# **In chapter 64 we see Isaiah unpack ‘his’ Gospel. Recall that the word ‘gospel’ appears three times in Isaiah’s ‘Volume of Comfort’ chapters 40-66. In chapter 40 the prophet anticipates the return of the glory or Shekinah of God to Israel…interpreted by John the Baptist to be anticipated at the place of Joshua’s entrance at Bethany beyond the Jordan. In chapter 52 Isaiah anticipates that this return of God in his glory will affect a new or second Exodus rescue or deliverance of Israel and the establishment of God’s kingdom on earth as in the first Exodus, see Ex 15, the Song of Moses, particularly v.18, “Yahweh will reign forever and ever.” Finally, in the third use of the term ‘gospel’ by Isaiah in chapter 61 God would anoint a new King/High Priest who would inaugurate a new Year of Jubilee, canceling debts, setting free slaves, transforming Israel to be the people that God created and rescued them to be, and to empower them, the Blessed Remnant to fulfill the mission of Israel, namely, to be a ‘Light to the Nations.’ In this chapter he makes explicit how this remarkable change of fortune will be accomplished…God himself will come, and accomplish these mighty acts, and transform his people, by forgiving their sins, changing their hearts, restoring the blessing of his presence in their midst, and bringing judgment on their enemies.**

# **VV.1-4 God is sought for deliverance against their heathen enemies and oppressors.**

## **V.1 The prayer, plea, that Yahweh would ‘rend the heavens and come down’ recalls language of the first Exodus in Exodus 19:16-20, (See also Ps 18:9 and 144:5). It also is language that is used intentionally by Mark/Peter of the Baptism of Jesus in Mk 1:10. The point of this language in Mk 1 being one of fulfillment…and it is Jesus’ understanding of His baptism as the fulfillment of Is 61:1ff that is His answer to all of the questions of ‘by what authority do you do these things?’ (See Mt 21; Mk 11; Lk 20)**

## **Vv.2,3 Also recall Exodus 19 in the remembrance of the fire on the mountain at Sinai as God in his glory descended or ‘came down’ upon the Mountain to meet with Moses and the trembling of both land and people is the result of the appearance of God in his glory.**

## **V.4 Dr. Scott Hafemann, called this verse ‘the John 3:16 of the OT”. It quintessentially distinguishes Yahweh, the God of Israel, from all of the gods of the nations. Israel does not work for God…Israel’s God shows his greatness in working on behalf of his people…there is no other God like him.**

# **Vv. 5-7 The Todah Prayer, Prayer of Confession**

## **For background we should recall Lev 26:40ff…Let us go there and examine the promises…If Israel truly confesses her sins…Then, what should she expect? See Daniel 9 for another example…what was the result? Such a prayer reflecting a true heart of repentance is the goal of prophetic preaching. It is my conviction, that 1 Jn 1:9, the frequently stated ‘Assurance of Pardon’ is a direct commentary on Lev 26:40ff.**

## **V.5 Isaiah reflects on the readiness of God to rejoice in the righteous acts of his people…it is an interesting thought that God delights and rejoices in our obedience…but also is angry when we embrace sin rather than trust in him to meet our needs. Dr. Hafemann, described obedience as ‘faith gone public’ and sin as ‘unbelief gone public’. See Deut 28:47,48 and Jer 31.**

## **V.6 Israel is unacceptable in God’s presence…because through their sins they have become ‘unclean’. Uncleanness is a state of being unusable for holy purposes, in worship, unacceptable to be God’s presence. This verse is reflected upon by the Apostle Paul in Phil 3:8 and also by Ezekiel in 36:17.**

## **V.7 The reality of Israel’s spiritual corruption and poverty is that there is no one who truly and honestly seeks after Yahweh…see Rom 3:10…as Paul concludes that there is no distinction between Jews and Greeks…all have sinned and all need a Savior. Isaiah concludes that if Yahweh does not intervene on their behalf that Israel is irretrievably lost. They are unable to save or rescue themselves…and God is just and right to condemn them as he said he would in Lev 26 and Deut 28:36. But, when God’s face shines upon his people they are blessed and prosper Num 6:25,26.**

# **Vv.8-12 Isaiah appeals to God for Pardon and Restoration for those of the Remnant**

## **V.8 Isaiah, appeals to God as the Father of Israel, see Ex 4:22 and Hos 11:1. He makes a covenantal argument, that Yahweh is the Father of Israel and as such should hear his (Israel’s through Isaiah) plea…that is pleading on behalf of Israel, Isaiah should have standing to be heard. He goes further, acknowledging that Yahweh is the Maker of Israel, using the potter and clay imagery as in Jer 18:4ff. Isaiah acknowledges that Israel is God’s creation and is under the sovereign hand of Yahweh, to bless or curse.**

## **V.9 Having confessed the sins of the nation and the sins of the fathers over time against Yahweh, he pleads that God restrains his just anger and wrath…because Israel is the people that God himself has chosen to be his people uniquely.**

## **V.10 The wrath of God has been expressed (in anticipation) of the coming judgment and exile, (remember this is spoken by Isaiah as something so certain that he speaks of it in the past tense but remains still future). He pictures Judah’s cities in ruins and abandoned and in parallel Jerusalem/Zion is desolate…language Jesus would use later of the next destruction and exile in Mt 23:38, “See, your house is left to you desolate.”**

## **Vv.11,12 The Temple of Solomon is pictured as burned with fire and in ruins…the presence of God withdrawn, the memories of Israel’s feasts and worship discarded and trashed. So the prophet cries out… “Will you restrain yourself...Will you not speak as we are afflicted” …forever? The question for suffering saints…is “How long?” see Rev 6:9,10.**