# **In my view, Isaiah 63 continues the song of Deliverance from chapter 62. Having described the exaltation of Zion/Jerusalem and her increase through the addition and ingrafting of the Gentiles, now Isaiah looks to the destruction of Zion’s enemies as the necessary corollary of her deliverance. It is important for us to remember that salvation/deliverance are never separated from judgment in the Bible…they are always two sides of one coin…two sides of one event. In chapter 63, Edom and, in parallel, her capital city, Bozrah, stand for all of Zion’s enemies. Yahweh, Israel’s defender and rescuer, appears in garments stained with the blood of His and their enemies…which He alone defeated.**

# **Vv.1-6 Depicts Yahweh’s wrath executed on Zion’s enemies.**

## **V.1 Begins with a rhetorical question…Who is this? in v.1a…the answer comes resounding in v.1b “It is I”…Yahweh Himself comes to rescue His people…by judging their and His enemies as in the first exodus.**

## **Vv.2,3 Asks another rhetorical question, “Why is your apparel red?” …which is answered in v.3 - I have trodden the wine press of the wrath of God alone. John has this passage in mind as he depicts the conquering Messiah in Rev.19:13. The way God has restored His people is through judging His and their enemies. Edom, descended from Esau, and Bozrah, its capital, are emblematic of those hostile to Israel and Yahweh…see Amos 1:11-12; Ps 137:7. All who remain opposed to Yahweh must ultimately come before Him for judgment…and will be removed. In v.1 The Victor appears far off approaching from a distance…but in verse 2, he is near and can be addressed directly. When Judgment Day arrives, God will execute His justice in righteousness, not malice…but those who rebel and refuse to repent must at some point face God’s righteous judgment which will be the means by which He delivers His people from this present fallen world.**

## **Vv.4-6 Here Isaiah links the Year of Jubilee mentioned in chapter 61:1-2 with Judgment Day or the Day of Vengeance but so does 61:2. Here Yahweh speaks how He has longed to set things right but has patiently waited. Now that it has arrived, Yahweh speaks as if He experiences a measure of relief at holding His righteous wrath back for so long. Again, as in the first exodus, it is Yahweh who delivers His people alone. No one else can do what He must do…because He alone is the righteous warrior against evil and the Evil One. As He at last engages and overthrows the enemy and his minions, the victory is the Lord’s alone. As the earth cries out for vengeance for the innocent blood that has been spilled upon it, so now, at last, Yahweh addresses the great injustice that has gone unaddressed for so long. His red garments are the robes of Judgment.**

# **Vv.7-9 The Prophet recalls Yahweh’s past covenant faithfulness and mercies and how God in His mercy rescued Israel in history. Beginning at verse 7 and continuing through 64:11, the Prophet representing his people prays, expressing thanksgiving and confessing as well as asking God to be merciful. Chapters 65 and 66 are God’s response and answer to this prayer. The unfaithful nation will be rejected, but the faithful Remnant will be not only preserved but rescued.**

## **V.7 Now Isaiah speaks on behalf of the nation testifying to Yahweh’s unshakable love and faithfulness to Israel throughout her history. He understands that every blessing of God that has been bestowed upon Israel has been a gift of grace or unmerited favor. God has taken the initiative to do good to Israel out of mercy and covenantally faithful love.**

## **V.8 Now the prophet anticipates that God will at one point create a new kind of Israelite…one in which there will be no deceit. Jn 1:47 and Ps 32:2 come to mind as promises of the kind of deliverance this will be. Yahweh will act on behalf of His people to transform them into people whose character will resemble His. The last line of this verse recalls Exodus 15:2 and the Song of Moses in the great act of rescue where God became their Savior.**

## **V.9 Beginning in verse 9 we begin to see an unfolding in the OT of the doctrine of the Trinity. V.9 is a remarkable verse to reveal that Yahweh is not like the gods of the nations. Isaiah tells his readers that in all their affliction…he was afflicted. Then he mentions that the one experiencing their affliction with them was the ‘Angel of his presence’. Theologically, The Angel of the Lord has been identified with the Second person of the Trinity. See Ex 23:20-23; 33:12,14,15. It is this thought that stands behind a statement like 1 Cor 10:4, recalling Ex 17:6 and Num 20. In Deut 4:7 Moses declares that Israel is unlike any other nation because their God is unlike any other God…one who is with His people and even one who shares their sorrows and experiences with them their pain. See Jud 10:16 When Israel repented, God became indignant and impatient with Israel’s oppressors because of Israel’s enduring pain. God felt the pain of their suffering as His own.**

# **Vv.10-14 God’s Deliverance in the first Exodus**

## **V.10 Now we hear of the Third person of the Trinity, the Ruah ha Kodesh or the Holy Spirit or Spirit of Holiness, spoken of as a person, who can be grieved and choose to bless or curse. Paul mentions this language explicitly in Eph 4:30. Stephen mentions this same incident and pattern of behavior in Acts 7:51. Ps 78:40 and 106:40 also make reference to how Israel grieved Yahweh here spoken of as the Holy Spirit. The result of their rebellion is that Yahweh became to them what he was not before, an enemy!**

## **V.11 The picture of God remembering…is a covenantal act. Israel is called to remember but frequently forgets…but when God remembers His covenant and His promises, it is a ground for His actions of righteousness and justice and mercy. Here God remembers His mighty deliverance at the Red Sea in Ex 14:30. In v.11c, the Holy Spirit is linked to the Shekinah or glory of God, housed in the Tabernacle in the center of the camp of the Israelites as in Numbers 2.**

## **V.12 God’s dividing the waters before His people made an everlasting name for Himself. God is glorified in saving His people from their enemies.**

## **Vv.13,14 The Holy Spirit is tied here to Israel’s experience through their wilderness wanderings of ‘being led’ by their God rather than carrying their idols with them as they made their way. Yahweh is seen and experienced as leading His people from captivity to freedom in the Promised Land…which obtains for God a name of glory or a glorious name.**

# **Vv. 15-17 Experiencing Yahweh as their enemy because of their rebellion, the prophet prays for the Remnant.**

## **Vv. 15-17 Having recalled and reviewed God’s past mercies, the Prophet cries on Israel’s behalf for new mercy. Whenever zeal is mentioned, it involves action, usually military or judicial action of God’s intervening. Having become their enemy, the prophet cries out for God to turn from His just wrath to compassion. He appeals to Yahweh as the Father of his son, Israel. They are more than simply Abraham’s descendants…they are God’s own. God has given them up to their wayward ways…but the prophet pleads on Israel’s behalf to turn their hearts back to Him. He makes a similar cry to that of David in Ps 51…particularly vv.10ff.**

# **Vv.18,19 The Sad Realization of their waywardness**

## **As Isaiah reflects upon Israel/Judah’s experience…they knew his blessing but a short time…it was like Camelot…but they could not keep it…but in prosperity soon became just like and virtually indistinguishable from their pagan neighbors to whom they were to be Lights in the darkness. See Deut 4:25-26 Through Moses, God warned His people before they entered the Promised Land…but they would not listen or hear Him.**