

He Treads The Winepress • Isaiah 63:1-6

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *The Raid On Entebbe*

1. On July 4, 1976, a force of elite Israeli commandos stormed the air terminal at Entebbe air port
2. They were there to rescue 103 fellow Israelis who had been hijacked aboard an Air France flight from Athens
3. Their captors, Palestinians terrorists, were in cahoots with Idi Amin, the corrupt dictator and butcher of Uganda
4. The commandos had flown over 4,000 miles from Israel, all the way avoiding Arab radar, and then taking out key sites in Uganda on their way to Entebbe
5. It was late at night when they made their raid on the terminal
6. As soon as they entered the room where the hostages and their captors were staying, the commandos ordered the Israelis to drop to the ground
7. A split second passed, and then the commandos opened fire on those still standing, taking out the terrorists
8. the hostages were then hurriedly shuttled aboard a cargo plane, and they took off
9. Of the 103 hostages, only 3 were killed, along with 1 soldier, the commander of the rescue team
10. It was a daring and courageous rescue
11. But I want to tell you about the greatest hostage rescue operation of all time this morning

B. *This World Hostage*

1. This world has been *hijacked* by evil
2. Mankind is *hostage* to *spiritual* terrorists
3. But God has traveled the distance from *deity* to *humanity* to affect a rescue
4. He came in under the *radar* of human expectations
5. In fact, so stealthy was He, many missed Him
6. To those who look to Him by faith, He is the Rescuer, the Savior who sets them free
7. But to those who fail to fall at His feet – He comes in judgment

II. TEXT

A. *Overview*

- 1 Who is this who comes from Edom, With dyed garments from Bozrah, This One who is glorious in His apparel, Traveling in the greatness of His strength?; "I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save."
- 2 Why is Your apparel red, And Your garments like one who treads in the winepress?
- 3 "I have trodden the winepress alone, And from the peoples no one was with Me. For I have trodden them in My anger, And trampled them in My fury; Their blood is

sprinkled upon My garments, And I have stained all My robes.

4 For the day of vengeance is in My heart, And the year of My redeemed has come.

5 I looked, but there was no one to help, And I wondered That there was no one to uphold; Therefore My own arm brought salvation for Me; And My own fury, it sustained Me.

6 I have trodden down the peoples in My anger, Made them drunk in My fury, And brought down their strength to the earth."

1. We hear far more about the God of love and the Jesus of mercy than we do about the God of justice and the Jesus of Judgment
2. Yet the later is just as true as the former
3. And the Bible that shows us the perfect grace and compassion of God is the same Bible that speaks to us of His equally perfect hatred of sin and evil
4. If the essence of eternal life is to Know God, as Jesus said in John 17, then we must make sure that our perception of God is complete and well rounded
5. We must not only understand Him as the Good Shepherd, but the Avenger of wrong, and this passage speaks of that

B. v. 1

1 Who is this who comes from Edom, With dyed garments from Bozrah, This One who is glorious in His apparel, Traveling in the greatness of His strength?;

And then the answer . . .

"I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save."

1. In these chapters of Isaiah, the prophet is being given visions of the Messiah's person and mission
2. Now comes one that stands in stark contrast to the pictures of tenderness and compassion that have come before
3. So different are they, that Isaiah asks, "Who is this?"
4. He is coming from Edom and from the direction of its capital city – Bozrah.
 - a. Edom was a nation on the border of southeast Israel
 - b. and were a constant thorn in the side of Israel throughout her history
 - c. in fact, much later, the family of *Herod*, who were Edomites, would rise to rule over Israel with a brutal hand
 - d. Edom becomes identified in scripture with *all* of the nations of the world who stand in opposition to God
 - e. just as today when we want to say someone is a traitor, we call them a "Judas"
 - f. so in the prophets and some of the Psalms, *Edom* came to represent all the enemies of God
5. And now Isaiah sees someone coming from Edom
6. As we read on, we realize that this is the Messiah, and that He is coming from the direction of Edom after having gone there to judge them
7. But notice how Isaiah describes him here in v. 1
 - a. His clothing is glorious – He is covered with light!
 - b. and His bearing and carriage is one of might!
 - c. He doesn't walk with weary stride or stooped shoulders

- d. He travels with sure and confident steps
- 8. And then, in answer to Isaiah's query about who this is, He answers . . .

"I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save."

- 9. This is the Lord, the Savior
- 10. Though he has visited Edom with judgment, He is now coming to Jerusalem to *save*
- 11. And all His strength will be applied to accomplish their salvation

C. Mighty to Save

- 1. I want to ask you to let those last three words soak in for a moment – MIGHTY TO SAVE
- 2. Jesus is mighty to save
- 3. We know He's mighty – He must be, He's GOD!
- 4. But what is He mighty FOR? To save.
- 5. Think of that – God uses His strength, and what He does with it is turn it to save YOU and ME!
- 6. If we look at the cross with the unaided eye, what we see is the consummate demonstration of human weakness
 - a. it appears to be the *epitome* of humiliation and shame
 - b. a man stripped naked, and placed on a post at street level so that others can mock and jeer him
 - c. in human reckoning, this is the embodiment of shame and failure
- 7. But if we look at the Cross through the revelation of the Spirit, we understand that it is the supreme manifestation of *strength*
 - a. think of it, nothing that happened to Jesus was thrust upon Him against His will
 - b. He went to the cross, and faced all that humiliation and shame of His own decision
 - c. at any moment during His passion He could have brought it to an end
 - d. He could have raised a mere eyebrow and called forth balls of fire to smite His tormentors
 - e. tell me, how much strength do you think it took for Him to remain silent and submit to their abuse?
 - f. when my boys were younger, we used to wrestle all the time
 - 1) and as we played, sometimes they would get pretty worked up and really try to hit or tackle me
 - 2) but I was so much stronger, I could easily restrain them or get away
 - 3) sometimes, I would feign weakness and let them really wail away
 - 4) when it started to hurt, I would stop them – no problem
 - 5) then they got older, and quite frankly, I'm not so sure I want to tangle with them anymore
 - 6) so my 7 year old daughter is now my wrestling partner
 - g. how much strength did it take for Jesus to let it go and not flee when this tormentors were wailing away on Him
 - h. how much might did it take for Him to say from that tree – "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do?"

- i. you and I both know if it were us up there our words to the Father would have been much different – “Father, get ‘em, for they’re all a bunch of worthless creeps.”
- 8. The cross is not a sign of the weakness of God, it is the consummate sign of His might!
- 9. Friend, Jesus is mighty to save – to save YOU.
 - a. no matter what you have done, how far you’ve gone – He is able to save
 - b. He is ready to save – right now!

D. Vs. 2-6

2 Why is Your apparel red, And Your garments like one who treads in the winepress?

- 1. Isaiah asks why the Messiah’s garments are blemished with crimson stains
- 2. Why does it look like the hem of His glorious garment of light has been stained with the juice of grapes?
- 3. The Lord answers . . .

3 "I have trodden the winepress alone, And from the peoples no one was with Me. For I have trodden them in My anger, And trampled them in My fury; Their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, And I have stained all My robes.

4 For the day of vengeance is in My heart, And the year of My redeemed has come.

5 I looked, but there was no one to help, And I wondered That there was no one to uphold; Therefore My own arm brought salvation for Me; And My own fury, it sustained Me.

6 I have trodden down the peoples in My anger, Made them drunk in My fury, And brought down their strength to the earth."

- 4. Isaiah saw red stains on the Lord’s garments, like the stains of one who treads a winepress
- 5. A winepress was a shallow pit dug into the top of a large flat rock with a hole in one side
 - a. grapes would be poured in by the basketful
 - b. then people would step in and with their bare feet trample the grapes to extract the juice
 - c. this would then flow out the hole and into a container
 - d. as the pressers would trample the grapes, juice would splash up and stain their garments
 - e. that’s the picture here
- 6. But the winepress in this case, is Edom, and by extension, all the nations and people of the world who reject God
- 7. What Isaiah sees here is a vision of future judgment, when Christ comes to Judge the earth
 - a. the first time He came, He came as Savior
 - b. when He comes again, He comes as Judge who will also apply the sentence
- 8. John echoes this vision of Isaiah’s in Revelation 14

11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.

12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a

name written that no one knew except Himself.

- 13 **He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.**
 - 14 **And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.**
 - 15 **Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.**
 - 16 **And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.**
9. What John is seeing is Jesus Christ's triumphal return to Earth
 10. We would think that when Christ comes again, this time descending from the skies and attended by such incredible glory, the world would fall all over itself in surrender and worship
 11. But what happens is the *exact opposite*
 12. The world will rally to *resist* him
 13. So when He comes, He enters the Valley of Megiddo, or as Revelation 16 calls it, *Armageddon*, and He turns it into a vast winepress
 14. Like baskets of grapes, the nations are assembled there, and then Jesus executes His judgment, by Himself!
 15. No one treads the winepress with Him for *only He* is competent to judge
 - a. only He is perfect
 - b. only He is qualified to enter the winepress and extract the juice of justice in the punishment of those who have brought pain and sorrow to earth through their rebellion against God

E. Balance

1. Friends, we *need* this picture of Christ as Judge, Jury, and Executioner
 - a. we need to be reminded that the One who is perfect in love is also perfect in justice
 - b. in order for perfection to be perfect, it must encompass all
 - c. God could not be perfect in love if He *wasn't also* perfect in judgment
2. And being the perfect God He is, then He *must* judge and punish sin for the very reason that sin harms and mars the objects of His love
3. That is why the cross was *absolutely necessary*
 - a. it makes provision for the just punishment of your sin without you having to perish
 - b. when Jesus hung on that cross, He bore the brunt of God's holy justice and the full punishment for your sin
 - c. if you repent of sin, and believe that when Christ hung on that cross, He hung in *your* place, then your guilt is consumed and satisfied in Jesus's work
 - d. but if you don't, then your sins adhere to you
 - e. and if your sins adhere to you, then so does your guilt
 - f. and if your guilt adheres to you, then so does God's judgment and one day, the punishment will fall!

4. One day! What day? Don't know – but one day.
5. One day, the very same Jesus who came so quietly and humbly to die for the sins of the world will come again and lay claim to that which rightly belongs to Him - this earth, and all that is on it
6. Those who will try to resist Him, He will execute with swift and perfect judgment
7. And while that day will be a day of vengeance for the enemies of God, it will be the Day of Redemption for the redeemed of God
8. Look at v. 4 again . . .

4 For the day of vengeance is in My heart, And the year of My redeemed has come.

9. One day, Jesus will come and vindicate His Name and the Name of His people
10. One day, He will set all things right
11. This day is in His heart – it is near to His heart
12. The day when evil is finally put down and earth is restored to the paradise it was before sin ruined it

III. CONCLUSION

A. *The In-Between*

1. You and I live in a great in-between
2. On one side is the cross, the place where God poured out His wrath on Christ as our substitute
3. We look back to the cross as an historical certainty
4. But we look forward to the Second Coming of Christ with the eye of faith and hope
5. We yearn for the day when evil is finally put down
 - a. when the devil is at last silenced
 - b. and sin no longer mars the blessedness God designed for us
6. While we ache for the day of Redemption, we also agonize for all those we know who remain indifferent to Christ, who resist Him
7. If that's you – if you're one of those who's been reluctant to surrender to Christ, delay no longer!

B. *Fall*

1. When those Israeli commandos stormed the air terminal at Entebbe, their single command to the hostages was, "Drop!"
2. It was the act of falling that saved them
3. One Israeli was slow to respond because he wanted to know what was going on, and he was killed in the hail of bullets
4. Jesus broke in to this world to rescue us with one command – "Believe."
5. If we genuinely believe, then we will fall at His feet in worship and adoration
6. If we fail to fall, then all we will know is judgment
7. But no one will be able to say they didn't hear and didn't know
8. They heard, but they chose to ignore

C. *Mighty To Save*

1. Jesus is mighty to save
2. And He is ready to save you – now!