, are mentioned. He has been to Edom for a specific purpose: to punish the oppressors and save His people.” (P. 306)

Alexander states that “*Speaking in righteousness* is understood by most of the modern writers in the sense of speaking about it or concerning it, in which case righteousness must have the sense of deliverance, or at least be regarded as its cause. It is much more natural, however, to explain the phrase as meaning, I that speak in truth, I Who promise and am able to perform...

“The terms of this description are applied in **Revelation 19:13**, to the victorious Word of God, a name which has apparently some reference to **גֹּדַל בְּרַךְ**, ‘One speaking.’” (P. 414)

Oswalt states that “Righteousness is not what God speaks, but the manner in which He speaks. Who is this person? The one who constantly and characteristically speaks what is right.” (P. 596)

But we insist that **Third Isaiah** has already defined “righteousness / right relationship” in **chapter 58**. It is not something that is just spoken, or talked about, but something that is done—it is love in action, reaching out to all of those in need, delivering them from their needy condition, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked—loosing the bonds of wickedness, letting the oppressed go free—while honoring YHWH with one’s time, allowing workers (and animals) to have regular (one day in seven) times for rest. This is the God Who comes from Edom, YHWH Who has loosed the bonds of His people in Babylonian exile, defeating all oppressors while getting their life-blood spattered on His robes—the God Who is now calling His people to live by His righteousness, His righteous deeds, bringing deliverance / salvation to those who need it most!

And, we insist, this is not a depiction of a “Pacifist God.” Sometimes in order to make such righteousness real in human society, there is the necessity for armed conflict against oppressors such as Hitler, Chairman Mao, Stalin, Muslim Jihadists, etc., demanding the spattering of life-blood, before the righteous society can emerge. The central task is, of course, building the righteous society, but it is the “suffering servant” people who do the building, all too often having to die themselves for such a society to be built.

63:2 מְדוֹנֵעַ אָדָם לְלִבְיֹשֶׁתְךָ

וּבְגָדֶיךָ כְּדֹרֵךְ בְּגֵת:

For what reason (are) Your clothes red,
and Your garments like one treading in a wine-press?¹²

¹¹The “righteousness” of YHWH to His people is to save / deliver them. Instead of “righteousness / righteousness,” Slotki’s translation has “victory,” which we think is a very questionable translation of the noun צִדְקָה. Translations of this line vary:

King James, “I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.”

Tanakh, “It is I, who contend victoriously, Powerful to give triumph.”

New Revised Standard, “It is I, announcing vindication, mighty to save.”

New International, “It is I, proclaiming victory, mighty to save.”

New Jerusalem, “It is I, whose word is saving justice, whose power is to save.”

Rahlf’s, “I discuss righteousness and saving justice / judgment.”

But surely the Greek translation is inadequate—God does not just “discuss righteousness,” He does / enacts righteousness. He comes to the oppressed to free them, to give them new life and hope, even at the cost of the life-blood of their oppressors! This is what He has done for the Israelite captives in Edom / Babylon; it is what He wants the returnees from Babylon to do for all others—not to pull away from others as “unclean,” and to devote themselves to a life-time of fulfilling the *Torah’s* 613 commandments—but to welcome all others into their fellowship, accepting them as they are, without declaring them “unclean” or “untouchable,” and doing all in their power to meet their needs, transforming their lives! YHWH’s righteousness is “mighty to save / deliver,” while legalistic Judaism, such as taught by Ezra / Nehemiah and the Pharisees is powerless to save / deliver! What do you think?

¹²The editor of the 1QIs^a scroll states that the letters in the word for “wine-press” are illegible. He thinks they are ב and פ with a letter between which he cannot read. Our Hebrew text has בְּגֵת, “in a wine-press.”

Again the unidentified voice, which Slotki says is the prophet’s, and Achtemeier says is that of the watchmen on the wall, asks the Warrior a question—what is the reason for His clothes being red, spattered with the blood of grapes?

Slotki comments that “The blood-stains on the garments not having been explained, the prophet seeks further enlightenment...The Hebrew word for *red*, it should be noted, is of the same root as *Edom*.” (P. 306)

(continued...)

¹²(...continued)

Achtemeier comments on **verses 2-4** that “The watchers on the walls persist in their questioning. Why are God’s garments like those who tread the juice out of the grapes in the wine-trough at harvest time? Compare:

Joel 4:9-13^{Heb} / 3:9-13^{Eng}

- 9 Proclaim this among the nations;
consecrate war!
Stir up the mighty men;
let them draw near, let them come up,
all of the war's men!
- 10 Hammer your plows for the swords
and (your) pruning knives for spears;
let the weak say, A mighty man (am) !!
- 11 Come to help, and come, all the nations from round about, and be gathered
there;
bring down Your mighty men, YHWH!
- 12 Be aroused, and let the nations come up into Jehoshaphat's Valley;
for there I will sit to judge all the nations from round about.
- 13 Put forth a sickle, for the harvest has ripened;
come, descend, for a vat is full,
the wine presses have overflowed;
for great is their evil!
(This is certainly not a “pacifist” text! Rather, it unites the metaphor of the wine-press together with that of the Divine war.)

Lamentations 1:15, where we understand Jerusalem to be speaking:

My Lord treated all my mighty men lightly in my midst;
He proclaimed over me an appointed time to break my young men.
My Lord has trodden / trampled Judah’s virgin daughter (in a) winepress!
(Again, the metaphor of the winepress is used to describe war.)

And the dreadful answer comes back from God: because He has trodden His enemies
in His wrath. Compare

Isaiah 22:5,

Because a day of tumult, and treading down, and confusion belongs to my Lord
YHWH of Armies in (the) Valley of Vision--
tearing down a wall and a cry to the mountain!

(continued...)

¹²(...continued)

Isaiah 28:3,

With both feet it will be trampled,
the crown of majesty of Ephraim's drunken ones!

Micah 7:10,

And my enemy will see, and shame will cover her--
the one saying (feminine) to me, Where is He, YHWH your God?
My eyes will look on her--now she will be for trampling down, like mud (in the)
streets!

...and their lifeblood (literally, juice, to preserve the figure of grapes) has spattered on His robe and sandals. God's enemies have now been destroyed in His day of reckoning, a day planned from the first in His purpose (= 'heart' **verse 4a**). All opposition to Him is gone." (P. 107)

Alexander remarks that "It is a slight but effective stroke in this fine picture, that the **first verse** seems to speak of the stranger as still at a distance, whereas in the **second** he has come so near as to be addressed directly." (P. 414)

What do you think? Would you agree with Alexander that this is a "fine picture," with all its gore, and with masses of YHWH's enemies' bodies mangled in the wine-press of His wrath?

Oswalt states that the question means, "Has this person [the Warrior coming from Edom] been working in a wine press, stamping around on the newly harvested grapes to squeeze the juice out of them, and in the process getting the juice on his clothes?" (P. 597)

Only, we say, it is not a literal wine-press, and the juice is not that of newly harvested grapes, but the life-blood of YHWH's enemies, who have had their life-blood squeezed out of them, and now spattered all over His royal robes!

¹³Slotki comments on **verses 3-6** that they contain the Divine answer to the prophet's question. (P. 306)

Oswalt likewise states that "The Warrior's answer to this second question begins in this **verse (3)** and continues through **verse 6**. The answer stresses four things: the imagery of the wine press (**verses 3, 6**), the motive of anger (**verses 3, 6**), the fact that the work was done without assistance (**verses 3, 5**), and the purpose of redemption (**verse 4**)..."

(continued...)

¹³(...continued)

“The Warrior confirms that treading the wine trough is exactly what He has been doing. Although He does not explain the imagery here (He does in **verse 6**), no explanation is needed. 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 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...

“Here, as the prophet has said again and again, God’s rage is directed against those who would destroy and oppress His people. He is furious against all that would deprive them of the blessings He wishes to give them. The imagery is gruesome in its vividness; it says to us that we should do everything in our power to become part of His people and not be among His enemies.

“But the leading thought in the verse is that there was no one to help the Warrior in His awful task...The mixed metaphor occurs when we recognize that the peoples could not have helped Him—they were the grapes in the vat!

“A more significant point is revealed by the reference to the key thought of this division: the helplessness of human beings to accomplish the salvation of the world because of our impotence before evil, most especially that which resides in our own breasts.” (Pp. 597-98)

Oswalt goes on to depict Marx and Engels as being naive in their belief that if Russia got rid of its faulty economic system, the “good people of Russia,” would join together in acting for the common good.

But, according to Oswalt, with his belief in “total, hereditary depravity,” people are not “good,” and “no system, whether Jewish or Christian or whatever” [including Communism] can bring about goodness—only the Divine Warrior can accomplish this! This opens a big “can of worms,” with all sorts of disagreements. Marx and Engels advocated atheistic communism, and the end result is obvious—no God, no goodness—with Lenin and Stalin leading their nation in the murder of millions upon millions far outdistancing Hitler’s atrocities.

But the assumption of **Third Isaiah** is that the people of God can be righteous, and produce goodness—see the Divine command in **chapter 58**. Surely God doesn’t give commands that are impossible of fulfillment! The assumption of the Divine Warrior in this passage is that people should have joined with Him in this struggle to destroy evil

(continued...)

וּמַעֲמִים אֵין-אִישׁ אִתִּי
וְאֶדְרָכֶם בְּאַפִּי וְאֶרְמָסֶם בְּחַמְתִּי
וַיֵּז נֶצְחָם עַל-בְּגָדֵי וְכָל-מְלִבוּשֵׁי אֲנָלְתִּי:

I trod¹⁴ a wine-press (synonym)¹⁵ by Myself,
and there was not a man from (the) peoples with Me.¹⁶
And I trod them in My anger,
and I trampled them in My rage;
and their juice splattered upon My garments,
and all My clothes I would defile.¹⁷

¹³(...continued)
and produce goodness—not that they were unable, but that they were unwilling. What do you think?

We think that the United States and its Allies in the Second World War exemplified the fact that nations / peoples can embody righteousness and destructive warfare at the same time—as they crushed the regime of the Nazis, destroying the major cities in Germany, and then when the war ended, helped the Germans to rebuild their country. We do not think genuine righteousness would have done nothing to abolish the German war machine.

¹⁴Again the editor of 1QIs^a finds the letter ר in the verb דָּרַכְתִּי, “I trod” illegible.

Slotki notes that “Grapes were trodden under foot, and the juice splashed the treader’s garment.” (P. 306)

¹⁵The earlier word for wine-press in **verse 2** was גַּת, **gath**. Here, in **verse 3**, it is the synonym, פּוּרָה, **purah**. Holladay says that this latter word means “*trough* of the wine-press.”

¹⁶Slotki explains that this means there was no one either “to assist or to withstand.” (P. 306)

Perhaps—but we think it only means that YHWH had to do the work of treading by Himself, with no one assisting, not because they could not help, but because they would not.

¹⁷The last four lines in Hebrew are

(continued...)

¹⁷(...continued)

וְאֶדְרַכְּם בְּאַפִּי
וְאֶרְמַסֵּם בְּחַמְתִּי
וְיֵז נִצְחָם עַל-בְּגָדֵי
וְכָל-מַלְבוּשֵׁי אֲנֹלְתִי:

And I trod them (qal imperfect, with waw-conversive) in My anger;
and I trampled them (qal imperfect, with waw-conversive) in the wrath of
Mine;
and their juice / blood splatters will splatter (qal perfect with waw-conversive)
upon My garments;
and all My raiment / attire I would will defile.

(The last verb, אֲנֹלְתִי, is somewhat ambiguous, due to the fact that the root נֹל has two different meanings, “redeem” and “defile.” But what would it mean to “redeem,” “act as next-of-kin to” with regards to clothing splattered with blood? It is much easier to understand it as meaning “defile,” that is, the Divine Warrior would defile His royal garments by the splattering of blood on them. The verb looks to us like a qal imperfect, which would be translated either “I will / would defile.” **Brown-Driver-Briggs** states that it is hiphil perfect 1st person common singular, patterned after the Aramaic, and means “I defiled / polluted.” **King James** translates all of the verbs in these last four lines as futures: “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.”

Alexander comments on **verse 3** that “The comparison suggested in the question (**verse 2**) is here carried out in detail. Being asked why he looks like the treader of a wine-press, he replies that he has been treading one, and that alone...The meaning of the figure is then expressed in literal terms. ‘Of the nations there was not a man with me’...The more general opinion is...that but one act of treading is here mentioned, and that the nations are themselves represented as the grapes...

“The most satisfactory solution seems to be that these words are added to convey the idea that all the nations were on the adverse [unfavorable] side, none on that of the conqueror...As if he had said, I trod the press alone, and all the nations, without exception, were trodden in it. By all the nations we are of course to understand all but God’s people.” (P. 415)

But how can Alexander say that “of course” we are to understand all but God’s people? The phrase “all the nations” can certainly be understood to include Israel, can it not?

Third Isaiah’s depiction of YHWH is that of the Divine Warrior Who is fighting in the midst of the nations of the earth for righteousness—for loving care of the oppressed

(continued...)

63:4 כִּי יוֹם נִקְּם בְּלִבִּי

וְשָׁנַת גְּאוּלֵי בָאָה:

¹⁷(...continued)

and the needy. But YHWH meets opposition wherever He goes. The nations do not want to care for the needy, to commit their resources to build homes for the homeless, to purchase food and healing medicine for the hungry and the sick. And YHWH's unceasing goal has been to fight against such selfishness and lack of care, to bring relief to those who are suffering, to trample / redeem through His action, destroying their oppressors.

The metaphor of YHWH treading a wine-press is of course highly symbolic, and should not be taken literally, or carried too far. To say, as Alexander does, that "all the nations, without exception, were trodden in it," has to be modified, as he himself does, saying "we are of course to understand all but God's people." But the metaphor makes no such allowances. And, in the depictions of the entire **Book of Isaiah**, God's people are subject to Divine judgment, just as are the nations.

We say, the fact of human history is that in every nation there are always some people who care for the hungry, the homeless, the oppressed, the dying, and who commit their resources to their care. Doctrines of universal, hereditary total depravity are just not true to life. There are, of course, many people in every nation and people, who care little or nothing for others, and who selfishly refuse to practice biblical righteousness, including some so-called "Christian nations"; and there are religious organizations that cater to the wealthy, while looking down on the poor, rather than committing themselves to genuinely serving them.

The metaphor of the Divine Warrior treading the grapes must not be taken to mean that YHWH is trampling the life-blood out of everyone in every nation; but it should be taken to mean that YHWH is deeply angry with any and every people that refuses to practice genuine righteousness.

We take it to mean, in the context of **Third Isaiah**, that YHWH is going to come in anger and wrath against those following in the program of legalistic Judaism, building a wall of segregation between themselves as "holy," and the outsiders they consider "impure," divorcing foreign wives with their half-breed children, leaving in their wake single-mothers with fatherless children, and instead of practicing the righteousness of **chapter 58**, seeking to build an exclusive society devoted to keeping the 613 commandments of the Mosaic **Torah**, while refusing to associate with others who will not join in that practice. How do you think we should understand this metaphor?

Because a day of vengeance¹⁸ (was) in My heart,¹⁹
and (the) year of My redemption came.²⁰

¹⁸Slotki states that **יְמֵי נִקְמָה** means a day of vengeance “on the enemies of God and Israel, spoken of in **Isaiah 61:2**,

to proclaim a year of acceptance for the YHWH,
and a day of vengeance for our God;
to comfort all who are mourning... (P. 306)

Can this mean that YHWH’s “vengeance” operates through “acceptance” of all people, regardless of their evil, forgiving them in love, comforting all who mourn, i.e., by practicing the kind of “righteousness” He commands in **Isaiah 58**, accepting all humanity, and caring for their needs? Can that be what Divine “vengeance” is? Or does it mean YHWH’s vengeance is taken on all those in every nation, including Israel, who will not practice righteousness—that He takes vengeance by destroying those who do not care, and He acts to save / deliver the oppressed who mourn? What do you think?

¹⁹This means, Alexander states, “(In) my mind or purpose.” (P. 415)

This is the “heart of God”—to fight against oppression and lack of care among His creatures, and to act as the Next-of Kin to those who are oppressed, bringing them redemption / release! In the context of Third Isaiah, can this “day of vengeance” be referring to the day Cyrus entered into Babylon, proclaiming emancipation for those who had been taken captive from other nations, allowing them to return home? We think it may well be.

And we wonder—did Lyndon Johnson and the Democrats get their “War on Poverty” from such passages as this? It is clear to us that Jesus Christ spent his life / ministry in just such a battle, seeking not only to teach the content of **Isaiah 58** (see **Matthew 25:31-46**), but to enact that righteousness in first century Galilee / Israel—ministering directly to those considered “untouchable” by the Pharisees, healing the lepers, associating with “sinners” such as prostitutes and tax-collectors, caring for the families of Roman soldiers, insisting that the temple should be a house of prayer for all people, quoting **Isaiah 56:7**, etc. etc.—which resulted in His bloody death. Truly, we believe, it was Jesus’ spoken and acted “righteousness” which led to his becoming the suffering servant of God—exactly what YHWH wanted His people to become!

²⁰Slotki comments that the phrase “My year of redemption” means redemption “of Israel. This is probably *the year of the Lord’s good pleasure* mentioned, like *the day of vengeance*, in **Isaiah 61:2**. God’s vengeance is only for a while—a *day*; but *His good pleasure* is everlasting—a year without end.” (P. 306) The words *everlasting* and *without end* are being read into the text. And it is strange to describe “year” as “a year without end.”

(continued...)

²⁰(...continued)

To say that a year of YHWH's redemption "came" should not be understood to mean that there was no redemption before that "year." YHWH has always been a "Redeemer," Who has come to the aid of His people. But in the year that the Persian ruler Cyrus sent the Babylonian exiles home—that was indeed a year (that continued on for many years) of YHWH's redemption of His people.

Translations of this line vary:

King James, "and the year of my redeemed is come."

Tanakh, "And My year of redemption arrived."

New Revised Standard, "and the year for my redeeming work had come."

New International, "the year for me to redeem had come."

New Jerusalem, "my year of retribution has come." (We think this is a mistaken translation.)

Rahfs, "and a year of ransoming / redemption is present / has arrived."

This statement does not sound like it is talking about a redemption that will come six centuries in the future; rather, it is talking about a redemption that was present when the statement was made, a redemption that had already come!

And we ask, When is YHWH Israel's or humanity's "Redeemer"? Our answer is, YHWH has always been Israel's and humanity's Redeemer, and always will be. He didn't suddenly become their Redeemer when Jesus died! Yes, Jesus embodies YHWH's redemption as well--YHWH was present in Jesus Christ, acting on our behalf, as our "Next-of-Kin"! But YHWH was also Redeemer for the returnees from Babylon! See:

Isaiah 41:14, "Your Redeemer is the Set-apart One of Israel"

Isaiah 43:1, "Fear not, for I have redeemed you"

Isaiah 43:14, "YHWH, your Redeemer, the Set-apart One of Israel"

Isaiah 44:6, "YHWH, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, YHWH of Armies"

Isaiah 44:22, "I have blotted out your transgressions like a cloud and your sins like mist; return to Me, for I have redeemed you."

Isaiah 44:23, "For YHWH has redeemed Israel"

Isaiah 44:24, "YHWH your Redeemer"

Isaiah 47:4, "Our Redeemer—YHWH of Armies is His name"

(continued...)

²⁰(...continued)

Isaiah 48:17, “Your Redeemer, the Set-apart One of Israel”

Isaiah 48:20, “YHWH has redeemed His servant, Jacob”

Isaiah 49:7, “YHWH, the Redeemer of Israel”

Isaiah 49:26, “I am YHWH your Savior, and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob”

Isaiah 52:9, “YHWH has comforted His people; He has redeemed Jerusalem”

Isaiah 54:5, “the Set-apart One of Israel is your Redeemer”

Isaiah 54:8, “YHWH your Redeemer”

Isaiah 59:20, “a Redeemer / redeemer will come to Zion”

Isaiah 60:16, “Your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob”

Isaiah 63:9, “In His love and in His pity He redeemed them; He lifted them up and carried them all the days of old”

Isaiah 63:16, “You, O YHWH, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is Your name”

In the light of these numerous passages, we must conclude that YHWH was Israel’s Redeemer in the past, and is Israel’s Redeemer in the present as the exiles begin their new life in their homeland, and that He will be Israel’s Redeemer in the future as well. Do you agree?

And if YHWH is this kind of Redeemer God for Israel, is He not also the Redeemer God for all other nations? See **Amos 9:7**, which answers our question, “Yes!”

²¹Slotki comments that **verse 5** “is a reminiscence of **Isaiah 59:16**.” (P. 306)

And He saw that there is no man;
and He was appalled, because there is no one entreating.
And His arm saved / delivered for Him,
and His righteousness / righteousness, it supported Him.

Achtemeier comments on **verses 5-6** that “The final strophe emphasizes, however, that God won His victory alone...He was astonished that there were no human beings who would join cause with Him...And now, having defeated all enemies, Yahweh

(continued...)

וַאֲשֶׁתּוֹמָם וְאֵין סוֹמֵךְ
וַתּוֹשַׁע לִי זְרַעִי
וַחֲמַתִּי הִיא סִמְכַתְּנִי:

And I looked, and there was no one helping;

²¹(...continued)

comes to Judah to save...But her [Judah's] deliverance will mean, as in the preceding chapters, the salvation of the rest of the world." (P. 107)

Compare **Zephaniah 3:14-17**,

- 14 Cry aloud, daughter of Zion! Raise a shout, Israel!
Rejoice and exult with all your heart, Daughter of Jerusalem!
- 15 YHWH took away / removed your (guilty) verdicts!
He cleared out your enemy!
- 16 In that day it will be said to Jerusalem, Do not be afraid!
Zion—Do not let your hands be weak!
- 17 YHWH your God (is) in your midst—a Mighty Man—He will save / deliver!
He will exult over you with gladness;
He will cause silence by / in His love.
He will rejoice over you with a ringing cry!

Oswalt asks concerning **verse 5**, "What can accomplish God's work in the world? Only the mighty arm of His wrath. This is the way in which the arm of the Lord was most frequently thought of in the Israelite mind: His mighty power to deliver us from our enemies and confirm our election. But as **53:1ff.** showed conclusively, if that picture is correct, it is only partially so. We must not leave out another side to the picture. One of the ways in which the servant / messiah has crushed the power of evil in the world is to have taken it into himself and forever destroyed its hold over us...God will achieve the redemption of His people, and we may experience His arm as the 'righteousness' of God on our behalf, or we may experience it as His wrath. The choice is ours." (P. 599)

But is the suffering servant of **Isaiah 53** an expression of "wrath"? The suffering servant gave / gives himself to and for the sins of Israel and the world. That's what YHWH wants the Nation of Israel to be, and that's what Jesus Christ was. Not "wrath," but self-giving love—true righteousness—is the way chosen for His people to accomplish the Divine work in the world! It is only the failure to serve through suffering, and failure to practice true righteousness that causes the Divine wrath and anger.

What do you think?

and I was appalled, and there was no one supporting.²²

And My arm saved / delivered for Me,

and My rage, it supported Me.²³

63:6 וְאִבּוֹס עַמִּים בְּאַפִּי

וְאֲשַׁכְּרֵם בְּחַמְתִּי

וְאוֹרִיד לָאָרֶץ נִצְחָם:

And I trampled peoples in My anger,

and I made them drunk²⁴ in the rage of Mine!

And I brought down their juice / blood to the earth!²⁵

²²What do you think this means that YHWH was appalled over the lack of support? We take it to mean that YHWH expected His human creatures to join in His work of treading the winepress—getting rid of oppression, and replacing it with true righteousness—and thereby saving / delivering the oppressed. Did YHWH consider it impossible for human beings to join in that work? We say, No—YHWH their God fully expects them, His human creatures, to share in this Divine work. The Divine emotions are committed to this—and YHWH will accomplish it, even if His creatures refuse to help.

²³It is a two-fold statement. The Divine Warrior / Wine-Press Treader is filled with wrath, with unyielding determination to accomplish His work of saving / delivering humanity. His wrath urges Him on, causing Him to relentlessly stamp out those who oppress and refuse to care for the hungry, the homeless, the suffering poor; and in so doing YHWH brings salvation / deliverance to those who are being oppressed. It is a Divine War on Oppression and Injustice!

²⁴Where our Hebrew text reads וְאֲשַׁכְּרֵם, “and I made them drunk,” a large number of Hebrew manuscripts and the Aramaic Targum read וְאֲשַׁבְּרֵם, “and I shattered them.” Alexander commends this alternative reading (p. 410). **Rahlf**s omits the second line of **verse 6**.

²⁵Achtemeier asks concerning this picture of God in **Isaiah 63:1-6**, “What are we to make of such a bloody, slaughtering, conquering God? The figure of the trodden grapes, with their juice spattering out, which is used to portray God crushing out the life of His enemies, is appalling to our eyes, going far beyond the portrayal of the Divine Warrior in **59:16-20**...

“Here the message is driven home in all its awfulness: God Who comes to save is terrible against those who oppose Him. [We note that there is a very similar depiction of the word of God (Jesus) as a warrior, riding on a victorious stallion, with a robe

(continued...)

²⁵(...continued)

dipped in blood, ruling the nations with a rod of iron in **Revelation 19:11-16**—see footnote 8.]

“Certainly we should be warned by this passage if we hinder or oppose God’s purposes, for the Trito-Isaianic community intended the oracle to warn all enemies of God. But principally that community intended this victory song to be a source of comfort for the people of God. God will destroy all evil opposition to His cause in the world. His enemies’ strength is as nothing before His might. He can crush opponents as easily as a man can crush the grapes in the winepress with his bare feet. In a world such as ours, full of violence and injustice and cold indifference to the ways of God, that is a source of comfort. God will win the battle and come to save His people...

“The Trito-Isaianic community did not believe that the ideal programs constructed in exile by the Zadokites [High Priests] and priestly writers and Ezekiel’s disciples [with their insistence on rebuilding the walls of segregation and restoring the temple worship with its animal sacrifices] could guarantee either Yahweh’s favor or the security of the future. That future, they maintained, depended solely on the mercy and might of a sovereign God. It is that might, over against all rebellion against Him, and that mercy, determined to save His Own, which are set forth in this victory song in unforgettable fashion.” (Pp. 107-09)

For this imagery of the treading of the wine-press, see:

Lamentations 1:15, where the voice speaking for destroyed Jerusalem speaks:

My Lord treated all my mighty men lightly in my midst;
He proclaimed over me an appointed time to break my young men.
My Lord has trodden / trampled Judah’s virgin daughter (in a) winepress!

Joel 3:13^{Eng} / **4:13**^{Heb},

Send forth a sickle, because harvest has ripened / grew ripe!
Go, tread, because a winepress was full!
The wine-vats overflowed, because great (is) their evil!

Revelation 14:19-20,

19 And the messenger / angel threw his sickle / pruning hook into the earth,
and he gathered in the vine of the earth.
And he threw (it) into the great winepress of the wrath of God.
20 And the winepress was trodden outside of the city;
and blood came out from the winepress, up to the bridles of the horses,
for some 200 miles!

(continued...)

²⁵(...continued)

Oswalt comments on **63:1-6** that “Tertullian, Origen, Jerome, and other church fathers boldly applied this passage 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.” (P. 595)

But Oswalt disagrees with Calvin, and thinks the imagery of the Divine Warrior treading the winepress includes the messiah’s death on the cross: “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 [no—His doing what no one else was willing to join in doing, as God expected them to do!] Furthermore, both passages stress that it is the arm of God by which salvation appears, and it is apparent from **chapters 49-53** that the arm of God is His servant [Yes, YHWH’s servant is YHWH’s arm; but His arm is not limited to the messiah --Jesus Christ--as Oswalt implies--see the numerous passages throughout the **Hebrew Bible** where the Divine arm is used for YHWH’s mighty acts throughout history]...

“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 [yes, their refusal to become suffering servants, and their failure to practice genuine righteousness] (compare **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 [but for Oswalt, this is something that will only happen some six centuries later, in the suffering of Jesus Christ; and the fact is, YHWH has already forgiven Israel—see **40:2**, long before the Messiah’s suffering]. If it is true that He will indeed destroy all those who stubbornly remain at enmity with Him in the last day (**Revelation 19:13-15**), it is because He first submitted Himself ‘to the point of death—even death on a cross’ (**Philippians 2:8**). What does this mean for our understanding of the passage and its function here?...

“First the blood that spatters the robes of the Warrior is unquestionably that of His enemies. Sin and evil will be converted or destroyed...

“Second, this is not an allegorical presentation of the crucifixion, but is not limited to, or primarily about, that event...It is about the destruction of all that prevents the ‘holy people’ from realizing all that God has promised them. In this sense, the passage is about the work of the messiah that makes it possible for the people of God to be and to do what God commands them to do.” (Pp. 595-96)

(continued...)

²⁵(...continued)

We think Oswalt's interpretation of the passage as centered in Jesus Christ, the messiah, keeps Oswalt from understanding the passage, and causes him to interpret it in a misleading, allegorical way—the kind of interpretation that Calvin warned against.

²⁶Slotki states that **verses 63:7** through **64:11**^{Heb} / **12**^{Eng} constitute “a prayer, confession and thanksgiving.” He also states that **verses 7-9** express “gratitude to God for His past kindness and mercy to Israel.” (P. 307)

Achtemeier comments that **verses 7-14** open with “a recital of the saving deeds of Yahweh... Yahweh is spoken of in the third person and not addressed until **63:14d**... Though not deserving on her part, Israel has been adopted by God as His Own possession, as His special people, set apart for His purpose in the world...(Exodus 9:4-6).

“This adoption of Israel has taken place in the exodus from Egypt, and from that time forth, Israel has been Yahweh's adopted son...The relation into which Yahweh, in His grace, has entered with His people, is therefore one of the most tender love and care. All of Israel's sufferings have been felt in the Divine heart, **63:9**...The expectation of Yahweh has been, therefore, that Israel would respond in the love and obedience of a faithful son to His fatherly love and care...

“And this history of mercy is then contrasted with Israel's perfidy [deceitfulness], **63:10**. Despite all of Yahweh's merciful deeds, Israel has rebelled against its Father... The effect of Israel's disobedience has been grief within the Divine Spirit (**63:10**; compare **Genesis 6:6**)...The God Who is always Father to Israel therefore Himself became their Enemy, and waged...warfare against them...[resulting] in the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem and exile into Babylonia in 587 B.C.E.” (Pp. 113-14)

Oswalt entitles **63:7-14** “Faithfulness and rebellion.”

He comments that **63:7-14** is an expansion of the historical reminiscence that is a frequent element in community laments...The recollection of the past serves to reveal again the character of God, which is the foundation of all Israel's hopes and dreams... Would not the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile effectively put an end to all that Israel had pretended about itself and its God? The prophet argues that that is not the case. There is a continuity with the past that the most terrifying upheavals cannot change. Even if Jerusalem should fall, the God of Jerusalem is unchanged, and the character that the patriarchs knew is still present for the patriarchs most distant descendants...

“What has befallen Israel in her history, and what will befall her, is nothing other than a function of her relationship with God. If that relationship is damaged, historical disaster may be expected; if that relationship is intact and flourishing, she need fear

(continued...)

²⁶(...continued)

nothing any nation can do to her (compare **Isaiah 10:5-27**). Thus a time of chaos and disaster is not the time to give up on God, but most particularly the time to turn to Him.” (Pp. 603-04)

Knight entitles **verses 7-8** “A Prophetic Liturgy,” and comments that “in what at first looks like an independent poem we are given an exegesis of the words ‘My Own arm brought Me victory’ (**verse 5c**), or better, ‘wrought salvation.’ Today one meets with attempts at creating a theology of the Cross that takes no account of the Covenant, or even of the **Old Testament** itself for that matter. But to our poet, the Covenant is all-important. The two English words ‘steadfast love’ represent the covenantal term **חֶסֶד**, *chesedh*. It is known to Israel as the basic experience granted them at Sinai (**Exodus 20:5-6**; see **Psalms 136** [where the phrase, ‘for His steadfast love endures to long-lasting time’ is repeated 26 times!]). Here the word is used in the plural, describing the loving actions created and performed by the living God in history. I will ‘recount’ these, says Trito-Isaiah, meaning bring them to mind, telling others about God’s loyalty (**חֶסְדֵי־יְהוָה**, *chesadiym*) and compassion (**רַחֲמֵי־יְהוָה**, *rachamiym*) or ‘mercy.’ This declaration of the prophet is important.

“Down through the centuries there have been those who have sought God in the silence. Such silence can only too easily ignore historical facts. Dietrich Bonhoeffer notes that mystical silence, by its absence of words, is...the soul secretly chattering away to itself (**Christ the Center**, p. 27). But what **Old Testament** (and the Church) demands of us ‘is silence before the Word.’ So here our poet has been silent; he has listened, he has read his Scriptures first, the record of God’s mighty saving acts of love. Only then, therefore, does he declare: ‘I will recount the steadfast love of the Lord.’

“One such act of love is described in this way: ‘For He said, Surely (**אֵלֵּי**, *ak*, ‘Oh, but they are not like that!’), they are My people, sons who will not deal falsely (**שֶׁקֶר**, *shaqar*),’ simply because they have been My people since the days of Moses (**Exodus 19:5**). The next line is a simple statement. Knowing in His love for them that His people must live with the mystery of evil, ‘He became their Savior.’ His means to that end was to enter into a covenant with them.” (Pp. 74-5)

We do not understand why Knight makes these comments—other than to show that the **Hebrew Bible**, long before the coming of Christ and Christianity, emphasized God’s love and mercy, His forgiveness and grace that accompanied His covenant—in opposition to Christian commentators who make these matters of the distant future, only to become real with the coming of Jesus. We certainly agree with that!

Alexander states concerning **verse 7** that “The sudden change of tone in this verse has...led to many suppositions as to its connection with what goes before and

(continued...)

תְּהִלַּת יְהוָה
 כָּעַל כָּל אֲשֶׁר-נִמְלְנוּ יְהוָה
 וְרַב-טוֹב לְבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל
 אֲשֶׁר-נִמְלַם כְּרַחֲמָיו
 וְכָרַב חַסְדָּיו:

²⁶(...continued)

follows.” He concludes that “the passage must be understood as relating to the favors experienced and the sins committed by the chosen people throughout the period of the old dispensation. There is no need of assuming any speaker but the Prophet himself.” (Pp. 416-17)

This is typical for Alexander, with his “dispensationalist” view of biblical history. Again we observe that there is no mention in the text of any such thing as “the period of the old dispensation.”

Oswalt states that the language in **verse 7** is “somewhat reminiscent of **Psalm 51:3**^{Heb} / **1**^{Eng},

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your steadfast-love!
 According to Your compassions, blot out my transgressions!,

the prophet begins his lament with a heavily repetitive assertion of the goodness of God...This thought is emphasized by the repetition of חֶסֶד, *chesedh*, (kindness [our ‘steadfast-love’]) as the first and last words of the verse. What has the Hebrew experience taught them about God, first and last? He is a God of unfailing kindness, grace, mercy, and love. Circumstances may change, our rebellions may even make Him our Enemy. But the חֶסֶד, *chesedh* of God never changes; and when we recount all that God has done in our experience, it will end up in praise for Who He is... [Yes!]

“The emphasis on memory, both here and again in **verse 11**, is at the heart of biblical faith...The evidence of God’s חֶסֶד will be seen in all the ways in which He has *benefitted* His people through the years...He has treated us not with legal reserve, but with the tender *compassion* of a Mother.” (Pp. 604-05) Again we say, Yes! The biblical teaching concerning the love of God for His people, and for all the peoples and nations of the world, as Second and Third Isaiah insist, did not begin with the coming of Jesus!

YHWH's steadfast-loves I will cause to remember--²⁷

praises of YHWH--²⁸

according to everything which YHWH has dealt out to us,

and (His) great goodness to Israel's house,

which He dealt out to them according to His compassions,

and according to His great steadfast-loves!²⁹

63:8³⁰ וַיֹּאמֶר אֶף-עַמִּי הֵמָּה

בְּנִים לֹא יִשְׁקְרוּ

²⁷Slotki's translation has "I will make mention," and Slotki suggests "'commemorate' in gratitude." (P. 307)

²⁸Slotki holds that "praises" (תְּהִלָּת) means "praiseworthy acts." (P. 307)

Alexander by contrast, states that "There is no need of giving to תְּהִלָּת [which he translates by 'praises'] the factitious [artificially created] sense of praiseworthy acts or virtues...The proper sense of *praises* is appropriate and sufficient." (P. 417)

Still, as Alexander admits, the Greek translation has τὰς ἀρετὰς, "the excellences / virtues," and as the text continues, it speaks of the things YHWH has done for His people—i.e., His "loving acts."

²⁹Again, we urge, for commentary on this verse, meditate on **Psalms 136**.

The Hebrew noun here is in the construct form of the plural noun, חֲסִדִים, חֲסִדֵי, which means "steadfast-loves of (YHWH)..."

³⁰Oswalt comments on **verses 8-9** that "For any Israelite, the most fundamental evidence of God's beneficence was the fact of election. For some unknown reason, God had chosen Abraham and his descendants to be His people. They never could quite get over the wonder of that choice...Again and again they testified that there was no reason why God should have chosen them, yet He did. If nothing else showed the unmerited grace (חֲסִד, *chesedh* [again, our 'steadfast-love'] of God, that surely did.

"But an expectation went with that election, one that is particularly important in the context of **Isaiah 56-66**. That is the expectation that His people would respond to their election with lives of absolute loyalty and integrity; they would not be *false*." (P. 605)

וַיְהִי לָהֶם לְמוֹשִׁיעַ:

And He said,³¹ Surely³² they (are) My people,
sons / children (who) will not act falsely!

³¹The original text of 1QIs^a omitted the letter ך at the end of the phrase וַיֹּאמֶר, “and He said,” but a later hand has written in the letter above the line, correcting the text.

³²Alexander translates the adverb וַיִּשְׁׁ, “surely, howbeit” by “only,” by which he means “a solemn declaration of His having chosen Israel, to the exclusion of all other nations. Only they (and no others) are My people.” (P. 417)

The reason for this is that Alexander thinks that otherwise the verse is expressing “unfounded confidence and hope on God’s part, *surely they are My people, children that will not lie.*” (**Ibid.**) And for Alexander, it is unacceptable for YHWH to be depicted as being mistaken in His confidence—which we hold, is exactly what the passage states.

What do you think? Is this not similar to the depiction of God in the **Genesis** story of the flood (**chapters 6-9**), where God repents of what He has done, acknowledging that it has not worked, and determines to work in a different manner?

It is a very “human” God that is being depicted in that **Genesis** story, and also here--what scholars call “anthropomorphism,” describing God in terms of humanity. It is a God Who is involved in human history, in the wars and their outcomes of His people, in their successes and in their failures--Who has hopes for His people, hopes that don’t always come true. Do you believe in such a God? Or do you dismiss such depictions, as unworthy of being taken seriously?

In **Genesis 18-19** YHWH is depicted as revealing His plan concerning the fate of Sodom to Abraham, and then entering into a “bargaining session” with Abraham, in which Abraham seems to be getting his side of the bargain. Do you believe in such a God as that? Is that the kind of “bargaining” or “debating” that **Isaiah 1:18** is referring to? Do you honestly believe that God listens to human arguments, and makes adjustments in their light? Or does the God you believe in demand that you keep quiet, and never express your true feelings and desires and hopes—simply submitting to His will, no matter what happens? Is that your definition of “faith”? Was Abraham being unfaithful, or irreverent?

And what do you make of Jesus’ cry of despair from the cross, “My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?” When you come face to face with death, whether your own or that of loved one, especially in a tragic, unexplainable accident, or act of injustice, do you dare to ask such a question? If the God of the **Bible** can have a mistaken hope, can’t we as well?

And He was theirs for a Savior.³³

63:9 בְּכָל־צָרָתָם׃ (לֹא) [לֹ] צָר

וּמֵלֶאדָּךְ פְּנֵי הוֹשִׁיעִם

בְּאַהֲבָתוֹ וּבְחַמְלָתוֹ הוּא גָּאֵלֵם

וַיִּנְשָׁלֵם וַיִּנְשָׂאֵם כָּל־יְמֵי עוֹלָם׃

In all their distress, it was distress to Him;³⁴

³³Translations of this line vary, from “so He was their Savior,” to “So He was their Deliverer,” to “and He became their Savior.” **Rahlf**s has “and He become to them for salvation / deliverance.”

³⁴The Masoretes offer two readings: first, the *kethibh*, “what is written,” לא, “not”; second, the *qere*, “to be read,” לוֹ, “to Him.” With what was written, the statement denies that it was distress, evidently meaning it was not distress to God, even though it was to them. With the *qere*, “to be read,” it means that the distresses of God’s people are also a distress of His. Do you believe in a God Who has “distress”? Compare Knight’s comments on the belief in an “impassable God” in footnote 8.

Slotki, reading the *qere*, comments that “God Himself, so to speak, participates in the sufferings of His people.” He adds that *kethibh* means “In all their adversity He was no adversary.” (P. 307) Alexander objects to this, holding that it unnecessarily depicts God as having “human” emotions—compare footnote 32.

Rahlfs translates the *kethibh*, “not,” but denies the Hebrew statement: “out of all tribulation, not an ambassador nor a messenger / angel, but rather Lord Himself saved / delivered them!”

Alexander seeks to clear it all up by holding that a number of passages in **Exodus** demonstrate that the phrase, “the angel of His face,” “determine the sense of *the angel of His presence*, as denoting the angel whose presence was the presence of [YHWH], or in whom [YHWH] was personally present...that Divine person Who is represented in the **New [Testament]** as the brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express image of His Person (**Hebrews 1:3**), the image of God (**2 Corinthians 4:4**; **Colossians 1:15**), in Whose face the glory of God shines (**2 Corinthians 4:6**) and in Whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (**Colossians 2:9**).” (Pp. 419-20)

In this way, Alexander introduces a full-blown Christian theology into his interpretation of **Isaiah 63:9**, claiming that the Greek translation is a “perversion of the text,” (p. 420), and leading to the conclusion that wherever the **Hebrew Bible** speaks of

(continued...)

and His face's messenger / angel³⁵ saved / delivered them.

³⁴(...continued)

YHWH's "angel" or "messenger" it is in reality speaking of Jesus Christ in His preincarnate existence, a view that has oftentimes been held by Roman Catholic exegetes.

³⁵Slotki states that *the angel of His presence* is "expressive of Divine manifestation in a perceptible form." (P. 307)

Knight comments that "Within the bonds of the covenant, then, God shared Israel's life. So, naturally, 'in all their affliction He was afflicted.' The text of this crucial verse, however, is disputable. The Hebrew runs: 'In all their affliction He was not an adversary [reading the *kethibh*], and the angel of His 'face' ('presence') saved them.' This phrase refers to the angel of the covenant mentioned at **Exodus 23:20-22**.

"The angel of God,' or 'the angel of Yahweh,' or just 'the angel' appears frequently in the earlier literature. We may observe two things about him.

(1) He seems to have no essential 'being' of his own; he is exactly what the word angel means, a messenger. He is like a flame of fire that obeys its master by igniting the woodpile and then disappearing (**Psalms 104:4**,

One making His angels / messengers winds
His servants flaming fire(s).)

He is of no importance in himself; what is important is the message he brings...

(2) The 'Word' may take the form of a human person, for the messenger usually (but not always) is made visible to human consciousness as a human being (**Genesis 16:7-13** [Hagar in desperate condition in the wilderness]; **Numbers 22:22-35** [Balaam and his balky donkey]; **Judges 2:1-4** [announcement that YHWH will not drive out the inhabitants of the land]; **6:11-22** [the call of Gideon]; **13:3-21** [the birth of Samson])...

"The' angel (Greek: 'My' angel) knows the way to the prepared place [the promised land]...Israel therefore, the covenant partner, must necessarily obey him, and not rebel against him, 'for My name is in him' (**Exodus 23:21**). That is, though remaining transcendent, God is at the same time present 'in person'...

"Frequently elsewhere, especially at **Isaiah 37:36** [YHWH's angel / messenger strikes down 185,000 Assyrians in one night], in observing the action of the angel we see the face of the God Who is beyond human sight. This perhaps is why the [Greek translation of **Isaiah 63:9**]...translates 'Not an ambassador, but Himself saved them'...

"But why did God do so? 'Because He loved him [Israel], and He Himself redeemed them [His people].'" (Pp. 75-6)

In His love and in His mercy He redeemed / ransomed them.³⁶

And He lifted them up and He carried them³⁷ all (the) days of long-ago.³⁸

63:10³⁹, 1 וְהִנֵּה מָרוֹ וְעֵצְבוֹ אֶת־רוּחַ קְדָשׁוֹ

³⁶Having been taught in Christian Colleges in both Texas and Florida that “there is no salvation in the **Old Testament**,” as I began reading the **Hebrew Bible**, passages such as this brought me to the conviction that I had been misled by such teaching. Here is the clear affirmation that God’s love and mercy redeemed / ransomed the sinful, disobedient Israelites, saving them, long centuries before the coming of Christ.

³⁷Slotki’s translation has “bore them,” and Slotki suggests ‘took them up,’ as a parent raises a child and carries him.” (P. 307)

³⁸It wasn’t a temporary salvation / redemption—but one that had continued on throughout Israel’s past, and would continue on throughout Israel’s future. It didn’t mean Israel hadn’t or wouldn’t have to suffer, or go through extremely difficult times—but it meant that throughout their experiences, however difficult, YHWH was with them, carrying them, continually saving / delivering them, acting as their Next-of-Kin!

Knight comments that “following the covenant wording of **Exodus 19:4** [‘I bore you on eagle’s wings] Trito-Isaiah adds, ‘He lifted them up and carried them all the days of old,’ as an Eastern mother would carry her baby on her back across the Sinai desert.” (Pp. 75-6)

³⁹Slotki comments on **verses 10-14** that “Israel’s rebellion turned God from Friend into Foe; and when he [Israel] was plunged into abject [extremely bad] misery, he could but recall in anguish the wonders of old, longing for a return of the preceding days of glory.” (P. 308)

Knight comments on these verses that “‘But as for them (וְהִנֵּה) [literally, ‘and they’], they rebelled.’ That action by Israel ‘grieved His Holy Spirit’ or, as might say, broke God’s heart. **Verse 10b** thus shows a continuity with **verse 6**, making the whole chapter a unity...God remembered how He had given Israel His covenant and had promised to be their God no matter what might happen.

“God then proceeded to ask Himself questions! ‘Where is he who brought up...?’ In ‘the days of old’, of Moses’, Miriam and Aaron had been ‘the shepherds of His flock.’ In other words, God asks Himself if He had not perhaps reneged on His responsibilities to Israel within the covenant.

“‘Where is He who put in the midst of them His Holy Spirit (which is to be obeyed, **verse 10**)?’ The question has worried some expositors, for nowhere in the **Book of Exodus** is the Holy Spirit even mentioned [but see Exodus 31:3 and 35:31 where the skilled workers on the tabernacle are said to be filled with the רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים, ‘Spirit of God’]. But what we do find in **Exodus** is that Yahweh put His Word in Israel’s

(continued...)

וַיִּהְיוּ לָהֶם לְאוֹיֵב

הוּא נִלְחָם-בָּם:

And / but⁴⁰ they rebelled, and they grieved His set-apart Spirit;⁴¹

³⁹(...continued)

midst at Sinai, when He gave His people the **Torah**. Eight hundred years later, therefore, Trito-Isaiah found no difficulty in identifying the Spirit with the Word of God. Trito-Isaiah was no ‘biblical literalist.’ Rather, he interpreted the Scriptures as he felt them to be true, yet in accordance with the new circumstances that had developed over the years. In like manner, because he was a close disciple of the Isaiahs, Paul virtually never quoted the **Old Testament** literally, but adapted his references to interpret the Word to give meaning within his still very different circumstances.” (Pp. 76-77)

We think that there is little difference between the “Holy Spirit” and the “Spirit of God,” but still basically agree with Knight. There are places where Paul quotes **Second** and **Third Isaiah** in ways that are developments of their language, but are not exact or precise. See our end-note 1 for quotations from or references to **Isaiah 40-66** by Paul.

Oswalt asks concerning **verse 10**, “What was the response of God’s people, those who would not be false to Him (**verse 8**)?...The response is rebellion, that most heinous of all sins in Isaiah’s mind (Isaiah uses two sets of words to express rebellion: those derived from פָּשַׁע, [some 21 occurrences]...and those derived from מָרָה, [some 5 occurrences, including here]. The latter is more expressive of out-and-out refusal to obey...The ‘children’ have become ‘false’ in the most obstinate way.” (P. 607)

⁴⁰Literally “and,” but here we take it to be a disjunctive conjunction, as does Slotki, who states that “the Hebrew is emphatic: they of all people upon whom God had bestowed such favor.” (P. 308) We do not think the Hebrew is explicitly emphatic—rather, by changing the conjunction “and” to “but,” the translator reads the emphasis into the text. But we think this is appropriate for the meaning.

⁴¹Alexander states that “There seems to be an allusion in this clause to the injunction given to the people at the exodus, in reference to the angel who was to conduct them.” (P. 420)

Exodus 23:20-21,

- 20 Look! I am sending a messenger before you to guard you on the road,
to bring you to the place which I have prepared.
21 Be on guard before his face, and listen to his voice!
You shall not be bitter against him,
because he will not forgive your transgressions,
since My name is within him.

and He turned Himself into an Enemy for them.⁴²

⁴²This line, וַיִּהְיֶה לָהֶם לְאֹיֵב, “and He turned Himself into an Enemy for them,” is given slightly varying translations:

King James, “therefore he was turned to be their enemy”;

Tanakh, “Then He became their enemy”;

New Revised Standard, “therefore he became their enemy”;

New International, “So he turned and became their enemy”;

New Jerusalem, “Then he became their enemy”;

Rahfs, “and he was turned for them into enmity / hostility.”

In **Malachi 3:6**, YHWH is depicted as saying, “Because I, YHWH, I did not change,” commonly translated in English by “I do not change.” Here in **Isaiah 63:10** YHWH is depicted as turning Himself from Savior into Enemy. What do you think? Is that not changing?

Alexander comments that “the passage is in some sort historical, and shows the progress of the alienation between God and Israel. Having shown in the preceding verses that it began upon the part of Israel, and was long resisted and deferred by [YHWH], He now shows how at length His patience was exhausted, and He really became what He was not before...”

“From this verse Paul has borrowed a remarkable expression in **Ephesians 4:30a**, ‘And do not grieve the Spirit, the Set-apart One of the God.’” (P. 421)

Oswalt comments that “The result of the rebellion is a tragic turnabout. He Who as their Savior in all their affliction becomes their Enemy.” And Oswalt holds that “The verse makes clear that it is not God Who has changed, but the people.” (P. 608)

But does the passage make this clear? We think not. The verse states וַיִּהְיֶה, “and He was changed,” or “and He turned / changed Himself”—anything but making it clear that God didn’t change! But Oswalt has a creedal belief that God cannot change—and therefore holds that “This is not inconsistency on God’s part but absolute consistency...He is utterly dependable.” (**Ibid**)

We suspect that Oswalt means God is always the same—the Friend and Savior of those who by faith obey His voice, and the Implacable Enemy of those who reject faith and disobey His voice. In this light he can say, it wasn’t God who changed, but the people who changed from faith and obedience to unfaith and disobedience.

Perhaps—but the text says that וַיִּהְיֶה, which means “He turned Himself,” or “He changed Himself.” Instead of their Friend and Savior, He became their Enemy. Isn’t that a change?

(continued...)

He fought against them.

63:11⁴³ וַיִּזְכֹּר יְמֵי-עוֹלָם מֹשֶׁה עַמּוֹ

אֵיהָ | הַמַּעַלְלִים מִיָּמִים אֲתָרְעִי צֵאֲנֹו

אֵיהָ הַשֵּׁם בְּקִרְבּוֹ אֶת-רוּחַ קְדָשׁוֹ:

And He / he⁴⁴ remembered (the) days of long--Moses; His people--⁴⁵

⁴²(...continued)

We say, that while in this life-time God may sometimes appear be our Enemy—attacking us like a savage beast, seeking our destruction—as He appeared to Job, and to the **Book of Lamentations**—still in the long-run, in terms of His eternal purpose, He is in fact our Friend, our Next-of-Kin, our Savior Who provides for our eternal good. What do you think?

⁴³Achtemeier comments on **verses 11-14** that “Nevertheless, that is not the end of the Divine-human relationship. Judgment is really an act strange and alien to the nature of God the Father (compare **Isaiah 28:21; Hosea 11:8-9**), and the Levitical-prophetic community that prays this lament knows it as strange and alien. In this second strophe, they therefore rehearse once again God’s specific acts of mercy, but this time the rehearsal is used not to show the heinousness of Israel’s sin, but to question Yahweh...

“The questioning complaint is simply put in the form of a twofold plaintive ‘Where?’ (**63:11c** and **e**). Where, the community asks, is that God Who performed the deliverance from Egypt...Yahweh has enabled His people to pass through [the Reed Sea] on dry land as easily as a horse traverses a flat desert plain. Then in **verse 14**, the settlement in the land is recalled. Like cattle going down into the valley to refresh themselves at their watering-places, Israel has been brought into the promised land and given rest.” (Pp. 114-15)

⁴⁴In this first line of **verse 11**, the phrase וַיִּזְכֹּר is 3rd person masculine singular, “and he remembered.” In **verse 10**, YHWH has been the subject, and it seems that here the 3rd person pronoun would refer to YHWH, i.e., “He.” But in the questions that follow, it seems apparent that they are questions being asked by the people, not by YHWH—and therefore most likely that the “he” in the phrase refers to Israel and its people as “he.”

⁴⁵Translations of this first line of **verse 11** vary:

King James, “Then he remembered the days of old, Moses, *and* his people, *saying*,”;
Tanakh, “Then they remembered the ancient days, Him, who pulled His people out of *the water*.”;

(continued...)

Where (is) the One⁴⁶ bringing them up from (the) sea with shepherds of His flock?⁴⁷
Where is the One Who placed in its (Israel's) midst His Set-apart Spirit?⁴⁸

⁴⁵(...continued)

New Revised Standard, "Then they remembered the days of old, of Moses his servant."

New International, "Then his people recalled the days of old, the days of Moses and his people—"

New Jerusalem, "But he called the past to mind, Moses his servant."

Rahlf's, "and it he was remembered—days of ages past, the one raising up out of the land the shepherd of the sheep." **NETS** has "Then the one who brought up from the land the shepherd of the sheep remembered the days of old:"

Alexander observes on p. 421 that "The [Aramaic] Targum gives a singular turn to the sentence by supplying *lest they say* before the second clause, which then becomes the language of the enemies of Israel, exulting in the failure of [YHWH's] promises.

⁴⁶Slotki notes that "Down to the end of **verse 14** is the agonized question of the suffering people." (P. 308) The agonized question is, Where is our God, Who has been so active in our past?

Oswalt states the question this way, "Could the God Who had once provided a Moses for His people provide still another through the corrupt house of David as He had promised (**Isaiah 9:6**^{Heb} / **7**^{Eng}; **11:1**; **32:1**; **55:3-4**)? Could Israel yet again have Spirit-filled leadership (**59:21**)?" (P. 608)

⁴⁷1QIs^a has ׀׀ ׀׀, meaning there is a problem with legibility. Above the word the letter ׀ is written, probably to insure the pronunciation with an -o vowel.

The question means, Where is YHWH Who brought up Israel from the depths of the Sea of Reeds, along with the great shepherds of the flock, Moses and Aaron and Miriam?

Oswalt comments that "The nation finds itself in desperate straits and begins to reflect on the glorious past, asking where the God is today Who did all those glorious things...These verses recall two aspects of what God did in the ancient days: He led the people through the sea with their leaders, and He empowered those leaders through His Holy Spirit and His arm (**verse 12**)." (P. 608)

⁴⁸In my Christian College days, I often heard it taught that the coming / gift of the Holy Spirit was not until the Day of Pentecost following the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, when the Spirit was poured out on Jesus' disciples in Jerusalem, as described in **Acts 1-2**.

(continued...)

63:12 מוֹלִיךְ לְיָמִין מֹשֶׁה זְרוּעַ תְּפֹאֲרָתוֹ

בִּזְקַע מַיִם מִפְּנֵיהֶם

לַעֲשׂוֹת לוֹ שֵׁם עוֹלָם:

(Where is the) One leading by Moses' right hand with an arm of His beauty,⁴⁹
dividing⁵⁰ waters from before them,

⁴⁸(...continued)

Then, as I began to read Hebrew, and saw the many mentions of the Spirit acting in the lives of Israel's Judges, especially in the life of Saul, and then read such passages as this, **Isaiah 63:11**, I came to realize how uninformed that teaching had been, and how important the Spirit of YHWH is for the **Hebrew Bible**. Does the **Bible** teach that the Holy Spirit was poured out on Jesus' followers –Yes, of course. But that doesn't mean that it was the first time, or the only time! As we Christians acknowledge the work of God's Spirit in our lives, we must be careful not to think that this is the only way the Spirit has or will work. I say, "Don't try to put God's Spirit in an a vacuum-sealed box. The Spirit is too big, too omnipresent for that! The Spirit doesn't pay any attention to our proud denominational or religious lines in the sand!"

Again we say, read and meditate on **Amos 9:7!** God doesn't pay attention to national or religious boundaries!

⁴⁹Slotki's translation is "His glorious arm," and Slotki comments that this means "the overwhelming might of God." (P. 308) We say, whenever people recognize the power of God working in their lives, they see it as "beautiful," even if mind-boggling and fearsome.

Alexander comments that "The sentence and the interrogation are continued from the foregoing verse...The meaning of the whole is as follows: causing His glorious arm to march at the right hand of Moses, i.e. as Jarchi explains, causing His almighty power, of which the arm is the established symbol (**40:10; 57:16; 63:5**), to be near or present with the Prophet when he needed its interposition." (P. 423)

Knight comments that "God's 'glorious arm' was His Spirit in action within space and time. Such an action occurred when God's arm became Moses' arm, as we read at **Exodus 17:8-13** (see also **6:6; 15:16**)." (P. 77) We see the references to YHWH's "arm" in the last two passages, but observe that in the story of Aaron and Hur's holding up Moses' hands, which lifted up the "rod of God," nothing is said of the "arm of YHWH." The story is about Moses' arm, not YHWH arm!

⁵⁰The qal active participle בִּזְקַע means "cleaving," "breaking." See its use in **Ecclesiastes 10:9** where it refers to "splitting wood."

to make for Himself a long-lasting name?⁵¹

63:13 מוֹלִיכֶם בְּתֵהוֹמוֹת

כְּסוּס בַּמְדְּבָר לֹא יִפְשְׁלוּ:

(Where is the) One leading them in / through (the) ocean-depths,⁵²

⁵¹In fact, the rescue of the fleeing Israelites from the armies of Pharaoh through the cleaving / dividing of the water of the Sea of Reeds is constantly referred to in the **Hebrew Bible** as demonstrating the “mighty acts” of YHWH is delivering / saving His people, thereby getting a name for Himself, securing His reputation in Israel’s history.

⁵²The Hebrew phrase is מוֹלִיכֶם בְּתֵהוֹמוֹת, “One leading them in / through the ocean-depths.” Knight insists that if God led the Israelites through the ocean-depths, “He had first to ‘go down [into those depths] Himself.” Based on the translation in **Rahlf**, διὰ τῆς ἀβύσσου, “through the abyss,” which Knight takes to mean the “netherworld,” instead of simply “depths,” he claims that the passage is depicting God’s going through the chaos of death with His people, the “valley of the shadow of death,” “the seas of chaos as represented by the Red Sea.” Compare **Isaiah 51:9-10**, which he interprets in the same way.

He states, “We note that He led His people ‘*through* the depths’ (of chaos, of ‘hell’) without destroying chaos itself; for God actively employs chaos to re-create His world (see **Isaiah 65-66**). This renewing, re-creative love is God’s *tsedaqah* [our ‘righteousness’] for His Own fallen world.” (P. 77) That is, Divine righteousness, instead of condemning a sinful world, identifies with sinners, and gives Himself to cleans and forgive them!

In this way, Knight is reading into the text his theological view of “the descent into hell” of the Apostle’s Creed. Perhaps, we say—but this involves a great deal of reading into the text, which can certainly be interpreted otherwise—as symbolical language describing Israel’s crossing through the depths of the Sea of Reeds on dry ground.

We will see Knight giving this same interpretation of the Divine fire in **Isaiah 66:15-18** and **66:24**, which Knight takes to be the fire of God’s love, that burns up evil in order to purify sinners. See his comments in our footnote 91 on **Isaiah 66:15**, where he strongly defends this view of the fire of God as the fire of God’s love, and where we are led to agree with his interpretation.

What do you think?

like the horse in the wilderness,⁵³ they would not stumble?⁵⁴

63:14⁵⁵ כְּבַהֲמָהּ בְּבִקְעָה תֵרֵד

רוּחַ יְהוָה תְּנִיחֵנוּ

כִּן נִהְגָּתָ עִמָּךְ

לַעֲשׂוֹת לְךָ שֵׁם תְּפָאֶרֶת:

Like the animal⁵⁶ in the valley it goes down;

YHWH's Spirit gives him rest.⁵⁷

⁵³1QIs^a is slightly illegible in the reading of the phrase בְּמִדְבָּר, “in the wilderness.” The letter ך is illegible—but a later hand has written the letter above the word.

⁵⁴Compare **Psalm 106:9**,

And He rebuked (the) Sea of Reeds, and it dried up,
and He led them in the depths like the desert.

Slotki comments on the phrase “like the horse in the wilderness” that “with firm and sure steps like those of the horse in a pasture-land.” (P. 309) But we ask, Is the “wilderness” the same as “a pasture-land”?

We think the wilderness is referred to as being hard and firm—not like trying to ride a horse through a plowed field.

⁵⁵Oswalt states that **verse 14** “seems to be set off from the previous three as a conclusion. It continues the animal imagery of **verse 13** with the assertion that the Spirit had given them rest like a beast that goes down into a grassy valley...Thus the conclusion of all God’s leadership was that He made His flock lie down and rest in the green pastures of Canaan. Could He do that again in a time when after a new exodus the people would possess the land again and yet have no real rest in their relationship with God? The evidence of the past would say yes...If God did those wonderful things in the past because of His name, does it not follow that He would want to similar things again?” (P. 609)

⁵⁶Alexander holds that the noun בְּהֵמָה “Is probably here used in its collective sense of cattle, rather than in that of an individual animal or beast.” (P. 424)

⁵⁷Alexander says this line means “will bring him [Israel] to a place of rest,” “a form of expression often used in reference to the promised land. (**Deuteronomy 12:9, 10; Psalm 95:11**, etc.) (P. 424)

In this way⁵⁸ You led Your people,
to make for Yourself a beautiful name.⁵⁹

63:15⁶⁰ הַבֵּט מִשָּׁמַיִם וּרְאֵה

⁵⁸Slotki's translation has "so," and he states that this means "in the manner described in **verses 11-14.**" (P. 309)

⁵⁹Slotki comments on **verse 14** that it "may be a continuation of the preceding verse, repeating the idea of firmness and security in a new image. Others join it to *the spirit of the Lord*, etc., and instead of *caused them to rest*, the translation has been proposed: 'brought him (the nation) to the resting-place,' that is, the Promised Land." (P. 309)

For YHWH's making a beautiful name for Himself, compare:

Isaiah 60:21,

And your people, all of them, (will be) righteous;
for long-lasting time they will inherit earth—
a sprout of My planting,
a work of My hands,
to make itself beautiful.

Isaiah 61:3,

to place for the mourners of Zion--
to give to them a (joyous) turban instead of ashes,
oil of rejoicing instead of mourning,
a mantle / wrap of praise instead of a faint spirit;
and calling them "Oaks of the Righteousness,"
"Planting of YHWH for Glorifying Himself."

⁶⁰Oswalt entitles **63:15-19a**^{Heb} / **19**^{Eng} "Why make us err?"

He comments that "This section begins the lament proper, following the historical reminiscence of **verses 7-14**. The prophet, speaking for the people (as in **53:2-6**), calls on the God Whose power was expressed in **verses 1-6** and Whose election love was expressed in **verses 7-14** to take action. **Verses 15-16** call on God not to be distant but to have pity on those who are more truly His children than they ever were Abraham's or Jacob's. **Verses 17-19a**^{Heb} / **19**^{Eng} acknowledge the helplessness of the people before their sin and conclude with a reference to the Divine name...The two parts of the stanza are united by their questions in the lament mood about God's activities." (P. 611)

Knight entitles **verses 15-19** "A Revulsion of Spirit."

(continued...)

⁶⁰(...continued)

He comments that “Life in Jerusalem is not like that now (ca. 530 B.C.E.) [that is, the city of salvation]. Some seven or eight years earlier the faithful (the *tsaddiqim*, ‘righteous ones’) had been ordered by God to stop worrying about their own salvation, whether physical or spiritual, and turn their attention to all those who were struggling up the hill to Zion (**Isaiah 60:10-12; 62:10**). The elect evidently had been thinking of themselves as the ‘True Israel,’ as many Christian sects do even to this day; and so they were excluding from salvation all who were not of their way of thinking. They had brushed aside the Isaian awareness that to be the ‘holy people’ (**62:12**) they must reveal in their lives what God’s holiness is like: ‘The Holy God shows Himself holy in righteousness (*tsedaqah*)’ (**Isaiah 5:16**), love for others, love for all the peoples of the earth...

“Not grasping this word of revelation, at least one of the returned priestly group now pens a whine of self-pity. God had indeed been good to Israel in the days of the exodus, but what was He doing now?... ‘Where are Thy zeal and Thy might?’” (P. 78)

Slotki comments on **verses 15-16** that they are “an appeal for mercy to God as Father and Redeemer, recalling His compassionate dealings with Israel in the past.” (P. 309)

Achtemeier states that in **verses 15-19**, “the Levitical-prophetic community now contrasts Yahweh’s past deeds of deliverance with their own situation as outcasts in Jerusalem. This [section] and the next (**64:1-5b**) concentrate very specifically on the scorn and loss of leadership suffered by the Levitical priests and their followers. The complaint is that the God of mercy, the God Who has always been a Father to Israel, is no longer acting like their Father and Redeemer...

“[Their condition] held up before Yahweh is that ‘Abraham knows us not, and Israel recognizes us not’ (**verse 16ab**). This is a direct reference to the banishment of the Levitical priests and their followers from their positions of leadership and influence in the community. The same fact is referred to in **verse 18**: ‘for a little while’ the Levites–Yahweh’s holy people (compare **Jeremiah 2:3; Deuteronomy 7:6; 26:19; 28:9; Exodus 19:6**)–possessed the sanctuary, that is, they served as priests in Israel. But now their ‘adversaries’ trample the holy site—a metaphor for the Zadokites’ idolatrous and insincere worship (compare **Isaiah 1:12**). In **verse 17de**, Yahweh is therefore implored to ‘return’ ...for the sake of His true followers, His ‘servants’ (once again the Levitical-prophetic community takes on the role of **Second Isaiah’s** servant; see...**57:1-2; 61:1-4**), ‘the tribes of His inheritance,’ that is, the Levites (compare **Numbers 3:40-45**).

“That it is the Levitical-prophetic party which is treated here in the third [section] is made almost incontrovertible by the northern, Deuteronomic, Jeremianic tradition with which this whole lament is permeated...The Levitical priesthood claimed its Levitic descent through Moses and was centered in the Mushite (Mosaic)-Kenite priesthods

(continued...)

⁶⁰(...continued)

at Dan, Arad, and Kadesh-Naphtali...It was this Levitic priesthood which also found a center at Anathoth, the later home of Jeremiah...It was from the preaching of these northern Levitical priests that the **Book of Deuteronomy** was formed; it was their Mosaic covenant tradition which was consistently supported by the prophets of the north, especially Elijah and Hosea; and it was their Deuteronomic covenant tradition and Josiah's Deuteronomic reform which were championed by the prophet Jeremiah. Thus it is not surprising that we have in this lament of **Isaiah 63:7-64:12** a prominent reference to the covenant tradition, centered in the exodus of the northern Rachel tribes out of Egypt; a central role played by Moses; the northern Hoseanic-Deuteronomic tradition of Israel as Yahweh's son; a reference in **63:9** to the northern...tradition of the angel of Yahweh's presence...the Deuteronomic concept of the gift of the land as Israel's 'rest'; the Jeremianic concept of Yahweh's enmity and war against Judah; the Deuteronomic concept of Yahweh's 'holy people.'

This lament fairly reeks with northern, Mushite, Deuteronomic-Levitic-Jeremianic tradition.

"There is, however, also Isaianic tradition in this lament, and **63:17a-c** first exhibits it...As First Isaiah was told in his call, part of Yahweh's work of Yahweh's work of judgment on His sinful people was the very proclamation of a Word which hardened the people's hearts, so that they did not repent and their exile and destruction became inevitable in Yahweh's purpose. According to **Third-Isaiah**, Yahweh continues to work in such a manner, hardening their hearts, so that the Judean community brings further judgment on itself in postexilic times. It is finally the only reason **Third-Isaiah** can see for the continuing distress of the nation as a whole and for the persistent lack of trust among the people—it is part of Yahweh's plan (compare **Isaiah 22:11b**). Yahweh is a merciful God in **Third-Isaiah's** view, and the continuing ruin of Judah is incomprehensible apart from some purpose God may have for it (compare **Romans 11:25**)." (Pp. 115-18)

These are wide-ranging views, which go far beyond the ability of an average student of the **Bible** to affirm clearly, and which call for years of study--of the **Book of Deuteronomy** alongside the **Books of Joshua-2 Kings**, as well as the serious study of **Isaiah, Jeremiah, 1 and 2 Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah**, and all of the **Minor Prophets**. We have not yet been able to do such a broad, in-depth study, but intend to make it a life-long goal.

Nonetheless, we sense from our study of **Jeremiah 7** and **Second and Third Isaiah**, over against **Ezra-Nehemiah**, that there are two basic theological positions that are at odds in post-exilic Israel—the one holding that the temple and its wall of segregation / exclusiveness are no longer the will of YHWH, and the other insisting that the wall must be built, and Israel must keep herself segregated from foreigners / people of the land, demanding the divorce of Israelite men from their "non-orthodox" families.

(continued...)

מִזְבֵּל קִדְשׁ וְתַפְאֲרֹתָיִךְ
אֵיךְ קִנְיָתְךָ וְגִבּוֹרֹתְךָ
הַמּוֹן מֵעֵד וְרַחֲמֶיךָ
אֵלֵי הַתְּאֲפִקוּ:

Look from (the) heavens and see,

⁶⁰(...continued)

Those who hold both views believe that the nations will ultimately come streaming to Jerusalem / Zion, but disagree sharply on how that goal will be achieved. Will it be accomplished through rigid adherence to the ancient laws and the restoration of a segregated temple-worship with animal sacrifices that will ultimately win the nations over?

Or will it rather only be accomplished through Israel's making itself open to foreigners / people of the land, committing itself to welcoming and serving all their neighbors in genuine righteousness, even to the point of becoming "suffering servants" in the midst of a warring world?

We see Jesus affirming the latter viewpoint throughout His life and death, over against the Pharisees and High Priests who affirmed the previous viewpoint. Do you agree? Why? Why not?

And are you willing to enter into such a life-time of study, with its contrasting, apparently contradictory views? Or, will you settle for simpler, much easier answers, avoiding these biblical problems, giving broad statements concerning biblical theology that you cannot really be sure about?

Oswalt comments on **verse 15** that "In contrast to God's intimate nearness through His Holy Spirit during the days of the exodus and conquest, Isaiah envisions a time when God will seem far away. He will have restored His people from the exile, yet it will seem as though He is doing no mighty miracles. The people will seem helpless before their enemies, and much more, before their own sinfulness [which they claim God Himself is causing]. Where is God in moments like these? They think that He is surely far away in His heavenly palace, unconcerned with the condition of His people. Has He forgotten the promises that after the exile Jerusalem...would be His holy and beautiful dwelling place (**4:2, 3**)?...Where is the affection (rumbling of Your innards) and the compassionate feelings that have characterized God's dealings with His people from the beginning (**verse 7**)?" (Pp. 611-12)

from Your set-apart and Your beautiful elevated dwelling-place!⁶¹
Where (is) Your zeal and Your strength?
(The) roar of Your belly and Your compassions,
from me they restrained / controlled themselves!⁶²

⁶¹Alexander observes that “This unusual word for dwelling-place מִזְבֵּל [מִזְבֵּל], ‘high abode of Your set-apartness,’ using a noun that has connotations of Canaanite religion, in which the phrase **zebul** is often heard; compare the name **Baal-Zebub**, “Baal of Flies,” which has been changed from **Baal-Zebul**, “Baal of Height” in **2 Kings 1:2,3**] is borrowed from the prayer of Solomon (**1 Kings 8:13**).” (P. 424)

I have certainly built a high abode (בֵּית זְבִיל) for You,
a foundation / fixed place for Your dwelling (for) long-lasting times.

⁶²Alexander comments on **verse 15** that “The foregoing description of God’s ancient favors is now made the ground of an importunate appeal for new ones.” (P. 424)

The last three lines of **verse 15** are given varying translations:

King James, “where *is* thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies toward me? are they restrained?”

Tanakh, “Where is Your zeal, Your power? Your yearning and Your love Are being withheld from us!”

New Revised Standard, “Where are your zeal and your might? The yearning of your heart and your compassion? They are withheld from me.”

New International, “Where are your zeal and your might? Your tenderness and compassion are withheld from us.”

New Jerusalem, “Where is your zeal and your might? Are your deepest feelings, your mercy to me, to be restrained?”

Rahifs, “Where is the zeal of Yours and the strength of Yours? Where is the multitude of Your mercies and Your compassions, with which You put up with us?”

Alexander states that “the last verb in the verse [וַיִּתְאַפְּקוּ], hithpael perfect, 3rd person plural, ‘they restrained themselves’] denotes a violent suppression or restraint of strong emotion ...and is sometimes applied directly to God Himself.” (P. 424)

The verb only appears in the **Hebrew Bible** in the Hithpael. See:

Genesis 43:31, in the story of Joseph, as he confronts his brothers in Egypt:

And he washed his face(s), and he went forth;
and he controlled himself (וַיִּתְאַפְּקוּ),

(continued...)

⁶²(...continued)

and he said, serve (the) food!

Genesis 45:1;

And Joseph was not able to control himself (לְהִתְאַפֵּק) before all of those standing by him.

And he cried out, Send forth every man from beside me!

And not a man stood with him,

as Joseph made himself known to his brothers.

1 Samuel 13:12, where Saul explains to Samuel why he had acted too soon:

And I said, Now Philistines have come down to me, to Gilgal.

And YHWH's face(s) I did not pacify / entreat.

And I controlled myself (וַיִּתְאַפֵּק), and I offered up the offering-up!

Isaiah 42:14, where YHWH is depicted as saying:

I have kept silence for a long-lasting time!

I will be silent (synonym), I will control Myself (אֶתְאַפֵּק).

I will pant and I will gasp at the same time!

Isaiah 63:15 (here),

Look from (the) heavens and see,

from Your set-apart and Your beautiful elevated dwelling-place!

Where (is) Your zeal and Your strength?

(The) roar of Your belly and Your compassions,

from me they restrained / controlled themselves!

Isaiah 64:11,

Shall YHWH restrain / control Himself (תִּתְאַפֵּק) over these things?

(Will) You be silent, and afflict us excessively?

Esther 5:10,

And Haman controlled himself (וַיִּתְאַפֵּק), and he entered into his house.

And he sent forth, and he brought his loved ones, and Zeresh his wife.

כִּי אֲבֵרָהֶם לֹא יִדְעֻנוּ
וְיִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יִפְרֹנוּ
אַתָּה יְהוָה אֲבִינוּ
גְּאֻלָּנוּ מֵעוֹלָם שְׁמֹד:

Because You (are) our Father!⁶³

⁶³This first line is a powerful affirmation of the “Fatherhood” of YHWH! **Bakers Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology** states, “Throughout the **Bible** we find God portrayed as a Father. This portrayal, however, is surprisingly rare in the **Old Testament**...

“There God is specifically called the Father of the nation of Israel (**Deuteronomy 32:6; Isaiah 63:16** [twice] **64:8; Jeremiah 3:4, 19; 31:9; Malachi 1:6; 2:10**) or the Father of certain individuals (**2 Samuel 7:14; 1 Chronicles 17:13; 22:10; 28:6; Psalm 68:5; 89:26**) only fifteen times. (At times the father imagery is present although the term “Father” is not used [**Exodus 4:22-23; Deuteronomy 1:31; 8:5; 14:1; Psalm 103:13; Jeremiah 3:22; 31:20; Hosea 11:1-4; Malachi 3:17**])...

“This metaphor for God may have been avoided in the **Old Testament** due to its frequent use in the ancient Near East where it was used in various fertility religions and carried heavy sexual overtones. The avoidance of this description for God can still be found in the inter-testamental literature. There its use is also rare: **Apocrypha (Wisdom of Solomon 2:16; 14:3; Tobit 13:4; Ben Sirach 23:1, 4; 51:10); Pseudepigrapha (Jubilees 1:24, 28; 19:29; 3 Maccabees 5:7; 6:4, 8; Testament of Levi 18:6; Testament of Judah 24:2);** and Dead Sea Scrolls (**1 QH 9:35-36**).

“The teaching of the Fatherhood of God takes a decided turn with Jesus, for “Father” was his favorite term for addressing God. It appears on his lips some sixty-five times in the **Synoptic Gospels** and over one hundred times in **John**. The exact term Jesus used is still found three times in the **New Testament (Mark 14:36; Romans 8:15-16; Galatians 4:6)** but elsewhere the Aramaic term *Abba* is translated by the Greek *pater*.” (Internet, 12/25/2015)

Alexander comments that “The true sense of the verse...is that the church or chosen people, although once, for temporary reasons, coextensive and coincident with a single race, is not essentially a national organization, but a spiritual body. Its Father is not Abraham or Israel, but [YHWH], Who is and always has been its Redeemer, Who has borne that name from everlasting...

“This verse explicitly asserts what is implied and indirectly taught throughout these prophecies, in reference to the true design and mission of the church, and its

(continued...)

If Abraham did not know us,
and Israel⁶⁴ did not recognize us,⁶⁵
You, YHWH, (are) our Father,⁶⁶
our Redeemer / Next-of-Kin from long ago (is) Your name!

63:17⁶⁷ לְמָה תִּתְעַנּוּ יְהוָה מִדֶּרֶךְ כִּיךָ

⁶³(...continued)

relation to [YHWH], to the world, and to the single race with which of old it seemed to be identified...

“The strong terms of this verse are...to be comparatively understood, not as implying that the church will ever have occasion to repudiate its historical relation to the patriarchs, or cease to include among its members many of their natural descendants, but simply as denying all continued or perpetual pre-eminence to Israel as a race, and exalting the common relation of believers to their great Head as paramount to all connection with particular progenitors—the very doctrine so repeatedly and emphatically taught in the **New Testament**.” (P. 426)

⁶⁴Slotki explains that “Israel” here is referring to the third of the patriarchs: Jacob / Israel. (P. 309)

⁶⁵Where our Hebrew text has the hiphil imperfect verb יִפְיֶרְנוּ, “he will not acknowledge / recognize us,” 1QIs^a has the hiphil perfect verb, הִכִּירְנוּ, “he did not acknowledge / recognize us.”

⁶⁶This is the second affirmation of the Fatherhood of God in this verse.

Where our Hebrew text has אַתָּה יְהוָה אֲבִינוּ, “You, YHWH, (are) our Father,” 1QIs^a reads אַתָּה הוּא יְהוָה אֲבִינוּ, “You (are) He, YHWH our Father.”

⁶⁷Slotki comments on **verses 17-19** that “The sufferings of Israel inflicted by God are themselves a hindrance to his [Israel’s] return to the paths of justice and righteousness, and God is implored to be reconciled to His people if not for their sake, then for the sake of their ancestors.” (P. 310)

Alexander comments on **verse 17** that “the earnestness of the prayer is evinced by an increasing boldness of expostulation [earnest and kindly protest].” (P. 426) It is bold, in that it charges YHWH with causing Israel to go astray from His ways, and with hardening Israel’s heart to keep Israel’s from fearing / revering Him.

Oswalt comments on this verse that “Now the complaint itself is introduced, and with the exception of **verse 17b**, it continues through **verse 19a**^{Heb} / **19**^{Eng}...Whatever

(continued...)

⁶⁷(...continued)

else this verse claims, it does not claim that the people are not responsible for their sinfulness.” (P. 613)

We say, Nonsense! That is exactly what the verse claims. Oswalt goes on to explain this away, but ends up stating that “If persons do not turn to Him, it is because God has not given them the desire to do so,” which amounts to the same thing. (**ibid.**) And in the next line of this verse, the question is asked, “Why do You harden our heart from fearing / revering You?”

Oswalt seeks to justify the statement, by saying, “One must also remember that what we have here is not a philosophical treatise, but the cry of a man of God who has seen the fulfillment of the words God had spoken to him at the beginning of his ministry (**6:9-10**). He has cried out to his people with all his strength and has watched them turn away in amused contempt (compare **5:19; 30:9-14** [the words ‘amused contempt’ are Oswalt’s not the text’s]). He has also seen the enormously addictive power of sin, and the stubbornness of rebellion.” (P. 614)

Knight comments that “There follows a verse [**verse 17**] that enshrines a crux [puzzling or seemingly insoluble problem] for biblical faith. This particular preacher had simply not absorbed in faith the mystery of God’s redemptive act in ‘resurrecting’ His elect people from the ‘death’ of the exile to new life in the elect city as the New Israel of God. Here he puts the blame on God for the behavior of his contemporaries. ‘Why’—the eternal cry of lonely humanity—‘dost Thou make us err from Thy ways?’ He implies that God had left Israel free to worship what is not God...This is of course a perennial problem to faith...

“It was recognized by the young Isaiah at his call (**Isaiah 6:9-13**). Jesus included the issue as a clause in the Lord’s Prayer [‘and lead us not into temptation’]. It would have remained a problem right from the penning of the Song of Moses on into the **New Testament**, had it not been recognized by each new generation that God uses the evil to produce the good. Incidentally, we note that this speaker suggests that he and his contemporaries were not able to keep the law in their own strength; so it is was God’s fault for creating them the kind of people they were.

“But the next phrase goes even farther. Why dost Thou ‘harden our heart, so that we fear Thee not?’ Here the verb **qashach** [קָשַׁח] is used, the strongest of all the verbs for ‘harden’ that are employed in the **Book of Exodus**. Could it be that God was handling His redeemed people in the same way that He handled Pharaoh of old (**Exodus 4:2**), and in fact in the way He had handled the whole Egyptian people (**Exodus 14:17; Joshua 11:20**)?...

“Was it the case, people wondered, that, while Yahweh had indeed fetched His people home, He Himself had not returned? So we hear the cry to God, ‘Return for the sake of Thy servants, the tribes of Thy heritage.’ ‘Don’t demand of us that we should

(continued...)

תִּקְשִׁיחַ לְבַנּוּ מִיִּרְאַתְךָ
שׁוּב לְמַעַן עֲבֹדֶיךָ
שְׁבִטִי נִחַלְתָּךְ:

For what reason do You cause us to go astray, YHWH, from Your ways?
(Why) do You harden our heart from fearing / revering You?⁶⁸

⁶⁷(...continued)

restore the old paths and keep the **Torah** without Your being present with us, Lord, in person! Come back and do something different for us than the strange way You have chosen.’ Here the word ‘return’ is a verbal imperative that can also mean ‘repent.’ So the speaker may be cheekily telling God to change His ways and act more like the way a God should act!

“Using the root *shubh* [שׁוּב], the **Book of Isaiah** can speak of God returning to Israel (**Isaiah 52:8**) and of Israel returning to God (**Isaiah 35:10; 51:11**)...All these usages thus show God to be the God Who acts, Who reveals Himself only by acting [only? That’s too broad a statement!]. And He expects mankind to do the same...

“The complaint points to a collapse of faith—not in God’s existence, but in God’s power and love...

“We should take note that nowhere in this whole chapter do we find the concept that a person’s *teshubhah* (‘turning’) can restore him to God’s fellowship, such as by keeping the law or by striving after obedience. Here it is God alone Who must *shub* [שׁוּב] (‘return’).” (Pp. 80-81)

⁶⁸We are reminded of **Isaiah 6:8-13**, where Isaiah is commissioned to make the heart of the people of Israel dull, their ears heavy, and their eyes blind with his message, until the nation is destroyed, and only a remnant is left. We take that to mean that the prophetic message is an instrument of judgment, causing the large majority of its hearers to be hardened and face destruction, while only the small minority get the message and are delivered from destruction, to become the “seed of the future.”

It is a puzzling charge, but one that is repeated in the **New Testament** where the parables of Jesus are depicted as having the same purpose—see **Mark 4:10-12 / Matthew 13:10-15 / Luke 8:9-10**.

We take this to mean that the Divine message of the prophets and of Jesus comes in such a way that it is an instrument of Divine judgment. For those who are unwilling to seek for God and His truth, Who believe they can make their way through life without any need for God, the message can easily be dismissed, criticized and

(continued...)

Return / repent⁶⁹ for the sake of Your slaves / servants,⁷⁰
tribes of Your inheritance!^{71, 2}

⁶⁸(...continued)

belittled—as making no sense, as irrelevant. But for those who know their need, and are unabashedly, humbly seeking for God, the message can speak to their hearts, giving them guidance and hope, enabling them to become YHWH’s “seed” for the future.

⁶⁹The verb here is שׁוּב, the qal imperative masculine singular, meaning “Repent!” “Turn around!” “Return!” We are familiar with this verb on the tongue of Israel’s prophets, calling on the individual or the nation to “Repent!,” to “Turn their life around!,” to “Return to God!” But here it is on the tongue of the prophet, representing the people of Israel, calling on YHWH their God to “Repent!,” to “Change His mind,” “to “Return.” The honest feeling is that YHWH God is doing them wrong, hardening their hearts, causing them to go astray--and needs to stop it!

Oswalt comments that “Thus he calls on God to *Return*, to turn back to the people whom He has apparently rejected. Note the intensity of the appeal throughout the stanza as Isaiah musters every argument he can to persuade God to intervene where no one else can.” (P. 614) Compare

Isaiah 59:16,

And He saw that there is no man;
and He was appalled, because there is no one entreating.
And His arm saved / delivered for Him,
and His righteousness / righteousness, it supported Him.

Isaiah 63:5,

And I looked, and there was no one helping;
and I was appalled, and there was no one supporting.
And My arm saved / delivered for Me,
and My rage, it supported Me.

⁷⁰Slotki states that this phrase “for [God’s] servants’ sake,” means “for the merits of the patriarchs.” (P. 310) This is a typical understanding for Jewish biblical students. See articles on the Internet under the Hebrew title **Zekhut Avoth**.

We think the phrase means that YHWH should return / repent for the sake of the returned exiles, who needed His help--instead of His leading them astray or hardening of their hearts.

⁷¹For the matter of YHWH’s “inheritance” or “heritage,” see end-note 4. In the light of the passages there, there can be no doubt that for the **Hebrew Bible**, YHWH’s “inheritance / possession” is the Land of Israel, and its people, the tribes of Israel.

(continued...)

63:18 לְמַצְעַר יְרֵשׁוּ עַם־קִדְשְׁךָ

צָרֵינוּ בּוֹסְסוּ מִקְדָּשְׁךָ:

For the little (while) they dispossessed (the) people of Your set-apartness;⁷²
our adversaries trampled down Your set-apart place / sanctuary.⁷³

⁷¹(...continued)

For this prayer to God to return / repent, go to the Internet and read the various articles written on the subject of God's repentance / returning, as sceptics point to the problems that this presents for the biblical picture of God, alongside proposed defenses and interpretations by others who insist that it would be impossible for the **Bible** with its high view of God to really mean that God "repented"—as numerous biblical passages claim.

⁷²For this line, **Rahlf's** has "in order that we might inherit a little of the mountain, the holy (one) of Yours." This translation hardly makes sense in this verse, and we wonder what the translator was thinking. Was he / she trying to avoid the thought of YHWH having an inheritance / possession as small as the Land of Israel and its people?

⁷³We understand this to be referring to the Land of Israel's being conquered by the Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C.E., who destroyed the temple of Solomon, and carried away a large number of the leading Israelites into Babylon. It is not said as a prediction for the future, but rather is stated as something that has happened in Israel's past.

Alexander states that "The sense of this verse is extremely dubious." (P. 427) Oswalt also sees great problems in the verse—see his note 76 on pp. 610-11.

We think Alexander's statement is overstatement, and that the meaning of the verse is fairly obvious, in spite of the difficulties.

Oswalt states that "It is unclear whether the people possessed something (the land, the sanctuary, the holy mountain) for a short time but lost it to adversaries, who then trampled the sanctuary; or whether the enemies of the people dispossessed the people, and in so doing trampled the sanctuary. The latter seems more likely...

"The sense is this: during the brief time that the holy people were dispossessed (i.e., the Babylonian exile), their adversaries trampled God's sanctuary (the temple was in a ruined state)."

Oswalt then asks, "What is the significance of this statement in this context?" His answer is that "if they [the holy people] are now restored to the land, they can hardly be said to possess it, being vassals of the Persian emperor...Instead of the enemy

(continued...)

63:19a הִיָּינוּ מֵעוֹלָם לֹא־מִשְׁלַתָּ בָּם

לֹא־נִקְרָא שְׁמֶךָ עֲלֵיהֶם

We became for a long-lasting time (a people) You did not rule over;
Your name was not called over them.⁷⁴

⁷³(...continued)

being trampled underfoot (**Isaiah 14:25; 63:6**), God's holy place has been trampled. Where indeed is God's zeal for His house and His people (**verse 15**)?" (Pp. 614-15)

Oswalt has an excursus on the historical setting of **63:15-19**, in pp. 616-17, where he states that "Although the historical setting of **chapters 40-66** is vague at best...contemporary scholarship continues to reconstruct a more precise setting than the text provides...Although the issues dealt with in **chapters 40-55** have special relevance for persons in Babylon in 580-540 B.C.E., and the issues dealt with in **chapters 56-66** have special relevance for persons living in Judah in 540-400 B.C.E., by its great paucity of data the text carefully avoids making those eras the primary reference points for understanding them." (P. 616)

Oswalt obviously has "an axe to grind" in making such statements, as he longs to prove that the entire **Book of Isaiah** was written by the historical Isaiah in the 8th century B.C.E. (the 700's), and rejects the view held by many that **chapters 40-55** were written by a "Second Isaiah" (a disciple of the original Isaiah—who lived and prophesied and wrote in the 6th century, 580-540 B.C.E.), and then a "Third Isaiah" (written in the latter part of the 6th century B.C.E., 540-400 B.C.E. by another disciple or disciples of the original Isaiah.)

But **verses 18-19** make it clear, we think, to anyone reading them, that the historical setting of this part of the **Book of Isaiah, Third Isaiah**, has been composed after the Babylonian captivity, and that now, having returned to their native land, the people of Israel are no longer like the Israel of old, with YHWH as their sole ruler, but have become subject to others—obviously meaning the Persians. This is not a "vague" reference to the historical setting, but a very clear one, in our opinion.

⁷⁴Translation of these two lines vary:

King James, "We are *thine*: thou never barest rule over them; they were not called by thy name."

Tanakh, "We have become as a people You never ruled, To which Your name was never attached."

New Revised Standard, "We have long been like those whom you do not rule, like those not called by your name."

New International, "We are yours from of old; but you have not ruled over them, they have not been called by your name."

(continued...)

⁷⁴(...continued)

New Jerusalem, “We have long been like those you do not rule, people who do not bear your name.”

Rahifs, “We became like that which from (the) beginning You did not rule us, neither was the name of Yours called over us.”

Slotki, “We are become as they over whom Thou never borest rule, As they that were not called by Thy name.” (Slotki interpolates “as” twice in this verse.)

Alexander, “We are of old, You have not ruled over them, Your name has not been called upon them.”

Slotki’s comment emphasizes the “as”—“It would appear that the election of Israel as God’s people had finally ceased.”

But in fact, the text states it clearly, “We became for a long-lasting time (a people) You did not rule over; Your name was not called over them.”

Oswalt asks with reference to verse **19a^{Heb} / 19^{Eng}**, “What conclusions might an observer draw from the conditions described in **verses 17-18**? If they saw a people who continually lived lives that were contrary to the character of God, who were chronically disloyal to Him; if they saw a nation given over to its enemies, the people dedicated to God’s service dispossessed, and the places dedicated to His service corrupted and destroyed, what would they conclude? They would surely conclude that the stories about Israel’s glorious past were lies. God never had ruled over them...

“Is this what God wants? Does He want the world to have this false impression, or does He want the world to know His glory (**66:18-19**)?...The solution for Israel is that God should deal with their continued sinning and make of them the witnesses to His glorious name that they ought to be.” (Pp. 615-16)

⁷⁵Achtemeier comments on **63:19b-64:5^{Heb} / 64:1-5b^{Eng}** that “Despite the persecution the Levitic-prophetic community is suffering at the hands of the Zadokites, they therefore also join common cause with the Judeans, and the last three strophes of this prayer of lament (**64:1-5b^{Eng}; 64:5c-7^{Eng}; 64:8-12^{Eng}**) pray for the good of the Judean community as a whole...The Levites and prophets do not claim perfection for themselves before God; nor do they cut themselves off from their fellow countrymen in some isolating claim to self-righteousness...

“And the plea of...**64:5b^{Eng}** is that the sovereign Lord of Hosts, enthroned above the heaven of heavens, will cleave the firmament in two...and come down (compare **Psalms 18:9; 144:5**) in a mighty theophany to save His people from their foreign adversaries...

“This is a fearsome Lord Who descends to do terrible deeds, that is, deeds of terrifying and awesome power (compare **Deuteronomy 10:21; Psalms 65:5; 66:3, 5; 106:22**), to save His covenant people...And yet this is the God Who, for all His awe-

(continued...)

לֹא-קָרַעַתָּ שָׁמַיִם יְרֵדָתָּ
מִפְּנֵי הַרִים נֹזְלוּ:

Would that You had torn (the) heavens and come down!⁷⁶

⁷⁵(...continued)

some power, stoops to act on behalf of anyone who expects and trusts His action (**verse 4e**—this is the meaning of ‘awaits Him’; compare **26:8-9; 40:31**), and Who rejoices over anyone who walks according to His ways (**verse 5**).” (Pp. 118-19)

Alexander comments on **chapter 64** that “This chapter, like the one before it, from which it is in fact inseparable, has respect to the critical or turning-point between the old and new dispensations, and presents it just as it might naturally have appeared to the believing Jews, i.e. the first Christian converts, at that juncture. The strongest confidence is expressed in the Divine power, founded upon former experience (**verses 1-3**). The two great facts of Israel’s rejection as a nation, and the continued existence of the church, are brought together (**verse 4**). The unworthiness of Israel is acknowledged still more fully (**verses 5-6**). The sovereign authority of God is humbly recognized (**verse 8**). The external prerogatives of Israel are lost (**verse 9**). But will God for that cause cast off true Israel, His Own church or people? (**verse 10**).” (P. 429)

But where in the text is anything said about “the old and new dispensations”? Where is anything said about the distinction between Israel as a nation and Israel as a church? Where is anything said about “true Israel”? As he has done in chapter after chapter, Alexander is reading his dispensational theology into the text, not genuinely finding it there. The text contains an earnest plea for Divine intervention in Israel’s history, for a powerful Theophany that would convince Israel’s enemies of the Divine reality, but nothing is said concerning dispensations.

Oswalt comments on **63:19b^{Heb} / 64:1^{Eng}** that “Having already called on God to see how bad the situation is (**63:15**), the prophet now goes farther still and pleads for God to break in on that situation. How he would love to see that blood-stained Warrior coming up from Edom (**63:1**). Where is He?...”

“The language here is the classical language of Theophany in the **Old Testament**, with God breaking through the apparently solid dome of the heavens...to shake the most solid of earth’s foundations, the *mountains*...Although the Creator is other than His creation, He can break into it at any point, and when He does, lightning flashes, thunder rolls, and the earth shakes. In the voice of his deeply discouraged people, Isaiah cries out for God to do it again.” (Pp. 620-21)

⁷⁶Ortlund comments that “Isaiah sees the heavens as a vast curtain [see **Isaiah 40:22**] concealing God, and begs God to rip them apart and step down into this world with His felt presence.” (P. 1356)

(continued...)

(that) from Your presence mountains had shaken--⁷⁷

⁷⁶(...continued)

The verb is עָרַע, **qara**(, "tear," "rend," "beat," "gnash." For other occurrences in the **Book of Isaiah**, see **36:22; 37:1** (both of the tearing of one's robe or garment), and here, **63:19**, of "tearing open" the heavens.

⁷⁷These two lines are a prayer-wish, that YHWH had appeared in a great Theophany, breaking His silence, causing the earth to tremble at His presence. Only such a Divine mighty act of Self-revelation could have caused YHWH's enemies to recognize YHWH's name, and caused the nations to recognize YHWH's greatness!

Where our Hebrew text has the niphal 3rd person plural perfect, נִזְלְוּ, "were shaken," "quaked," **Rahlf**s has καὶ τακήσονται, "and should melt / dissolve."

1. **Paul's Quotations / References to Isaiah 40-66**

Loci Citati Vel Allegati, in Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece Pp. 791-92)
(Passages Cited or Alluded To: Quotations in Italics)

Romans 11:34, 1 Corinthians 2:16 (Isaiah 40:13);

(These two passages are certainly quotations of the Greek text)

Romans 11:34:

Isaiah's Greek:

τίς ἔγνω νοῦν κυρίου
καὶ τίς αὐτοῦ σύμβουλος ἐγένετο
ὃς συμβιβῶ αὐτόν
Who knew (the) Mind of (the) Lord?
And who became His counselor,

Paul's Greek:

τίς γὰρ ἔγνω νοῦν κυρίου;
ἢ τίς σύμβουλος αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο;
For who knew (the) mind of (the) Lord?
Or who became a counselor of His?

(Paul's translation is close to that of **Rahlfs**, adding in γὰρ, "for," in the first line and changing καὶ, "and," to ἢ, "or" in the second line, as well as reversing the order of αὐτοῦ σύμβουλος to σύμβουλος αὐτοῦ. Both Greek texts [Rahlfs' and Paul's] are quite different from the first line in the Hebrew. Paul is certainly not a biblical literalist!)

Hebrew:

Who measured out YHWH's Spirit / wind,
and (what) man made known His counsel to Him?

1 Corinthians 2:16:

Paul' Greek:

τίς γὰρ ἔγνω νοῦν κυρίου,
ὃς συμβιβάσει αὐτόν;
For who knew (the) mind of (the) Lord,
who will counsel Him?

(In this second quotation of **Isaiah 40:13**, Paul changes the second line—again showing that Paul was no literalist.)

Romans 1:20, Ephesians 1:19, 6:10 (Isaiah 40:26);

(Certainly not quotations; perhaps distant allusions.)

Romans 1:20 (Isaiah 40:28)

(Certainly not a quotation; perhaps a distant allusion.)

2 Corinthians 6:18 (Isaiah 43:6)

(Certainly not a quotation; similar theme of sons and daughters of God)

2 Corinthians 5:17 (Isaiah 43:18-19)

(Certainly not a quotation; similar contrast between old things and new)

Ephesians 1:6 (Isaiah 44:2);

(Certainly not a quotation; perhaps a distant allusion.)

1 Corinthians 1:20 (Isaiah 44:25)

(Certainly not a quotation, but Paul's statement οὐχὶ ἐμώρανεν ὁ θεὸς τὴν σοφίαν τοῦ κόσμου;, "Did not the God make foolish the wisdom of the world?" is closely similar to Isaiah's statement concerning the Lord's ἀποστρέφω φρονίμους εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω καὶ τὴν βουλήν αὐτῶν μωρεύων, "turning wise people backward, and making foolish their counsel.")

Colossians 2:3 (Isaiah 45:3);

(Certainly not a quotation; perhaps a distant allusion to the theme of treasures.)

Romans 9:20 (Isaiah 45:9);

(Certainly not a quotation, but similar theme of foolishness of worldly wisdom)

1 Corinthians 14:25b; (Isaiah 45:14b);

(We doubt that this is in fact a quotation; rather, it appears that Paul's language has been influenced by this passage in **Isaiah 45:14b**, since the theme of finding God in the presence of believers is similar.)

Isaiah's Greek:

καὶ ἐροῦσιν οὐκ ἔστιν θεὸς πλὴν σοῦ
and they will say There is no God except You!

Paul's Greek:

τὰ κρυπτὰ τῆς καρδίας αὐτοῦ φανερὰ γίνεται,
καὶ οὕτως πεσὼν ἐπὶ πρόσωπον προσκυνήσει τῷ θεῷ
ἀπαγγέλλων ὅτι ὄντως ὁ θεὸς ἐν ὑμῖν ἐστίν.
The hidden things of his heart become manifest;
and in this way, falling upon (his) face he will worship the God
proclaiming that Truly *the God is in you* (plural)!

Hebrew:

And they will bow down to you, they will make intercession, (saying)
Surely God is with you, and there is no other besides God!

Romans 14:11, Philippians 2:10, 11 (Isaiah 45:23b);

(**Romans 14:11** contains a verbatim quotation of the last two lines of Greek **Isaiah 45:23**. **Philippians 2:10-11** has the theme of knees bending and tongues confessing out, but is Christocentric rather than Theocentric.)

Isaiah's Greek:

ὅτι ἐμοὶ κάμψει πᾶν γόνυ
καὶ ἐξομολογήσεται πᾶσα γλῶσσα τῷ θεῷ
because to me every knee shall bow
and every tongue shall confess out to the God.

Paul's Greek:

γέγραπται γάρ·
ζῶ ἐγώ, λέγει κύριος,
ὅτι ἐμοὶ κάμψει πᾶν γόνυ
καὶ πᾶσα γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσεται τῷ θεῷ.
For it has been written,
I, I live, says (the) Lord,
because to Me every knee will bow,
and every tongue will confess our to the God.

Hebrew:

By Myself I have sworn;
righteousness has gone forth from My mouth,
a word—and it will not return--

that to Me every knee will bend;
every tongue will swear!

Romans 4:17 (Isaiah 48:13);

(Certainly not a quotation; but the theme of calling non-existent things into existence is shared in the two passages.)

Galatians 1:15 (Isaiah 49:1);

(Certainly not a quotation, but the two passages share the theme of a person [prophet] being called by God from his mother's womb.)

Ephesians 6:17 (Isaiah 49:2);

(Certainly not a quotation, but where the prophet in **Isaiah 49:2** says his mouth is a "sharp sword," **Ephesians 6:7** describes the word of God as the sword of the Spirit.)

Philippians 2:16 (Isaiah 49:4);

(Certainly not a quotation; but the passages both speak of "running in vain.")

2 Corinthians 6:2b (Isaiah 49:8);

(This is a verbatim quotation of the Greek text of **Isaiah 49:8a**, except for a difference in the introductory statement. Where Isaiah has "In this way says [the] Lord," Paul has "For it / He says.")

Isaiah's Greek:

οὕτως λέγει κύριος
καιρῷ δεκτῷ ἐπήκουσά σου
καὶ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ σωτηρίας ἐβοήθησά σοι
In this way says (the) Lord,
At an acceptable time I listened to you (singular);
and in a day of salvation / deliverance I helped you.

Paul's Greek:

λέγει γάρ·
καιρῷ δεκτῷ ἐπήκουσά σου
καὶ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ σωτηρίας ἐβοήθησά σοι.
For it / He says,
At an acceptable time I listened to you (singular);
and in a day of salvation / deliverance I helped you.

Hebrew:

In this way YHWH spoke:
At a time of acceptance I answered you,
and in a day of salvation I helped you.

Romans 9:16 (Isaiah 49:10);

(Certainly not a quotation; but both passages share the theme of Divine mercy.)

2 Corinthians 7:6 (Isaiah 49:13);

(Certainly not a quotation; but both passages share the theme of comforting the downcast.)

Romans 14:11 (Isaiah 49:18b)

(We do not think this is Paul's quotation of **Isaiah 49:18b**, but rather of **Isaiah 45:23**—see above. But here the two passages share the phrase, ζῶ ἐγὼ λέγει κύριος, "I, I live, says (the) Lord.")

Romans 8:33 (Isaiah 50:8);

(Certainly not a quotation; but the two passages share the question of Who shall condemn the one who is serving God?)

Romans 9:31 (Isaiah 51:1);

(Certainly not a quotation; but both passages share the theme of "pursuing righteousness / a law of righteousness.")

Romans 1:17, 3:21 (Isaiah 51:5-6);

(Certainly not quotations; but all three passages share the theme of the righteousness of God.)

Romans 2:15 (Isaiah 51:7);

(Certainly not a quotation; but both passages share the theme of God's law / teaching being in the heart.)

Romans 1:17, 3:21 (Isaiah 51:8)

(Certainly not quotations; but all three passages share the theme of God's righteousness.)

2 Corinthians 6:17 (Isaiah 52:11);

(Here Paul paraphrases some of the language of **Isaiah 52:11**, quoting verbatim the words of one phrase, 'and an unclean thing do not touch'; but Paul says

nothing concerning the context of the Israelite exiles going out from Babylon, applying the words of **Second Isaiah** to the new situation of believers having to get out of an unclean, defiling environment, such as that of Corinth in the first century.)

Isaiah's Greek:

ἀπόστητε ἀπόστητε
ἐξέλθατε ἐκεῖθεν καὶ ἀκαθάρτου μὴ ἅπτεσθε
ἐξέλθατε ἐκ μέσου αὐτῆς
ἀφορίσθητε οἱ φέροντες τὰ σκεύη κυρίου
Depart, depart,
go out from there, and touch no unclean thing;
go out from the midst of it;
be separated, you who carry the vessels of the Lord!

Paul's Greek:

διὸ ἐξέλθατε ἐκ μέσου αὐτῶν
καὶ ἀφορίσθητε, λέγει κύριος,
καὶ ἀκαθάρτου μὴ ἅπτεσθε·
κἀγὼ εἰσδέξομαι ὑμᾶς
Therefore go out from their midst,
and be separate, says (the) Lord,
and an unclean thing do not touch;
and I, I will receive you (plural).

Hebrew:

Depart! Depart!
Go forth from there!
You (plural) shall not touch (anything) unclean!
Go forth from her midst!
Purify yourselves, bearers of YHWH's vessels!

Romans 2:24, 1 Timothy 6:1 (Isaiah 52:5b);

(We think Paul is quoting from **Isaiah 52:5b** in **Romans 2:24**, but he changes the wording slightly, omitting the phrase διὰ παντὸς, “constantly,” and changing “the name of Mine” to “the name of the God.” Again we see that Paul is not a literalist, but rather, feels free to make adjustments to the biblical word as he quotes it.)

Isaiah's Greek:

τάδε λέγει κύριος
δι' ὑμᾶς διὰ παντὸς τὸ ὄνομά μου βλασφημεῖται ἐν τοῖς

ἔθνεσιν

But then these things says (the) Lord:
Through you (plural) constantly the name of Mine is blasphemed
among the nations.

Paul's Greek:

τὸ γὰρ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ δι' ὑμᾶς βλασφημεῖται ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν,
καθὼς γέγραπται.

For the name of God through you (plural) is blasphemed among the
nations.
just as it has been written.

Hebrew:

And now, what is there for Me here?—a saying of YHWH—
that My people was taken for nothing,
his rulers howl?—a saying of YHWH—
And constantly, all day long, My name is scorned!

1 Timothy 6:1 is not a quotation, but shares language with the Isaiah passage,
as Paul admonishes slaves to respect their masters, ἵνα μὴ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ
θεοῦ καὶ ἡ διδασκαλία βλασφημηῆται., so that the name of the God and the
teaching is not blasphemed / slandered / reviled.

Romans 10:15, Ephesians 2:17, 6:15 (Isaiah 52:7);

(Paul affirms that he is quoting in **Romans 10:15**, but his words are not an exact
quotation; rather, they share some of the language and phrases of **Isaiah 52:7**,
as do **Ephesians 2:17** and **6:15**, especially the phrase “the good news of
peace.”)

Isaiah's Greek:

ὡς ὥρα ἐπὶ τῶν ὄρέων
ὡς πόδες εὐαγγελιζομένου ἀκοὴν εἰρήνης
ὡς εὐαγγελιζόμενος ἀγαθὰ
Like an hour upon the mountains,
like feet announcing announcing good news—a message of peace,
like one announcing good news of good things!

Paul's Greek:

πῶς δὲ κηρύξωσιν ἐὰν μὴ ἀποσταλῶσιν;
καθὼς γέγραπται·

ὡς ὠραῖοι οἱ πόδες τῶν εὐαγγελιζομένων [τὰ] ἀγαθὰ.
But then how shall they preach / proclaim unless they should be sent out?
Even as it has been written:
How beautiful (are) the feet of those announcing the good things as good news!

Hebrew:

How beautiful upon the mountains (are the) feet of one announcing good news!
One causing Peace! to be heard,
one announcing good news of good!
One causing salvation / deliverance to be heard,
one saying to Zion, Your God reigned!

Romans 15:21 (Isaiah 52:15b);

(This is certainly a quotation as Paul claims, and a verbatim one at that)

Isaiah's Greek:

οἷς οὐκ ἀνηγγέλη περὶ αὐτοῦ ὄψονται
καὶ οἱ οὐκ ἀκηκόασιν συνήσουσιν
those to whom it was not announced concerning him (the suffering servant) shall see;
and those who had not heard shall understand.

Paul's Greek:

ἀλλὰ καθὼς γέγραπται·
οἷς οὐκ ἀνηγγέλη περὶ αὐτοῦ ὄψονται,
καὶ οἱ οὐκ ἀκηκόασιν συνήσουσιν.
But rather, even as it has been written,
Those to whom it was not announced concerning him (the Christ) shall see;
and those who had not heard shall understand.

(Whereas Isaiah is speaking about the suffering servant of **Isaiah 53**, Paul is speaking about Jesus Christ, of the Christian revelation. The list in **Nestle-Aland 27** mistakenly lists **1 Corinthians 2:9** here, it is a quotation of **Isaiah 64:4^{Heb} / 5^{Eng}**)

Romans 10:16 (Isaiah 53:1b);

(This is certainly a quotation by Paul of the latter half of **Isaiah 53:1**)

Isaiah's Greek:

κύριε τίς ἐπίστευσεν τῇ ἀκοῇ ἡμῶν
καὶ ὁ βραχίον κυρίου τίνι ἀπεκαλύφθη

Lord, who believed the message of ours?
And the arm of (the) Lord, to whom was it revealed?

Paul's Greek:

Ἄλλ' οὐ πάντες ὑπήκουσαν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ.
Ἡσαΐας γὰρ λέγει·
κύριε, τίς ἐπίστευσεν τῇ ἀκοῇ ἡμῶν;
But rather, not all / everyone obeyed the good news.
For Isaiah says,
Lord, who believed the message of ours?

Hebrew:

Who put confidence in / believed, our report?
And YHWH's arm, to whom was it revealed?

Philippians 2:7 (Isaiah 53:3);

(Certainly not a quotation, but here in **Philippians 2:7-8** Paul identifies Jesus as the “servant” of Second Isaiah, who willingly gives up his life for others, thereby becoming the pattern for Christian believers. Compare **1 Peter 2:18-25**.)

Romans 4:25, 5:1; 1 Corinthians 15:3 (Isaiah 53:5-6);

(Certainly not quotations, but each of the three passages identify Jesus as the servant of **Isaiah 53**, who vicariously suffers for the lawlessness and sins of others, bringing them peace.)

Romans 5:15, 19 (Isaiah 53:11-12);

(Certainly not quotations; but Paul identifies Jesus as the one who brings righteousness / justification to many, bearing their sins vicariously.)

Romans 4:24-25, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 (Isaiah 53:12);

(Certainly not quotations; but just as the suffering servant of **Isaiah 53** is depicted as surviving death, so Jesus is risen from the dead.)

Galatians 4:27 (Isaiah 54:1);

Isaiah's Greek:

εὐφράνητι στείρα ἢ οὐ τίκτουσα
ῥῆξον καὶ βόησον ἢ οὐκ ὠδίνουσα

ὅτι πολλὰ τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἐρήμου
μᾶλλον ἢ τῆς ἐχούσης τὸν ἄνδρα
εἶπεν γὰρ κύριος

Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear;
break forth, and shout, you who are not in labor!
Because many are the children of the desolate woman
more than of her that has a husband,
for the Lord has spoken.

Paul's Greek:

γέγραπται γάρ·
εὐφράνθητι, στειρα ἢ οὐ τίκτουσα,
ῥῆξον καὶ βόησον, ἢ οὐκ ὠδίνουσα·
ὅτι πολλὰ τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἐρήμου
μᾶλλον ἢ τῆς ἐχούσης τὸν ἄνδρα.

For it has been written:

Be gladdened, sterile one, the one not giving birth!
Break forth and cry aloud, the one not having labor-pains!
Because many (are) the children of the desolate one--
More than the one having the husband!

Hebrew:

Give a ringing cry, barren woman—she (who) did not give birth;
break forth a ringing shout, and cry out, (you who) did not have
labor-pains!
Because more (are the) children of her who is desolate, than the
married woman's children!
YHWH said (it)!

(Paul self-identifies this as a quotation, which it is—but uses it allegorically, as referring to the Christian movement as the “Jerusalem above.”)

Romans 9:22 (Isaiah 54:16);

(Certainly not a quotation; but the theme of creating something for destruction is found in both passages. **Isaiah 54:16** denies it; **Romans 9:22** affirms it.)

2 Corinthians 9:10 (Isaiah 55:10);

(This is hardly a quotation of **Isaiah 55:10**, but rather Paul's statement has been influenced by the language of that passage.)

Isaiah's Greek:

ὡς γὰρ ἐὰν καταβῆ ὑετὸς ἢ χιῶν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ
καὶ οὐ μὴ ἀποστραφῆ ἕως ἂν μεθύσῃ τὴν γῆν
καὶ ἐκτέκῃ καὶ ἐκβλαστήσῃ
καὶ δῶ σπέρμα τῷ σπείροντι καὶ ἄρτον εἰς βρώσιν
For as when rain may fall or snow out of the heaven,
and does not return until it makes the earth drunk,
and it brings forth, and sprouts up,
and gives seed to the one sowing and bread for food...

Paul's Greek:

ὁ δὲ ἐπιχορηγῶν σπόρον τῷ σπείροντι καὶ ἄρτον εἰς βρώσιν
χορηγήσει καὶ πληθυνεῖ τὸν σπόρον ὑμῶν
καὶ αὐξήσει τὰ γενήματα τῆς δικαιοσύνης ὑμῶν.
But then the One supplying seed to the one sowing, and bread for
eating,
will supply and multiply your (plural) seed
and will increase the produce of your righteousness!

Hebrew:

Because just as the rain comes down, and the snow from the heavens,
and there, it will not return, unless it saturated the earth,
and causes it to give birth, and causes it to sprout,
and it will give seed for the one sowing, and bread for the one
eating...

Philippians 4:18 (Isaiah 56:7);

(Certainly not a quotation, but both passages share in describing acceptable sacrifices—**Isaiah 56:7** concerning those offered by foreigners in YHWH's house of prayer for all peoples, and **Philippians 4:18** concerning gifts sent to aid him in his ministry in Thessalonica.)

2 Thessalonians 2:3 (Isaiah 57:3-4);

(Certainly not a quotation, but where **Isaiah 57:3-4** speaks of “children of destruction, **2 Thessalonians 2:3** speaks of a “son / child of destruction.”)

1 Thessalonians 5:14 (Isaiah 57:15);

(Certainly not a quotation, but similarity in language. Where **Isaiah 57:15** speaks of the Lord Most High giving μακροθυμίαν, long-suffering / patience to the faint-hearted, Paul uses the imperative in **1 Thessalonians 5:14**, μακροθυμεῖτε πρὸς πάντας, “be long-suffering / patient towards all.”

Ephesians 2:17 (Isaiah 57:19);

(Not exactly a quotation, but Paul's language is closely built upon its language.)

Isaiah's Greek:

εἰρήνην ἐπ' εἰρήνην τοῖς μακρὰν
καὶ τοῖς ἐγγύς οὖσιν
καὶ εἶπεν κύριος ἰάσομαι αὐτούς
Peace upon peace to the one far-off,
and to those being near.
And (the) Lord said, I will heal them!

Paul's Greek:

καὶ ἐλθὼν εὐηγγελίσσατο εἰρήνην ὑμῖν τοῖς μακρὰν
καὶ εἰρήνην τοῖς ἐγγύς·
And coming, He announced good news of peace to you, the ones far-off;
And peace to the ones near.

Ephesians 4:14 (Isaiah 57:20);

(Certainly not a quotation; but Paul's use of the rare verb κλυδωνίζομαι, "to be tossed about by waves," may have been influenced by it. While the verb is not uncommon in Classical Greek, this is its only occurrence in the **Septuagint**, and likewise its only occurrence in the **Greek New Testament**.)

Romans 3:15-17 (Isaiah 59:7-8a);

(Certainly a selective quotation of **Isaiah 59:7-8a** by Paul.)

Isaiah's Greek:

οἱ δὲ πόδες αὐτῶν ἐπὶ πονηρίαν τρέχουσιν
ταχινοὶ ἐκχέαι αἷμα
καὶ οἱ διαλογισμοὶ αὐτῶν διαλογισμοὶ ἀφρόνων
σύντριμμα καὶ ταλαιπωρία ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτῶν
καὶ ὁδὸν εἰρήνης οὐκ οἶδασιν...
But then their feet run to evil,
(they are) quick to pour out blood.
And their reasonings (are) reasonings of foolish people.
Destruction and misery (are) in their ways,
and a way of peace they did not know!

Paul's Greek:

- ¹⁵ ὄξεις οἱ πόδες αὐτῶν ἐκχέαι αἷμα,
 Their feet (are) quick to pour out blood;
¹⁶ σύντριμμα καὶ ταλαιπωρία ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτῶν,
 destruction and misery (are) in their ways;
¹⁷ καὶ ὁδὸν εἰρήνης οὐκ ἔγνωσαν.
 and a way of peace they did not know.

Hebrew:

Their feet run to the evil,
 and they hurry to pour out innocent blood.
 Their thoughts (are) thoughts of wickedness;
 ruin and brokenness (are) in their highways.
 A way of peace / welfare they did not know...

Ephesians 6:14, 17, 1 Thessalonians 5:8 (Isaiah 59:17);

(Certainly not a quotations, but Paul's language has been deeply influenced by it, with its description of YHWH's putting on a "breastplate of righteousness" and a "helmet of salvation," as Divine armor. Note how in 1 Thessalonians 5:8 Paul changes the phrases to "a breastplate of faith and love," and "the hope of salvation" as a helmet. Whereas in **Isaiah 59:17** the armor belongs to YHWH, in Paul the armor is that of the Christian believer.

Romans 11:26-27 (Isaiah 59:20-21);

(Certainly a self-described quotation by Paul of Isaiah, which he understands as predicting the salvation of all Israel.)

Isaiah's Greek:

- ²⁰ καὶ ἥξει ἕνεκεν Σιων ὁ ῥυόμενος
 καὶ ἀποστρέψει ἀσεβείας ἀπὸ Ἰακωβ
²¹ καὶ αὕτη αὐτοῖς ἡ παρ' ἐμοῦ διαθήκη εἶπεν κύριος
 τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἐμόν ὃ ἐστὶν ἐπὶ σοί
 καὶ τὰ ῥήματα ἃ ἔδωκα εἰς τὸ στόμα σου
 οὐ μὴ ἐκλίπη ἐκ τοῦ στόματός σου
 καὶ ἐκ τοῦ στόματος τοῦ σπέρματός σου εἶπεν γὰρ κύριος
 ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν καὶ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα
²⁰ And he will come on behalf of Zion, the one delivering;
 and he will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;
²¹ and this (is) for them the covenant from Me, said (the) Lord:
 The Spirit, the One of Mine, which is upon you (singular),
 and the words which I gave / placed in the mouth of yours,
 will not fail / cease out of your mouth,
 and out of the mouth of your seed / descendant(s), for (the) Lord said
 (it);

from the now, and into the ages!

Paul's Greek:

²⁶ καὶ οὕτως πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ σωθήσεται, καθὼς γέγραπται·
ἥξει ἐκ Σιών ὁρῶμενος,
ἀποστρέψει ἀσεβείας ἀπὸ Ἰακώβ.

And in this way all Israel will be saved, even as it has been written:
The one rescuing / delivering will come out of Zion;
he will turn away godlessness from Jacob.

²⁷ καὶ αὕτη αὐτοῖς ἡ παρ' ἐμοῦ διαθήκη,
ὅταν ἀφέλωμαι τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν.

And this (is) for them the covenant from Me,
when I take away the sins of theirs.

(Where Isaiah says the one delivering will come “on behalf of Zion,” Paul says the one rescuing / delivering will come “out of Zion.” Paul omits the remaining lines in Isaiah’s Greek text.)

Hebrew:

²⁰ And a redeemer / next-of-kin will come to Zion,
and to those turning away from transgression in Jacob!
–(It is) a saying of YHWH.

²¹ And I—this is My covenant with them, said YHWH;
My Spirit which is upon you, and My words which I placed in your
mouth,
shall not depart from your mouth, and from (the) mouth of your
descendant(s), said YHWH,
from now and until long-lasting-time!

Ephesians 4:30 (Isaiah 63:10a);

(Certainly not a quotation; but Paul’s warning to believers to “not grieve the Holy Spirit,” is strongly reminiscent of Isaiah’s statement that the people of Israel had disobeyed and provoked the Holy Spirit.)

1 Corinthians 2:9 (Isaiah 64:3a);

(Paul call his language a quotation, but if it is not an exact quotation, it is very close to one, at least in part.)

Isaiah’s Greek:

ἀπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος οὐκ ἠκούσαμεν
οὐδὲ οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ ἡμῶν εἶδον
θεὸν πλὴν σοῦ

From the age (past), we did not hear,
neither did our eyes see,
a God besides You!

Paul's Greek:

ἀλλὰ καθὼς γέγραπται·
ὃ ὀφθαλμὸς οὐκ εἶδεν
καὶ οὖς οὐκ ἤκουσεν
καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίαν ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἀνέβη,
ὃ ἠτοίμασεν ὁ θεὸς τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν.
But rather, just as it has been written:
What things eye did not see,
and ear did not hear,
and did not go up upon a heart of a human--
the things the God prepared for the ones who love Him!

(Whereas in **Isaiah 64:3a** what has not been seen or heard is a God other than YHWH, Paul has in mind the things God has prepared for those who love Him.)

Romans 10:20 (Isaiah 65:1);

(Paul identifies his words as a quotation of Isaiah)

Isaiah's Greek:

ἐμφανῆς ἐγενόμην τοῖς ἐμὲ μὴ ζητοῦσιν
εὐρέθην τοῖς ἐμὲ μὴ ἐπερωτῶσιν
εἶπα ἰδοὺ εἰμι
τῷ ἔθνει οἷ οὐκ ἐκάλεσάν μου τὸ ὄνομα
I became visible / manifest to the ones not seeking Me;
I was found by the ones not asking for Me.
I said, Look—I am,
to the nation , the ones who did not call My name.

Paul's Greek:

Ἰσαΐας δὲ ἀποτολμᾷ καὶ λέγει·
εὐρέθην [ἐν] τοῖς ἐμὲ μὴ ζητοῦσιν,
ἐμφανῆς ἐγενόμην τοῖς ἐμὲ μὴ ἐπερωτῶσιν.
But then Isaiah is bold, and he says,
I was found by those not seeking Me;
I became visible to the ones not asking for Me.
(Note the reverse order of the lines 2 and 3.)

Hebrew:

I was sought after by those who did not call,
I was found by those who did not seek Me.
I said, Look at Me, Look at Me!,
to a nation not being called by My name.

Romans 10:21 (Isaiah 65:2a)

(Paul's words continue his quotation from **Isaiah 65a**)

Isaiah's Greek:

ἔξεπέτασα τὰς χεῖράς μου ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν
πρὸς λαὸν ἀπειθοῦντα καὶ ἀντιλέγοντα
I stretched out the hands of Mine all the day,
to a people disobeying and contradicting...

Paul's Greek:

πρὸς δὲ τὸν Ἰσραὴλ λέγει·
ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν ἔξεπέτασα τὰς χεῖράς μου
πρὸς λαὸν ἀπειθοῦντα καὶ ἀντιλέγοντα.
But then to the Israel he says
All the day I stretched out the hands of Mine,
To a people disobeying and contradicting.

Hebrew:

I spread out My hands, all day-long
to a people being stubborn...

1 Corinthians 10:21 (Isaiah 65:11);

(Certainly not a quotation; but Paul's use of the phrase *τραπέζης δαιμονίων*, "table of demons," probably has come from **Isaiah 65:11's** *ἐτοιμάζοντες τῷ δαίμονι τράπεζαν*, "preparing for the demon a table.")

1 Corinthians 2:9b (Isaiah 65:16b);

(While not part of the quotation in **1 Corinthians 2:9a**, Paul's phrase in **2:9b**, *ἐπὶ καρδίαν ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἀνέβη*, "upon a heart of a person it did not come up," is apparently taken from **Isaiah 65:16b**, *ἐπιλήσονται γὰρ τὴν θλίψιν αὐτῶν τὴν πρώτην καὶ οὐκ ἀναβήσεται αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν*, "For they will forget their first affliction and it will not come up into their heart.")

1 Corinthians 15:58; Philippians 2:16 (Isaiah 65:23);

(While not exactly a quotation of **Isaiah 65:23**, the last phrase in **1 Corinthians 15:58**, εἰδότες ὅτι ὁ κόπος ὑμῶν οὐκ ἔστιν κενὸς ἐν κυρίῳ, “knowing that the labor of yours is not empty / in vain in [the] Lord,” is very similar to **Isaiah 65:23's** οἱ δὲ ἐκλεκτοί μου οὐ κοπιήσουσιν εἰς κενόν, “But then the chosen one of Mine do not labor in vain / for emptiness.” The same thing is true of the last half of **Philippians 2:16**, where Paul says that οὐκ εἰς κενὸν ἔδραμον οὐδὲ εἰς κενὸν ἐκοπίασα, “I did not run in vain / for emptiness, neither did I labor in vain / for emptiness.”)

2 Thessalonians 1:8 (Isaiah 66:4);

(Though there is some similarity in the two passages, there is certainly no quotation involved; we doubt if this should have been included in the list.)

2 Thessalonians 1:12 (Isaiah 66:5);

(While not a quotation by Paul, the phrase he uses, ὅπως ἐνδοξασθῆ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν, “so that the name of the Lord of ours may be glorified,” is a phrase occurring in **Isaiah 66:5**, ἵνα τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου δοξασθῆ, “in order that the name of (the) Lord might be glorified.”)

2 Thessalonians 1:8 (Isaiah 66:15);

(While not an exact quotation, Paul’s language here is apparently built upon the language of **Isaiah 66:15**.)

Isaiah’s Greek:

ἰδοὺ γὰρ κύριος ὡς πῦρ ἦξει
καὶ ὡς καταγίγς τὰ ἄρματα αὐτοῦ
ἀποδοῦναι ἐν θυμῷ ἐκδίκησιν
καὶ ἀποσκορακισμὸν ἐν φλογὶ πυρός
For look—(the) Lord like fire will come,
And like a tempest His chariots,
to repay / give back vengeance with wrath,
and repudiation with a flame of fire.

Paul’s Greek:

ἐν πυρὶ φλογός, διδόντος ἐκδίκησιν τοῖς μὴ εἰδόσιν θεὸν
καὶ τοῖς μὴ ὑπακούουσιν...
In fire of flame, giving vengeance to those not knowing God,
and to those not obeying...

Romans 15:17 (Isaiah 66:20).

(There is certainly no quotation here; but Paul's view of his work as that of a priestly service, bringing the Gentiles as an offering to God, is similar to **Isaiah 66:20's** depiction of the Gentiles bringing the Jewish family members back to Jerusalem where they will worship YHWH.)

2. YHWH's Possession / Inheritance in the Hebrew Bible

Exodus 15:17,

You will bring them in, and You will plant them
in Your inheritance's mountain (בְּהַר נַחֲלַתְּךָ),
an established place for Your dwelling
(which) You made, O YHWH,
a sacred place, My Lord,
(which) Your hands established.

Psalm 28:9,

Save / deliver Your people!
And bless Your inheritance (נַחֲלַתְּךָ)!
And shepherd them and carry them to long-lasting-time!

Psalm 68:10^{Heb} / 9^{Eng}

Rain of generosity, You shed abroad, O God, (over) Your inheritance
(נַחֲלַתְּךָ);
and (when) it is wearied, You, You established / strengthened it!

Psalm 74:2,

Remember Your congregation You acquired / purchased formerly / long ago;
You redeemed a tribe, your inheritance (נַחֲלַתְּךָ),
this Mount Zion, You dwelt in it!

Psalm 106:5,

to see / look on (the) goodness / prosperity of Your chosen ones,
to rejoice in Your nation's joy,
to glory / give praise with Your inheritance (נַחֲלַתְּךָ)!

Isaiah 63:17 (here),

For what reason do You cause us to go astray, YHWH, from Your ways?
(Why) do You harden our heart from fearing / revering You?
Return / repent for the sake of Your slaves / servants,
tribes of Your inheritance (נַחֲלַתְּךָ)!

Joel 2:17,

Between the porch and the altar
let the priests--ministers (of) YHWH weep;
and let them say, Look upon Your people with compassion YHWH,
and do not give Your inheritance / possession (נַחֲלֶיךָ) up to scorn,
for a taunt-song among them, the nations!
Why should they say among the peoples,
Where is their God?

Micah 7:14,

Shepherd your people with your rod, (the) flock of your inheritance (נַחֲלֶיךָ),
dwelling alone (in) a forest in Carmel's midst;
they will pasture / graze (in) Bashan and Gilead like days of long ago.

