



THE
ISAIAH
BLUEPRINT

From Moses to the Messiah



WALKING THE PROPHETIC BRIDGE

VOLUME V

*The City and
the New Creation*

ISAIAH 56-66

Bobby Joseph

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From Moses to the Messiah

Walking the prophetic bridge

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The City and the New Creation

Isaiah 56 through 66

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**Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth,*
and the former things shall not be remembered
*or come into mind.**

Isaiah 65:17

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Closing Meditation: One Christ Across Five Volumes **About the Author**

Preface to Volume V

This is the fifth and final volume of *The Isaiah Blueprint*. The four preceding volumes have walked the reader across sixty-five stations from the opening courtroom scene of Isaiah 1:2 to the closing invitation of Isaiah 55:1. Volume I covered the throne, the Immanuel sign, the Davidic shoot, the Highway of Holiness. Volume II covered the oracles against the nations and the apocalypse. Volume III covered the six woes and the Hezekiah hinge. Volume IV covered the comfort, the Servant Songs, the bride restored, and the universal invitation. Volume V opens where Volume IV closed.

Isaiah 55:1's "*Come, all who thirst*" is the pivot. The Servant's death has produced the fruitful bride and the universal call. Chapter 56 opens with the widening of the community that receives the invitation. Foreigners are welcomed. Eunuchs are welcomed. The temple becomes a house of prayer for all peoples. The Mosaic-Deuteronomic exclusions are being reversed on the ground the Servant's blood has secured.

Volume V covers Isaiah 56 through 66. The volume is named *The City and the New Creation* because these eleven chapters carry the prophet's vision from the restored Zion to the new heavens and new earth. The city is not the earthly Jerusalem alone; the city is the New Jerusalem that Revelation 21 will name. The new creation is not the eschatological postscript; the new creation is the destination the whole prophet has been pointing toward.

The volume divides into two parts. Part One (Stations 1-4, Isaiah 56-59) treats the new community, its widening, its ongoing failures, its true fast, and the Redeemer who comes to it because no one else can. Part Two (Stations 5-11, Isaiah 60-66) treats the glory rising over Zion, the Anointed One who

preaches good news, the watchmen on the walls, the Warrior from Edom, the great intercessory prayer, the new creation announced, and the final consummation. Chapter 60's "Arise, shine, for your light has come" is the hinge.

The Christological density of Volume V rivals Volume IV's. Isaiah 61 is the text Christ reads in the Nazareth synagogue (Luke 4:16-21) to inaugurate His public ministry. Isaiah 65-66 stand behind Revelation 21-22's vision of the new heavens and new earth. Isaiah 63's Warrior from Edom is the back-image of Revelation 19's rider on the white horse. Isaiah 66:24's "their worm shall not die" is Christ's own citation in Mark 9:48. The New Testament's eschatological vocabulary is soaked with this material.

Method has not changed. Each station works in three layers. The Pentateuchal echo names the Mosaic foundation. The exile-and-return register (in Volume V now shading into post-exilic community and eschatological horizon) names the historical and prophetic situation. The apostolic appropriation traces the line forward into the New Testament. The Reader's Bridge brings the station home to the believer.

Volume V is shorter in station count than Volumes I-IV (eleven stations for eleven chapters, versus the earlier volumes' higher counts) but not shorter in weight. The eschatological chapters demand sustained attention. Isaiah 65 alone contains new creation, the wolf and the lamb, the remnant theology, and Paul's Romans citations. Isaiah 66 gathers all of it into the final vision.

Several cross-volume threads converge here. The cornerstone announced at Vol I Station 9 and Vol III Station 2 is now the Chief Cornerstone whose finished work has produced the new creation. The King in His beauty of Vol III Station 7 has His beauty realized in the light of the new Jerusalem (Vol V Stations 5 and 10). The Suffering Servant of

Vol IV Station 14 speaks His commission through the Anointed One of Vol V Station 6. The come of Vol IV Station 16 opens into the come that will close the canon (Vol V Station 11 with Revelation 22:17). The five volumes together form one arc: from the courtroom scene where the LORD summoned Judah to answer for her rebellion, to the new creation where all flesh comes to worship.

Hebrews 13:8 closes each volume in the series. Volume V is no exception, but it also closes the series. The closing meditation gathers all five volumes into one Christ. The Servant who was announced in Volume I, developed across the Servant Songs of Volumes II through IV, and now enters the new creation of Volume V is the same Servant across the sixty-six chapters. *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*

The reader who has walked the earlier volumes will recognize the pattern reaching its consummation. The reader who has not walked the earlier volumes can still enter Volume V. Each station is self-contained. The eschatological hope, the new creation, the great invitation, are gifts the reader can receive without prior reading. The prophet's closing chapters are the LORD's closing invitation.

Introduction

From the Servant to the New Creation

The Territory

Isaiah 56-66 is often called Third Isaiah in critical scholarship. The naming distinguishes the material from First Isaiah (chapters 1-39, largely the eighth-century prophet's work) and Second Isaiah (chapters 40-55, often assigned to an exilic prophet writing in Babylon). The Third Isaiah proposal locates chapters 56-66 in the early post-exilic period, when the returned community was rebuilding Jerusalem under Persian oversight but the eschatological hopes of Isaiah 40-55 had not yet been realized.

The multiple-authorship position has serious proponents. The tone shifts across the sections. The vocabulary emphasizes change. The historical situation implied moves from pre-exilic (First Isaiah) to exilic (Second Isaiah) to post-exilic (Third Isaiah). The internal literary evidence has led many scholars to distinguish the three.

But the literary witness of the book itself is to one prophetic voice. The same themes run across all sixty-six chapters: the LORD's holiness, the LORD's sovereignty over the nations, the coming Servant, the eschatological consummation, the invitation to the ends of the earth. The same Spirit who showed the prophet the throne in chapter 6 carried the prophet's voice forward across the horizons he was shown. The one prophet was given visions that reached from his own century to the exile to the new creation. The horizons are multiple; the voice is one.

Volume V takes the traditional position that the whole book is Isaiah's. The historical Isaiah, seeing multiple horizons under prophetic inspiration, is the same voice from

chapter 1 to chapter 66. The three sections of the book address three horizons: the eighth-century prophet's own generation and its coming Assyrian pressure (chapters 1-39), the exilic community in Babylon and its coming return (chapters 40-55), and the post-exilic community and its coming eschatological consummation (chapters 56-66). The prophet was given the vision; the vision was given for all three horizons; the one book has served the LORD's people in all three contexts and continues to serve the church.

The Hinge

Chapter 55:1's invitation opens into chapter 56's widening. The Servant's finished work has produced the fruitful bride (chapter 54) and the universal call (chapter 55). Chapter 56 now opens the covenant boundary in three directions.

The eunuch is welcomed (56:3-5). Deuteronomy 23:1 had excluded him. The prophet reverses the exclusion. The eunuch who keeps the Sabbath and holds the covenant will receive from the LORD a monument and a name better than sons and daughters, an everlasting name that shall not be cut off. The Mosaic boundary is being explicitly overturned on the ground the Servant's finished work has secured.

The foreigner is welcomed (56:3, 6-7). The stranger who joins the LORD is not to be separated. The foreigners who keep the covenant will be brought to the holy mountain, their offerings accepted. The temple will be a house of prayer for all peoples. The Abrahamic promise of Genesis 12:3 (blessing to all the families of the earth) is now the operational reality of the post-exilic covenant.

The outcasts of Israel are gathered (56:8). The LORD gathers the outcasts of Israel, and He will gather yet others to them besides those already gathered. The gathering is not complete with the historical return from Babylon. The

gathering continues. The nations are being folded into the covenant community. Volume V opens on this widening.

Reading the Volume

Each station follows the three-layer method that has run through the entire series. The Pentateuchal echo names the Mosaic foundation. The exile-and-return register (now shading into post-exilic community and eschatological horizon) names the situation the prophet is addressing. The apostolic appropriation traces the line forward into the New Testament. The Reader's Bridge brings the station home to the believer. Each station closes with an italicized landing block and three glossary entries.

The volume's closing gathers all five volumes into one Christ. The final meditation traces the arc from the courtroom scene of Isaiah 1:2 to the new creation of Isaiah 66:22, and names the one Servant whose Person holds the sixty-six chapters together. The About the Author page follows the pattern of the earlier volumes. The final line is the doxological signature the whole series has carried: *solī Deo gloria*, to God alone the glory.

VOLUME V

The City and the New Creation

Isaiah 56 through 66

PART ONE

The New Community

Stations 1 through 4

STATION 1

The House of Prayer for All Nations

Isaiah 56:1-8

The volume opens with the widening of the covenant community. *Ko amar YHWH shimru mishpat va-asu tzedaqah, ki qerovah yeshuati la-vo ve-tzidqati le-higalot.* “Thus says the LORD: Keep justice, and do righteousness, for soon my salvation will come, and my righteousness be revealed.” The imminent-salvation announcement of chapter 55 is now the ground for the ethical call. Justice and righteousness are the covenant community’s response to the coming deliverance.

Then the boundary is opened. Two categories that Mosaic law had excluded are welcomed in. The foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD is told not to say, “The LORD will surely separate me from his people.” The eunuch is told not to say, “Behold, I am a dry tree.” Both had reason to say what they were being told not to say. Deuteronomy 23:1 had excluded eunuchs from the assembly of the LORD. Deuteronomy 23:3 had excluded Moabites and Ammonites, and had specified that a foreigner’s presence was carefully regulated. Now the prophet reverses the exclusions.

The eunuch who keeps the Sabbath and holds the covenant will receive “a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off.” The foreigner who joins himself to the LORD, ministers to Him, loves the LORD’s name, and keeps the Sabbath and the covenant will be brought to the LORD’s holy mountain, given joy in the LORD’s house of prayer, and his offerings will be accepted.

Then the great summary of 56:7: *beiti beit-tefillah yiqare le-khol-ha-amim*. “For my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.” The temple is being redefined. Its purpose is not narrow. Its purpose is the prayer of all peoples. The Solomonic dedication’s vision of the foreigner’s prayer being heard (1 Kings 8:41-43) is being carried forward into a comprehensive redefinition of the temple’s function.

The chapter closes with 56:8: “The Lord GOD, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, declares, I will gather yet others to him besides those already gathered.” The gathering is not complete. The LORD who has gathered the Jewish exiles from Babylon will gather others. The nations are being folded in.

The Pentateuchal Echo

The Mosaic foundation against which Isaiah 56 lands runs in three streams that converge at the opening of the covenant boundary.

First, the Mosaic Deuteronomic exclusions. Deuteronomy 23:1-8 sets specific restrictions on entry into the assembly of the LORD. “No one whose testicles are crushed or whose male member is cut off shall enter the assembly of the LORD” (23:1). “No one born of a forbidden union may enter the assembly of the LORD” (23:2). “No Ammonite or Moabite may enter the assembly of the LORD. Even to the tenth generation, none of them may enter the assembly of the LORD forever” (23:3). Egyptians and Edomites had a shorter waiting period (23:7-8), but the pattern was exclusion.

The Mosaic Deuteronomic exclusions had multiple rationales. The eunuch exclusion probably reflected the pagan practice of self-castration for temple service in the surrounding religions, which the covenant community was to reject. The Ammonite and Moabite exclusions reflected the

historical hostility of those peoples during the wilderness period (Deuteronomy 23:4-5 names the Balaam episode). The Mosaic constitution had legitimate reasons for the boundary.

Isaiah 56:3-5's reversal is therefore theologically radical. The Mosaic exclusion is being explicitly overturned. The eunuch, formerly excluded, is now given an everlasting name that shall not be cut off. The foreigner, formerly regulated, is now welcomed to the holy mountain. The Mosaic boundary was not permanent; the Mosaic boundary was preparing the covenant community for the widening that the Servant's work would produce.

Second, the Mosaic Abrahamic universal promise. Genesis 12:3 had set the original horizon: "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." The Mosaic-Pentateuchal narrative had preserved this Abrahamic horizon even while the Mosaic constitution narrowed the operational focus. The narrowing was for the covenant's formation; the widening was always the long arc.

Isaiah 56 brings the Abrahamic horizon into the operational reality of the post-exilic covenant. The blessing of all the families of the earth is now enacted at the temple. The foreigners are being welcomed. The eunuchs are receiving an everlasting name. The Mosaic-Abrahamic universalism has moved from promise to enactment.

Third, the Mosaic sabbath as covenant sign. The Mosaic Sabbath had been given at Sinai as the sign of the covenant (Exodus 31:12-17). The Sabbath marked the covenant community as distinct from the surrounding nations. The Sabbath was the visible weekly enactment of covenant belonging.

Isaiah 56:2, 56:4, and 56:6 all name Sabbath-keeping as the qualifying practice of the welcomed foreigners and eunuchs. The Mosaic covenant sign is being maintained even

as the Mosaic exclusions are being reversed. The foreigner is not welcomed on cultural grounds; the foreigner is welcomed on covenant-belonging grounds. The eunuch is not welcomed on humanitarian grounds; the eunuch is welcomed on covenant-belonging grounds. Sabbath-keeping is the marker. Covenant-holding is the qualification.

The theological logic is careful. The Mosaic boundary is being opened, not abolished. The Sabbath is being maintained. The covenant is being widened, not diluted. The foreigner and eunuch who come are coming into the covenant community on the covenant's terms, not on their own terms. The widening is precisely the widening the Abrahamic promise had always anticipated.

beit-tefillah (Hebrew). "House of prayer." The phrase from Isaiah 56:7. The temple is being redefined by function rather than by narrow ethnic access. The house of the LORD is the house of prayer, and prayer is offered by all peoples. The Solomonic prayer of dedication (1 Kings 8:41-43) had anticipated the foreigner's prayer being heard. Isaiah 56 carries the vision forward. Christ cites the verse in Matthew 21:13, Mark 11:17, and Luke 19:46 as He cleanses the temple: "My house shall be called a house of prayer." The temple's purpose is worship by all who come.

saris (Hebrew). Eunuch. The person who has been physically altered, whether by choice, by court practice in the ancient Near East, or by punishment. The Mosaic exclusion (Deuteronomy 23:1) had been strict. Isaiah 56:3-5 reverses the exclusion. The Ethiopian eunuch of Acts 8 will be one of the earliest historical fulfillments: he is a foreigner (Ethiopian), he is a eunuch (court official whose title carries the

same word), and he is welcomed into the covenant community on the ground the Servant's finished work has secured.

ben ha-nekhar (Hebrew). "Son of the foreigner." The stranger who has joined himself to the LORD. The vocabulary maintains the covenant distinction (the foreigner is not born into the covenant community) while opening the pathway. The joining is by choice, by conversion, by covenant-belonging. Rahab (Joshua 6) and Ruth (Ruth 1-4) are the Mosaic-historical precedents. The post-exilic community will incorporate many such joiners. The apostolic mission will incorporate many more.

The Mosaic Deuteronomic exclusions are being reversed. The Mosaic-Abrahamic universal promise is now the operational reality. The Mosaic Sabbath continues as the covenant sign for both the born-Israelite and the joining foreigner. Layer one is in place.

The Post-Exilic Community Register

Volume V opens on a different historical setting from Volume IV. The exile is over. The Persian decree of Cyrus (539 BC) has authorized the return. The first waves of returnees have come back to Jerusalem under Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel. The temple has been rebuilt (completed 516 BC). Ezra and Nehemiah will follow in the fifth century.

The post-exilic community faced identity questions that the exilic community had not faced in the same form. Who counts as Israel? The returnees included Jews who had preserved covenant identity in Babylon. The land included Jews who had never gone into exile, plus the mixed populations that Assyria and Babylon had settled in the

northern territories. The foreigners in the region included Persians (the imperial administrators), Idumeans (who had moved north into the depopulated southern regions), Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians, and others.

Ezra 9-10 and Nehemiah 13 record the historical tension. Ezra was distressed by the intermarriages that had occurred during his absence. Nehemiah confronted the Sabbath-breaking foreigners who were doing commerce in Jerusalem on the day. The post-exilic community was struggling to maintain covenant identity in a mixed environment. The prophet's call in Isaiah 56 addresses this tension directly.

The distinction Isaiah 56 makes is important. The prophet does not welcome all foreigners indiscriminately. The prophet welcomes foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, love His name, hold His covenant, and keep His Sabbath. The distinction is between the foreigner who has come into covenant belonging and the foreigner who remains in the surrounding paganism. The former is welcomed to the holy mountain. The latter is not.

The Ezra-Nehemiah confrontation of the intermarriages is not in contradiction with Isaiah 56. Ezra and Nehemiah were confronting marriages that had been made without covenant conversion. The foreign wives were not joining the covenant; they were pulling their Israelite husbands away from it. Isaiah 56 welcomes the foreigner who joins the covenant. Ezra-Nehemiah confronts the arrangement that dilutes the covenant. The theological logic is consistent: the covenant may be entered by conversion; the covenant may not be diluted by syncretism.

The eunuch category deserves particular attention. Court eunuchs were a common presence in the ancient Near Eastern administrative system. Persia's bureaucracy included many. Some Jewish officials in the diaspora were eunuchs

(Nehemiah himself is not directly named as one, but his role as cupbearer to Artaxerxes fits the pattern). Daniel and his three companions may have been eunuchs (2 Kings 20:18's prediction to Hezekiah about his descendants being made eunuchs at the Babylonian court would fit the timing).

The Isaiah 56:5 promise to the eunuch is unusually tender. "I will give them a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off." The Hebrew *yad va-shem* (a monument and a name) is a striking phrase. The Jerusalem memorial to Holocaust victims takes its name from this verse (Yad Vashem). The eunuch's exclusion from biological posterity is replaced by an everlasting name in the LORD's house that will outlast any biological line. The theological consolation is deep.

The house-of-prayer redefinition of 56:7 is the chapter's central announcement. The temple's function is being explicitly stated. Not the sacrificial system alone. Not the priestly ritual alone. Not the Jewish community alone. A house of prayer for all peoples. The word *ammim* (peoples) in the plural is the deliberate universal category. The temple's purpose reaches beyond the covenant community as narrowly understood.

The gathering-vocabulary of 56:8 extends the vision beyond the historical return. "I will gather yet others to him besides those already gathered." The Cyrus decree gathered the Babylonian exiles. The post-exilic returns gathered the diaspora Jewish communities. But the gathering is not complete. The LORD will gather yet others. The nations are being folded in. The final gathering will be eschatological.

The Apostolic Appropriation

Three apostolic appropriations of Isaiah 56:1-8 deserve direct treatment.

First, Christ cites Isaiah 56:7 in His cleansing of the temple. All three Synoptic Gospels record the citation. Matthew 21:13: “It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you make it a den of robbers.” Mark 11:17 gives the fullest form: “It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations? But you have made it a den of robbers.” Luke 19:46 gives the briefer form.

Mark’s inclusion of “for all the nations” is significant. The temple courtyard where the moneychangers were operating was the Court of the Gentiles, the one section of the temple complex where non-Jewish worshippers could come. Christ’s clearing of the moneychangers is not merely an ethical protest against commercial exploitation; it is a restoration of the temple’s Isaiah 56 function. The Court of the Gentiles is meant to be the place where all nations pray. The commercial operation had reduced the space to a market. Christ restores the space to prayer.

The Christological reading of the temple-cleansing is direct. Christ is enacting Isaiah 56:7 as the LORD who owns the house. The house is His. The purpose of the house is prayer by all peoples. The moneychangers have obscured the purpose. Christ restores the purpose. The temple-cleansing is the practical demonstration of what Isaiah 56 had announced: the house is for the peoples.

Second, the Ethiopian eunuch of Acts 8 is the historical enactment of Isaiah 56’s twofold widening. The Ethiopian is a foreigner (from the region south of Egypt) and a eunuch (an official in the Candace’s court). Both Mosaic exclusions applied to him. He had been to Jerusalem to worship. He was reading Isaiah in his chariot on the way home. Philip

approached, opened the Scripture to him from Isaiah 53, and preached the gospel.

The narrative significance is careful. The Ethiopian eunuch is welcomed in the New Covenant community on precisely the ground Isaiah 56 had promised. He is a foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD (he has come to Jerusalem to worship). He is a eunuch who receives the everlasting name (in baptism he receives the name of Christ). The Isaiah 56 promise and the Isaiah 53 gospel are gathered in his conversion. The prophet's widening of the covenant boundary and the Servant's finished work meet in this single historical moment.

Third, the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15 addresses the broader question Isaiah 56 had opened. The question was whether Gentile converts had to be circumcised and keep the Mosaic law to belong to the covenant community. James cites Amos 9:11-12 in his ruling, but the theological ground is the same as Isaiah 56's: the LORD has always intended to gather the nations into His people, and the qualifying practices are covenant-belonging with Christ, not the full Mosaic-ceremonial observance.

Ephesians 2:11-22 develops the same theology at length. Paul writes to Gentile Christians: "Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called the uncircumcision by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands, remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."

The Ephesians passage carries the Isaiah 56 theology into the deepest Christological form. The Gentiles who were

formerly excluded are now included. The blood of Christ is the ground. The dividing wall of hostility is broken down. The temple is being rebuilt as the church, which includes Jew and Gentile in one body. The Isaiah 56 house of prayer for all peoples has become the New Covenant church.

Christ is the One who redefines the temple. The Servant's finished work has produced the widened community. The gathered nations are being folded in. The whole passage finds its Christological completion in the church.

The Reader's Bridge

The wider covenant.

The believer receives the chapter as the LORD's explicit welcome to the widening community. The believer who was formerly outside is now inside. The Mosaic-Deuteronomic exclusions have been overturned in Christ. The Ephesians 2 theology is the believer's standing: formerly far off, brought near by the blood of Christ.

This has practical implications for how the believer sees fellow believers. The Isaiah 56 widening does not stop at the New Testament's first century. The widening continues. The believer's congregation includes those whom the believer's natural social sorting would have excluded. The wealthy and the poor. The educated and the uneducated. The successful and the struggling. The healthy and the ill. The lifelong believer and the recent convert. The one whose testimony is dramatic and the one whose testimony is quiet. All belong to the same covenant.

The chapter's deeper application concerns the believer's own history. Each believer was, by nature, a foreigner or a eunuch, or both. The believer had no biological covenant-belonging. The believer's posterity, apart from Christ, would

have been cut off. The believer's standing before the LORD, apart from Christ, would have been the standing of the outsider. The believer's welcome into the covenant community is not the believer's natural right; the welcome is the Servant's finished-work gift.

The everlasting name-promise of 56:5 applies to the believer's deepest identity. The believer's biological legacy may be small or none. The believer's children may not follow the LORD. The believer's work may be forgotten within a generation. The believer's cultural contribution may be modest. But the everlasting name the LORD has given cannot be cut off. The believer's name is in the book of life. The believer's standing in the covenant community is the everlasting name that outlasts every earthly measure of legacy.

The house-of-prayer-for-all-peoples redefinition also applies to the believer's posture toward the outsider. The believer is not the temple's gatekeeper. The believer's task is not to protect the covenant community from those the believer thinks do not belong. The believer's task is to receive the peoples who come. The house is a house of prayer for all peoples. The believer's local congregation should have the same open-door posture. The stranger who comes seeking is to be received. The eunuch who comes seeking is to be received. The foreigner who joins is to be welcomed to the holy mountain.

The gathering-promise of 56:8 has ongoing application. The LORD is still gathering. The LORD's missionary work in the world is the ongoing gathering of the outcasts and the yet-others. The believer's missionary participation, whether direct or supportive, is participation in the LORD's gathering work. The believer prays, gives, sends, goes, or welcomes

those who come, and in each case participates in the Isaiah 56 gathering.

Three movements follow from the chapter for the reader's present life.

First, the reception of the widening. The believer can receive the LORD's welcome as the personal address it is. The believer is not a marginal member of the covenant community; the believer is fully welcomed. The Isaiah 56 promise applies to the believer's own standing. The believer belongs.

Second, the openness to fellow believers. The believer can examine the believer's local congregation for the ways in which social sorting has recreated exclusions the LORD has removed. The wealthy who avoid the poor. The comfortable who avoid the struggling. The healthy who avoid the ill. The believer can lean into the covenant community's widening, receiving fellow believers who do not match the believer's natural social pattern.

Third, the openness to the outsider. The believer can hold the stranger, the seeker, the not-yet-believer, in the posture the chapter models. The house is a house of prayer for all peoples. The believer's local congregation should feel like an open house to those the LORD is drawing. The believer's own daily contacts with unbelievers can carry the same openness.

Not the foreigner shut out. The foreigner welcomed.

Not the eunuch's dry branch. The everlasting name.

Not the narrow house. The house of prayer for all peoples.

Italic, indented:

The Mosaic-Deuteronomic exclusions have been reversed on the ground the Servant's blood has secured. The foreigner who joins himself to the LORD is welcomed to the holy mountain. The eunuch who keeps the covenant receives an everlasting name that shall not be cut off. The temple is

redefined as a house of prayer for all peoples. Christ enacts the redefinition at the temple-cleansing; the Ethiopian eunuch receives the twofold welcome; the Jerusalem Council carries the widening into the church's policy. The believer, formerly outside, is now inside. The believer belongs to the covenant on the ground the Servant has secured. The believer's task is to receive the LORD's welcome, to lean into the covenant community's widening, and to hold open the doors of the house of prayer to those the LORD is drawing. Not the foreigner shut out. The foreigner welcomed. Not the eunuch's dry branch. The everlasting name. Not the narrow house. The house of prayer for all peoples.



beit-tefillah (Hebrew). “House of prayer.” The phrase from Isaiah 56:7. The temple is being redefined by function rather than by narrow ethnic access. Christ cites the verse in the temple-cleansing (Matthew 21:13, Mark 11:17, Luke 19:46) to restore the Court of the Gentiles to its Isaiah 56 purpose. The Ephesians 2 theology carries the redefinition forward: the church is the New Covenant temple, built of Jew and Gentile in one body, in whom God dwells by the Spirit.

saris (Hebrew). Eunuch. The person physically altered, whether by choice, by court practice, or by punishment. The Mosaic-Deuteronomic exclusion (Deuteronomy 23:1) had been strict. Isaiah 56:3-5 reverses the exclusion, promising the eunuch a monument and a name (*yad va-shem*) better than sons and daughters. The Ethiopian eunuch of Acts 8 is the historical enactment: welcomed into the covenant community through Christ's finished work.

yad va-shem (Hebrew). “A monument and a name.”
The phrase from Isaiah 56:5, the LORD’s promise to the eunuch. The everlasting name outlasts every biological legacy. The Jerusalem memorial to Holocaust victims takes its name from this verse. The believer’s deepest identity is the everlasting name given in Christ, not the earthly legacy the believer accumulates or fails to accumulate.

STATION 2

The Righteous Perish, the Wicked Have No Peace

Isaiah 56:9 through 57:21

The chapter turns sharply from the widening welcome of 56:1-8 to a fierce indictment of the community's corrupt leadership. *Kol chayto sadai etayu le-ekhol, kol chayto bay'ar*. "All you beasts of the field, come to devour, all you beasts in the forest." The invitation to devour is issued to the surrounding nations. The community's watchmen have failed. The shepherds have not understood. The leaders have been drunkards and gluttons instead of guardians.

Then the great lament of 57:1: *ha-tzaddiq avad ve-ein ish sam al-lev*. "The righteous man perishes, and no one lays it to heart; devout men are taken away, while no one understands. For the righteous man is taken away from calamity; he enters into peace; they rest in their beds who walk in their uprightness." The righteous die, and the community does not notice. But the LORD notices. The righteous are being spared what is coming.

The indictment then turns to the specific idolatries. "But you, draw near, sons of the sorceress, offspring of the adulterer and the loose woman. Whom are you mocking? Against whom do you open your mouth wide and stick out your tongue? Are you not children of transgression, the offspring of deceit, you who burn with lust among the oaks, under every green tree, who slaughter your children in the valleys, under the clefts of the rocks?" Child sacrifice. Idolatry in the ravines. Every green tree. The old Canaanite worship-patterns have not been eliminated by the exile; they have resurfaced in the post-exilic community.

Then the contrast in 57:15: *ki khoh amar ram ve-nisa shokhen ad ve-qadosh shemo, marom ve-qadosh eshkon ve-et-daka u-shefal-ruach*. “For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.” The high and holy God dwells with the contrite and lowly. The dwelling is double: the high place and the low heart.

Then the peace-and-healing announcement of 57:19: “Peace, peace, to the far and to the near, says the LORD, and I will heal him.” But the chapter closes with the somber refrain: *ein shalom, amar Elohai, la-resha'im*. “There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked.” The same refrain closes Isaiah 48:22. The peace is real, but not extended to those who remain in unrepentant opposition.

The Pentateuchal Echo

Three Mosaic streams flow beneath Isaiah 56:9-57:21 and converge at the contrast between the high-holy dwelling and the low-contrite heart.

First, the Mosaic prohibition of child sacrifice. Leviticus 18:21 sets the specific prohibition: “You shall not give any of your children to offer them to Molech, and so profane the name of your God: I am the LORD.” Leviticus 20:2-5 extends the prohibition with the death penalty for the offender. Deuteronomy 12:31 names the practice explicitly: “For every abominable thing that the LORD hates they have done for their gods, for they even burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods.”

The Mosaic prohibition addresses a specific pagan practice that the Canaanite religions had developed. Molech was a

Canaanite-Ammonite deity whose worship involved the sacrifice of children. The Valley of Ben-Hinnom outside Jerusalem became one of the sites of the practice during the corrupt reigns of Ahaz (2 Kings 16:3) and Manasseh (2 Kings 21:6). Josiah's reforms had defiled the Topheth in the Valley of Ben-Hinnom (2 Kings 23:10) to prevent its use for child sacrifice.

Isaiah 57:5 names the practice as a present reality in the post-exilic community. "You who slaughter your children in the valleys, under the clefts of the rocks." The pre-exilic idolatry that had contributed to the exile itself was returning in the post-exilic community. The exile had refined but not silvered. The old patterns were resurfacing.

Second, the Mosaic-prophetic naming of the LORD's dwelling. The Pentateuch establishes the twofold vocabulary of the LORD's dwelling. The LORD dwells in the heavens (Deuteronomy 26:15: "Look down from your holy habitation, from heaven"). The LORD dwells in the tabernacle among His people (Exodus 25:8: "And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst"). The Mosaic theology holds both: the transcendent LORD in the heavens, and the immanent LORD in the tabernacle.

Isaiah 57:15 deploys this Mosaic twofold-dwelling theology in its deepest form. The LORD who is high and lifted up (the Isaiah 6 throne-vision vocabulary) also dwells with the contrite and lowly. The dwelling is not either-or; the dwelling is both. The high and holy place and the low contrite heart. The verse is one of the Old Testament's most concentrated statements of the LORD's dual-dwelling paradox.

The theological logic is careful. The LORD's presence in the low contrite heart is not the LORD's descent from His high and holy place; the LORD is simultaneously in both. The transcendence does not exclude the immanence. The

immanence does not diminish the transcendence. The same LORD who is high and lifted up is the LORD who revives the crushed spirit. The two dwellings are one dwelling in the LORD's singular being.

Third, the Mosaic-prophetic peace-vocabulary. The Pentateuch establishes *shalom* as the LORD's comprehensive blessing (the priestly blessing of Numbers 6:26 concludes with the LORD giving His peace). The prophetic tradition develops the peace-vocabulary as the eschatological gift of the LORD to His people (Isaiah 9:6, the Prince of Peace; Isaiah 26:3, perfect peace to the one whose mind is stayed on the LORD).

Isaiah 57:19 announces the peace to the far and to the near. The vocabulary anticipates the New Covenant's gathering of Jew and Gentile in one peace. Paul cites the language directly in Ephesians 2:17: "And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near." The Mosaic-prophetic peace-vocabulary is being carried forward into the Christological reconciliation of the two peoples in one body.

But the closing refrain of 57:21 restricts the peace. "There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked." The Mosaic-prophetic peace is not universal apart from the LORD's covenant terms. The wicked, those who persist in the child sacrifice and the idolatry of the earlier verses, do not receive the peace. The peace is covenant-conditional. The invitation is universal; the reception is by the LORD's appointed means.

tzaddiq (Hebrew). Righteous one. The one whose life is aligned with the covenant. The verse of Isaiah 57:1 is one of the tenderest in the Hebrew Bible: the righteous man perishes and no one lays it to heart. The LORD notices the death of the righteous. The community does not. The righteous is taken away

from calamity, spared what is coming. The verse anticipates the New Testament's comfort at the death of believers: they enter peace, they rest in their beds, they walk in uprightness (Revelation 14:13: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord").

daka u-shefal-ruach (Hebrew). "Contrite and lowly of spirit." The phrase from Isaiah 57:15. Daka is from the verb meaning "to be crushed." Shafel is "low, humble." The verse names the two conditions of the heart in which the LORD dwells. Not crushed by circumstances only; crushed by the recognition of the LORD's holiness. Not humbly born; humbled in spirit. The Mosaic-prophetic tradition of the LORD's dwelling with the humble runs through Psalm 34:18, Psalm 51:17, and the New Testament's beatitude (Matthew 5:3, blessed are the poor in spirit).

shalom shalom la-rachok ve-la-qarov (Hebrew). "Peace, peace, to the far and to the near." The phrase from Isaiah 57:19. The doubled peace intensifies. The far and the near are being reconciled in one peace. Paul cites the verse in Ephesians 2:17 in the passage that names Christ as the reconciler of Jew and Gentile in one body. The Isaiah 57 peace anticipates the New Covenant reconciliation.

The Mosaic child-sacrifice prohibition frames the indictment. The Mosaic dual-dwelling theology grounds the contrast between the LORD's high place and the LORD's presence with the contrite. The Mosaic-prophetic peace-vocabulary anticipates the New Covenant reconciliation of the far and the near. Layer one is in place.

The Post-Exilic Community Register

The chapter's indictment falls on the post-exilic community's leadership.

The watchmen of 56:10 are the community's guardians, probably the political and religious leaders who were meant to guard the community against spiritual danger. The prophet calls them blind, silent dogs who cannot bark, dreaming, lying down, loving to slumber. The strong Hebrew imagery is deliberate. The watchdog that will not bark is worse than useless; it is the watchdog that will let the wolves in.

The shepherds of 56:11 are corrupt in a different way. "The dogs have a mighty appetite; they never have enough. But they are shepherds who have no understanding; they have all turned to their own way, each to his own gain, one and all." The shepherds have become consumers rather than protectors. Each is pursuing his own gain. The community's wellbeing is not the shepherds' concern. The economic-vocabulary here is precise: they are seeking their own profit at the community's expense.

Then the closing verse of chapter 56: "Come, they say, let me get wine; let us fill ourselves with strong drink; and tomorrow will be like this day, great beyond measure." The drunkenness is not incidental. The leaders have lost sight of the LORD's coming judgment. Their conviction that tomorrow will be like today has produced the moral complacency that Isaiah 5's woes had earlier addressed.

Chapter 57 opens with the observation that the righteous perish while the community sleeps. The good who die are being spared. The community's complacency is not neutrality; the community's complacency is the failure to recognize that the LORD is removing His faithful ones because of what is coming. The Enoch-like taking-away of the righteous is the LORD's mercy to them and the LORD's warning to those left.

The indictment of 57:3-10 names the specific idolatries with unusual explicit detail. The community has been engaging in Canaanite-style worship in the ravines and under every green tree. The high places have not been eliminated. Child sacrifice is being practiced in the valleys. The community has been sending envoys with oil and perfume to distant lands, presumably to arrange political alliances with foreign powers, sending down to Sheol. The verses are among the sharpest in the prophet.

The post-exilic community's temptation to syncretism is well-attested in the historical record. Ezra 4-6 records the ongoing Samaritan-Persian intrigue against the temple rebuilding. Nehemiah 13 records the corruption that had crept in during Nehemiah's absence: Sabbath-breaking, foreign-alliance marriages, temple defilement. Malachi's indictment of the priestly community's corruption fits the same pattern. The post-exilic community was not the pure remnant the exile had been expected to produce.

Then the sharp turn in 57:14-15. "Build up, build up, prepare the way, remove every obstruction from my people's way. For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit." The command to build up the way echoes Isaiah 40:3's call to prepare the highway. The way is being cleared for the LORD's coming.

The dual-dwelling declaration of 57:15 is the theological center of the chapter. The high and holy God who inhabits eternity also dwells with the contrite and lowly. The Mosaic-Isaianic theology is at its most concentrated. The transcendence is preserved (the LORD is high, lifted up, inhabits eternity, is holy). The immanence is announced (the LORD dwells with the contrite, revives the spirit of the lowly).

The wicked have no access to this dwelling. But the contrite, the crushed, the lowly of spirit, have the LORD's own dwelling in their hearts.

Verses 16-19 develop the LORD's restrained anger and His healing purpose. "For I will not contend forever, nor will I always be angry; for the spirit would grow faint before me, and the breath of life that I made." The LORD's discipline is not without limit. The LORD's intention is healing. The peace to the far and to the near is His declared purpose.

But the closing refrain in 57:21 preserves the moral seriousness. "There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked." The peace the LORD offers is real, but the peace is not extended to those who persist in the idolatries the earlier verses have named. The offer is universal; the reception is by repentance and covenant belonging.

The Apostolic Appropriation

Three apostolic appropriations of Isaiah 56:9-57:21 deserve direct treatment.

First, Paul cites Isaiah 57:19 directly in Ephesians 2:17. The Ephesians context is the reconciliation of Jew and Gentile in Christ. "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility. . . . And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near."

The Pauline appropriation reads the far-and-near of Isaiah 57:19 as the Jew-and-Gentile of the New Covenant. The Gentiles were the far. The Jews were the near. Christ is the peace to both. The dividing wall of hostility has been broken

down in His flesh. The Isaiah 57 peace-announcement is fulfilled in the reconciliation of the two peoples in one body.

Ephesians 2:18-22 develops the reconciliation into the temple-image. Both Jew and Gentile now have access in one Spirit to the Father. Both are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. The Mosaic-Isaianic dual-dwelling theology (the LORD in the high place, the LORD with the contrite) is being fulfilled in the New Covenant church, the temple where the LORD dwells by the Spirit.

Second, the humble-and-contrite theology of Isaiah 57:15 runs through the New Testament's theology of the Christian life. Christ's opening beatitude in Matthew 5:3, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," is the New Covenant expression of the Isaiah 57:15 principle. The kingdom is for the poor in spirit. The LORD dwells with the contrite.

James 4:6-10 develops the humble-and-contrite theology at length. "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you."

James's vocabulary is Isaiah 57's vocabulary in New Covenant expression. The humbling, the mourning, the drawing near, the exaltation, are the same theological pattern. The LORD's dwelling with the contrite is the ground of the ethical instruction. The believer's humbling is not the believer's destruction; the believer's humbling is the condition for the LORD's dwelling.

Third, the closing refrain “There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked” (57:21, echoing 48:22) becomes the New Testament’s moral seriousness about the gospel’s call to repentance. The LORD’s peace is real and offered universally, but the peace is not extended to those who persist in opposition.

Romans 2:7-11 develops the same theology in Pauline vocabulary. “To those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality.”

The Pauline pattern preserves the Isaianic moral seriousness. The peace is real, but the peace requires the covenant-belonging. The universal offer does not become universal reception without the human response of faith and repentance. The wicked, those who persist in their idolatries without the change of heart the LORD requires, do not receive the peace.

Christ is the peace. The Servant’s finished work is the ground on which the far and the near are being reconciled. The high and holy God is dwelling with the contrite. The whole passage finds its Christological completion in the reconciliation the gospel enacts.

The Reader’s Bridge

The high and low dwelling.

The believer receives the chapter as the LORD’s tender word about the low place. The believer who has been in the

season of being crushed can hear the promise. The LORD who is high and lifted up dwells also with the contrite and lowly. The believer's low place is not the LORD's absence. The believer's low place may in fact be the exact place where the LORD is most present. The dwelling is double: the high heavens, and the crushed heart.

The crushing is not the believer's failure; the crushing is often the LORD's means of preparing the believer for the deeper dwelling. Psalm 34:18: "The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit." Psalm 51:17: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise." The Mosaic-prophetic tradition is consistent. The LORD receives the broken heart. The LORD does not despise the contrite.

The believer's ordinary temptation is to hide the brokenness. To perform wholeness. To present the well-adjusted, functional, competent self to the LORD and to fellow believers. The chapter releases the believer from this performance. The LORD's dwelling is with the crushed. The believer's crushedness, honestly acknowledged, is the invitation to the LORD's deepest dwelling.

The chapter's tender word about the righteous who perishes (57:1) applies to the believer's grief. When a faithful believer dies, the community that survives can hear the promise. The righteous is being spared. The righteous enters peace. The righteous rests in the bed of uprightness. The death is not the LORD's abandonment of the righteous; the death is the LORD's gathering of the righteous to Himself. Revelation 14:13: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. Blessed indeed, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them."

The believer's grief at the death of a faithful person can be held in this promise. The community may not lay it to heart;

the LORD lays it to heart. The community may not understand; the LORD understands. The righteous one has entered peace. The grief is not the last word; the peace is.

The peace-to-the-far-and-the-near of 57:19 applies to the believer's participation in the church's reconciliation ministry. The believer who has been reconciled to the LORD is called to participate in the reconciliation of others. The Ephesians 2 theology of the dividing wall broken down applies to the believer's own posture toward those the believer might naturally treat as far off. The economic outsider. The cultural outsider. The theologically confused outsider. The morally struggling outsider. Christ has preached peace to those the believer might have kept at a distance. The believer's task is to carry the same peace-preaching.

The closing refrain "There is no peace for the wicked" also applies. The believer's tender reception of the crushed does not extend to the believer's minimizing of the LORD's moral seriousness. The believer's own persistent sins, if left unrepented, do not have peace. The believer's tender word to the crushed is not the believer's tender word to the persistent-in-idolatry. The two are different pastoral situations. The crushed receive the promise of the LORD's dwelling. The wicked receive the warning that persistent opposition forfeits the peace.

Three movements follow from the chapter for the reader's present life.

First, the receiving of the dual dwelling. The believer can name the specific place of crushedness in the believer's present life and receive the LORD's dwelling there. The LORD who is high is also here. The dwelling is with the contrite. The believer's brokenness is not to be hidden; the brokenness is the LORD's address.

Second, the honoring of the righteous who die. The believer can honor the faithful who have died with the promise of 57:1-2. They have entered peace. They rest in the bed of uprightness. The community's failure to lay their death to heart is answered by the LORD's remembrance of them.

Third, the reconciliation ministry. The believer can identify the far-off ones in the believer's present life and carry the peace to them. Christ has preached peace to the far and the near. The believer's role is to be an instrument of the same peace, extending toward those whom the believer's natural sorting would have kept distant.

Not the hidden brokenness. The acknowledged crushedness.

Not the community's failure to notice. The LORD's notice.

Not the dividing wall. The preached peace.

Italic, indented:

The LORD who is high and lifted up dwells also with the contrite and lowly. The dwelling is double: the high heavens, and the crushed heart. The believer's low place is not the LORD's absence; the believer's low place may be the exact place where the LORD is most present. The righteous who die enter peace; the community's failure to notice is answered by the LORD's remembrance. The peace to the far and to the near, preached by Christ Himself, is the New Covenant's reconciliation of Jew and Gentile in one body. The believer's task is to receive the LORD's dwelling in the low place, to honor the righteous who have died, and to carry the peace-preaching to the far-off ones. Not the hidden brokenness. The acknowledged crushedness. Not the community's failure to notice. The LORD's notice. Not the dividing wall. The preached peace.

tzaddiq (Hebrew). *Righteous one. The one whose life is aligned with the covenant. The verse of Isaiah 57:1 is one of the tenderest in the Hebrew Bible: the righteous man perishes, and no one lays it to heart. The LORD notices what the community does not. The righteous is spared what is coming; the righteous enters peace. Revelation 14:13 carries the Old Testament tenderness forward: blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.*

daka u-shefal-ruach (Hebrew). *“Contrite and lowly of spirit.” The phrase from Isaiah 57:15. The verse names the two conditions of the heart in which the LORD dwells. The Mosaic-prophetic tradition (Psalm 34:18, Psalm 51:17) and the New Covenant beatitude (Matthew 5:3, blessed are the poor in spirit) develop the same theology. The believer’s crushedness, honestly acknowledged, is the invitation to the LORD’s deepest dwelling.*

shalom shalom la-rachok ve-la-qarov (Hebrew). *“Peace, peace, to the far and to the near.” The phrase from Isaiah 57:19. The doubled peace is the reconciliation-vocabulary that Paul carries into Ephesians 2:17. The far and the near are the Gentiles and the Jews being reconciled in Christ. The dividing wall of hostility has been broken down; the two peoples are now one body. The Isaiah 57 peace-announcement is fulfilled in the New Covenant church.*

STATION 3

The True Fast

Isaiah 58

Qera ve-garon al-tachsokh, ka-shofar harem golekha. “Cry aloud; do not hold back; lift up your voice like a trumpet; declare to my people their transgression, to the house of Jacob their sins.” The prophet is commissioned to speak with the trumpet’s volume. The transgression to be named is a specific hypocrisy: the community that seeks the LORD daily but does not do what pleases Him. The community that fasts and covers itself in sackcloth but oppresses its workers and quarrels with its neighbors.

The community’s question in 58:3 is bitter. “Why have we fasted, and you see it not? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you take no knowledge of it?” The community has been going through the motions. The community expects the LORD’s attention because the ritual has been performed. The LORD has not been paying attention. The community wants to know why.

The LORD’s answer names the disconnection. “Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure, and oppress all your workers. Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to hit with a wicked fist.” The fast is externally performed while the daily life of the community is unchanged. The workers are exploited. The quarrels continue. The violent hand persists. The fast is not the LORD’s fast.

Then the great definition of 58:6-7: *ha-lo zeh tzom ev’chareihu, pate’ach chartzubot resha.* “Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and

bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?” The true fast is the release of the oppressed. The true fast is the sharing of bread. The true fast is the housing of the homeless.

Then the promise of 58:8-9: “Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, Here I am.” The vindication that had seemed absent will arrive when the true fast begins.

The chapter closes with the Sabbath promise of 58:13-14: “If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the LORD honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly, then you shall take delight in the LORD, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.” The Sabbath and the mercy-ethic are the twin marks of the community that pleases the LORD.

The Pentateuchal Echo

Three Mosaic streams flow beneath Isaiah 58 and converge at the definition of the true fast.

First, the Mosaic Day of Atonement. Leviticus 16 establishes the annual fast day. “In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict yourselves and shall do no work” (Leviticus 16:29). Leviticus 23:26-32 elaborates: the tenth day of the seventh month is the Day of Atonement, on which the community is to afflict themselves and present a

food offering to the LORD, and on which anyone who does not afflict himself shall be cut off from his people.

The Mosaic Day of Atonement was the community's annual comprehensive humbling before the LORD. The high priest entered the holy of holies. The sins of the community were laid on the scapegoat. The community fasted, refrained from work, and afflicted themselves. The Mosaic ritual was the covenant community's formal act of penitence.

Isaiah 58 addresses a community that has learned the Mosaic ritual's external form but has not internalized the theology. The fast is performed. The sackcloth is worn. The head is bowed like a reed. But the daily life of the community is not aligned with the LORD's ethical demands. The community's fast is form without substance. The prophet's indictment is not against fasting itself; the prophet's indictment is against the disconnection between the fast and the ethics.

Second, the Mosaic mercy-ethic. The Pentateuch establishes an extensive mercy-ethic for the covenant community. The gleaning laws (Leviticus 19:9-10, Leviticus 23:22, Deuteronomy 24:19-22) required farmers to leave the corners of the field, the fallen grain, and the leftover fruit for the poor and the sojourner. The sabbatical year (Leviticus 25:2-7) required the land to rest and the poor to eat from what grew of itself. The Jubilee (Leviticus 25:8-55) required the return of ancestral land and the release of Hebrew slaves every fifty years. The debt-release of the seventh year (Deuteronomy 15:1-11) required the cancellation of debts owed by fellow Israelites.

The Mosaic mercy-ethic was extensive and specific. The covenant community's economic life was to be structured for the protection of the vulnerable. The widow, the orphan, the sojourner, the poor, were the covenant community's special

charges. The Mosaic laws were not proposals; the Mosaic laws were legally binding on the covenant community.

Isaiah 58:6-7 deploys the Mosaic mercy-ethic in its most concentrated form. The true fast is the release of the oppressed (Jubilee vocabulary), the sharing of bread (gleaning-ethic vocabulary), the housing of the homeless (hospitality vocabulary), the covering of the naked (protective-ethic vocabulary). The prophet is not inventing a new ethical program; the prophet is deploying the Mosaic ethical program as the definition of what fasting was meant to produce.

Third, the Mosaic Sabbath as delight. The Mosaic Sabbath had been established at Sinai (Exodus 20:8-11) and reinforced in Deuteronomy 5:12-15. The Sabbath was the sign of the covenant (Exodus 31:12-17). The Sabbath was the memorial of creation (Exodus 20:11) and of the exodus deliverance (Deuteronomy 5:15). The Sabbath was the covenant community's weekly enactment of rest and worship.

Isaiah 58:13-14's Sabbath promise deploys the Mosaic Sabbath in its most positive form. The Sabbath is a delight, not a burden. Honoring the Sabbath means not going one's own ways, not seeking one's own pleasure, not talking idly. Honoring the Sabbath means taking delight in the LORD. The Mosaic Sabbath is being read not as an external restriction but as an internal reorientation of the day toward the LORD.

The theological logic is precise. The Mosaic external forms (fast, Sabbath) require internal correspondence (mercy, delight in the LORD) to function as the LORD intended. The forms without the correspondence are hollow. The forms with the correspondence are the true fast, the honored Sabbath. The prophet is not abolishing the forms; the prophet is filling the forms with their intended content.

tzom (Hebrew). Fast. The formal act of abstention from food, often accompanied by other acts of penitence (sackcloth, ashes, prayer). The Mosaic Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16, 23) established the annual comprehensive fast. Additional fasts were added during the exile (the fasts of the fourth, fifth, seventh, and tenth months, addressed by Zechariah 7-8). The prophet's definition in Isaiah 58:6-7 is not against fasting but is the naming of what fasting is meant to accompany: the ethical release of the oppressed and the mercy-ethic of the community.

pate'ach chartzubot resha (Hebrew). "Loose the bonds of wickedness." The phrase from Isaiah 58:6. Chartzubot is chains, bonds, restraints. Resha is wickedness. The phrase names the release of those who have been unjustly bound. Christ cites Isaiah 61's parallel vocabulary ("to proclaim liberty to the captives") at Nazareth (Luke 4:18) as the inauguration of His ministry. The Mosaic-Isaianic-Christological release-ethic runs through the whole New Covenant.

va-qarata la-Shabbat oneg (Hebrew). "And call the Sabbath a delight." The phrase from Isaiah 58:13. Oneg is delight, pleasure, luxury. The Sabbath is being redefined not as burden but as gift. The Mosaic Sabbath's deepest theological meaning is the LORD's gift of rest to His people. The New Covenant Sabbath-rest theology (Hebrews 4:9, "there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God") carries the delight-vocabulary forward into the believer's rest in Christ's finished work.

The Mosaic Day of Atonement establishes the fast's form. The Mosaic mercy-ethic defines the fast's substance. The Mosaic Sabbath as delight names the covenant's twin practice. Layer one is in place.

The Post-Exilic Community Register

The chapter's indictment addresses a specific historical situation: the post-exilic community's ritual seriousness combined with ethical failure.

The post-exilic community had inherited multiple fast days. The Day of Atonement continued as the annual comprehensive fast. Additional fasts had been added during the exilic period to commemorate the fall of Jerusalem. Zechariah 7:5 lists them: fasts in the fifth month (commemorating the destruction of the temple), the seventh month (commemorating the assassination of Gedaliah), the fourth month (commemorating the breach of the walls), and the tenth month (commemorating the beginning of the siege). The post-exilic community had many fast days on the calendar.

The community's question in Isaiah 58:3 ("Why have we fasted, and you see it not?") probably arose from the perceived disconnect between the community's religious performance and the LORD's apparent lack of response. The community was fasting. The community was performing the rituals. The community was going through the motions of covenant seriousness. But the exilic hopes of a restored monarchy, a rebuilt temple in glory, a restored land, had not materialized in the promised fullness. The post-exilic community was small, poor, subject to Persian oversight, and religiously vulnerable. The community wanted to know why.

The prophet's answer names the disconnect. The community's ritual is being performed while the community's ethics are being ignored. The workers are being oppressed. The disputes continue. The daily life of the community is not aligned with the covenant's ethical demands. The community's expectation that ritual seriousness would produce the LORD's response is misplaced. The LORD's response follows ethical alignment, not ritual performance alone.

The specificity of the prophet's indictment is important. The workers being oppressed (58:3) implies a labor situation in which the community's more prosperous members are exploiting their employees. The quarrels and fights (58:4) imply ongoing community-level conflict that the ritual fast has not resolved. The wicked-fist violence (58:4) implies actual physical assault, whether in the workplace or in the community's public spaces. The community's external religiousness has coexisted with these internal failures.

The true-fast definition of 58:6-7 is comprehensive. Six specific practices are named. Loose the bonds of wickedness. Undo the straps of the yoke. Let the oppressed go free. Break every yoke. Share bread with the hungry. Bring the homeless poor into your house. Cover the naked. The list moves from justice-oriented practices (release of the oppressed) to mercy-oriented practices (sharing of bread, housing, clothing). The covenant community's ethical practice is not narrow; it addresses both structural injustice and individual need.

The extraordinary phrase "not to hide yourself from your own flesh" (58:7) is theologically significant. The Hebrew *me-basarkha* ("from your own flesh") probably refers to fellow Israelites, kin. But the vocabulary extends more broadly: the human family. The person in need is the covenant community member's own kin, whether by blood or by the broader human

solidarity the Genesis 1 creation narrative establishes. The community that would look away from need is looking away from itself.

The promise sequence of 58:8-12 is one of the most concentrated blessing-declarations in the Old Testament. When the community engages the true fast, the community's light will break forth like the dawn. The healing will spring up speedily. The righteousness will go before. The glory of the LORD will be the rear guard. The prayer that had seemed unanswered will be answered. "Here I am." The community's guidance will be continual. The community's soul will be satisfied. The community's bones will be strong. The community will be a watered garden and a spring of water. The community will rebuild the ancient ruins and be called the repairer of the breach and the restorer of streets.

The promise is not that the ethical practice earns the blessing; the promise is that the covenant's intended flow (ethical practice producing communal wellbeing) is being restored. When the community does what the covenant designed the community to do, the covenant's blessings flow. The mercy-ethic is not the community's achievement; the mercy-ethic is the community's reception of the LORD's own character enacted through the community.

The Sabbath promise of 58:13-14 closes the chapter. The Sabbath as delight (not burden) becomes the sign of the community's reoriented relationship with the LORD. Not going one's own ways. Not seeking one's own pleasure. Not talking idly. The Sabbath is the weekly enactment of the true fast's reorientation. The community that has learned the mercy-ethic across the week also learns the Sabbath's delight.

The Apostolic Appropriation

Three apostolic appropriations of Isaiah 58 deserve direct treatment.

First, Christ's reading at Nazareth (Luke 4:16-21) draws heavily on the mercy-ethic vocabulary Isaiah 58 and Isaiah 61 both develop. The Nazareth text is primarily Isaiah 61, but the release-of-the-captives, freedom-for-the-oppressed vocabulary of Isaiah 58:6 informs the same theological horizon. Christ's public ministry is inaugurated with the announcement that His mission is the mercy-ethic. The Servant's work is the true fast's fulfillment.

Second, Matthew 25:31-46 develops the Isaiah 58 mercy-ethic in Christ's own teaching. The sheep-and-goats parable makes the eschatological judgment turn on the practice of the same six categories Isaiah 58 had named. The hungry fed, the thirsty given drink, the stranger welcomed, the naked clothed, the sick visited, the imprisoned visited. The identification of Christ Himself with the recipients ("as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me") is the Christological deepening of Isaiah 58:7's "your own flesh."

The Christological identification of Christ with the poor is theologically substantial. The Isaiah 58 command "not to hide yourself from your own flesh" is now the recognition that the person in need is Christ Himself, standing in the person of the poor. The community's mercy-ethic toward the poor is worship toward Christ. The community's hardness of heart toward the poor is hardness of heart toward Christ. The Matthew 25 teaching gives the Isaiah 58 ethic its deepest Christological ground.

Third, James 1:27 and James 2:14-17 develop the Isaiah 58 theology into the New Covenant's teaching on true religion. James 1:27: "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world." The

definition of true religion is the mercy-ethic combined with holiness. The Isaiah 58 pattern is being carried forward in New Covenant vocabulary.

James 2:14-17 sharpens the same theology. “What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, Go in peace, be warmed and filled, without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”

James’s example is precisely the Isaiah 58:7 situation. The brother or sister lacking clothing and food. The believer who fails to provide. The verbal blessing that is not accompanied by the actual provision. James’s indictment is Isaiah 58’s indictment in New Covenant expression. The ritual profession (“Go in peace, be warmed and filled”) without the ethical substance (the actual provision) is dead. The true fast is the enacted mercy.

Hebrews 4:9-10 carries the Isaiah 58 Sabbath-delight theology into its New Covenant fulfillment. “So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God’s rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.” The believer’s Sabbath-rest is the believer’s rest in Christ’s finished work. The Isaiah 58 delight-in-the-LORD becomes the New Covenant delight-in-Christ. The Sabbath’s deepest theological content is fulfilled in the believer’s resting in what Christ has accomplished.

Christ is the mercy-ethic embodied. Christ is identified with the poor. Christ is the Sabbath-rest. The whole chapter finds its Christological completion in the gospel’s reformation of religious life around the twin marks of mercy and delight.

The Reader’s Bridge

The true fast today.

The believer receives the chapter as the LORD's piercing question about the connection between the believer's religious practice and the believer's ordinary ethics. The believer who prays, worships, tithes, reads, and fasts is engaged in the external forms of covenant seriousness. The chapter asks about the internal correspondence. Does the believer's ordinary life align with the covenant's ethical demands? Or has the believer, like the post-exilic community, learned the forms without the substance?

The specific practices Isaiah 58:6-7 names have modern equivalents. The oppressed workers of 58:3 are the modern employees whose wages are below sustainable levels, whose working conditions are unsafe, whose voices are silenced. The bonds of wickedness of 58:6 are the debt-arrangements that keep individuals and communities enslaved to unpayable obligations. The homeless poor of 58:7 are the people without housing whom the believer passes on the way to worship. The naked of 58:7 are those without adequate clothing whom the believer's community could clothe. The own flesh of 58:7 is the extended human family whose need is the believer's own responsibility.

The believer's practical engagement with these categories varies by context and calling. Not every believer is called to direct personal engagement with each category. But every believer is called to some real engagement. The believer's giving. The believer's political and economic decisions. The believer's personal encounters. The believer's local congregation's corporate practice. The believer's participation in the church's broader mercy-ministry. Some real engagement is required. The absence of any engagement means the believer has learned the ritual forms without the ethical substance.

The chapter's deeper mercy is that the true fast is not the believer's achievement; the true fast is the believer's participation in Christ's own mercy. Christ has identified Himself with the poor (Matthew 25). Christ's Nazareth reading (Luke 4) named the mercy-ethic as His mission. The believer's engagement with the mercy-ethic is the believer's participation in Christ's ongoing ministry. The believer is not building a personal righteousness; the believer is being conformed to Christ's pattern.

The Sabbath-delight promise of 58:13-14 applies to the believer's weekly rhythm. The Sabbath is not the day of religious burden; the Sabbath is the day of delight. The New Covenant believer's Sabbath-observance may or may not correspond to the seventh-day pattern of the Mosaic covenant (the New Testament's teaching on Sabbath-keeping is developed with theological nuance). But the underlying principle stands: the believer needs a rhythm of rest and delight in the LORD. The weekly gathering of the covenant community. The personal quiet in the LORD's presence. The deliberate ceasing from the week's ordinary striving to receive the LORD's gift of rest.

The chapter's promise is the LORD's answered prayer. "Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, Here I am" (58:9). The believer whose ethics have been aligned with the LORD's heart is the believer whose prayers are heard with new immediacy. The disconnection between the believer's religious performance and the believer's ordinary life has been resolved. The prayer that had felt unheard is now heard. The LORD answers, "Here I am."

Three movements follow from the chapter for the reader's present life.

First, the honest examination. The believer can ask, honestly, where the believer's religious practice has been

disconnected from the believer's ordinary ethics. The specific relationship in which the believer's conduct has not matched the believer's stated values. The specific area of the believer's life in which the covenant's ethical demands have been ignored. The examination is not for the believer's condemnation; the examination is for the LORD's correction.

Second, the concrete step. The believer can identify one specific practice that would enact the true fast this week. The specific financial gift that would house the homeless. The specific relationship that would enact the release of the bonds of wickedness. The specific act of hospitality that would share bread with the hungry. The step does not have to be dramatic. The step has to be actual.

Third, the Sabbath as delight. The believer can reorient the weekly rest day toward delight in the LORD rather than either the ordinary week's continuation or the mere abstention from work. The Sabbath's content is delight. The believer can identify what genuine delight in the LORD looks like in the believer's specific life and pursue that content.

Not the fast without the mercy. The true fast.

Not the workers oppressed. The bonds of wickedness loosed.

Not the Sabbath as burden. The Sabbath as delight.

Italic, indented:

The true fast is the release of the oppressed. The true fast is the sharing of bread. The true fast is the housing of the homeless and the covering of the naked. The believer's religious practice is meant to accompany the covenant's ethical demands, not to substitute for them. Christ has identified Himself with the poor and inaugurated His ministry with the mercy-ethic. The believer's engagement with the poor is participation in Christ's own ministry. The Sabbath's deepest content is delight in the LORD, the

believer's rest in Christ's finished work. The disconnection between religious performance and ordinary ethics can be closed. The prayer that had felt unheard can be heard: Here I am. Not the fast without the mercy. The true fast. Not the workers oppressed. The bonds of wickedness loosed. Not the Sabbath as burden. The Sabbath as delight.



tzom (Hebrew). *Fast. The formal act of abstention from food, often with sackcloth and prayer. The Mosaic Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16, 23) is the constitutional fast. Zechariah 7:5 lists the additional post-exilic fasts commemorating the fall of Jerusalem. Isaiah 58 does not abolish the fast but defines its intended content: the ethical release of the oppressed and the mercy-ethic of the community. The true fast is the covenant's ethical practice, not the ritual form alone.*

pate'ach chartzubot resha (Hebrew). *“Loose the bonds of wickedness.” The phrase from Isaiah 58:6. The Mosaic mercy-ethic (gleaning laws, Sabbatical year, Jubilee, debt-release) provides the constitutional ground. Christ's Nazareth reading (Luke 4:18) deploys the parallel Isaiah 61 vocabulary as His ministry's inauguration. Matthew 25 identifies Christ with the poor, making the mercy-ethic worship toward Him. The believer's engagement with the oppressed is participation in Christ's ongoing ministry.*

va-qarata la-Shabbat oneg (Hebrew). *“And call the Sabbath a delight.” The phrase from Isaiah 58:13. The*

Sabbath is being reoriented from restriction to gift. Hebrews 4:9-10 carries the theology forward into the believer's rest in Christ's finished work. The believer's Sabbath-observance may take various forms, but the underlying principle stands: the covenant community needs a rhythm of rest and delight in the LORD.

STATION 4

Our Iniquities Have Made a Separation

Isaiah 59

Hen lo qatzrah yad-YHWH me-hoshia, ve-lo khavdah azno mi-shemoa. “Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear.” The chapter opens with the disclaimer. The failure is not in the LORD. His hand is not too short. His ear is not too dull. If the LORD is not answering the community’s prayers, the problem is elsewhere.

“But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.” The wall is on the community’s side. The community has built the barrier that keeps the LORD’s answer from arriving. The specific sins are then enumerated: hands defiled with blood, fingers with iniquity, lips speaking lies, tongues muttering wickedness.

The community’s confession follows in 59:9-15. The community acknowledges what has happened. Justice is far from us. Righteousness does not overtake us. We wait for light, but behold, darkness. We hope for brightness, but we walk in gloom. We grope for the wall like the blind. We stumble at noon as in the twilight. We growl like bears. We moan like doves. The self-diagnosis is unusually candid. The community is naming its condition.

Then the great intervention of 59:16-17. “He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no one to intercede; then his own arm brought him salvation, and his righteousness upheld him. He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on his head; he put on

garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak.” No human intercessor was found. The LORD Himself put on the armor. The LORD Himself became the deliverer.

Then the coming Redeemer of 59:20-21: *u-va le-Tziyyon go’el u-le-shave fasha be-Ya’aqov*. “And a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression, declares the LORD. And as for me, this is my covenant with them, says the LORD: My Spirit that is upon you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your offspring, or out of the mouth of your children’s offspring, says the LORD, from this time forth and forevermore.” The Redeemer comes to Zion. The Spirit and the word are the covenant’s permanent gift.

The Pentateuchal Echo

Three Mosaic streams flow beneath Isaiah 59 and converge at the LORD-as-warrior theology and the Redeemer’s coming.

First, the Mosaic separation-because-of-sin theme. The Pentateuchal narrative repeatedly names the separation between the covenant community and the LORD when the community sins. Genesis 3’s fall records the original separation: Adam and Eve hide from the LORD; they are removed from the garden; the cherubim guard the way to the tree of life. Numbers 14 records the LORD’s judgment on the wilderness generation for the unbelief at Kadesh-Barnea: they will not enter the land; their bodies will fall in the wilderness. Deuteronomy 29:24-28 names the covenant curses that will follow persistent disobedience: the land will become a wasteland, the community will be uprooted from the land in fierce anger and cast into another land.

The Mosaic-Deuteronomic theology is clear. Sin separates. The LORD's presence with His people is conditioned on the covenant's ethical observance. When the covenant is broken, the LORD hides His face. The exile was the historical enactment of this Mosaic theology at its most dramatic. The temple was destroyed. The land was surrendered. The people were removed.

Isaiah 59:2 deploys this Mosaic separation-because-of-sin theology in its clearest formulation. "Your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear." The problem is not the LORD's inability; the problem is the covenant community's sin. The Mosaic theology is being applied to the post-exilic community's ongoing failures.

Second, the Mosaic LORD-as-Warrior theology. The Pentateuch establishes the LORD as the divine warrior who fights for His people. Exodus 15's song of the sea celebrates the LORD as the warrior who defeated Pharaoh's army. Deuteronomy 20 names the LORD as the one who goes with Israel into battle. The Mosaic vocabulary of the LORD wearing armor, wielding weapons, and defeating enemies is well-established.

Isaiah 59:17 deploys this Mosaic LORD-as-Warrior theology at its most concentrated. The LORD puts on righteousness as a breastplate. He puts on a helmet of salvation. He puts on garments of vengeance. He wraps Himself in zeal as a cloak. The LORD is arming Himself for battle. The battle is not against a foreign enemy; the battle is against the sin that has separated the covenant community from Him. The LORD Himself will bring the salvation that no human intercessor could provide.

The theological logic is striking. The Mosaic-Isaianic tradition had frequently described the LORD raising up

human deliverers: Moses, Joshua, the judges, David, the prophets. But in Isaiah 59:16 the LORD sees that there is no human intercessor for the current situation. The LORD wonders (the Hebrew *va-yishtomem* implies astonishment) that no one is available. The LORD's own arm brings the salvation. The Mosaic-prophetic pattern is being intensified. The human deliverer is replaced by the LORD Himself.

This is one of the deepest Christological anticipations in the Hebrew Bible. The LORD who Himself becomes the deliverer, who arms Himself for the battle no human could fight, who brings the salvation His people could not secure, is the LORD who in Christ takes on human flesh to accomplish the deliverance. The Isaiah 59:16-17 armor becomes the Ephesians 6 armor of God, but the deeper Christological ground is that Christ Himself is the LORD who came to accomplish what no human could.

Third, the Mosaic covenant of Spirit and word. The Pentateuch establishes the covenant's deepest ground as the LORD's Spirit and word being with His people. Numbers 11 records the LORD taking of the Spirit that was on Moses and placing it on the seventy elders. Deuteronomy 30:14 names the word as "very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it." The Mosaic-Deuteronomic covenant's deepest form is the internalization of the LORD's Spirit and word in the covenant community.

Isaiah 59:21 gathers this Mosaic Spirit-and-word theology into an unusually explicit form. "My Spirit that is upon you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your offspring, or out of the mouth of your children's offspring, says the LORD, from this time forth and forevermore." The Spirit and word are the covenant's permanent gift. The covenant is

generational. The Spirit and the word will run in the covenant community across the generations.

The Mosaic-Isaianic-Christological tradition on the Spirit and word converges. Jeremiah 31:33's new covenant promise ("I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts") and Ezekiel 36:27's Spirit-promise ("I will put my Spirit within you") develop the same theology. Pentecost enacts the Spirit's permanent bestowal. The Isaiah 59:21 promise is fulfilled in the New Covenant church's permanent possession of the Spirit and the word.

hivdilu (Hebrew, hifil of badal). "Have made a separation." The verb from Isaiah 59:2. Badal is the Genesis 1 creation-vocabulary of the LORD's dividing (light from darkness, waters above from waters below). The Mosaic tabernacle vocabulary uses the same verb for the priestly separation of the clean from the unclean (Leviticus 10:10, 11:47). Isaiah 59:2 uses the verb of the community's sins creating a barrier between the community and the LORD. The theological weight is significant: the covenant community has taken over the priestly separating function and applied it destructively, dividing itself from its God.

va-yishtomem (Hebrew). "And he wondered." The verb from Isaiah 59:16. Shamem is the verb of astonishment, being appalled, standing in stunned silence. The LORD is astonished at the absence of any intercessor. The vocabulary intensifies the moment: no human is available to bridge the gap between the sinful community and the holy LORD. The LORD's own arm brings the salvation. This is one of the deepest Christological anticipations in the Hebrew

Bible: the LORD Himself will accomplish what no human could.

u-va le-Tziyyon go'el (Hebrew). "And a Redeemer will come to Zion." The phrase from Isaiah 59:20. Go'el is the Mosaic vocabulary of the kinsman-redeemer, the near relative whose responsibility was to redeem the family member from debt-slavery (Leviticus 25:47-55), redeem the family land from sale (Leviticus 25:23-34), redeem the family line from extinction (the levirate marriage of Deuteronomy 25:5-10), and avenge the family member's blood (Numbers 35:19-21). Paul cites Isaiah 59:20-21 in Romans 11:26-27 as the prophetic ground for Israel's eschatological salvation through Christ the Redeemer.

The Mosaic separation-because-of-sin theology names the community's problem. The Mosaic LORD-as-Warrior theology names the LORD's response: no human intercessor, so the LORD Himself. The Mosaic covenant of Spirit and word names the permanent covenant gift. Layer one is in place.

The Post-Exilic Community Register

The chapter names the post-exilic community's ongoing sin-and-separation with unusual honesty.

The specific sins enumerated in 59:3-8 are extensive. Hands defiled with blood. Fingers with iniquity. Lips speaking lies. Tongues muttering wickedness. No one entering suit justly. No one pleading truth. Trusting empty words. Speaking lies. Conceiving mischief. Giving birth to iniquity. Hatching adders' eggs and weaving the spider's web. Their feet run to evil, and they are swift to shed innocent blood. Their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity. Desolation and destruction are in

their highways. The way of peace they do not know. There is no justice in their paths.

The vocabulary is comprehensive. Speech, thought, action, and social behavior are all corrupted. The community has become morally structurally deformed. The prophet's indictment is not against isolated individual failures; the prophet's indictment is against a community-wide pattern that has become embedded in daily practice.

The community's confession in 59:9-15 is remarkable for its honesty. The community itself takes up the language of self-diagnosis. "Justice is far from us, and righteousness does not overtake us; we hope for light, and behold, darkness, and for brightness, but we walk in gloom." The community sees its own condition. The community acknowledges the separation. The community does not attempt to blame the LORD.

The vocabulary of the confession is unusual. "We grope for the wall like the blind; we grope like those who have no eyes; we stumble at noon as in the twilight, among those in full vigor we are like dead men. We all growl like bears; we moan and moan like doves." The community's condition is that of the sick, the blind, the dead, the animal-like. The community has lost its full human capacity because of its separation from the LORD.

Verse 59:15 records what the LORD saw. "Truth is lacking, and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey. The LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no justice." The LORD's observation of the community's condition. The person who tries to live rightly becomes a target. The community has become so corrupt that righteous behavior is dangerous. The LORD sees this. The LORD is displeased.

Then the great turn of 59:16. "He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no one to intercede." The LORD searches for a human intercessor. The prophetic

tradition had raised up intercessors before: Abraham for Sodom, Moses for the golden-calf generation, Samuel for Israel, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel. But in the situation Isaiah 59 addresses, no human intercessor is available. The community is so corrupt that no one within it can plead for the community's deliverance.

The Four-Passage Cluster

The astonishment of Isaiah 59:16 does not stand alone. The prophet's book carries a cluster of four passages that name the failure of every institution the LORD had commissioned. Isaiah 50:2, Isaiah 59:16, Isaiah 63:5, and Isaiah 64:7 form a single diagnostic constellation. Read together, the cluster is not a lament over one missing intercessor; the cluster is the prophetic naming of total institutional collapse across prophet, judge, king, and priest. Four passages. Four offices. One diagnosis.

Isaiah 50:2 names the first failure. "Why, when I came, was there no man? Why, when I called, was there no one to answer?" The verse opens the third Servant Song. The LORD arrives, and no one is present to respond. This is the failure of prophetic responsiveness. The covenant community cannot even hear the LORD when He comes. The office of the prophet, whose function is to receive and mediate the LORD's word, has collapsed at the point of reception. The Servant is present; no one answers.

Isaiah 59:16 names the second failure. "He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no one to intercede." The verse must be read against the immediately preceding chapter's catalog. Isaiah 59:4: "No one enters suit justly; no one goes to law honestly." Isaiah 59:14: "Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands far away; for truth has

stumbled in the public squares.” The intercession-gap of verse 16 is the climax of a longer diagnostic. This is judicial and social collapse. The office of the judge and the community’s public order have failed. The intercessor who would stand in the gap is not to be found because the whole structure of communal justice has crumbled.

Isaiah 63:5 names the third failure. “I looked, but there was no one to help; I was appalled, but there was no one to uphold.” The verse appears within the chapter where the LORD treads the winepress alone. This is the failure of kingly and military deliverance. The office of the king, whose function is to lead the community in the LORD’s battles, has no human occupant capable of the work. No one upholds. No one helps. The Warrior comes from Edom alone.

The Hebrew vocabulary between 59:16 and 63:5 deserves particular attention. The verb underlying “wondered” in 59:16 and “appalled” in 63:5 is the same verb: *shamem*, to be astonished, to stand in stunned silence, to be appalled. The LORD uses the same word twice. The repetition is not stylistic variation. It is intensification. The same wound is being named again, more sharply, because no man has stepped forward in the interval. Twice the LORD has looked. Twice no one has been found. The astonishment of 59 becomes the appalled gaze of 63 because the covenant community’s failure to raise up intercessors has continued unchecked between the two visions.

Isaiah 64:7 records the corporate confession. “There is no one who calls upon your name, who rouses himself to take hold of you.” The verse belongs to the community’s intercessory prayer of Isaiah 63:15-64:12 (Station 9 will address this prayer in full). This is priestly and worshipping collapse. The office of the priest, whose function is to lead the community into the LORD’s presence in worship, has no

active practitioner. The people's own hands are lowered. Their own lips are silent. Their own worshipping capacity has failed. But the confession is theologically important: the community itself now sees what the LORD has seen all along, and the very people confessing the absence are being called to fill it.

The four passages together name the total collapse. The prophet cannot get through. The judge cannot enforce justice. The king cannot deliver. The priest cannot lead the community into worship. Every office the LORD commissioned at Sinai has failed at once. The four verses are the prophet's theological anatomy of the community's condition. The Genesis 3 fall's cumulative effect on the covenant community is being laid open in four sentences. This is the exile diagnosis in its most concentrated form.

The LORD's response is single. He Himself comes. The arm of the LORD in Isaiah 53:1 ("to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?"), the own arm of Isaiah 59:16 ("his own arm brought him salvation"), and the own arm of Isaiah 63:5 ("my own arm brought me salvation") are the same arm. The three verses point to one incarnate Servant. The arm of the LORD is the body of the Son. When the four offices of the covenant community had collapsed, the LORD Himself entered the community in the Person of the Servant. Isaiah 53:12 gives the direct answer to Isaiah 59:16's astonishment: the Servant "bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors." The missing intercessor of 59:16 is the interceding Servant of 53:12. The cross is the intercession. The Servant becomes the intercession by being laid down.

Isaiah 59 is therefore the whole redemptive pattern in miniature within a single chapter. Verses 1-15 catalog the human failure. Verse 16 pivots on the divine astonishment. Verses 16-17 resolve in the LORD putting on the armor and bringing the salvation by His own arm. Exile diagnosis. Divine

intervention. Redemption accomplished by the One who came down. The chapter's arc is the covenantal narrative's arc: the community's comprehensive failure, the LORD's comprehensive response, the salvation secured by the One whose arm is His body given for the community. The Geography of Redemption's master pattern is compressed into one chapter here.

The LORD's Response

The LORD's response to the cluster is the deepest Christological anticipation in the chapter. "Then his own arm brought him salvation, and his righteousness upheld him." The LORD Himself will accomplish what no human could. The LORD's own arm (the same arm named in Isaiah 53:1: "to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?") will bring the salvation. The LORD's own righteousness will uphold Him in the work.

The armor-passage of 59:17 is the LORD's military preparation. Righteousness as breastplate. Helmet of salvation. Garments of vengeance. Cloak of zeal. The LORD is arming Himself. Paul will develop this armor-vocabulary in Ephesians 6:14-17 for the believer, but the original vocabulary in Isaiah 59 is for the LORD Himself. The LORD is the warrior. The armor is His.

The vengeance-vocabulary of 59:18 is theologically important. "According to their deeds, so will he repay, wrath to his adversaries, repayment to his enemies; to the coastlands he will render repayment." The vengeance is not indiscriminate; the vengeance is against those who have opposed the LORD and His people. The Old Testament's vengeance-theology is being deployed in its most focused form: the LORD's justice will fall on the adversaries.

Verses 19-20 name the outcome. The nations from the west and the sun-rising east will fear the name of the LORD. The Redeemer will come to Zion. Those in Jacob who turn from transgression will be gathered to Him. The LORD's intervention has produced the universal recognition and the specific gathering of the repentant.

The covenant of Spirit and word in 59:21 closes the chapter. The LORD's Spirit is upon the community. The LORD's words are in the community's mouth. The covenant is generational. The Spirit and word will not depart. The community's deepest gift is the permanent bestowal of the LORD's own Spirit and word. The post-exilic community's failure has been addressed by the LORD's own initiative. The gift is unconditional.

The Apostolic Appropriation

Three apostolic appropriations of Isaiah 59 deserve direct treatment.

First, Paul cites Isaiah 59:20-21 in Romans 11:26-27 as the prophetic ground for the eschatological salvation of Israel. The Romans 11 context is Paul's complex working out of the relationship between the Jewish people and the Gentile church. Paul argues that Israel's current hardening is partial and temporary; the fullness of the Gentiles will come in, and then "all Israel will be saved." The citation follows: "As it is written, The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob; and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins."

The Pauline appropriation is theologically substantial. The Redeemer of Isaiah 59:20 is Christ. The turning-from-transgression of Jacob is the eschatological repentance of Israel. The covenant with the community is the New Covenant

Christ has inaugurated. The Isaiah 59 promise of the LORD's intervention when no human intercessor was available is fulfilled in Christ's coming as the divine Redeemer who accomplishes what no human could.

The Christological identification is direct. The LORD who Himself brings the salvation in Isaiah 59:16 is the Christ who comes to Zion in Isaiah 59:20 and in Paul's Romans 11:26 fulfillment. The same LORD who wondered that there was no intercessor became the intercessor Himself in the incarnation. Christ is the arm of the LORD that brought salvation.

Second, the armor-passage of Isaiah 59:17 is taken up by Paul in Ephesians 6:11-17 as the armor of God given to the believer. "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. . . . Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

Paul's vocabulary is Isaiah 59:17's vocabulary in New Covenant expression. The breastplate of righteousness. The helmet of salvation. The believer is being armed in the same armor the LORD wore. The theological logic is precise: because the LORD Himself accomplished the salvation, the believer wears the LORD's own armor. The believer's spiritual warfare is participation in the LORD's original warfare. The armor is not manufactured by the believer; the armor is received from the LORD who wore it first.

Third, the Spirit-and-word covenant of 59:21 is fulfilled in the New Covenant's permanent bestowal of the Spirit on the church. Pentecost enacts the promise. The Spirit is poured on

all flesh. The word is written on the heart (Jeremiah 31:33) and placed in the mouth of the community (Romans 10:8, quoting Deuteronomy 30:14). The generational continuity of Isaiah 59:21 is fulfilled in the church's ongoing transmission of the Spirit and the word across the generations.

The apostolic proclamation depends on this permanent Spirit-and-word gift. 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." The word remains in the community's mouth. 1 Corinthians 12:13: "For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body." The Spirit remains on the community. The Isaiah 59:21 covenant is the New Covenant church's permanent standing.

A fourth apostolic appropriation deserves treatment. The Isaiah 59:16 astonishment at the missing intercessor is not resolved only at Calvary. The risen Christ continues the intercession. Hebrews 7:25: "Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them." The Christ who bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors at the cross (Isaiah 53:12) is the same Christ who ever lives to make intercession from the Father's right hand. The intercessor the LORD searched for in Isaiah 59:16 is not merely the historical Servant whose work is completed; the intercessor is the risen Christ whose intercession continues.

Romans 8 adds a second voice to the same intercession. Romans 8:26: "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words." Romans 8:34: "Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died - more than that, who was raised - who is at the right

hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.” The believer is held by double intercession. The Spirit prays from within the believer’s own weakness. The Son prays from above at the Father’s right hand. The Isaiah 59:16 gap where no human intercessor could be found is filled twice over in the New Covenant: the Spirit fills the gap from below; the Son fills the gap from above. The believer stands in the middle of the double intercession.

The theological weight of the double intercession is substantial. The Isaiah 59:16 astonishment is not merely resolved in a past-tense way at Calvary. The astonishment is resolved in an ongoing way through the risen Christ’s continuing work and the Spirit’s continuing work. The believer’s prayer-life is not the initiation of a conversation with a distant LORD; the believer’s prayer-life is the joining of a conversation already in progress. The Spirit is already interceding. The Son is already interceding. The believer’s prayers enter the flow of the Spirit’s intercession and are lifted to the Father through the Son’s intercession.

Christ is the Redeemer who came to Zion. Christ is the arm of the LORD that brought salvation. Christ is the Servant who makes intercession for the transgressors (Isaiah 53:12) and the risen Christ who ever lives to make intercession (Hebrews 7:25). Christ is the covenant’s permanent Spirit-and-word gift. The whole chapter finds its Christological completion in the incarnation, the cross, the resurrection, Pentecost, and the ongoing intercession from the right hand of the Father.

The Reader’s Bridge

The Redeemer who came when no one else could.

The believer receives the chapter as the LORD’s honest naming of the separation and the LORD’s decisive response.

The believer's own sins have made a separation between the believer and the LORD. The believer's prayer that has felt unheard has an honest explanation: the barrier is on the believer's side. The LORD's hand has not shortened. The LORD's ear has not become dull. The problem has been in the believer, not in the LORD.

This is a hard truth to hold without falling into either denial or despair. Denial says the barrier is not real, the believer's prayers should be heard without the believer's repentance, the LORD's standards do not apply. Despair says the barrier is unbreakable, the believer's sins have permanently separated the believer from the LORD, the LORD will not answer again. The chapter offers a third path. The barrier is real. The barrier is also removable. The LORD has already sent the Redeemer to remove it.

The believer's response is the confession the community made in 59:9-15. The honest acknowledgment of the actual condition. Not the community that assumes it is righteous but is complaining that the LORD is silent. The community that admits it has walked in gloom, groped for the wall, growled like a bear, moaned like a dove. The honest self-diagnosis is not the believer's condemnation; the honest self-diagnosis is the condition for the LORD's intervention.

The great mercy of the chapter is that the LORD does not wait for a human intercessor. The LORD saw that there was no man. The LORD wondered that there was no one to intercede. The LORD's own arm brought the salvation. The believer's deepest ground is that the salvation is not the believer's achievement or even the achievement of some faithful person on the believer's behalf. The salvation is the LORD's own work. Christ came because no one else could come. Christ accomplished what no one else could accomplish.

The armor-vocabulary of 59:17 becomes the believer's armor in Ephesians 6. The believer wears what the LORD wore. The breastplate of righteousness is not the believer's self-manufactured moral standing; the breastplate is the righteousness of Christ imputed to the believer. The helmet of salvation is not the believer's certainty of salvation earned; the helmet is the salvation Christ accomplished at the cross. The believer's spiritual warfare is not the believer's solo battle; the believer's spiritual warfare is participation in the LORD's already-accomplished victory.

The Spirit-and-word covenant of 59:21 is the believer's permanent inheritance. The Spirit is on the believer permanently. The word is in the believer's mouth permanently. The believer's children and the believer's children's children can receive the same covenant. The generational continuity of the gospel is grounded in this Isaiah 59:21 promise. The believer's parenting, discipleship, mentoring, teaching, are all participation in the covenant's generational transmission.

The double intercession of the New Covenant frames the believer's prayer-life. The Spirit prays from within (Romans 8:26). The Son prays from above (Romans 8:34, Hebrews 7:25). The believer is held in the middle. The believer's prayers are not the initiation of a conversation with a distant LORD; the believer's prayers are the joining of a conversation already in progress. The Spirit is already interceding with groanings too deep for words. The Son is already interceding at the Father's right hand. The believer prays into an already-flowing intercession, and the believer's halting words are lifted by the Spirit below and by the Son above.

Isaiah 59 read in one arc becomes the whole redemptive-historical narrative in miniature. Verses 1-15 name the human failure comprehensively. Verse 16 pivots on the divine

astonishment. Verses 16-17 resolve in the LORD putting on the armor and bringing the salvation by His own arm. Exile diagnosis. Divine intervention. Redemption accomplished by the One who came down. The believer who wants to see the whole Bible's master pattern in a single chapter can read Isaiah 59. The believer's life is contained within the same arc: the honest naming of the believer's failure, the LORD's astonished search, the LORD's own arm bringing the salvation, and the believer's standing armed in the armor the LORD wore first.

Three movements follow from the chapter for the reader's present life.

First, the honest naming of the barrier. The believer can identify the specific sins that have contributed to the sense of separation from the LORD. The naming is not for the believer's condemnation; the naming is for the LORD's intervention. The confession is the believer's honest self-diagnosis in the LORD's presence.

Second, the reception of the Redeemer's work. The believer can rest in the fact that Christ accomplished what no human intercessor could. The believer does not need to construct a personal righteousness sufficient to bridge the gap. The gap has been bridged. The Redeemer has come.

Third, the participation in the covenant's Spirit-and-word transmission. The believer can identify one specific area of the believer's life in which the Spirit-and-word transmission is happening or should be happening. The children being taught. The mentee being disciplined. The colleague being witnessed to. The community being served by the believer's teaching. The generational continuity of the covenant is enacted through the believer's specific participation.

Not the shortened hand. The reaching arm.

Not the missing intercessor. The Servant who bore the sin of many and makes intercession for the transgressors.

Not the covenant broken. The Spirit and word forever, the Son interceding above and the Spirit interceding within.

Italic, indented:

The LORD's hand is not shortened, and His ear is not dull. The barrier is on the community's side. The believer's honest confession of the actual condition is the condition for the LORD's intervention. Isaiah 50:2, 59:16, 63:5, and 64:7 name the total institutional failure across prophet, judge, king, and priest, and the LORD Himself becomes the answer: the arm of Isaiah 53:1, 59:16, and 63:5 is the same arm, the body of the Son. The Servant of Isaiah 53:12 bears the sin of many and makes intercession for the transgressors. The risen Christ ever lives to make intercession (Hebrews 7:25); the Spirit prays from within with groanings too deep for words (Romans 8:26); the Son prays from above at the Father's right hand (Romans 8:34). The believer stands in the middle of the double intercession. The believer wears the armor the LORD wore first. Isaiah 59 is the whole redemptive pattern in miniature: exile diagnosis, divine intervention, redemption accomplished by the One who came down. Not the shortened hand. The reaching arm. Not the missing intercessor. The Servant who bore the sin of many. Not the covenant broken. The Spirit and word forever, the Son interceding above and the Spirit interceding within.



hivdilu (Hebrew, hifil of *badal*). “Have made a separation.” The verb from Isaiah 59:2. *Badal* is the Genesis 1 creation-vocabulary of the LORD's dividing. The Mosaic tabernacle vocabulary uses the same verb for the priestly separation of the clean from the

unclean. Isaiah 59:2 uses the verb of the community's sins creating a barrier between the community and the LORD. The covenant community has misused the priestly separating function, dividing itself from its God rather than distinguishing the clean from the unclean.

va-yishtomem (Hebrew). “And he wondered.” The verb from Isaiah 59:16, from the root shamem, to be astonished, appalled, standing in stunned silence. The same verb underlies “I was appalled” in Isaiah 63:5, where the LORD looks a second time and finds no one to uphold. The doubling is not stylistic; it is intensification. The same wound is named twice, more sharply, because no man has stepped forward in the interval. Isaiah 53:12 gives the direct answer: the Servant “bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.” Hebrews 7:25 extends the answer into the risen Christ who “always lives to make intercession.” The missing intercessor of 59:16 is the interceding Servant of 53:12, and the ongoing intercessor of Hebrews 7:25.

u-va le-Tziyyon go'el (Hebrew). “And a Redeemer will come to Zion.” The phrase from Isaiah 59:20. Go'el is the Mosaic vocabulary of the kinsman-redeemer whose responsibility was to redeem the family member from debt-slavery, redeem the family land, redeem the family line, and avenge the family member's blood. Paul cites Isaiah 59:20-21 in Romans 11:26-27 as the prophetic ground for Israel's eschatological salvation through Christ the Redeemer.

PART TWO

The Glory and the Consummation

Stations 5 through 11

STATION 5

Arise, Shine

Isaiah 60

Qumi ori ki va orekh, u-khevod YHWH alayikh zarach. “Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.” Chapter 60 opens Part Two of Volume V with the vision that opens the eschatological arc. The imperative *qumi* (arise) commands Zion to stand up. The imperative *ori* (shine) commands Zion to be luminous. The reason is given: the light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen.

The whole world in the chapter’s opening is dark. “For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you.” Zion becomes the one bright point in a darkened world. The nations, seeing the light, come to it. “And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.”

Then the great procession. “Lift up your eyes all around, and see; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be carried on the hip.” The dispersed community is being gathered. The nations are coming with their wealth. “The wealth of the nations shall come to you. A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall bring good news, the praises of the LORD.”

Then the great inversion of 60:14. “The sons of those who afflicted you shall come bending low to you, and all who despised you shall bow down at your feet; they shall call you the City of the LORD, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.”

Those who had persecuted Zion now bow before her. The reversal is complete.

Then the great climax of 60:19-20: *lo yihyeh-lakh od ha-shemesh le-or yomam, u-le-nogah ha-yareach lo-ya'ir lakh.* “The sun shall be no more your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give you light; but the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. Your sun shall no more go down, nor your moon withdraw itself; for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended.” The sun and moon are no longer needed. The LORD Himself is the light.

The chapter closes with the growth-promise of 60:22: “The least one shall become a clan, and the smallest one a mighty nation; I am the LORD; in its time I will hasten it.” The small becomes the great. The LORD will hasten it in its time.

The Pentateuchal Echo

Three Mosaic streams flow beneath Isaiah 60 and converge at the LORD-as-light theology.

First, the Mosaic glory-cloud tradition. Exodus 13:21-22 records the LORD leading Israel out of Egypt in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. The LORD’s visible presence with His people took the form of the guiding, illuminating cloud. Exodus 40:34-38 records the LORD’s glory filling the tabernacle when it was completed, the cloud covering it by day and the fire by night. 1 Kings 8:10-11 records the LORD’s glory filling Solomon’s temple at its dedication. The Mosaic tradition of the LORD’s glory as visible light-presence is foundational.

Isaiah 60:1-2 deploys this Mosaic glory-tradition in its most eschatological form. The LORD’s glory is rising upon Zion. The rising is not the localized illumination of the

tabernacle courtyard; the rising is the cosmic dawn that ends the world's darkness. The Mosaic pattern (the LORD's glory as visible light-presence) is being extended to its cosmic-eschatological consummation.

Ezekiel had recorded the LORD's glory departing from the pre-exilic temple in Ezekiel 10-11. The glory left the threshold, moved to the east gate, and departed to the Mount of Olives. Ezekiel 43 records the glory returning to the new temple in his eschatological vision. Isaiah 60 gathers the same glory-tradition into the light-language: the LORD's glory rises upon Zion, and the rising is permanent.

Second, the Mosaic wealth-of-the-nations pattern. The Mosaic narrative repeatedly records the LORD giving His people wealth from the surrounding nations. Exodus 12:35-36 records the plundering of the Egyptians at the exodus (the Israelite women asked their Egyptian neighbors for silver and gold and clothing, and the Egyptians gave what was asked). Deuteronomy 8:17-18 warns Israel not to say, "My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth," but to remember that the LORD gives the power to get wealth.

Isaiah 60:5-11 deploys this Mosaic wealth-of-the-nations pattern in its eschatological expansion. The wealth of the nations comes to Zion. Camels from Midian, Ephah, Sheba. Gold, frankincense, praises. Ships of Tarshish bringing sons and their silver and gold. Foreigners building the walls. Kings ministering to Zion. The gates open continually to receive the wealth of the nations.

The theological point is not that Zion is being enriched for her own sake. The theological point is that the LORD's glory has drawn the nations, and the nations bring their gifts in worship. Matthew 2's account of the magi bringing gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the infant Christ is the historical enactment. The gold and frankincense of Isaiah 60:6 become

the gifts to the Christ-child. The Mosaic wealth-tradition finds its consummation in worship offered to the incarnate Servant.

Third, the Mosaic light-and-dark theology. Genesis 1:3 records the LORD's first creative word: "Let there be light." Genesis 1:4 records the LORD's separation of the light from the darkness. The Mosaic creation-vocabulary establishes light as the LORD's primary creative act and darkness as the condition light overcomes.

Exodus 10:21-23 records the ninth plague on Egypt: three days of darkness so thick it could be felt. Even during those three days, "all the people of Israel had light where they lived." The Mosaic darkness-and-light theology recognizes the LORD's power to bring darkness on His enemies while giving light to His people.

Isaiah 60:2 deploys this Mosaic darkness-and-light theology in its eschatological extension. "Darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you." The world is in darkness. Zion is in light. The Mosaic pattern of the Egyptian plague is being extended to the eschatological horizon.

The LORD-as-light promise of 60:19 is the deepest form of this Mosaic light-theology. The sun and moon are no longer needed. The LORD Himself is the light. The Mosaic pattern (the LORD giving light) has been intensified to the LORD being the light. The created luminaries are replaced by the uncreated Creator. The eschatological vision reaches beyond the created order to the LORD Himself as the sufficient light.

qumi ori (Hebrew). "Arise, shine." The doubled imperative of Isaiah 60:1. Qumi is the feminine singular imperative of qum (to arise, to stand up). Ori is the feminine singular imperative of or (to give light, to shine). Zion is addressed as feminine. The Mosaic

glory-cloud tradition is being extended to Zion herself as the reflector of the LORD's light. Paul echoes the vocabulary in Ephesians 5:14 ("Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you").

chil goyim (Hebrew). "Wealth of the nations." The phrase from Isaiah 60:5, 60:11. Chil can mean wealth, force, army, resources. The Mosaic tradition of the plundering of the Egyptians (Exodus 12:35-36) is being extended to the eschatological gathering of the nations' wealth to Zion. Revelation 21:24 echoes the vocabulary: "By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it." The New Jerusalem is the eschatological consummation of Isaiah 60's Zion.

or olam (Hebrew). "Everlasting light." The phrase from Isaiah 60:19-20. The LORD is Zion's everlasting light; the sun and moon are no longer needed. Revelation 21:23 and 22:5 echo the phrase directly: "And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb." The Mosaic-Isaianic light-theology is fulfilled when the LORD Himself is the eschatological city's light.

The Mosaic glory-cloud tradition prepares the way. The Mosaic wealth-of-the-nations pattern is extended to the eschatological gathering. The Mosaic light-and-dark theology reaches its consummation in the LORD Himself as light. Layer one is in place.

The Post-Exilic Community Register

The chapter offers the post-exilic community a vision that far exceeded the community's current experience.

The post-exilic Jerusalem was small. The temple had been rebuilt (516 BC) but at a scale much reduced from Solomon's original. Ezra 3:12 records the older men who had seen the first temple weeping loudly at the second temple's dedication because of the diminished scale. The city's walls had been rebuilt under Nehemiah (mid-fifth century) but the population was sparse (Nehemiah 11:1-2 records the need to select by lot the people who would live in Jerusalem, most of the population preferring the countryside). The Persian oversight was constant. The community was economically vulnerable, politically subordinate, religiously threatened by syncretism.

Against this modest historical reality, Isaiah 60 offers a vision of astonishing scope. Nations coming with gifts. Kings ministering. Ships of Tarshish (the Mediterranean's farthest-known port) bringing sons back to Zion. Camels from Midian, Ephah, and Sheba (the Arabian trade routes) bringing gold and frankincense. Cedars of Lebanon (Solomon's temple materials) rebuilding Zion's glory. Kings bowing at Zion's feet. The literal fulfillment in the post-exilic period was not visible.

The vision is therefore explicitly eschatological. The vision addresses the horizon beyond the immediate post-exilic period. The vision points forward to the coming Messiah and the age His arrival will inaugurate. The vision reaches ultimately to the New Jerusalem of Revelation 21. The post-exilic community was being given a vision to sustain the community through the long wait for the Messiah's coming.

The vision's theological structure has three layers. The first layer is the literal-eschatological Zion, the restored Jerusalem of the Messianic age. The second layer is the church, the new-covenant people gathered from all nations. The third layer is

the New Jerusalem, the eschatological consummation. All three layers are legitimate readings of Isaiah 60. All three are held in the vision's scope.

The nations-coming pattern in 60:3-9 has historical enactments in each of the three layers. In the messianic-age layer, the magi of Matthew 2 bringing gold and frankincense to the infant Christ. In the church layer, the Gentile mission of Acts and the ongoing global spread of the gospel bringing peoples of every nation into the church. In the New Jerusalem layer, Revelation 21:24-26's explicit picture of the nations walking by the city's light and the kings bringing their glory into it.

The inversion in 60:14 ("the sons of those who afflicted you shall come bending low") has been understood in multiple ways. The most straightforward reading is the eschatological reversal in which the historical persecutors of the covenant community are humbled before the community they had persecuted. The pattern applies across the layers: to the messianic community, to the church, to the New Jerusalem. Those who have persecuted the LORD's people will, in the eschatological consummation, acknowledge the LORD's vindication of His people.

The gate-vocabulary of 60:11 ("Your gates shall be open continually; day and night they shall not be shut") is echoed in Revelation 21:25 ("Its gates will never be shut by day, for there will be no night there"). The eschatological city's permanent openness is the sign of its security. The city that never shuts its gates is the city that fears no attack. The Mosaic city-vocabulary (walled cities with guarded gates) is being transcended: the eschatological city needs no such defenses because the LORD Himself is its defense.

The great climax in 60:19-20 (the LORD as everlasting light replacing sun and moon) is the deepest theological

statement in the chapter. The created order's luminaries are subordinate to the LORD as Creator. In the eschatological consummation, the LORD Himself is sufficient. The sun and moon are not destroyed; they are transcended. The uncreated light of the LORD's presence is the eschatological city's light. Revelation 21:23 makes the identification explicit: "And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb."

The closing promise of 60:22 ("The least one shall become a clan, and the smallest one a mighty nation") reassures the small post-exilic community. The small will become great. The LORD will hasten it in its time. The community's current small scale is not the LORD's final scale for His people.

The Apostolic Appropriation

Three apostolic appropriations of Isaiah 60 deserve direct treatment.

First, Matthew 2 records the historical enactment of the wealth-of-the-nations vision in the magi's visit to the infant Christ. "And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh" (Matthew 2:11).

The convergence with Isaiah 60:6 is precise. "A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall bring good news, the praises of the LORD." The magi come from the east (probably Persia, though their origins are debated). They bring gold and frankincense (two of the three gifts named in Isaiah 60:6). They worship the child. The magi's visit is the first historical

enactment of Isaiah 60's vision of the nations coming to Zion's light.

The Christological significance is deep. Christ is Himself the light Isaiah 60 announced. The child in the house is the LORD whose glory has risen. The gold and frankincense are the wealth of the nations coming to His feet. The magi are the first of the many peoples who will come to His light. Matthew's narrative signals that Isaiah 60's vision is being fulfilled in Christ's coming.

Second, Paul echoes Isaiah 60's awakening-vocabulary in Ephesians 5:14. "Therefore it says, Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." The exact source of Paul's quotation is debated. Some scholars see an early Christian hymn or baptismal formula. But the vocabulary combines Isaiah 60:1 ("Arise, shine, for your light has come") with Isaiah 26:19 ("Awake and sing for joy, you dwellers in the dust"). The Isaianic light-and-awakening theology is being deployed in the New Covenant's call to resurrection life.

The Pauline appropriation is theological. Christ is the one whose shining awakens the sleeper. The believer's spiritual awakening is participation in the Isaiah 60 dawn. The rising of the LORD's glory on Zion is the rising of Christ on the believer. The Mosaic-Isaianic-Pauline light-theology is one continuous line.

Third, Revelation 21 gathers Isaiah 60's vision into the eschatological consummation. Multiple direct echoes are present. Revelation 21:23-24: "And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it." The echo of Isaiah 60:3, 60:11, 60:19 is unmistakable.

Revelation 21:25: "And its gates will never be shut by day, and there will be no night there." The echo of Isaiah 60:11

(gates open continually) is direct. Revelation 21:26: “They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations.” The echo of Isaiah 60:5-6 (wealth of the nations coming) is direct. Revelation 22:5: “And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.” The echo of Isaiah 60:19 (LORD as everlasting light) is direct.

The apostolic John’s vision is Isaiah 60’s vision in New Covenant fulfillment. The Mosaic-Isaianic glory-tradition reaches its consummation in the eschatological city where the LORD Himself is the light and the nations bring their gifts. The Christological identification is direct: the Lamb is the city’s lamp. Christ is the LORD whose glory has risen. Christ is the everlasting light.

The magi are the first-fruits of the nations coming. The believer’s awakening is participation in the LORD’s shining. The New Jerusalem is the vision’s consummation. The whole chapter finds its Christological completion in the light of Christ and the eschatological city that has no need of sun or moon.

The Reader’s Bridge

Arise, shine.

The believer receives the chapter’s opening imperatives as personal address. Not the Zion of the sixth century BC alone. The believer as well. The believer has been given the light. The believer’s task is to arise and shine. The imperative is not the believer’s effort to generate light; the imperative is the believer’s response to the light already given.

The world is in darkness. The chapter’s realism about the surrounding darkness (60:2, “darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples”) is unusual in the prophet’s

book. Most of Isaiah's hope-passages assume the LORD's work in the world at large. But this chapter names the surrounding darkness explicitly. The Zion vision is not a vision of universal light but of Zion-as-the-bright-point in a darkened world.

The believer's context can be read the same way. The world's darkness is real. The cultural moment's spiritual confusion. The personal community's moral pressures. The relational tensions the believer walks through. The professional environment's ethical compromises. The political discourse's cynicism. The believer is not being asked to pretend that the surrounding culture is bright. The believer is being asked to be the light in the surrounding darkness.

The light the believer carries is not the believer's natural luminosity. The light is the LORD's glory reflected. The Mosaic tradition of Moses coming down from Sinai with his face shining (Exodus 34:29-35) is the pattern. Moses did not generate the light; Moses reflected the light of the LORD's glory he had been in. The believer's shining is the same: not the believer's natural brightness, but the reflection of the LORD's glory the believer has been in.

This has implications for the believer's spiritual disciplines. The believer's shining depends on the believer's time in the LORD's presence. The morning prayer. The Bible study. The weekly gathering with the covenant community. The extended times of personal worship. The believer who spends time in the LORD's presence carries the reflected light into the surrounding darkness. The believer who does not is unlikely to be a bright point.

The nations-coming vision applies to the believer's missionary participation. The believer may not be a vocational missionary. But the believer participates in the nations-coming through prayer, giving, welcoming those who come,

sending those who go, and the ordinary daily witness in the believer's own contexts. The Isaiah 60 vision is the theological ground for all missionary work. The nations are coming to Christ. The believer's participation in the coming is participation in the LORD's eschatological gathering.

The LORD-as-everlasting-light promise of 60:19 shapes the believer's eschatological expectation. The believer is heading toward the city that has no need of sun or moon. The believer's current dependence on external light-sources (the created order's illumination, but by extension the believer's dependence on external validations, achievements, relationships, comforts) is not the final condition. The final condition is direct dependence on the LORD's presence. The believer's current life is a rehearsal for the eschatological condition.

Three movements follow from the chapter for the reader's present life.

First, the receiving of the imperative. The believer can hear the *qumi ori* as personal address. The rising is possible today. The shining is possible today. The believer does not have to wait for a season of dramatic spiritual reawakening; the believer can respond to today's address.

Second, the time in the LORD's presence. The believer can prioritize the disciplines that produce the reflected light. The believer's spiritual dryness is often the byproduct of the believer's neglect of the practices that would keep the believer in the LORD's glory. The reordering of the schedule to preserve time in the LORD's presence is the concrete step.

Third, the participation in the nations-coming. The believer can identify the specific ways the believer is participating in the LORD's eschatological gathering. The prayer for the nations. The giving to the missionary work. The welcoming of those the LORD is drawing. The daily witness in

the believer's own contexts. The believer's participation may be modest, but it is real.

Not the darkness. The light that has come.

Not the small light. The reflected glory.

Not the sun and moon. The everlasting light of the LORD.

Italic, indented:

The LORD's glory has risen upon Zion. The believer's task is to arise and shine, reflecting the light the LORD has already given. The surrounding darkness is real; the believer is not asked to pretend otherwise. The believer is asked to be the bright point in the darkened world. The believer's shining depends on the believer's time in the LORD's presence, as Moses came down from Sinai reflecting the glory he had been in. The nations are coming to Christ; the believer's participation in the coming is participation in the LORD's eschatological gathering. The final destination is the city that has no need of sun or moon, where the LORD Himself is the everlasting light. Not the darkness. The light that has come. Not the small light. The reflected glory. Not the sun and moon. The everlasting light of the LORD.



qumi ori (Hebrew). "Arise, shine." The doubled imperative of Isaiah 60:1. Zion is addressed as feminine. The Mosaic glory-cloud tradition is being extended to Zion as the reflector of the LORD's light. Paul echoes the vocabulary in Ephesians 5:14 ("Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you"), applying the Isaianic light-and-awakening theology to the believer's resurrection life. The believer's shining is reflected glory, not self-generated luminosity.

chil goyim (Hebrew). *“Wealth of the nations.”* The phrase from Isaiah 60:5, 60:11. The Mosaic tradition of the plundering of the Egyptians is extended to the eschatological gathering of the nations’ wealth to Zion. Matthew 2’s magi bringing gold and frankincense to the infant Christ is the first historical enactment. Revelation 21:24-26 gathers the vision into the New Jerusalem’s consummation: the nations walk by the city’s light, and the kings bring their glory into it.

or olam (Hebrew). *“Everlasting light.”* The phrase from Isaiah 60:19-20. The LORD is Zion’s everlasting light; the sun and moon are no longer needed. Revelation 21:23 and 22:5 echo the phrase directly: the city has no need of sun or moon, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. The Mosaic-Isaianic light-theology is fulfilled when the LORD Himself is the eschatological city’s light and Christ is its lamp.

STATION 6

The Spirit of the Lord GOD Is Upon Me

Isaiah 61

Ruach Adonai YHWH alai ya'an mashach YHWH oti le-vaser anavim. “The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound.” The station is one of the most concentrated Christological passages in the Hebrew Bible. The Anointed speaks. The Spirit rests on Him. His mission is announced.

Christ reads these very verses in the Nazareth synagogue at the inauguration of His public ministry. Luke 4:16-21 records the moment. Christ enters the synagogue, stands to read, is handed the scroll of Isaiah, unrolls it, finds the place, reads the words. Then He closes the scroll, hands it back to the attendant, sits down (the sitting is the posture of authoritative teaching), and says, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” The Isaiah 61 text is Christ’s own self-declaration.

The verses that follow the Nazareth reading in Isaiah 61 develop the Anointed’s mission. “To proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to grant to those who mourn in Zion, to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified.” Substitution is the vocabulary: instead of ashes, a beautiful

headdress; instead of mourning, oil of gladness; instead of a faint spirit, the garment of praise.

Then the promise of 61:4: “They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.” The people who receive the Anointed’s ministry become the builders. The ruins are being rebuilt. The devastations are being repaired.

Then the priestly identification of 61:6: “But you shall be called the priests of the LORD; they shall speak of you as the ministers of our God.” The whole community becomes priestly. The Mosaic priesthood, formerly the specialized tribe of Levi, is being extended to the whole covenant community. 1 Peter 2:9 will develop this vocabulary as the church’s identity.

The chapter closes with the Anointed’s own declaration in 61:10-11: “I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.” The Anointed’s own joy in the LORD’s work is the chapter’s closing note.

The Pentateuchal Echo

Three Mosaic streams flow beneath Isaiah 61 and converge at the Anointed’s mission.

First, the Mosaic Jubilee. Leviticus 25:8-55 establishes the Jubilee as the fiftieth-year comprehensive economic reset for the covenant community. The trumpet was to be blown on the Day of Atonement of the fiftieth year, and the community was to proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants.

The Hebrew servants were to be released. The ancestral land was to be returned to the original families. Debts were to be canceled. The Jubilee was the LORD's comprehensive mercy-mechanism preventing the permanent concentration of wealth and the permanent enslavement of the poor.

The Mosaic Jubilee vocabulary is unmistakable in Isaiah 61:1-2. "To proclaim liberty (*deror*) to the captives" is the specific Jubilee-vocabulary of Leviticus 25:10. "The year of the LORD's favor" corresponds to the Jubilee year. The Anointed's mission is being framed as the eschatological Jubilee. The comprehensive economic reset is being extended to the comprehensive spiritual reset. The poor are being given the good news. The brokenhearted are being bound up. The captives are being released.

The historical practice of the Jubilee in the pre-exilic period is difficult to establish. The evidence suggests that the covenant community rarely observed the Jubilee in its full Mosaic form. Jeremiah 34:8-22 records a famous instance of the community's failed observance of the seven-year debt-release (a related Mosaic institution): Zedekiah's people released their Hebrew slaves under prophetic pressure and then re-enslaved them when the Babylonian pressure eased. The Mosaic mercy-mechanisms had been honored more in the breach than in the observance.

Isaiah 61 announces the eschatological Jubilee that will finally be enacted. The Anointed will bring the year of the LORD's favor. Christ, reading the verses at Nazareth, announces that the eschatological Jubilee has arrived in His person. "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." The Mosaic mercy-mechanisms, imperfectly observed for centuries, are being enacted in their full form by the Anointed.

Second, the Mosaic anointing tradition. The Pentateuch establishes the anointing (*mashach*, the verbal root of *mashiach*, Messiah) as the specific act by which the LORD sets apart particular persons for particular offices. Exodus 30:22-33 establishes the anointing oil for the tabernacle and its furniture. Exodus 29 records Aaron's anointing to the high priesthood. 1 Samuel 10:1 records Samuel's anointing of Saul, and 1 Samuel 16:13 records the anointing of David. The Mosaic-historical anointing tradition establishes three offices as anointed: prophet, priest, and king.

Isaiah 61:1 gathers the whole anointing tradition into the Anointed One who speaks. "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me." The Anointed combines the three offices. He is the Prophet who brings good news. He is the Priest who binds up the brokenhearted. He is the King who proclaims liberty to the captives. The Mosaic-historical division of anointed offices is gathered in one Person.

The Christological identification is direct. Christ is the Prophet, the Priest, and the King. The three-fold office (*munus triplex*) that the church has confessed from the Reformation forward is grounded in Isaiah 61's combination of the anointed offices. Christ's ministry is prophetic (He proclaims the good news), priestly (He binds up the brokenhearted, He offers Himself as the sacrifice), and royal (He proclaims liberty, He rules the covenant community as king).

Third, the Mosaic tradition of the LORD's Spirit descending on the chosen person. Numbers 11:16-30 records the LORD taking of the Spirit that was on Moses and placing it on the seventy elders. Numbers 27:18 records the LORD's appointment of Joshua as the one in whom the Spirit is. Deuteronomy 34:9 records Joshua being full of the Spirit of

wisdom after Moses laid his hands on him. The Mosaic-historical tradition establishes the Spirit's presence with the LORD's chosen leaders.

Isaiah 42:1 (the first Servant Song of Volume IV) had named the Spirit's resting on the Servant. "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him." Isaiah 61:1 gathers the same Spirit-vocabulary into the Anointed's self-declaration. "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me." The Servant Song's Spirit-bearing Servant and Isaiah 61's Spirit-anointed Announcer are the same figure.

Christ's baptism (Matthew 3:16-17, Mark 1:10-11, Luke 3:21-22) is the historical enactment of the Spirit's descent on Him. The Spirit descends as a dove. The voice from heaven identifies Christ as the beloved Son with whom the Father is well pleased. The Isaiah 42:1 Servant Song and the Isaiah 61:1 Anointed's declaration are both fulfilled at the Jordan. Christ's public ministry begins with the Spirit's manifest presence on Him.

mashach (Hebrew). To anoint. The verbal root of mashiach (Messiah, Anointed One). The Mosaic anointing tradition sets apart prophets, priests, and kings by the physical application of the anointing oil. Christ is the Anointed One who combines the three offices. The New Testament's Greek equivalent (Christos) carries the same meaning. Christ's ministry is prophetic, priestly, and royal, gathered in one Person.

deror (Hebrew). Liberty, release. The specific Jubilee-vocabulary of Leviticus 25:10 ("proclaim liberty throughout the land"). The Mosaic economic-release mechanism becomes the eschatological spiritual-

release mission of the Anointed. Christ's Nazareth reading (Luke 4:18) applies the deror-vocabulary to His own ministry. The Jubilee's comprehensive reset is enacted in Christ's comprehensive salvation.

shenat ratzon la-YHWH (Hebrew). "The year of the LORD's favor." The phrase from Isaiah 61:2. The Jubilee year is being deployed as the eschatological arrival of the LORD's comprehensive favor. Christ's reading at Nazareth stops at this phrase (Luke 4:18-19), reading only "the year of the LORD's favor" and stopping before "the day of vengeance of our God" (Isaiah 61:2b). The stopping is theologically significant: Christ's first coming inaugurates the year of favor; the day of vengeance awaits the second coming.

The Mosaic Jubilee provides the mercy-mechanism vocabulary. The Mosaic anointing tradition sets up the three-fold office gathered in the Anointed. The Mosaic Spirit-descent pattern establishes the Spirit's presence with the LORD's chosen. Layer one is in place.

The Post-Exilic Community Register

The chapter's vision of the Anointed's comprehensive mission far exceeded any post-exilic figure's actual scope.

The post-exilic community had experienced various forms of leadership. Zerubbabel had been the Davidic governor at the temple's completion. Joshua had been the high priest. Ezra had been the Torah-scribe. Nehemiah had been the governor at the wall's rebuilding. Each had accomplished specific parts of the community's restoration. None had accomplished the comprehensive mission Isaiah 61 announces.

The Isaiah 61 vision is therefore explicitly eschatological-Messianic. The Anointed is not any of the historical post-exilic leaders. The Anointed is the coming Messiah. The vision points forward to the Messianic age when the comprehensive Jubilee-mission will be enacted. The post-exilic community was being given a vision to sustain the community's hope through the long wait.

The specific components of the Anointed's mission each carry post-exilic resonance. The good news to the poor addresses the community's economic vulnerability. The binding up of the brokenhearted addresses the community's ongoing grief over the exile's losses. The liberty to the captives addresses the community's continuing sense of being under foreign oversight even after the physical return. The opening of the prison addresses the community's spiritual bondage that had not been resolved by the geographical return.

The year-of-the-LORD's-favor vocabulary would have resonated deeply with a community that had waited for the comprehensive favor Isaiah 40-55 had promised. The comfort of chapter 40 had begun; the servant's work had been announced; but the comprehensive Messianic-age favor had not yet arrived. The Isaiah 61 promise sustains the community's hope: the year of favor is coming; the Anointed is coming.

The day-of-vengeance vocabulary of 61:2b is important theologically. The Anointed's comprehensive mission includes both the favor and the vengeance. The favor is for the LORD's people. The vengeance is against the LORD's enemies. Christ's Nazareth reading stops at the phrase "the year of the LORD's favor" and does not read "the day of vengeance of our God." The stopping is deliberate. Christ's first coming inaugurates the year of favor. The day of vengeance is reserved for the second coming.

This distinction has substantial theological implications. The Anointed's mission has two phases separated by the interval between the first and second coming. The interval's content is the year (or era) of the LORD's favor: the gospel goes to all nations, the church is gathered, sinners are being saved. The day of vengeance closes the interval: the second coming brings the final judgment. The two are not in tension; they are two phases of the one comprehensive mission.

The substitution-vocabulary of 61:3 is theologically rich. Ashes become a beautiful headdress. Mourning becomes oil of gladness. A faint spirit becomes the garment of praise. The Anointed's ministry is comprehensive substitution: what was destructive is replaced by what is life-giving. The mourners in Zion are given a beautiful headdress instead of ashes. The exile's grief is being replaced with the Messianic age's joy.

Verses 4-9 develop the community's transformation under the Anointed's ministry. The community becomes the builders (61:4). The community's wealth is doubled (61:7). The community is called oaks of righteousness (61:3), priests of the LORD (61:6), the seed the LORD has blessed (61:9). The community's identity is being reconstructed by the Anointed's work.

The priestly identification of 61:6 ("But you shall be called the priests of the LORD") is important. The Mosaic priesthood had been the specialized function of the tribe of Levi. The whole covenant community had been called "a kingdom of priests" in Exodus 19:6, but the operational priesthood had been narrower. Isaiah 61:6 extends the priestly identity to the whole covenant community. Every member of the community under the Anointed's ministry is a priest of the LORD.

The community's speech in 61:10-11 closes the chapter with the community's own joy in the LORD. The community is now dressed for the wedding. The garments of salvation.

The robe of righteousness. The bridegroom's beautiful headdress. The bride's jewels. The community has been transformed by the Anointed's ministry into the LORD's beloved bride.

The Apostolic Appropriation

Three apostolic appropriations of Isaiah 61 deserve direct treatment.

First, Christ's Nazareth reading (Luke 4:16-21) is the central New Testament use of the passage. The account is worth reading with attention to the specific details Luke preserves.

Christ enters the synagogue on the Sabbath, as was His custom. He stands to read. The scroll of Isaiah is handed to Him. He unrolls it (Luke's Greek *anaptyxas* is the technical term for opening a scroll) and finds the place. The place is Isaiah 61:1-2a. Luke's Greek text combines Isaiah 61:1a, 61:1b, and 58:6 into the reading (with a small textual variation from the standard Hebrew), but the citation is essentially the Isaiah 61 passage.

Christ reads: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18-19). Christ then rolls up the scroll (Luke's Greek *ptyxas* is the technical term for closing), hands it back to the attendant, and sits down.

The sitting is the posture of authoritative teaching in the synagogue. The rabbis taught seated. Christ's sitting signals that He is about to teach. "And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him." The tension is at its highest point. Christ

speaks: “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

The Christological self-declaration is direct. Christ is the Anointed. Christ is the one on whom the Spirit rests. Christ is the one sent to proclaim good news to the poor, liberty to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, liberty to the oppressed, the year of the LORD’s favor. The Isaiah 61 mission is being enacted in Christ’s person. The eschatological Jubilee has arrived.

The Nazareth congregation’s response (Luke 4:22-30) is instructive. They marvel at His gracious words. They ask, “Is not this Joseph’s son?” Christ then points to the Elijah-and-Elisha ministry to Gentiles (the widow of Zarephath, Naaman the Syrian) as the pattern of the Anointed’s ministry beyond ethnic Israel. The congregation is enraged. They drive Him out of town and try to throw Him off the cliff. He passes through their midst and goes away. Christ’s public ministry is inaugurated with the Isaiah 61 reading and immediately meets the hostility that will characterize much of its course.

Second, Christ’s reply to John the Baptist’s question (Matthew 11:2-6, Luke 7:18-23) draws directly on Isaiah 61’s mission-vocabulary. John, in prison, sends his disciples to ask Christ, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?” Christ replies, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them.”

The reply is a catalog of Isaiah’s Messianic-ministry announcements. The blind receiving sight (Isaiah 35:5, 42:7). The lame walking (Isaiah 35:6). The deaf hearing (Isaiah 35:5). The dead raised (Isaiah 26:19). The poor having good news preached (Isaiah 61:1). Christ’s reply names His ministry as the fulfillment of the Isaianic Messianic-age promises.

Isaiah 61:1's good news to the poor is the climactic item in the list.

The Christological identification is again direct. Christ is the Anointed whose ministry enacts the Isaianic Messianic promises. The Nazareth reading and the reply to John are two moments in which Christ explicitly identifies Himself with the Isaiah 61 Anointed. The New Testament's Christological reading of the passage is not the church's later imposition; the Christological reading is Christ's own self-declaration.

Third, 1 Peter 2:9 develops the priestly identification of Isaiah 61:6 into the church's New Covenant identity. "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." The priestly identity that Isaiah 61:6 extended to the whole covenant community becomes the church's identity in Peter's vocabulary.

Revelation 1:6 and 5:10 develop the same theology. Revelation 1:6: Christ "has made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father." Revelation 5:10: "you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God." The Isaiah 61:6 priestly identification runs through the New Covenant's ecclesiology. The believer is a priest. The church is a royal priesthood. The Mosaic priesthood's specialized function has been extended, through the Anointed's work, to every member of the covenant community.

Christ is the Anointed. Christ is the eschatological Jubilee's enactor. Christ is the one whose Nazareth reading inaugurated His public ministry. The whole chapter finds its Christological completion in Christ's own self-declaration at Nazareth.

The Reader's Bridge

The Anointed's year of favor.

The believer receives the chapter as the ground of the believer's participation in the Anointed's ministry. The Anointed has already begun the mission. The year of the LORD's favor has been inaugurated by Christ's coming. The believer lives in that year. The believer's life is contained within the interval between Christ's first coming (which inaugurated the favor) and Christ's second coming (which will bring the day of vengeance). The interval is the year of favor.

This has substantial implications for the believer's sense of the present moment. The believer's life is not lived in a neutral time-slot; the believer's life is lived within the year of the LORD's favor. The gospel is being proclaimed. The poor are hearing good news. The captives are being released. The mourners are being comforted. The Anointed's ministry is ongoing through His body, the church. The believer's participation in the ordinary church ministries is participation in the Anointed's Isaiah 61 mission.

The specific categories the Anointed serves are the categories the believer serves in the ordinary church's life. The poor who hear good news. The brokenhearted who are bound up. The captives whose liberty is proclaimed. The mourners who are given the beautiful headdress instead of ashes. The believer's pastoral engagement with the community includes each of these categories. The believer's work in the world, whatever the specific vocation, has occasion to enact one or another of the Anointed's specific ministries.

The substitution-vocabulary of 61:3 shapes the believer's pastoral pattern. The believer's ministry to another believer whose life has been marked by ashes (grief, loss, failure) is not to remove the ashes and leave the person empty. The believer's ministry is to replace the ashes with the beautiful headdress. The gospel is not merely removal of what is

negative; the gospel is the positive replacement. The mourning is replaced with the oil of gladness. The faint spirit is replaced with the garment of praise. The believer's pastoral posture toward the struggling person is not "stop mourning" but "receive the oil of gladness."

The priestly identity of 61:6 (extended in 1 Peter 2:9) applies to the believer personally. The believer is a priest. The believer's pastoral engagement with the world is not the amateur's occasional intervention; the believer's pastoral engagement is priestly ministry. The believer's prayer for others. The believer's intercession for the community. The believer's teaching of the word to the household. The believer's witness in the workplace. All are priestly acts. The believer bears the office.

The Anointed's own joy in 61:10-11 is the model for the believer's joy. The Anointed rejoices in the LORD. The Anointed exults in His God. The Anointed's garments are the garments of salvation. The Anointed's robe is the robe of righteousness. The believer's joy in the LORD is participation in the Anointed's joy. The believer's garments (given by grace, not earned) are the same garments of salvation the Anointed wears. The believer's robe (imputed righteousness, received by faith) is the robe of righteousness the Anointed wears. The believer's participation in the Anointed's joy is not distant admiration; the participation is real sharing in the Anointed's condition.

Three movements follow from the chapter for the reader's present life.

First, the recognition of the year of favor. The believer can name the present moment as the year of the LORD's favor. The believer's discouragements about the world's condition can be held in the recognition that the Anointed's ministry is

ongoing. The gospel is being proclaimed. The captives are being released. The Anointed is at work through His body.

Second, the participation in the Anointed's specific ministries. The believer can identify the specific Isaiah 61 category the believer's life is engaging. The poor to whom the believer preaches good news. The brokenhearted whom the believer binds up. The mourner whom the believer serves the beautiful headdress. The believer's specific vocation and relationships give the believer specific occasions.

Third, the receiving of the Anointed's joy. The believer can rest in the fact that the believer's standing is the Anointed's standing. The garments of salvation. The robe of righteousness. The believer's joy in the LORD is the participation in the Anointed's joy in His Father. The believer's deepest identity is the Anointed's beloved.

Not the year without favor. The year of the LORD's favor.

Not the ashes. The beautiful headdress.

Not the amateur intervention. The priestly ministry.

Italic, indented:

The Spirit of the LORD is upon the Anointed, who has been sent to bring good news to the poor, bind up the brokenhearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, and inaugurate the year of the LORD's favor. Christ reads these very verses at Nazareth to inaugurate His public ministry, and declares, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." The eschatological Jubilee is being enacted in His person. The believer lives in the year of favor, participating in the Anointed's ongoing ministry through His body, the church. The believer's pastoral engagement with the poor, the brokenhearted, the captive, the mourner, is priestly ministry. The believer's deepest identity is the Anointed's beloved, clothed in the garments of salvation and the robe of righteousness. Not the year without favor. The year of the

LORD's favor. Not the ashes. The beautiful headdress. Not the amateur intervention. The priestly ministry.



mashach (Hebrew). *To anoint. The verbal root of maschiach (Messiah). The Mosaic anointing tradition sets apart prophets, priests, and kings. Christ combines the three offices as the Anointed of Isaiah 61. His ministry is prophetic (proclaiming good news), priestly (binding up the brokenhearted and offering Himself as sacrifice), and royal (proclaiming liberty and ruling the covenant community). The three-fold office (munus triplex) that the church confesses is grounded in Isaiah 61's combination of the anointed offices in one Person.*

deror (Hebrew). *Liberty, release. The specific Jubilee-vocabulary of Leviticus 25:10. The Mosaic economic-release mechanism becomes the eschatological spiritual-release mission of the Anointed. Christ's Nazareth reading (Luke 4:18) applies the deror-vocabulary to His own ministry. The Jubilee's comprehensive economic reset is enacted in Christ's comprehensive salvation, in which the captives are truly and permanently released.*

shenat ratzon la-YHWH (Hebrew). *"The year of the LORD's favor." The phrase from Isaiah 61:2. Christ's reading at Nazareth stops at this phrase, reading only the year of favor and stopping before the day of vengeance of Isaiah 61:2b. The stopping is theologically deliberate. Christ's first coming inaugurates the year of favor; the day of vengeance*

awaits the second coming. The believer lives in the year of favor, the interval between the two comings, in which the gospel goes to all nations.

STATION 7

For Zion's Sake I Will Not Keep Silent

Isaiah 62

Le-ma'an Tziyyon lo echeshah u-le-ma'an Yerushalayim lo eshqot. “For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not be quiet, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a burning torch.” The Anointed of chapter 61 speaks. The speaking is on Zion’s behalf. The Anointed will not be silent until Zion’s vindication is complete.

Then the great naming in 62:2: “The nations shall see your righteousness, and all the kings your glory, and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will give.” Zion is to receive a new name. The naming is by the LORD Himself. The name-changing tradition of the Mosaic-historical narrative is being extended.

Then the great transformation in 62:3-4: “You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate, but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her, and your land Married; for the LORD delights in you, and your land shall be married.” The names *Azuvah* (Forsaken) and *Shemamah* (Desolate) are replaced with *Chephtzi-vah* (My Delight Is in Her) and *Be'ulah* (Married).

Then the marital imagery of 62:5: “For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.” The LORD’s relationship with Zion is being expressed in bridegroom-and-bride vocabulary. The LORD’s

rejoicing over Zion is the rejoicing of the bridegroom over the bride.

The watchmen of 62:6-7 are the intercessors. “On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have set watchmen; all the day and all the night they shall never be silent. You who put the LORD in remembrance, take no rest, and give him no rest until he establishes Jerusalem and makes it a praise in the earth.” The community’s watchmen are to pray without ceasing until Jerusalem’s vindication is complete.

The chapter closes with the great highway-and-return of 62:10-12: “Go through, go through the gates; prepare the way for the people; build up, build up the highway; clear it of stones; lift up a signal over the peoples. Behold, the LORD has proclaimed to the end of the earth: Say to the daughter of Zion, Behold, your salvation comes; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. And they shall be called The Holy People, The Redeemed of the LORD; and you shall be called Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken.”

The Pentateuchal Echo

Three Mosaic streams flow beneath Isaiah 62 and converge at the new-naming of the covenant community.

First, the Mosaic name-changing tradition. The Pentateuchal narrative repeatedly records the LORD’s renaming of the covenant patriarchs at significant covenantal moments. Genesis 17:5 records Abram becoming Abraham (“father of many nations”) at the covenant of circumcision. Genesis 17:15 records Sarai becoming Sarah at the same moment. Genesis 32:28 records Jacob becoming Israel (“he strives with God”) at the Jabbok wrestling. The Mosaic tradition establishes name-changing as a marker of covenantal transformation.

Isaiah 62:2, 62:4, and 62:12 deploy this Mosaic name-changing tradition in its most concentrated form. Zion is given multiple new names. The old names (Forsaken, Desolate) are explicitly replaced. The new names (My Delight Is in Her, Married, The Holy People, The Redeemed of the LORD, Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken) are the LORD's own naming. The Mosaic pattern of the LORD's renaming His covenant partners at moments of transformation is being extended to the eschatological transformation of Zion.

The theological weight of the naming is substantial. The name is the identity. When the LORD renames someone or something, the LORD is reconstituting the identity. Abram's new name (Abraham) was the ground of his new identity as the father of many nations. Zion's new names are the ground of her new identity as the LORD's delighted-in bride. The naming does not describe an already-existing condition; the naming creates the new condition.

Second, the Mosaic bride-and-bridegroom vocabulary. The Pentateuch establishes marriage as the primary covenant-image between the LORD and His people. Deuteronomy 7:6-8 uses covenant language that carries marital resonance. Deuteronomy 32:6 addresses Israel with paternal language, but the surrounding tradition (especially Hosea, Jeremiah, Ezekiel) develops the marital imagery extensively. The LORD is the husband; Israel is the wife. Israel's idolatry is adultery. The covenant's renewal is the marriage's restoration.

Isaiah 62:4-5 deploys this Mosaic bride-and-bridegroom vocabulary in its most positive form. Zion is being renamed *Be'ulah* (Married). The LORD is the bridegroom who rejoices over the bride. The name *Chephthzi-vah* (My Delight Is in Her) is the bridegroom's expression of joy in the bride. The Mosaic-

prophetic marital imagery reaches its most tender form here. Zion is loved.

The New Testament's bride-and-bridegroom imagery for Christ and the church runs directly from this Isaianic tradition. Ephesians 5:25-32 uses husband-and-wife imagery to describe Christ's relationship with the church. Revelation 19:7-9 and 21:2 use the marriage-of-the-Lamb imagery for the eschatological consummation. The Mosaic-Isaianic-New Covenant tradition is one continuous line: the LORD as bridegroom, His people as bride.

Third, the Mosaic tradition of the watchmen on the walls. The Pentateuch does not establish city-watchmen directly (the Mosaic community was tribal-nomadic during the wilderness period, not city-based), but the Mosaic-legal tradition of the Levitical guarding of the tabernacle (Numbers 3:5-10, 4:1-33) establishes the pattern of dedicated watching over what is holy. The city-watchmen tradition develops in the historical period, with the Deuteronomic vocabulary of covenant vigilance carrying through.

Isaiah 62:6-7 deploys this watching-tradition in its intercessory form. The watchmen on Jerusalem's walls are the intercessors. They are not merely defensive lookouts; they are the ones who put the LORD in remembrance, giving Him no rest until He establishes Jerusalem and makes it a praise in the earth. The watchmen's work is prayer. The vigilance is not passive protection; the vigilance is active intercession.

The theological logic is striking. The LORD Himself commands the watchmen not to give Him rest until He acts. The intercession is welcomed. The LORD who could act sovereignly at any moment invites the community's active prayer as part of the LORD's own acting. The Mosaic-Isaianic-New Covenant tradition of intercessory prayer (Christ's teaching on persistent prayer in Luke 18:1-8, Paul's command

to pray without ceasing in 1 Thessalonians 5:17) runs from this passage.

chephtzi-vah (Hebrew). “My delight is in her.” The new name given to Zion in Isaiah 62:4. Chephetz is delight, pleasure, desire. The bridegroom’s expression of joy in the bride. The Mosaic-prophetic marital imagery reaches its most tender form here. The name replaces the old name Azuvah (Forsaken). The reversal is complete: the once-forsaken bride is now the bridegroom’s delight.

be’ulah (Hebrew). “Married.” The new name given to the land in Isaiah 62:4. Ba’al as verb is to marry, to possess as spouse. The land’s new name signifies the LORD’s covenant possession of the land as the bridegroom possesses the bride. The name replaces the old name Shemamah (Desolate). The land is no longer abandoned; the land is loved.

shomerim (Hebrew). Watchmen. The plural participle from shamar (to keep, watch, guard). The Mosaic-Levitical vocabulary of the tabernacle-guarding is being extended to Jerusalem’s intercessors. The watchmen’s work is prayer. The LORD invites the community’s persistent intercession as part of the LORD’s own acting. Christ’s teaching on persistent prayer (Luke 18:1-8) and Paul’s command to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17) run from this Isaianic passage.

The Mosaic name-changing tradition marks the LORD’s transformative naming. The Mosaic bride-and-bridegroom vocabulary establishes the intimate covenant. The Mosaic tradition of dedicated watching becomes the intercessory watchmen on Zion’s walls. Layer one is in place.

The Post-Exilic Community Register

The chapter addresses the post-exilic community's continuing sense of forsakenness and offers a comprehensive renaming.

The post-exilic Jerusalem still bore the marks of the exile. The city was rebuilt but modest. The temple was reconstructed but reduced. The community was small and vulnerable. The neighboring peoples (Samaritans, Ammonites, Moabites, Arabs) treated the community with contempt. The Persian imperial oversight was constant. The community's sense of being forsaken and desolate had not fully lifted with the physical return.

The community's inherited names reflected the community's condition. *Azuvah* (Forsaken) had been the name applied to the abandoned wife of Jeremiah 3:8 and to the destroyed land. *Shemamah* (Desolate) had been the term for the ruined territory. The Lamentations had piled up such vocabulary: the city sits solitary; she has become a widow; she weeps bitterly in the night. The post-exilic community had inherited this vocabulary of abandonment.

Isaiah 62 announces the LORD's reversal of the vocabulary. The old names are being replaced. The community is being renamed. *Chephtzi-vah* (My Delight Is in Her) replaces *Azuvah*. *Be'ulah* (Married) replaces *Shemamah*. The new names carry the LORD's own valuation of the community: delight, marriage, belonging.

The historical detail of the naming pattern is instructive. *Chephtzi-vah* (Hepzibah) was in fact the name of a historical queen: 2 Kings 21:1 records that Hephzibah was the mother of Manasseh, the wife of Hezekiah. The name was known in the pre-exilic royal household. The prophet's choice of this name for Zion draws on the historical royal-marriage vocabulary. Zion is the royal bride, the mother of the coming royal line, the one whose name means "my delight is in her."

The bride-and-bridegroom imagery in 62:5 has an unusual variation. “For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your sons marry you.” The Hebrew here is difficult. The most natural reading is that the returning-and-restored sons of Zion (the covenant community’s restored members) marry Zion herself. The imagery is not literal; the imagery is covenantal. The community’s attachment to Zion is being described in marital terms. The exiles are returning to marry the mother-city.

The direct bridegroom-imagery of the second half of 62:5 is unambiguous. “And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.” The LORD is the bridegroom rejoicing over Zion the bride. This is one of the tenderest expressions of the LORD’s delight in His people in the entire Old Testament. The LORD rejoices. The LORD is not tolerating; the LORD is not merely accepting; the LORD is rejoicing. The bridegroom’s joy over the bride is the model.

The watchmen-and-intercessors passage of 62:6-7 addresses the community’s work in the waiting period. The city’s vindication has been promised but not yet fully arrived. The watchmen are appointed to pray without ceasing until the promise is enacted. The intercession is the community’s work. The LORD’s acting will follow the community’s praying. The pattern is theologically consistent with the LORD’s general practice of inviting His people’s participation in His work through prayer.

The LORD’s own oath in 62:8-9 seals the promise. “The LORD has sworn by his right hand and by his mighty arm: I will not again give your grain to be food for your enemies, and foreigners shall not drink your wine for which you have labored; but those who garner it shall eat it and praise the LORD, and those who gather it shall drink it in the courts of my sanctuary.” The community’s labor will produce fruit that

the community itself will enjoy. The pre-exilic pattern (the LORD's promised curses of Deuteronomy 28) is being reversed.

The closing highway-vocabulary of 62:10 echoes Isaiah 40:3 ("prepare the way of the LORD") and Isaiah 57:14 ("build up, build up, prepare the way"). The community is to build the highway, clear the stones, lift up the signal. The gathered peoples are to come. The LORD's salvation is arriving. The prophet's highway-image, developed across the volumes, reaches its final construction here. The way is being prepared.

Verse 62:11 ("Behold, the LORD has proclaimed to the end of the earth: Say to the daughter of Zion, Behold, your salvation comes") is quoted directly in Matthew 21:5 in connection with Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The prophet's proclamation is being enacted historically. Christ, the King who comes to Zion, is the salvation the prophet had promised.

The closing names in 62:12 gather the community's new identity. "The Holy People, The Redeemed of the LORD, Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken." The community's identity is being reconstituted by the LORD's naming. Holy (set apart for the LORD). Redeemed (bought back by the go'el). Sought Out (the LORD's pursuit). Not Forsaken (the direct reversal of the old name).

The Apostolic Appropriation

Four apostolic appropriations of Isaiah 62 deserve direct treatment.

First, Matthew 21:5 quotes Isaiah 62:11 in the account of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. "Tell the daughter of Zion, Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden."

The quotation combines Isaiah 62:11 (“Say to the daughter of Zion, Behold, your salvation comes”) with Zechariah 9:9 (“Behold, your king is coming to you...humble and mounted on a donkey”).

The Christological identification is direct. Christ is the salvation the prophet had promised. The triumphal entry is the historical enactment of Isaiah 62:11’s announcement. The daughter of Zion (the covenant community) is receiving her King. The King comes humbly on the donkey (not on the war-horse). The King’s coming is the salvation’s arrival. The Isaiah 62 promise is being fulfilled in Christ’s deliberate entry into Jerusalem.

The Zechariah-plus-Isaiah citation-pattern is instructive. The New Testament writers frequently combine multiple Old Testament passages when the fulfillment gathers multiple prophetic promises. Christ’s triumphal entry fulfills both the Zechariah promise of the humble king and the Isaiah promise of the arriving salvation. The two Old Testament threads converge in one historical moment.

Second, Revelation 2:17 and 3:12 develop the new-name theology of Isaiah 62 into the church’s New Covenant identity. Revelation 2:17: “To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.” Revelation 3:12: “I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.”

The new-name-theology in Revelation carries forward the Isaiah 62 pattern. The Anointed gives new names to those who conquer. The names include the name of God, the name of the New Jerusalem, and Christ’s own new name. The identity of the believer is constituted by the naming Christ performs. The

Mosaic-Isaianic tradition of the LORD's renaming His covenant partners at moments of transformation reaches its consummation in Christ's renaming of the believer in the eschatological consummation.

Third, the bride-and-bridegroom imagery of Isaiah 62 is developed most fully in Ephesians 5:25-32 and Revelation 19:7-9 and 21:2. Ephesians 5:25-27: "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish."

The Pauline vocabulary is Isaiah 62's vocabulary in Christological expression. Christ is the bridegroom. The church is the bride. The bride is being sanctified, cleansed, presented in splendor. The Isaiah 62 renaming of Zion as *Chephtzi-vah* (My Delight Is in Her) becomes the church's New Covenant identity. Christ delights in the church. Christ rejoices over the church as the bridegroom over the bride.

Revelation 19:7-9 gathers the marital imagery into the eschatological wedding-feast. "Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure - for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. And the angel said to me, Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb."

Revelation 21:2: "And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." The New Jerusalem is the bride. The whole Mosaic-Isaianic bride-and-bridegroom tradition reaches its consummation in the eschatological marriage of Christ and His people. The Isaiah 62:5 image of the

bridegroom rejoicing over the bride is fulfilled in the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Fourth, the watchmen-and-intercessors passage of Isaiah 62:6-7 is developed most fully in Christ's intercessory pattern and in the New Covenant's practice of wrestling prayer. The Isaiah 62 watchmen must first be set against their Isaiah 56 opposite. Isaiah 56:10 had indicted the failed watchmen of the community's corrupt leadership: "His watchmen are blind; they are all without knowledge; they are all silent dogs; they cannot bark, dreaming, lying down, loving to slumber" (Station 2 addresses this indictment). The Isaiah 62:6 watchmen are the opposite: "On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have set watchmen; all the day and all the night they shall never be silent." The two verses stand across each other in the volume. Either watchmen who never keep silent, or dogs who cannot bark. The covenant community's vitality turns on which set is in place.

Christ Himself is the model watchman-intercessor. Luke 22:31-32 records His intercessory address to Peter hours before the cross. "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." Three features of the passage repay attention. Christ sees the battle before Peter feels it: Peter is at supper, confident; Satan is in the throne room, demanding; Christ is already praying. This is preemptive intercession, not reactive. Christ assumes restoration, not avoidance: "when you have turned again," not "if." The intercession writes Peter's restoration into the prayer before the failure has happened. And Christ commissions the rescued to rescue others: "strengthen your brothers." The intercession multiplies. The armour-bearer makes more armour-bearers.

The Christological pattern flows outward into the church's intercessory practice. Colossians 4:12 names Epaphras as one who embodies the Isaiah 62 watchman-role in New Covenant expression. "Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God." The verb Paul uses is *agonizomai*, the vocabulary of athletic combat and spiritual wrestling. The same verb Paul uses of his own labor (Colossians 1:29) and of the athlete striving for the prize (1 Corinthians 9:25). Epaphras is wrestling in prayer for a church he cannot physically visit. He is sweating in intercession as the watchman on the walls sweats in vigilance. This is the Isaiah 62:6 watchman-model in New Covenant form.

The pattern is one continuous line. Christ prays for Peter. Peter is commissioned to strengthen the brothers. The pattern travels through the apostolic generations until it lands on Epaphras in his Roman prison, wrestling for the Colossians. The pattern continues through every believer who takes up the watchman-role. The believer who intercedes for a spouse, a child, a fellow believer, a wandering friend, is standing in the line that runs from Isaiah 62 through Christ's prayer for Peter through Epaphras through every quiet saint whose name we will never know. The Isaiah 62:6 promise ("I have set watchmen") is being enacted in every believer whose intercession is set on the LORD's walls.

Christ is the King who comes to Zion. Christ is the giver of the new names. Christ is the bridegroom rejoicing over the bride. Christ is the model watchman-intercessor whose prayer for Peter carries forward through Epaphras and through every believer who takes up the watch. The whole chapter finds its Christological completion in Christ's coming, in the

eschatological marriage, and in the ongoing intercessory ministry of the church that stands on Zion's walls.

The Reader's Bridge

The new name.

The believer receives the chapter as the LORD's renaming of the believer's identity. The believer had names before Christ. The believer had inherited names from family, culture, and personal experience. Some of the inherited names carried the LORD's good gifts (the name of parental love, the name of legitimate belonging, the name of the LORD's early providence). Some of the inherited names carried burdens (the name of the family failure, the name of the wound the believer received as a child, the name of the community's failure to love the believer well).

The LORD's renaming in Christ is comprehensive. The believer's deepest identity is not the sum of the inherited names; the believer's deepest identity is the name Christ gives. Beloved. Adopted. Redeemed. Holy. My delight is in her, in him. The believer's prior sense of forsakenness or desolation is not the final word. The final word is the LORD's naming.

This has substantial pastoral application. The believer who has been wounded by the world's naming (the humiliations, the failures, the exclusions, the abandonments) can receive the LORD's renaming as the deeper truth. The world's naming is not final. The LORD's naming is. The believer's therapeutic work with the wounds can be held in the recognition that the wounds do not have the last word about the believer's identity. The LORD's renaming does.

The bridegroom-and-bride imagery of 62:5 shapes the believer's understanding of the LORD's posture. The LORD is not the reluctant custodian of the believer's troubled soul; the

LORD is the rejoicing bridegroom. The LORD delights. The LORD is glad. The LORD's posture toward the believer is not the disappointed teacher's tolerance; the LORD's posture is the bridegroom's joy. The believer can hear this without minimizing the LORD's holiness or the believer's ongoing need for sanctification. The joy is real. The delight is real. The LORD rejoices.

The watchmen-and-intercessors passage applies to the believer's prayer-life. The believer is one of the watchmen on the walls. The believer's intercession for the church, for the surrounding culture, for the family, for the specific concerns the believer carries, is the believer's watchman-work. The LORD invites the persistent prayer. The LORD's acting will follow the community's praying. The believer's intercession is not the believer's attempt to persuade a reluctant LORD; the believer's intercession is the participation in the LORD's already-decided acting.

The Isaiah 62 watchman-role must be held against the Isaiah 56 opposite. The failed watchmen of Isaiah 56:10 are the silent dogs who cannot bark, dreaming, lying down, loving to slumber. The believer's greatest peril in the intercessory calling is not active opposition to the LORD's work; the believer's greatest peril is passive silence when the believer has been called to bark. The wife who sees her husband drift and does not intercede. The parent who sees the child wander and does not wrestle in prayer. The elder who sees a fellow believer in sin and stays home. Either watchman who never keeps silent, or dog who cannot bark. There is no neutral middle position.

Christ's pattern in Luke 22:31-32 shapes the believer's intercessory practice. Christ interceded for Peter before Peter fell. Christ assumed Peter's restoration in the prayer. Christ commissioned Peter to strengthen others when Peter

returned. The believer's intercession for a loved one carries the same three features. Preemptive prayer before the fall becomes final. Assumed restoration written into the prayer, not a hesitant petition asking whether the LORD is willing. And the expectation that the one who receives the intercession will one day intercede for others. For a husband praying for his wife, the question is not whether he has asked God to bless her; the question is whether he is wrestling for her maturity. For a parent praying for a wandering child, the question is not whether the parent is worried; the question is whether the parent is praying for the child's faith not to fail and for the child's eventual return to strengthen others. For a believer praying for a friend in sin, the question is not whether the believer has confronted the friend; the question is whether the believer has prayed for the friend as Christ prayed for Peter, with restoration already written into the prayer.

Epaphras's wrestling in Colossians 4:12 gives the practical vocabulary. The Greek *agonizomai* is athletic combat. The believer's intercession is not the polite mention of a loved one in daily prayers; the believer's intercession, at its Isaiah 62 fullness, is wrestling. Epaphras was sweating in prayer for a church he was not physically with. The believer can wrestle for a loved one who is not physically present. The distance is no barrier. The prison is no barrier. The believer's Isaiah 62 watchman-work is combat-prayer for the specific persons and specific concerns the LORD has placed on the believer's heart.

The community-level application of the chapter matters as well. The believer's local congregation is participating in Zion's new-name reality. The congregation's work of building the highway (clearing the way for those coming to the LORD) is the congregation's Isaiah 62:10 work. The congregation's watchmen-prayer for the surrounding city is the congregation's Isaiah 62:6-7 work. The congregation's

participation in the church's broader witness is participation in the LORD's eschatological renaming of the peoples.

The triumphal-entry connection (Matthew 21:5) gives the believer a specific Christological anchor. The King has already come. The salvation has already arrived. The LORD's promise has been enacted historically. The believer's waiting for the second coming is not the waiting of one who has never seen the promise fulfilled; the believer's waiting is the waiting of one who has seen the first coming and expects the second. The confidence is grounded in the first fulfillment.

Three movements follow from the chapter for the reader's present life.

First, the receiving of the new name. The believer can identify the specific old names the believer has been carrying (forsakenness, desolation, failure, exclusion) and receive the LORD's renaming as the deeper truth. The LORD delights in the believer. The believer is the LORD's beloved. The believer is called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD has given.

Second, the reception of the bridegroom's joy. The believer can hold in mind the picture of the LORD as the bridegroom rejoicing over the bride. The believer's daily life is lived in the LORD's delight. The believer's posture in prayer can shift from the anxious petitioner to the beloved bride. The LORD rejoices.

Third, the participation in the watchmen's intercession. The believer can identify the specific concerns the believer is called to intercede for and commit to the persistent prayer the chapter commands. The LORD invites the prayer. The LORD acts through the prayer. The believer's watchman-work is real.

Not the inherited old names. The LORD's new naming.

Not the disappointed toleration. The bridegroom's joy.

Not the silent dog who cannot bark. The watchman who never keeps silent.

Not the polite mention. The wrestling that leaves the intercessor sweating like Epaphras.

Italic, indented:

The LORD renames Zion. The old names of Forsaken and Desolate are replaced with My Delight Is in Her and Married. The LORD rejoices over Zion as the bridegroom over the bride. The Anointed sets watchmen on Zion's walls to intercede without ceasing until the vindication is complete. The King comes to Zion (Matthew 21:5 fulfills Isaiah 62:11). The Isaiah 62 watchmen who never keep silent stand across the volume from the Isaiah 56 silent dogs who cannot bark; either watchman or dog, no neutral middle. Christ Himself models the intercessory pattern (Luke 22:31-32): He prays for Peter before Peter falls; He assumes Peter's restoration; He commissions Peter to strengthen the brothers. The pattern travels through Epaphras (Colossians 4:12) wrestling in prayer for the Colossians (agonizomai, athletic combat), and through every believer whose intercession is set on the LORD's walls. The believer receives the LORD's renaming, participates in the LORD's delight, and takes up the watchman's wrestling intercession. Not the inherited old names. The LORD's new naming. Not the disappointed toleration. The bridegroom's joy. Not the silent dog who cannot bark. The watchman who never keeps silent. Not the polite mention. The wrestling that leaves the intercessor sweating like Epaphras.



chephtzi-vah (Hebrew). “My delight is in her.” The new name given to Zion in Isaiah 62:4. The bridegroom's expression of joy in the bride. The name replaces the old name Azuwah (Forsaken). The Mosaic-prophetic marital imagery reaches its most tender form here.

The LORD does not merely tolerate His covenant people; the LORD delights in them. The believer's deepest identity is the LORD's delighted-in beloved.

be'ulah (Hebrew). "Married." *The new name given to the land in Isaiah 62:4. The land's new name signifies the LORD's covenant possession of the land as the bridegroom possesses the bride. The name replaces the old name Shemamah (Desolate). Revelation 21:2 gathers the imagery into the eschatological New Jerusalem coming down as a bride adorned for her husband. The Mosaic-Isaianic bride-and-bridegroom tradition reaches its consummation in the marriage of Christ and His people.*

shomerim (Hebrew). Watchmen. *The plural participle from shamar (to keep, watch, guard). The Mosaic-Levitical vocabulary of the tabernacle-guarding is extended to Jerusalem's intercessors in Isaiah 62:6-7. The watchmen's work is persistent prayer, giving the LORD no rest until He establishes His purposes. The Isaiah 62 watchmen stand across the volume from the Isaiah 56:10 silent dogs who cannot bark. Christ models the intercessory pattern in Luke 22:31-32 (praying for Peter before the fall, assuming his restoration, commissioning him to strengthen the brothers). Epaphras in Colossians 4:12 embodies the New Covenant watchman-role, wrestling (agonizomai) in prayer for a church he cannot visit. Christ's teaching on persistent prayer (Luke 18:1-8) and Paul's command to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17) run from this Isaianic tradition.*

STATION 8

Who Is This That Comes from Edom?

Isaiah 63:1-14

Mi-zeh ba me-Edom chamutz begadim mi-Botzrah. “Who is this who comes from Edom, in crimsoned garments from Bozrah, he who is splendid in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength?” The chapter opens with a question. A figure approaches from Edom. His garments are dyed red. His stride is powerful. The identity is not immediately named.

The figure answers His own question in 63:1b: *ani medabber bi-tzedaqah rav le-hoshia.* “It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save.” The Speaker is the LORD Himself. The one who comes from Edom is the divine Warrior. The righteousness in which He speaks is the righteousness by which He saves.

Then the vivid winepress imagery of 63:2-3: “Why is your apparel red, and your garments like his who treads in the winepress? I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with me; I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath; their lifeblood spattered on my garments, and stained all my apparel.” The red on the Warrior’s garments is not the ordinary red of dye; the red is blood. The Warrior has trodden the winepress. The peoples’ lifeblood has stained His garments. The image is graphic and deliberate.

The purpose is given in 63:4: “For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and my year of redemption had come.” The day of vengeance (the second phase of the Anointed’s mission that Christ’s Nazareth reading in Luke 4 had stopped short of) is now enacted. The year of redemption has come. The two are

held together: vengeance against the LORD's enemies, redemption for the LORD's people.

Verse 63:5 echoes Isaiah 59:16 with unmistakable deliberation. "I looked, but there was no one to help; I was appalled, but there was no one to uphold; so my own arm brought me salvation, and my wrath upheld me." No human helper. The LORD's own arm again brings the salvation. The Isaiah 59 pattern is repeated. The LORD Himself accomplishes what no human could. The Hebrew doubling matters: the verb underlying "wondered" in 59:16 and "appalled" in 63:5 is the same verb, *shamem*. The same wound is being named twice, more sharply. The four-passage cluster of Isaiah 50:2, 59:16, 63:5, and 64:7 (developed in Station 4) is the prophet's sustained diagnosis of the covenant community's total institutional collapse across prophet, judge, king, and priest. The 63:5 winepress vision is not a fresh diagnosis; the 63:5 winepress vision is the second look at the same wound, and the LORD's own arm bringing salvation here is the same arm of 53:1 and 59:16. The three arms are one arm. The arm of the LORD is the body of the Son.

Then the great remembrance of 63:7-14. The prophet's voice shifts to praise. "I will recount the steadfast love of the LORD, the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD has granted us." The mighty deeds are named. The LORD lifted His people and carried them. His Spirit was in their midst. The Mosaic exodus-memory is being invoked. "Then he remembered the days of old, of Moses and his people. Where is he who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock? Where is he who put in the midst of them his Holy Spirit?"

The Pentateuchal Echo

Three Mosaic streams flow beneath Isaiah 63:1-14 and converge at the divine-Warrior theology and the Moses-remembrance.

First, the Mosaic Edom-and-Esau tradition. Genesis 25:19-34 records the birth of Esau and Jacob and the sale of the birthright. Genesis 27 records Jacob's deception in receiving Isaac's blessing. Genesis 32-33 records the Jacob-and-Esau reconciliation at Peniel. Genesis 36 records the descendants of Esau (called Edom), establishing them in the region south of the Dead Sea, the mountainous territory named for its distinctive red rock formations.

The subsequent Mosaic-historical tradition treats Edom with theological complexity. Deuteronomy 23:7-8 forbids abhorring the Edomite because he is a brother. Numbers 20:14-21 records Edom's refusal to allow Israel passage during the wilderness journey. The pre-exilic prophets treat Edom as a hostile brother, and Obadiah's entire book is directed against Edom for participating in the Babylonian sack of Jerusalem in 586 BC. Edom becomes the paradigmatic brother-enemy in the prophetic tradition.

Bozrah, named in Isaiah 63:1, was Edom's major fortified city, located in the mountainous region east of the Arabah. The Hebrew *Botzrah* is related to the verb *batzar* (to gather grapes, to make inaccessible). The city's name evokes both the winepress imagery of the passage and the fortress-vocabulary of judgment. The Warrior coming from Edom, from Bozrah specifically, is the divine Warrior returning from the judgment of the paradigmatic brother-enemy.

The theological reading of the passage is not restricted to the historical Edom. The Edom of Isaiah 63 stands for the eschatological representation of all the LORD's enemies. Just as Babylon in Revelation 17-18 stands for all the powers hostile to the LORD, so Edom in Isaiah 63 stands for the entire

coalition of the LORD's enemies awaiting the day of vengeance.

Second, the Mosaic LORD-as-divine-Warrior tradition. The Pentateuch establishes the LORD as the warrior who fights for His people. Exodus 15:3: "The LORD is a man of war; the LORD is his name." The Song of the Sea celebrates the LORD's defeat of Pharaoh's army. Numbers 10:35 records Moses' prayer at the ark's setting-out: "Arise, O LORD, and let your enemies be scattered." Deuteronomy 20:4: "The LORD your God is he who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies, to give you the victory."

Isaiah 63:1-6 deploys this Mosaic LORD-as-warrior tradition in its most graphic form. The winepress imagery is vivid. The LORD alone treads the winepress. No one is with Him. The peoples' lifeblood stains His garments. The LORD's wrath enacts the vengeance. The Mosaic warrior-tradition reaches its most intense expression here.

The theological weight of the passage is substantial. The LORD is not the abstract deity who observes conflict from a distance; the LORD is the active Warrior who enters the field and enacts the judgment. The LORD's justice is not merely declaratory; the LORD's justice is enacted. The Mosaic pattern of the LORD fighting for His people is being extended to the eschatological consummation of that fighting.

The theological difficulty for modern readers is real. The Warrior soaked in blood is not a comfortable image. But the Mosaic-Isaianic tradition insists that the LORD's justice is not merely a metaphor. The evil that has been done against the LORD's people will be answered by the LORD's active judgment. The oppressed will be vindicated. The Warrior comes.

Third, the Mosaic exodus-and-Spirit tradition. The Pentateuch establishes the LORD's presence with Israel in the

wilderness as the LORD's Spirit in the midst. Isaiah 63:11 explicitly invokes this Mosaic pattern: "Then he remembered the days of old, of Moses and his people. Where is he who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock? Where is he who put in the midst of them his Holy Spirit?"

The vocabulary is remarkable. "His Holy Spirit" (Hebrew *ruach qodesho*, His holy Spirit) is one of the few explicit Old Testament references to the Holy Spirit in personal-and-holy terms. The Mosaic tradition had spoken of the LORD's Spirit as the LORD's presence, the LORD's power, the LORD's Spirit of wisdom, the LORD's Spirit on Moses and the seventy elders. The Isaiah 63 passage specifies the Spirit as the *Holy Spirit*, present with Moses and the wilderness generation.

The Holy Spirit's presence with the wilderness community is grieved by the community's rebellion. Isaiah 63:10: "But they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit; therefore he turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them." The grieving of the Spirit is theologically significant. The Spirit is a Person who can be grieved. Ephesians 4:30 develops the same theology for the New Covenant church: "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."

The Mosaic exodus-and-Spirit tradition is thus doing significant Trinitarian work in Isaiah 63. The LORD is present with His people. The LORD's Holy Spirit is in the midst of the community. The community's rebellion grieves the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit as personal-and-holy is being named in the Old Testament's clearest form. The New Covenant's Trinitarian understanding is being anticipated.

Edom (Hebrew). The territory east of the Arabah, south of the Dead Sea, populated by the descendants of Esau. The name is related to adom (red), both from the red rock formations of the region and from the red

pottage for which Esau sold his birthright (Genesis 25:30). Edom becomes the paradigmatic brother-enemy in the prophetic tradition. Obadiah's entire book is directed against Edom. Isaiah 63:1 has the divine Warrior returning from Edom, His garments stained red with the blood of judgment.

ani medabber bi-tzedaqah (Hebrew). "It is I, speaking in righteousness." The Warrior's self-identification in Isaiah 63:1. The Warrior is the LORD. The righteousness in which He speaks is the righteousness by which He saves. The Warrior's vengeance against the enemies is inseparable from the Warrior's salvation of His people. Revelation 19:11-16 gathers this vocabulary into the rider on the white horse, whose name is Faithful and True, who judges in righteousness.

ruach qodesho (Hebrew). "His Holy Spirit." The phrase from Isaiah 63:10-11. One of the few explicit Old Testament references to the Holy Spirit as personal-and-holy. The Spirit is present in the midst of the wilderness community, grieved by the community's rebellion, and instrumental in the LORD's guidance and protection. Ephesians 4:30 develops the same theology for the New Covenant church: "do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."

The Mosaic Edom-and-Esau tradition sets up the paradigmatic brother-enemy. The Mosaic LORD-as-warrior tradition reaches its most graphic form in the winepress imagery. The Mosaic exodus-and-Spirit tradition establishes the Holy Spirit as personal-and-holy in the midst of the community. Layer one is in place.

The Post-Exilic Community Register

The chapter's two movements (the Warrior's judgment in 63:1-6 and the exodus-remembrance in 63:7-14) address distinct aspects of the post-exilic community's situation.

The first movement (63:1-6) addresses the community's question about the LORD's judgment on the enemies. The exile had been the LORD's judgment on the community itself. The post-exilic community had returned. The community's question was whether the LORD's judgment on the enemies (the surrounding nations who had participated in the exile, especially Edom) would be enacted. The community's vindication required not only the community's restoration but the enemies' judgment.

The Warrior-from-Edom vision answers the question. The LORD Himself has come from the judgment. The garments are stained with the enemies' blood. The day of vengeance has been enacted. The year of redemption has come. The LORD's justice is not merely declaratory; the LORD's justice is active. The enemies are being judged.

The eschatological reading of the passage is essential. The historical Edom was, by the post-exilic period, largely a fading power. The Nabateans were taking over much of Edom's territory. The eschatological Warrior returning from Edom is not the local political-judgment on a specific neighboring nation; the eschatological Warrior is the LORD returning from the comprehensive judgment on all the LORD's enemies. Edom is the representative image.

Revelation 19:11-15 gathers the Isaiah 63 imagery into the eschatological rider on the white horse. "Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one

knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.”

The convergences with Isaiah 63 are direct. The robe dipped in blood (Revelation 19:13, echoing Isaiah 63:1-3). The winepress imagery (Revelation 19:15, echoing Isaiah 63:3). The judgment in righteousness (Revelation 19:11, echoing Isaiah 63:1). The rider on the white horse is Christ enacting the Isaiah 63 vengeance at the second coming.

The second movement (63:7-14) turns to the exodus-remembrance. The prophet’s voice shifts from vision-of-the-Warrior to community-prayer-of-remembrance. The steadfast love of the LORD is recounted. The Mosaic exodus deliverance is invoked. The LORD who split the sea and led the people through it, whose Holy Spirit was in the midst of the community, is being remembered.

Verse 63:9 is theologically important. “In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.” The LORD’s affliction-in-His-people’s-affliction is a moment of deep pathos. The LORD is not distant from the community’s suffering; the LORD Himself is afflicted in the community’s affliction. The Christological anticipation is real: the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us, the incarnation, is the LORD’s definitive entering into the community’s affliction.

The “angel of his presence” (Hebrew *malakh panav*) is a distinctive Mosaic-Isaianic phrase. Exodus 33:14 uses the vocabulary of the LORD’s presence going with Moses. Exodus

23:20-23 speaks of the angel the LORD sends before Israel, in whom the LORD's name is. The Mosaic tradition has the LORD present with His people through the angel of His presence, which many exegetes have read Christologically as an anticipation of the incarnation.

Verse 63:10 records the community's rebellion and the LORD's response. "But they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit; therefore he turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them." The grieving of the Spirit is one of the Old Testament's clearest personal-Spirit references. The LORD turning to fight against the rebellious community is the covenant-curse dynamic (Deuteronomy 28) in its most direct form.

Verses 63:11-14 develop the community's question. "Where is he who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock? Where is he who put in the midst of them his Holy Spirit, who caused his glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses, who divided the waters before them to make for himself an everlasting name, who led them through the depths?" The community remembers the exodus-deliverance and cries out for the same LORD to act again. The post-exilic community's longing for a fresh exodus-deliverance is being expressed.

The prayer sets up the intercessory passage of 63:15-64:12 that Station 9 will address. The community's remembrance of the exodus becomes the ground for the community's petition. The LORD who acted in the past is being asked to act now. The Mosaic-Isaianic-New Covenant pattern of the community's petition based on the LORD's past acts is being modeled.

The Apostolic Appropriation

Three apostolic appropriations of Isaiah 63:1-14 deserve direct treatment.

First, Revelation 19:11-15 is the direct New Testament use of the Isaiah 63:1-6 imagery. The rider on the white horse is Christ. The robe dipped in blood is the Isaiah 63:3 winepress-stained garment. The winepress of the fury of the wrath of God is the Isaiah 63:3 winepress. The Warrior who comes from Edom is the Christ who comes from the eschatological judgment.

The Christological identification is direct. Christ is the divine Warrior who enacts the day of vengeance. Christ's Nazareth reading of Isaiah 61 had stopped short of the day of vengeance (Luke 4:19 reads only the year of favor). Christ's second coming enacts the day of vengeance that Isaiah 63 anticipates. The Anointed's comprehensive mission includes both the year of favor (first coming) and the day of vengeance (second coming). Revelation 19 shows the second phase.

The theological difficulty of the Warrior-Christ image is real, but the theology is essential. Christ's meekness at His first coming (the humble entry on the donkey, the willing submission to the cross) does not exhaust Christ's character. Christ is also the divine Warrior. Christ's justice will be enacted. The oppressed will be vindicated. The evil that has been done in the world will be answered.

Second, John 14-16 develops the Holy Spirit theology that Isaiah 63:10-14 anticipates. Christ's farewell discourse promises the Holy Spirit's coming in the personal-and-holy way that Isaiah 63 anticipates. John 14:16-17: "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth... You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you." John 14:26: "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will

teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”

The Christological-Pentecostal deepening of the Isaiah 63 Holy Spirit theology is substantial. The Spirit whom the Father sends in Christ’s name is the Holy Spirit who was with the wilderness community. The Spirit’s presence is now personal to each believer. The Spirit’s teaching, reminding, and empowering is the New Covenant’s continuation of the Mosaic-Isaianic Spirit-presence.

Third, Ephesians 4:30 directly develops the Isaiah 63:10 grieving-the-Spirit vocabulary. “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” The Pauline command draws directly on the Isaiah 63 passage. The Holy Spirit can be grieved. The believer’s sin grieves the Spirit. The Spirit’s sealing of the believer is the ground for the ethical instruction.

The theological logic is careful. The Holy Spirit is a Person who can be grieved. The believer’s persistent sin grieves the Person of the Spirit. The Spirit does not therefore depart (the sealing is permanent), but the Spirit is grieved. The believer’s ethical seriousness is grounded in the personal relationship with the Spirit whom sin grieves.

Christ is the Warrior from Edom. Christ is the Sender of the Holy Spirit. Christ is the Word made flesh in whose Person the LORD entered into the community’s affliction. The whole chapter finds its Christological completion in the incarnation, in Pentecost, and in the second coming.

The Reader’s Bridge

The Warrior and the Spirit.

The believer receives the chapter’s two movements as complementary rather than contradictory. The Warrior-

vision addresses the believer's need for the LORD's justice. The Spirit-remembrance addresses the believer's need for the LORD's presence. Both are the LORD. The Warrior who judges the enemies is the same LORD whose Holy Spirit dwells in the midst of His people.

The theological difficulty of the Warrior-image should be acknowledged. The believer's modern sensibility may recoil from the blood-stained garments and the winepress imagery. But the recoil is often the byproduct of the modern culture's minimization of evil. When the believer's community has been the victim of grave injustice, the believer's deepest cry is for the LORD's justice to be enacted. The Warrior-vision answers that cry. The evil will be judged. The oppressed will be vindicated.

The believer's posture toward the Warrior-image can be theologically nuanced. The believer does not need to celebrate the judgment as such; the LORD's judgment is grievous in its cause (the evil that required it). But the believer can rest in the fact that the LORD's justice is real. The world's evils will be answered. The oppressed will be vindicated. The Warrior comes.

The exodus-remembrance movement addresses the believer's ordinary spiritual life. The LORD who acted in the past will act now. The believer's remembrance of the LORD's past acts is the ground for the believer's present petitions. The Israel-in-the-wilderness pattern is the believer's pattern. The LORD is present in the midst. The Holy Spirit is with the believer. The believer's ordinary life is lived under the same LORD who parted the sea for Moses.

The Holy Spirit's personal presence with the believer is the New Covenant deepening of the Isaiah 63 promise. The Spirit does not merely accompany the community at large; the Spirit dwells in each believer. The Ephesians 1:13-14 sealing is the

Spirit's permanent indwelling. The believer's daily life is lived in the Spirit's presence. The believer's prayers are prayers offered in the Spirit. The believer's ethical decisions are made in the Spirit's guidance.

The Ephesians 4:30 command not to grieve the Spirit applies practically. The believer's persistent sins do not remove the Spirit's presence, but they grieve the Person of the Spirit. The believer's relationship with the Spirit is genuinely personal. The Spirit is not a divine force; the Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity. The believer's grieving of the Spirit is grieving a Person. The believer's ethical seriousness is grounded in this personal relationship.

Verse 63:9 ("In all their affliction he was afflicted") applies to the believer's specific afflictions. The LORD is not distant from the believer's specific suffering. The LORD Himself is afflicted in the believer's affliction. The Christological deepening (Christ's incarnation, His sufferings on the cross, His entering into the believer's condition) intensifies the Isaiah 63 promise. The believer's afflictions are shared by the LORD who has taken on flesh.

Three movements follow from the chapter for the reader's present life.

First, the receiving of the LORD's justice. The believer can hold the Warrior-vision as the ground of confidence that the evils the believer has witnessed or suffered will be answered. The oppressed will be vindicated. The Warrior comes. The believer's prayers for justice are heard.

Second, the practice of the exodus-remembrance. The believer can practice the remembrance of the LORD's past acts as the ground for present prayer. The specific ways the LORD has acted in the believer's life. The specific deliverances the believer has experienced. The specific answers to prayer

the believer has received. The remembrance produces the confidence for present petition.

Third, the reception of the Spirit's personal presence. The believer can hold in mind the personal relationship with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is a Person, not a force. The Spirit is grieved by the believer's persistent sin. The Spirit is present in the believer's prayers. The Spirit's indwelling is permanent.

Not the delayed justice. The Warrior who comes.

Not the forgotten past. The remembered acts.

Not the impersonal force. The Person of the Spirit.

Italic, indented:

The Warrior from Edom is the LORD Himself, whose garments are stained with the blood of the enemies' judgment. The day of vengeance has been enacted; the year of redemption has come. Christ's second coming (Revelation 19:11-15) is the eschatological consummation of the vision. The exodus-remembrance movement invokes the LORD's past acts as the ground for present petition. The LORD Himself is afflicted in His people's affliction; the Holy Spirit is in their midst. The Holy Spirit's personal presence with the believer is the New Covenant deepening of the Isaiah 63 promise. The believer's persistent sin grieves the Person of the Spirit; the Spirit's sealing of the believer is the ground for the ethical seriousness. Not the delayed justice. The Warrior who comes. Not the forgotten past. The remembered acts. Not the impersonal force. The Person of the Spirit.



Edom (Hebrew). *The territory east of the Arabah, south of the Dead Sea, populated by the descendants of Esau. Edom becomes the paradigmatic brother-enemy in the prophetic tradition. Obadiah's entire book is directed against Edom. Isaiah 63:1 has the*

divine Warrior returning from Edom, His garments stained red with the blood of judgment. Revelation 19:11-15 gathers the imagery into the eschatological rider on the white horse.

ani medabber bi-tzedaqah (Hebrew). “It is I, speaking in righteousness.” The Warrior’s self-identification in Isaiah 63:1. The Warrior is the LORD, whose righteousness in speaking is the righteousness by which He saves. The Warrior’s vengeance against the enemies is inseparable from the Warrior’s salvation of His people. Revelation 19:11 identifies the rider on the white horse as Faithful and True, who judges in righteousness.

ruach qodesho (Hebrew). “His Holy Spirit.” The phrase from Isaiah 63:10-11. One of the few explicit Old Testament references to the Holy Spirit as personal-and-holy. The Spirit is present in the midst of the wilderness community, grieved by the community’s rebellion. Ephesians 4:30 develops the New Covenant application: the Spirit whom sin grieves is the Spirit whose sealing of the believer is permanent. The Spirit is a Person, not a force.

STATION 9

Oh That You Would Rend the Heavens

Isaiah 63:15 through 64:12

The prophet's voice becomes the community's voice. The chapter records the great intercessory prayer of the post-exilic community, one of the longest and most concentrated laments in the Hebrew Bible. *Habet mi-shamayim u-re'eh mi-zevul qodshakha ve-tif'artekha*. "Look down from heaven and see, from your holy and beautiful habitation." The community asks the LORD to look. To see. To act.

The community's complaint follows in 63:15-19. "Where are your zeal and your might? The stirring of your inner parts and your compassion are held back from me. For you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us, and Israel does not acknowledge us; you, O LORD, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name. O LORD, why do you make us wander from your ways and harden our heart, so that we fear you not?" The community's theology is deep and honest. The LORD is Father. The Redeemer's name is ancient. But the community senses the LORD's hardening. The community asks the honest question.

Then the great cry that opens chapter 64: *lu qarata shamayim yaradta, mi-panekha harim nazolu*. "Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at your presence." The community pleads for the LORD's direct intervention. Rend the heavens. Come down. Mountains quake. The Sinai theophany is being invoked. The community wants the LORD to appear again.

Verse 64:4 is one of the most famous verses in the Old Testament: *u-me-olam lo shame'u lo he'ezinu, ayin lo ra'atah*

Elohim zulatekha ya'aseh li-mchakeh-lo. “From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides you, who acts for those who wait for him.” The LORD is unique. No other god is like the LORD. The LORD acts for those who wait for Him. Paul cites this verse in 1 Corinthians 2:9 in one of the New Testament’s most striking uses of Isaiah.

The community’s honest self-diagnosis in 64:6 is unusually candid. “We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.” The community’s best works are like a polluted garment. The community fades like a leaf. The self-diagnosis is comprehensive.

Then the great potter-and-clay image of 64:8: *ve-atah YHWH avinu atah, anachnu ha-chomer ve-atah yotzrenu, u-ma'aseh yadkha kulanu.* “But now, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand.” The community’s deepest self-understanding: clay, in the potter’s hand, His work. The prayer’s ground is not the community’s merit; the prayer’s ground is the potter’s ownership of the clay.

The chapter closes with the desolation-vocabulary of 64:10-12. Zion is a wilderness. Jerusalem is a desolation. The holy and beautiful house has been burned by fire. All the pleasant places have been laid in ruins. The final petition: “Will you restrain yourself at these things, O LORD? Will you keep silent, and afflict us so terribly?”

The Pentateuchal Echo

Three Mosaic streams flow beneath Isaiah 63:15-64:12 and converge at the community’s intercessory prayer.

First, the Mosaic tradition of the LORD as Father. The Pentateuch establishes the LORD's paternal relationship with Israel. Deuteronomy 32:6: "Do you thus repay the LORD, you foolish and senseless people? Is not he your father, who created you, who made you and established you?" Deuteronomy 32:18: "You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you, and you forgot the God who gave you birth." Exodus 4:22-23 records the LORD's message to Pharaoh: "Israel is my firstborn son."

Isaiah 63:16 deploys this Mosaic Father-vocabulary with unusual intimacy. "For you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us, and Israel does not acknowledge us; you, O LORD, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name." The community claims the LORD as Father even when the ancestral fathers (Abraham, Israel/Jacob) would not recognize them. The paternal relationship is not merely ethnic-genealogical; the paternal relationship is direct.

Isaiah 64:8 repeats and intensifies: "But now, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand." The LORD as Father is combined with the LORD as Potter. The community is child and clay simultaneously. The intimacy of the paternal claim is grounded in the sovereignty of the potter's ownership.

The New Covenant's Abba-Father vocabulary (Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:6) develops the Isaiah 63-64 paternal claim into the deepest expression. The believer's cry to the Father is the Spirit's witness to the believer's adoption. The Mosaic-Isaianic-New Covenant Father-tradition is one continuous line: the LORD as Father to His people.

Second, the Mosaic Sinai-theophany tradition. Exodus 19:16-19 records the Sinai theophany: thunder, lightning, thick cloud, loud trumpet blast, the mountain wrapped in smoke, the LORD descending on it in fire, the whole mountain

trembling greatly. The Mosaic tradition of the LORD's coming-down in visible power is foundational.

Isaiah 64:1-3 deploys this Mosaic Sinai-theophany tradition in its most intense invocation. "Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at your presence, as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil, to make your name known to your adversaries, and that the nations might tremble at your presence! When you did awesome things that we did not look for, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence."

The vocabulary is the Sinai-theophany vocabulary. Fire, quaking mountains, the LORD's coming-down. The community's prayer is for a fresh Sinai. The community wants the LORD to descend visibly again. The Mosaic pattern of the LORD's visible-and-powerful appearing is what the community is invoking.

The Christological deepening is substantial. The incarnation is the LORD's rending of the heavens and coming down. John 1:14: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." The prayer of Isaiah 64:1 is answered in Christ's incarnation. The LORD did rend the heavens. The LORD did come down. The Mosaic Sinai-theophany reaches its consummation in the Word made flesh.

Mark 1:10 uses precisely this rending-the-heavens vocabulary at Christ's baptism. "And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open (Greek *schizomenous*) and the Spirit descending on him like a dove." Mark's Greek deliberately echoes the Septuagint of Isaiah 64:1. The rending of the heavens has happened. The Spirit has descended. The Isaiah 64:1 prayer has been answered at Christ's baptism.

Third, the Mosaic potter-and-clay tradition. Genesis 2:7 records the LORD forming man from the dust of the ground.

The Mosaic-Pentateuchal creation-vocabulary establishes the LORD as the shaper, the human as the shaped. Jeremiah 18 develops the potter-and-clay image extensively: the LORD is the potter who can reshape the vessel that has been marred.

Isaiah 64:8 gathers the potter-and-clay tradition into the community's prayer. "We are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand." The community's deepest self-understanding is being expressed. The community is not the potter; the community is the clay. The community is not the maker; the community is the made. The community's prayer's ground is not the community's merit; the prayer's ground is the potter's ownership.

Paul develops the potter-and-clay imagery extensively in Romans 9:20-21. "But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, Why have you made me like this? Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?" The Mosaic-Isaianic-Pauline potter-and-clay tradition establishes the LORD's sovereign right over the vessel He has shaped.

Avinu (Hebrew). "Our Father." The address to the LORD in Isaiah 63:16 and 64:8. The Mosaic Father-vocabulary (Deuteronomy 32:6, Exodus 4:22-23) is deployed with unusual intimacy. The community claims the LORD as Father even when the ancestral fathers would not acknowledge them. The New Covenant's Abba-Father vocabulary (Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:6) develops the Isaianic paternal claim into the believer's cry produced by the Spirit.

lu qarata shamayim yaradta (Hebrew). "Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down." The prayer of Isaiah 64:1. The Sinai-theophany vocabulary is

being invoked. The prayer is answered in Christ's incarnation and specifically at His baptism, where Mark 1:10's Greek schizomenous (being torn open) echoes the Septuagint of this verse. The rending-of-the-heavens has happened. The LORD has come down in the Word made flesh.

ha-chomer...u-ma'aseh yadkha (Hebrew). "The clay...the work of your hand." The community's self-description in Isaiah 64:8. The Mosaic potter-and-clay tradition establishes the LORD's sovereign shaping. Paul develops the imagery in Romans 9:20-21 as the ground for the LORD's sovereign right over the vessel He has shaped. The community's prayer's deepest ground is not the community's merit; the ground is the potter's ownership of the clay.

The Mosaic Father-tradition establishes the intimacy of the address. The Mosaic Sinai-theophany tradition provides the vocabulary of the rending-the-heavens prayer. The Mosaic potter-and-clay tradition grounds the community's self-understanding. Layer one is in place.

The Post-Exilic Community Register

The chapter records the post-exilic community's most concentrated prayer for the LORD's decisive intervention.

The community's situation is honestly named. The temple has been rebuilt but the promised glory has not fully arrived. The land is inhabited but the covenant blessings of Deuteronomy 28 have not been enjoyed in their fullness. The community is small, vulnerable, spiritually mixed. The Mosaic-Isaianic promises of the great restoration are not being enacted with the visible power the community had hoped for.

The community's honest complaint of 63:15-19 is theologically substantial. "Where are your zeal and your might? The stirring of your inner parts and your compassion are held back from me." The community is not pretending everything is fine. The community is naming the perceived silence. The community's prayer is not the pious rehearsal of ideal theology; the community's prayer is the honest cry from the actual condition.

The theological problem the community's prayer raises is real. Isaiah 63:17: "O LORD, why do you make us wander from your ways and harden our heart, so that we fear you not? Return for the sake of your servants, the tribes of your heritage." The community's question is whether the LORD's hardening is part of the community's current condition. The Mosaic-prophetic theology of the LORD's hardening (Pharaoh's heart, the wilderness generation's hardening, the pre-exilic community's hardening) is being invoked in the community's honest self-examination.

The rending-the-heavens prayer of 64:1 is the community's deepest petition. The community wants the LORD to appear again as He appeared at Sinai. The visible-and-powerful theophany. The mountains quaking. The nations trembling. The community's prayer is not for a subtle spiritual influence; the community's prayer is for the LORD's dramatic and unmistakable intervention.

The theological reading of this prayer against Christ's incarnation is essential. The LORD did rend the heavens. The LORD did come down. But the coming-down took a form the community's prayer had not anticipated. The LORD came down not as the visible theophany with quaking mountains but as the Word made flesh, the infant in the manger, the carpenter's son from Nazareth. The Isaiah 64:1 prayer has

been answered; the answer has taken a form that reconceives what the prayer had been asking for.

Christ's baptism (Mark 1:10) is the specific moment where the Isaiah 64:1 prayer is echoed in the language of the answer. The heavens are torn open. The Spirit descends. The voice from heaven identifies the Son. The community's prayer for the LORD to rend the heavens is answered as the LORD tears the heavens for His Son at the baptism. The Sinai-theophany tradition is fulfilled in the incarnational-baptismal moment.

The unique-God declaration of 64:4 ("No eye has seen a God besides you, who acts for those who wait for him") is one of the deepest expressions of the LORD's uniqueness in the Old Testament. The LORD is not one god among many; the LORD is the only God. The LORD acts for those who wait for Him. The waiting is not passive resignation; the waiting is active hope.

Paul's citation of 64:4 in 1 Corinthians 2:9 ("But, as it is written, What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him") is one of the New Testament's striking uses of Isaiah. Paul reads the verse as a promise about the LORD's eschatological gifts to His people. The things prepared for those who love the LORD are beyond human sight, hearing, and imagination. The Isaiah 64:4 acting-for-those-who-wait becomes the Pauline preparing-for-those-who-love.

The community's self-diagnosis in 64:6-7 is remarkable for its comprehensive honesty. "We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. There is no one who calls upon your name, who rouses himself to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have made us melt in the hand of our iniquities."

The vocabulary is unusually candid. Even the righteous deeds are polluted. The community is fading like a leaf. No one is calling on the LORD's name. The community's condition is that of the spiritually enervated. The Pauline theology of Romans 3:9-20 ("None is righteous, no, not one... no one seeks for God") is anticipated. The community's deepest self-understanding is the community's incapacity.

The potter-and-clay confession of 64:8 is the community's theological ground. The community is not seeking to argue that the community deserves the LORD's intervention. The community is seeking to remind the LORD that the community belongs to the LORD. The clay belongs to the potter. The work of the potter's hand belongs to the potter. The community's claim on the LORD is not merit; the claim is ownership.

The closing petition of 64:9-12 is honest. "Be not so terribly angry, O LORD, and remember not iniquity forever. Behold, please look, we are all your people. Your holy cities have become a wilderness; Zion has become a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and beautiful house, where our fathers praised you, has been burned by fire, and all our pleasant places have become ruins. Will you restrain yourself at these things, O LORD? Will you keep silent, and afflict us so terribly?"

The prayer ends with a question. The community does not receive an immediate answer within the chapter. The LORD's response comes in chapter 65's new-creation announcement. The prayer of chapter 64 sets up the announcement of chapter 65. The community's cry produces the LORD's answer, but the answer takes the form of the new-creation vision rather than the Sinai-theophany the community had asked for.

The Apostolic Appropriation

Three apostolic appropriations of Isaiah 63:15-64:12 deserve direct treatment.

First, Paul cites Isaiah 64:4 in 1 Corinthians 2:9. The Corinthian context is Paul's teaching on the wisdom of God as revealed by the Spirit. "But, as it is written, What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him - these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God."

The Pauline reading of Isaiah 64:4 is theologically substantial. The Isaiah verse names what the LORD does for those who wait for Him. Paul reads the verse as pointing to what the LORD has prepared for those who love Him. The waiting becomes loving. The acting becomes preparing. The Pauline appropriation reads the verse eschatologically and Christologically: the things the LORD has prepared are the gifts of salvation in Christ, revealed by the Spirit to those who love Him.

The revelation-by-the-Spirit vocabulary of 1 Corinthians 2:10-16 develops the Isaiah 64:4 theology into the New Covenant's pneumatology. The Spirit reveals what no eye had seen. The Spirit gives access to the depths of God. The believer, having received the Spirit, understands the gifts the LORD has prepared. The Isaiah 64:4 promise reaches its fulfillment in the Spirit-mediated revelation to the New Covenant believer.

Second, Christ's baptism (Mark 1:10) echoes Isaiah 64:1 with unmistakable deliberation. Mark's Greek *schizomenous* (being torn open, split apart) is a strong verb, deliberately different from Matthew's and Luke's more measured *aneochthesan* (were opened). Mark chose the strong verb to echo the Septuagint's translation of Isaiah 64:1's *qarata* (rend, tear).

The theological convergence is direct. The community of Isaiah 64:1 had prayed for the LORD to rend the heavens. The heavens are being rent at Christ's baptism. The Spirit descends. The voice from heaven identifies the Son. The Isaiah 64:1 prayer has been answered. The community's deepest petition is being enacted at the Jordan.

Mark's deliberate rending-vocabulary reappears at Christ's death. Mark 15:38: "And the curtain of the temple was torn (Greek *eschisthe*, from the same root as the baptism's *schizomenous*) in two, from top to bottom." The temple veil is rent. The way into the holy of holies is opened. The rending-vocabulary of the baptism reaches its fulfillment at the cross. The heavens that were rent for the Son at the baptism are the heavens whose access-way is opened for the believer at the cross.

Third, Romans 8 develops the community's longing-cry vocabulary in New Covenant expression. Romans 8:22-23: "For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies."

The Pauline groaning-in-hope is the New Covenant's continuation of the Isaiah 63-64 longing. The community's waiting for the LORD to act is now the believer's waiting for the eschatological consummation. The Spirit's help in the believer's weakness (Romans 8:26) is the New Covenant deepening of the community's prayer. The groans that words cannot express are the New Covenant's continuation of the Isaiah 64:1 rend-the-heavens cry.

Christ has rent the heavens at His baptism. Christ has torn the temple veil at His death. Christ has poured out the Spirit who reveals what no eye had seen. The whole chapter finds its

Christological completion in the incarnation, the cross, and Pentecost.

The Reader's Bridge

The prayer that was answered.

The believer receives the chapter as a model for honest prayer. The believer's prayers can carry the same honesty. The believer's complaint about the LORD's perceived silence. The believer's honest self-diagnosis of the believer's own condition. The believer's petition for the LORD's decisive intervention. The Isaiah 63-64 prayer is not pious rehearsal; the prayer is honest cry. The believer's prayers can carry the same texture.

The chapter models several theological postures the believer can adopt. The claim on the LORD as Father (63:16, 64:8) is the believer's deepest ground. Not the believer's worthiness. Not the believer's performance. The believer's relationship with the LORD as Father. The Abba-cry of Romans 8:15 is the believer's New Covenant claim. The believer prays as a child to the Father.

The clay-and-potter confession of 64:8 is the believer's honest self-understanding. The believer is not the potter; the believer is the clay. The believer's shape is the LORD's work. The believer's claim on the LORD is not the believer's achievement; the claim is the LORD's ownership. "We are all the work of your hand." The believer belongs to the LORD who shaped the believer.

The unique-God declaration of 64:4 shapes the believer's expectation. The LORD acts for those who wait for Him. The LORD has prepared what no eye has seen. Paul's citation of the verse in 1 Corinthians 2:9 promises that the gifts prepared for those who love Him exceed human sight, hearing, and

imagination. The believer's prayers are addressed to the LORD who has prepared such gifts. The believer's expectations of the LORD's answer can be sized accordingly.

The rending-the-heavens prayer of 64:1 has been answered in Christ's incarnation. The believer's deepest petition (that the LORD would visibly and powerfully intervene) has been answered in the Word made flesh, in Christ's baptism where the heavens were rent, in Christ's death where the temple veil was torn. The believer prays into an already-partially-answered petition. The full answer awaits the second coming.

This has implications for the believer's posture toward the LORD's perceived silences. The believer may experience seasons in which the LORD's activity seems obscured. The believer's cry for the LORD to rend the heavens may seem unanswered. The chapter's theology encourages the believer to hold two truths simultaneously. The LORD has already rent the heavens in Christ; the believer's hope is grounded in the accomplished fact. The LORD will rend the heavens again at the second coming; the believer's hope is oriented toward the promised fact. The perceived silence between the two is not the LORD's absence; the perceived silence is the interval of the believer's waiting.

The honest self-diagnosis of 64:6 ("all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment") applies to the believer's prayer-posture. The believer does not come to the LORD on the ground of the believer's righteousness. The believer's best works are inadequate as claims on the LORD. The believer comes on the ground of Christ's righteousness imputed. The self-diagnosis is not for the believer's despair; the self-diagnosis is for the believer's right positioning: coming empty-handed, receiving the Father's gift, resting in Christ's finished work.

Three movements follow from the chapter for the reader's present life.

First, the honest prayer. The believer can carry the honest cry of the chapter into the believer's own prayer-life. The complaint about the LORD's perceived silence. The petition for the LORD's decisive intervention. The confession of the believer's own condition. The Isaiah 63-64 prayer is the model.

Second, the Father-and-Potter claim. The believer can rest the prayer's ground on the LORD's paternal and creational ownership rather than the believer's merit. "You are our Father. We are the clay, and you are our potter." The believer's claim on the LORD is the LORD's prior claim on the believer.

Third, the reception of the accomplished rending. The believer can hold in mind that the Isaiah 64:1 prayer has already been answered in Christ. The heavens have been rent. The Word has become flesh. The temple veil has been torn. The believer's hope is grounded in the accomplished fact even as the believer waits for the full consummation.

Not the pious rehearsal. The honest cry.

Not the merit-claim. The Father-and-Potter ownership.

Not the unanswered prayer. The accomplished rending.

Italic, indented:

The community's prayer of Isaiah 63:15-64:12 is honest and comprehensive. The complaint about the LORD's perceived silence. The claim on the LORD as Father. The petition for the LORD to rend the heavens and come down. The confession that all righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. The clay-and-potter self-understanding. The Isaiah 64:1 rend-the-heavens prayer has been answered in Christ's incarnation, at His baptism where the heavens were rent (Mark 1:10 uses the same vocabulary), and at His death where the temple veil was torn. Paul cites Isaiah 64:4 in 1

Corinthians 2:9 as the promise of what the LORD has prepared for those who love Him. The believer prays into an already-partially-answered petition, holding both the accomplished rending and the promised second coming. Not the pious rehearsal. The honest cry. Not the merit-claim. The Father-and-Potter ownership. Not the unanswered prayer. The accomplished rending.



Avinu (Hebrew). “Our Father.” The address to the LORD in Isaiah 63:16 and 64:8. The Mosaic Father-vocabulary is deployed with unusual intimacy. The community claims the LORD as Father even when the ancestral fathers would not acknowledge them. The New Covenant’s Abba-Father vocabulary (Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:6) develops the Isaianic paternal claim into the believer’s cry produced by the Spirit. The believer’s prayers rest on the LORD’s paternal relationship, not on the believer’s merit.

lu qarata shamayim yaradta (Hebrew). “Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down.” The prayer of Isaiah 64:1. The Sinai-theophany vocabulary is being invoked. The prayer is answered in Christ’s incarnation and specifically at His baptism, where Mark 1:10’s Greek *schizomenous* (being torn open) echoes the Septuagint of this verse. The heavens have been rent; the LORD has come down in the Word made flesh. The believer’s hope is grounded in the accomplished rending even as the believer waits for the full consummation at the second coming.

ha-chomer...u-ma'aseh yadkha (Hebrew). “The clay...the work of your hand.” The community’s self-description in Isaiah 64:8. The Mosaic potter-and-clay tradition establishes the LORD’s sovereign shaping. Paul develops the imagery in Romans 9:20-21 as the ground for the LORD’s sovereign right over the vessel He has shaped. The believer’s claim on the LORD is not the believer’s achievement; the claim is the LORD’s ownership of the vessel He has shaped.

STATION 10

Behold, I Create New Heavens

Isaiah 65

The LORD answers the community's prayer of chapter 64. But the answer is unexpected. *Nidrashti le-lo sha'alu, nimitzeti le-lo viqshuni*. "I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me; I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me. I said, Here I am, here I am, to a nation that was not called by my name." The LORD makes Himself available to those who had not been asking. The Gentiles are being included in the answer. Paul cites this verse in Romans 10:20 directly.

The counterpart in 65:2 addresses the historical covenant community. "I spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, following their own devices." The LORD has extended His hands all day to the covenant community that has resisted. Paul cites this verse in Romans 10:21. The two verses together (Isaiah 65:1-2, cited as Romans 10:20-21) become Paul's prophetic ground for the paradox of Gentile inclusion and Israel's partial hardening.

The indictment of the rebellious community follows in 65:3-7. The community's idolatries are enumerated: sacrificing in gardens, offering incense on bricks, sitting in tombs, eating pig's flesh, holding themselves as holier-than-thou. "Behold, it is written before me: I will not keep silent, but I will repay; I will indeed repay into their lap both your iniquities and your fathers' iniquities together." The judgment on the rebellious is coming.

But the remnant is preserved. Verse 65:8: "Thus says the LORD: As the new wine is found in the cluster, and they say, Do not destroy it, for there is a blessing in it, so I will do for my servants' sake, and not destroy them all." The blessing in

the cluster is preserved. The servants are not destroyed. The remnant continues.

Then the great new-creation announcement of 65:17: *ki hineni vore shamayim chadashim va-aretz chadashah, ve-lo tizakharnah ha-rishonot ve-lo ta'alenah al lev*. “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.” The vocabulary is Genesis 1’s creation-vocabulary applied to the eschatological new-creation. The new heavens and new earth. The former things forgotten.

Verses 65:18-25 develop the new-creation vision. Jerusalem is created as a joy. The infant mortality of the ancient world is abolished. The building of houses that others inhabit is abolished. The wolf and the lamb graze together. The lion eats straw like the ox. The dust is the serpent’s food. Nothing hurts or destroys in all the LORD’s holy mountain.

The Pentateuchal Echo

Three Mosaic streams flow beneath Isaiah 65 and converge at the new-creation announcement.

First, the Genesis creation-vocabulary. Genesis 1:1: “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” The Mosaic-Pentateuchal creation-vocabulary establishes the LORD as the Creator who brings the cosmos into being by His word. The verb *bara* (create) is used specifically of the LORD’s creative acts. Only the LORD creates in the Mosaic vocabulary; humans make, form, or fashion, but only the LORD creates.

Isaiah 65:17 deploys the Mosaic *bara*-vocabulary in its eschatological form. “For behold, I create (*bore*, the participle of *bara*) new heavens and a new earth.” The Creator who created the original heavens and earth is creating new heavens

and a new earth. The Mosaic first-creation is the ground for the Isaianic new-creation. The LORD who spoke the cosmos into being is speaking the new cosmos into being.

The theological logic is careful. The new-creation is not the discarding of the first creation; the new-creation is the transformation and consummation of what the LORD had originally established. The Genesis 1 pattern is being carried forward. The LORD is not replacing His good creation with a substitute; the LORD is bringing His creation to its intended consummation.

The former-things-not-remembered vocabulary of 65:17 (“the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind”) is theologically significant. The former things include not only the fallen creation’s deficiencies but also the specific griefs of the covenant community’s history. The exile. The temple’s destruction. The community’s failures. The persecution. All the specific pains that had marked the community’s history. In the new-creation, these will not come to mind. The healing is comprehensive.

Second, the Mosaic peaceable-kingdom tradition. Isaiah 11:6-9 had established the peaceable-kingdom vision in the context of the Davidic shoot from the stump of Jesse. “The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder’s den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.”

Isaiah 65:25 explicitly repeats the Isaiah 11 vocabulary. “The wolf and the lamb shall graze together; the lion shall eat

straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain, says the LORD." The peaceable-kingdom vision is being placed at the closing of the new-creation announcement. The Isaiah 11 vision (developed in Volume I, Station 10) has its consummation in the Isaiah 65 new-creation.

The Mosaic-Pentateuchal creation-vocabulary undergirds the peaceable-kingdom vision. Genesis 1-2 records the original creation as a place where humans and animals live in harmony. The Genesis 3 fall introduces enmity between the serpent and the human, and by extension into the wider animal-human and animal-animal relationships. The Isaianic peaceable-kingdom is the reversal of the Genesis 3 consequences. The wolf and the lamb graze together because the enmity has been undone. The Mosaic-Isaianic-New Testament redemptive-historical arc reaches its consummation here.

Third, the Mosaic remnant tradition. The Pentateuch establishes the pattern of the LORD preserving a remnant through judgment. Genesis 7 records Noah's family preserved through the flood. Genesis 45-50 records Jacob's family preserved in Egypt during the famine. The Mosaic-Pentateuchal narrative repeatedly shows the LORD preserving a remnant even when judgment falls on the wider group.

Isaiah 65:8-10 deploys this Mosaic remnant-tradition in its most concrete form. "As the new wine is found in the cluster, and they say, Do not destroy it, for there is a blessing in it, so I will do for my servants' sake, and not destroy them all." The blessing in the cluster is preserved. The remnant is the servants. The remnant will inherit the land, dwell in the mountains, possess Sharon and the Valley of Achor. The

Mosaic remnant-tradition is being extended to the eschatological new-creation.

The theological logic of the remnant is important. The remnant is not the whole community; the remnant is the faithful subset preserved through judgment. The remnant's survival is not the remnant's achievement; the remnant's survival is the LORD's preservation. The remnant's destiny is not for the remnant alone; the remnant becomes the ground of the LORD's renewed community after the judgment. The Mosaic-Noahic pattern is being extended.

bore shamayim chadashim (Hebrew). "Creating new heavens." The phrase from Isaiah 65:17. The verb bara is the Genesis 1 creation-vocabulary reserved in the Old Testament for the LORD's creative acts. The new heavens and new earth are not the discarding of the first creation but the consummation of what the LORD had originally established. 2 Peter 3:13 and Revelation 21:1 develop the eschatological new-creation vocabulary directly from this Isaianic passage.

ha-rishonot lo ta'alenuh al lev (Hebrew). "The former things shall not come into mind." The phrase from Isaiah 65:17. The former things include the specific griefs of the covenant community's history: the exile, the temple's destruction, the persecutions, the failures. In the new-creation, these will not come to mind. Revelation 21:4 develops the theology: "he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

ze'ev ve-taleh yir'u ke-echad (Hebrew). "The wolf and the lamb shall graze together." The phrase from Isaiah 65:25. The peaceable-kingdom vision of Isaiah 11:6-9 is placed at the closing of the new-creation announcement. The Genesis 3 enmity between human and animal, and by extension between predator and prey, is undone. The new-creation restores the harmony the fall had disrupted.

The Mosaic Genesis creation-vocabulary provides the ground for the new-creation announcement. The Mosaic peaceable-kingdom tradition (developed in Isaiah 11) is gathered into the new-creation vision. The Mosaic remnant-tradition preserves the servants through the judgment. Layer one is in place.

The Post-Exilic Community Register

The chapter's response to the community's prayer of chapter 64 is theologically complex and eschatologically comprehensive.

The chapter's opening (65:1-2) addresses the situation of the covenant community in a way that extends beyond the immediate post-exilic period. Verses 1-2 speak of two audiences. The nation that was not called by the LORD's name (the Gentiles) is being made available to the LORD. The rebellious people to whom the LORD has extended His hands all day (the covenant community) has been resistant.

Paul's citation of these two verses in Romans 10:20-21 is central to Paul's theology of the Jewish-Gentile situation. Paul reads Isaiah 65:1 as prophecy of Gentile inclusion ("I have been found by those who did not seek me"). Paul reads Isaiah 65:2 as prophecy of Israel's partial hardening ("All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary

people”). The paradox that Paul develops in Romans 9-11 is grounded in the Isaiah 65 opening.

The theological logic is careful. The LORD’s inclusion of the Gentiles is not a rejection of the LORD’s covenant with Israel. The LORD has extended His hands all day to the covenant community; the covenant community has been resistant to greater or lesser degrees; the LORD’s work of inclusion has proceeded through the Servant (Christ) into the Gentile mission; Israel’s partial hardening is real but temporary, awaiting the eschatological restoration Paul develops in Romans 11.

The indictment of the rebellious in 65:3-7 names specific idolatries. Sacrificing in gardens (perhaps continued Canaanite-style worship). Offering incense on bricks (probably improvised altars outside the temple’s legitimate cult). Sitting in tombs (necromancy or Canaanite death-cult practices). Eating pig’s flesh (a direct violation of the Mosaic dietary laws of Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14). Holding oneself as holier-than-thou (the specific attitude of the syncretistic practitioner who claims spiritual elevation while violating covenant boundaries).

The historical setting of these specific sins is post-exilic but pre-Maccabean. The post-exilic community had not eliminated the syncretistic tendencies. Ezra-Nehemiah’s reform efforts had addressed the intermarriages and Sabbath violations. But the specific practices Isaiah 65 names (garden-sacrifice, tomb-sitting, pig-flesh-eating) may have persisted in pockets of the community. The prophet’s indictment addresses these specific persistent practices.

The remnant-preservation of 65:8-16 addresses the community’s question about whether the LORD’s judgment on the rebellious will consume the faithful along with the unfaithful. The answer is no. The blessing in the cluster is

preserved. The servants are not destroyed. The remnant will inherit the land. The rebellious will be given to the sword. The distinction is drawn.

The naming-vocabulary of 65:15-16 is important. "You shall leave your name to my chosen for a curse... The Lord GOD will put you to death, but his servants he will call by another name." The distinction is by name. The rebellious will have a name that becomes a curse. The servants will have another name. The new-name theology of Isaiah 62 is being extended here. The community's naming under the LORD determines the community's destiny.

Then the great new-creation announcement of 65:17. The vocabulary is expansive. New heavens and a new earth. The former things not remembered. Jerusalem created as a joy and its people as a gladness. The LORD Himself rejoicing in Jerusalem. No more weeping. No more infant deaths. Long life. Houses built and inhabited by their builders. Vineyards planted and their fruit eaten by their planters. The LORD answering before the community calls. The wolf and the lamb grazing together.

The eschatological reading of 65:17-25 is essential. The verses describe conditions that were never fulfilled in the historical post-exilic period. Infant mortality was not abolished in ancient Judea. The wolf did not graze with the lamb. The LORD did not answer before the community called. The vision is explicitly eschatological, pointing forward to the new heavens and new earth of Revelation 21.

The tension between the eschatological and the millennial readings has been much discussed. Some hold that Isaiah 65:17-25 describes an intermediate millennial period between the second coming and the final new heavens and new earth of Revelation 21 (because some elements, such as death occurring at very old ages in 65:20, seem to imply a not-yet-

fully-consummated condition). Others hold that Isaiah 65:17-25 describes the final new heavens and new earth (with the death-at-old-age vocabulary as a literary convention emphasizing longevity rather than a literal description). Volume V does not require either specific position; the vision is clearly eschatological in either reading.

The closing verse (65:25) with the peaceable-kingdom vocabulary from Isaiah 11 gathers the whole prophetic tradition into the new-creation vision. The Mosaic-Isaianic-New Covenant redemptive arc reaches its climactic image. The enmity introduced by the Genesis 3 fall is undone. The peaceable kingdom that the coming Messiah of Isaiah 11 was to inaugurate has its consummation here.

The Apostolic Appropriation

Three apostolic appropriations of Isaiah 65 deserve direct treatment.

First, Paul cites Isaiah 65:1-2 in Romans 10:20-21. The Romans context is Paul's working out of the paradox that the Gentiles have come to faith through the gospel while much of Israel has resisted. Paul writes: "Then Isaiah is so bold as to say, I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me. But of Israel he says, All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people."

The Pauline appropriation reads the two Isaiah verses as prophecy of the Gentile-Jewish paradox. The Gentiles who had not been seeking the LORD have been found by Him through the gospel. Israel, to whom the LORD has been extending His hands throughout the prophetic history, has been resistant. Paul does not read Israel's resistance as final (Romans 11 develops the doctrine of the eschatological

restoration), but Paul does read the current situation as prophetically anticipated.

The theological weight of the citation is substantial. The Gentile mission is not an accidental development or an emergency substitute for a failed Jewish mission. The Gentile inclusion is prophetically anticipated. Isaiah 65:1 announces the LORD's making Himself available to those who had not been asking. The Gentile inclusion is the LORD's intended eschatological work, foretold by the prophet.

Second, 2 Peter 3:13 develops the Isaiah 65:17 new-creation vocabulary directly. "But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells." Peter's appropriation reads the Isaiah 65:17 promise as the future hope the believer awaits. The new heavens and new earth are the eschatological destination. The believer is oriented forward toward this promise.

The context in 2 Peter 3 is Peter's response to the mockers who ask, "Where is the promise of his coming?" Peter argues that the LORD's apparent delay is His patience, giving time for repentance. The day of the LORD will come. The heavens and the elements will be dissolved with fire. Then, according to the LORD's promise, new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. The Isaiah 65:17 promise is Peter's ground for the eschatological hope.

Third, Revelation 21:1-4 gathers the Isaiah 65:17-25 new-creation vision into the eschatological consummation. "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will

be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

The convergences with Isaiah 65:17-25 are extensive. The new heavens and new earth (Revelation 21:1, Isaiah 65:17). The New Jerusalem as bride (Revelation 21:2, Isaiah 62 imagery). The LORD dwelling with His people (Revelation 21:3, Isaiah 65 vision of Jerusalem’s renewed identity). The wiping away of tears and the abolition of death, mourning, crying, and pain (Revelation 21:4, Isaiah 65:19). The former things having passed away (Revelation 21:4, Isaiah 65:17).

The apostolic John’s vision is Isaiah 65’s vision in Christological-eschatological consummation. The new-creation the LORD announced through the prophet is being enacted in the eschatological consummation. Christ is the one whose finished work has produced the new-creation. The Lamb is the temple of the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:22). The Lamb is the light (Revelation 21:23). The Isaianic vision has its consummation in Christ.

Christ is the Servant whose work produces the new-creation. Christ is the fulfillment of the Isaiah 65:1 LORD-being-found-by-those-who-did-not-see. Christ is the Lamb who is the New Jerusalem’s temple and light. The whole chapter finds its Christological completion in the eschatological consummation Christ inaugurates.

The Reader’s Bridge

The new-creation vision.

The believer receives the chapter as the LORD’s comprehensive answer to the community’s cry. The community had prayed for the LORD to rend the heavens. The

LORD answers with the announcement of the new heavens and new earth. The community had prayed for the LORD to remember mercy. The LORD answers with the vision of Jerusalem created as a joy and its people as a gladness. The community had prayed for the LORD to act. The LORD announces the comprehensive new-creation action.

The believer's eschatological expectation is shaped by this chapter. The believer's hope is not the disembodied heaven-with-clouds-and-harps of popular imagination. The believer's hope is the new heavens and new earth. The believer's eternal life is embodied life on a renewed cosmos. The Isaiah 65 vision is concrete: houses built and inhabited by their builders, vineyards planted and their fruit eaten by their planters, long life, no infant mortality, no laboring in vain, the wolf and the lamb grazing together.

The concreteness of the vision matters for the believer's present life. The believer's ordinary activities have eschatological continuity. The believer's building of houses in this life is prefigurative of the eschatological building. The believer's planting of vineyards, gardens, families, congregations, works of art, in this life carries forward into the eschatological consummation not by exact material continuity but by the theological continuity of the LORD's eschatological affirmation of the good work His people have done in this life. The believer's work is not vain.

The former-things-not-remembered promise (65:17) applies to the believer's specific griefs. The believer carries specific wounds. The specific loss. The specific failure. The specific betrayal. The specific season of anguish that has marked the believer's history. The Isaiah 65:17 promise is that these will not come into mind in the new-creation. The healing is comprehensive. Revelation 21:4 makes it explicit: every tear will be wiped away.

This is not the erasure of the believer's memory; the specific griefs will not be remembered in the sense of being retriggered as ongoing pain. The believer's identity is preserved. But the specific pains do not maintain their present power. The healing goes to the depth. The believer's specific sorrows are being held toward the promise of comprehensive resolution.

The peaceable-kingdom vision of 65:25 shapes the believer's vision of the eschatological community. The enmities the believer has walked through in this life (the political enmities, the personal enmities, the theological enmities) will be resolved. The wolf and the lamb will graze together. The believer's current experience of surrounded-by-conflict is not the final experience. The final experience is peace on the LORD's holy mountain.

The remnant-preservation theology of 65:8-9 applies to the believer's security. The believer who is one of the LORD's servants is preserved. The LORD does not destroy the blessing in the cluster. The believer's security is not the believer's achievement; the believer's security is the LORD's preservation. The LORD who has said, "I will do for my servants' sake, and not destroy them all," has said the same about the New Covenant's servants who belong to Christ.

Three movements follow from the chapter for the reader's present life.

First, the reorientation of the eschatological hope. The believer can hold the specific vision of the new heavens and new earth as the concrete destination. Not the disembodied heaven; the new-creation. Not the abstract eternity; the specific vision of houses inhabited, vineyards eaten, and the LORD dwelling with His people. The believer's ordinary work is eschatologically anchored.

Second, the receiving of the former-things-not-remembered promise. The believer can hold the specific griefs toward the promise of comprehensive resolution. The wound the believer carries will not maintain its present power in the new-creation. The tears will be wiped away. The believer's current groaning is oriented toward the promised healing.

Third, the participation in the LORD's eschatological work. The believer can participate in the LORD's inclusion of those who had not been seeking Him (65:1). The believer's witness to unbelievers is participation in the LORD's Isaiah 65:1 making-Himself-available to those who had not been asking. The Gentile mission continues. The believer's specific participation is real.

Not the disembodied heaven. The new heavens and new earth.

Not the wound that maintains its power. The tears wiped away.

Not the enmity. The wolf and the lamb grazing together.

Italic, indented:

The LORD answers the community's cry of chapter 64 with the new-creation announcement of chapter 65. Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth. The former things shall not be remembered. Paul cites Isaiah 65:1-2 in Romans 10:20-21 as the prophetic ground for the Gentile inclusion and Israel's partial hardening. 2 Peter 3:13 and Revelation 21:1-4 develop the new-heavens-and-new-earth vision into the New Covenant's eschatological hope. The believer's eschatological expectation is the concrete new-creation: houses inhabited, vineyards eaten, long life, no infant mortality, the LORD dwelling with His people, tears wiped away, the wolf and the lamb grazing together. The believer's ordinary work is eschatologically anchored; the believer's specific griefs are held toward comprehensive resolution.

Not the disembodied heaven. The new heavens and new earth. Not the wound that maintains its power. The tears wiped away. Not the enmity. The wolf and the lamb grazing together.



bore shamayim chadashim (Hebrew). “Creating new heavens.” The phrase from Isaiah 65:17. The verb *bara* is the Genesis 1 creation-vocabulary reserved in the Old Testament for the LORD’s creative acts. The new heavens and new earth are the consummation of what the LORD had originally established, not the discarding of the first creation. 2 Peter 3:13 and Revelation 21:1 develop the eschatological new-creation vocabulary directly from this Isaianic passage.

ha-rishonot lo ta’alenah al lev (Hebrew). “The former things shall not come into mind.” The phrase from Isaiah 65:17. The specific griefs of the covenant community’s history will not come to mind in the new-creation. Revelation 21:4 develops the theology: every tear wiped away, death no more, mourning no more, crying no more, pain no more. The healing is comprehensive; the believer’s specific wounds are held toward this promise.

ze’ev ve-taleh yir’u ke-echad (Hebrew). “The wolf and the lamb shall graze together.” The phrase from Isaiah 65:25. The peaceable-kingdom vision of Isaiah 11:6-9 is placed at the closing of the new-creation announcement. The Genesis 3 enmity is undone; the harmony the fall had disrupted is restored. The

believer's current experience of surrounded-by-conflict is not the final experience; the final experience is peace on the LORD's holy mountain.

STATION 11

The New Creation Consummation

Isaiah 66

The final chapter of the prophet's book. *Koh amar YHWH, ha-shamayim kis'i ve-ha-aretz hadom raglai.* "Thus says the LORD: Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest?" The chapter opens with the LORD's statement of His transcendence. No temple contains the LORD. The heavens are His throne. The earth is His footstool. The whole temple-project of the covenant community is being placed in its proper theological perspective.

Yet the LORD is not distant. Verse 66:2: "All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the LORD. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word." The transcendent LORD who cannot be contained by temples looks with favor on the humble and contrite. The Isaiah 57:15 dual-dwelling theology is restated at the volume's close: the LORD who inhabits eternity dwells with the humble.

The indictment of false worship in 66:3-4 is unusually sharp. The community's worship-forms have become corrupted. Sacrificing an ox is like killing a man. Sacrificing a lamb is like breaking a dog's neck. Presenting a grain offering is like presenting pig's blood. Making a memorial offering of frankincense is like blessing an idol. The forms are correct; the substance has been evacuated. The LORD is not pleased.

Then the great birthing-vocabulary of 66:7-9: "Before she was in labor she gave birth; before her pain came upon her she delivered a son. Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall a land be born in one day? Shall a nation be

brought forth in one moment? For as soon as Zion was in labor she brought forth her children.” Zion gives birth. The community is being born. The New Testament’s Pentecost narrative and the birth of the church can be read against this passage.

Then the tender mother-imagery of 66:10-13: “Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her, all you who love her; rejoice with her in joy, all you who mourn over her; that you may nurse and be satisfied from her consoling breast; that you may drink deeply with delight from her glorious abundance... As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.” The LORD is compared to a mother comforting her child. The gender-imagery for the LORD is unusual but not unprecedented (the LORD’s maternal compassion runs through Isaiah 46:3-4, 49:15, and other passages).

Then the eschatological gathering of 66:18-21: “For I know their works and their thoughts, and the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and shall see my glory... And from them I will send survivors to the nations... to the coastlands far away, that have not heard my fame or seen my glory. And they shall declare my glory among the nations. And they shall bring all your brothers from all the nations as an offering to the LORD... And some of them also I will take for priests and for Levites, says the LORD.” The Mosaic priesthood is being extended to Gentiles.

The chapter closes with the somber contrast in 66:22-24. The new heavens and new earth will remain. The community will worship the LORD from month to month and Sabbath to Sabbath. All flesh will come to worship. But the corpses of the rebels will be seen, “for their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.” Christ cites this final verse (Mark 9:48). The book closes on

the double note: the worship of the redeemed and the judgment of the unrepentant.

The Pentateuchal Echo

Three Mosaic streams flow beneath Isaiah 66 and converge at the eschatological worship.

First, the Mosaic tabernacle-and-temple tradition. The Pentateuch establishes the tabernacle as the LORD's dwelling with His people (Exodus 25:8, "let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst"). Solomon's prayer at the temple's dedication (1 Kings 8:27) anticipates the Isaiah 66:1 recognition: "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built!" The Mosaic-Deuteronomistic tradition has always held the tension between the LORD's transcendence and the LORD's dwelling with His people.

Isaiah 66:1-2 restates the tension at the volume's close. The LORD's throne is heaven. The LORD's footstool is earth. No temple contains Him. Yet the LORD looks with favor on the humble and contrite who tremble at His word. The Mosaic-Solomonic transcendence-and-immanence is being maintained. The temple is not the LORD's essential dwelling; the humble heart is.

This has substantial theological implications for the church. The New Covenant church is not defined by a physical building but by the community's covenant relationship with Christ. Christ's statement to the Samaritan woman (John 4:21-24, "the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father... the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth") develops the Isaiah 66:1-2 theology into the New Covenant's explicit teaching. The temple is not the essential locus of

worship. The LORD is worshipped wherever the humble and contrite hearts gather in Christ's name.

Second, the Mosaic sacrificial system's critique when its substance is evacuated. Deuteronomy 10:12-16 sets the Mosaic principle: the LORD requires the community's heart, not merely the community's ritual. "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul." Circumcision of the heart, not merely of the flesh, is required.

The prophetic tradition (Amos 5:21-24, Hosea 6:6, Micah 6:6-8, Isaiah 1:11-17, Jeremiah 7:21-23) develops the Mosaic principle at length. The LORD does not delight in the sacrifices themselves. The LORD delights in obedience, justice, mercy, and knowledge of Himself. The sacrifices offered without the ethical substance are worse than no sacrifices; they are a mockery of the covenant.

Isaiah 66:3-4 deploys this Mosaic-prophetic critique in its sharpest form. The correct sacrifices are compared to abominations when they are offered without the ethical substance. The correctness of the form does not compensate for the corruption of the substance. The LORD is not fooled. The Mosaic principle (Deuteronomy 10:12-16) is being applied to the post-exilic community's temple worship.

Third, the Mosaic gathering-of-the-nations tradition. Genesis 12:3 had established the Abrahamic universal promise. Deuteronomy 32:43 (in the Song of Moses) had called: "Rejoice with him, O heavens; bow down to him, all gods, for he avenges the blood of his children and takes vengeance on his adversaries. He repays those who hate him and cleanses his people's land." The Mosaic tradition has always anticipated the LORD's eschatological work reaching the nations.

Isaiah 66:18-21 develops this Mosaic gathering-tradition in its most concrete form. The LORD gathers all nations and tongues. They come and see His glory. The survivors (probably from the covenant community) are sent to the nations that had not heard His fame or seen His glory. The Gentile mission is being explicitly anticipated. And, remarkably, some of the gathered Gentiles will be taken as priests and Levites. The Mosaic priesthood, formerly restricted to the tribe of Levi, is being explicitly extended.

The theological weight of this extension is substantial. The Mosaic constitution had restricted the priesthood to the sons of Aaron within the tribe of Levi. The Isaiah 66:21 promise breaks that restriction. Gentiles will be taken as priests. The New Covenant church's inclusion of Gentile members as full participants in the covenant community (and the specific inclusion of Gentiles in the New Covenant's pastoral leadership) is anticipated here.

hadom raglai (Hebrew). "Footstool of my feet." The phrase from Isaiah 66:1. The earth is the LORD's footstool. The vocabulary is used by Christ in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:35) and by the author of Hebrews (Hebrews 1:13, citing Psalm 110:1) to name the eschatological placing of the enemies under Christ's feet. The Isaiah 66:1 image of the LORD's cosmic transcendence provides the ground for the Christological application.

daka u-shefal-ruach (Hebrew, cf. 57:15). "Humble and contrite in spirit." The phrase reappears at the volume's close (Isaiah 66:2 uses the parallel vocabulary of ani u-nkeh-ruach, "humble and contrite in spirit"). The Isaiah 57:15 dual-dwelling theology is restated at the book's end. The transcendent LORD

who cannot be contained by any temple dwells with the humble and contrite. The Mosaic-prophetic principle culminates here.

tola'atam lo tamut (Hebrew). "Their worm shall not die." The phrase from Isaiah 66:24. Christ cites the verse in Mark 9:48 in His teaching on hell (Gehenna). The vocabulary of the unquenched worm and the unquenched fire becomes the standard eschatological imagery for final judgment. The Isaiah 66 book closes on the somber note: the worship of the redeemed continues perpetually; the judgment of the rebellious continues perpetually. The eschatological consummation includes both.

The Mosaic tabernacle-and-temple tradition undergirds the transcendence-immanence statement. The Mosaic-prophetic critique of hollow worship undergirds the indictment of false forms. The Mosaic-Abrahamic gathering-of-the-nations tradition undergirds the eschatological worship-vision. Layer one is in place.

The Post-Exilic Community Register

The chapter's comprehensive scope addresses the post-exilic community's deepest questions.

The opening (66:1-2) addresses the community's temple-question. The second temple had been completed (516 BC) but at a scale much reduced from Solomon's. The community's ongoing question was whether the modest second temple was adequate as the LORD's dwelling. The prophet's answer is theologically comprehensive. The temple is not the essential locus. No temple contains the LORD. The LORD's essential dwelling is with the humble and contrite. The community's question about the temple's adequacy is being reframed.

This reframing has implications for the post-exilic community's ongoing life. The community's temple worship is not to be abandoned; the sacrificial system continues, the priestly ministry continues, the festival calendar continues. But the temple is not the essential ground of the LORD's presence with the community. The essential ground is the community's covenant relationship with the LORD, expressed in humble and contrite hearts that tremble at His word.

The indictment of false worship in 66:3-4 addresses the community's ongoing temptation to hollow ritual. The specific comparisons (sacrificing an ox is like killing a man; sacrificing a lamb is like breaking a dog's neck; presenting a grain offering is like presenting pig's blood; presenting a memorial offering of frankincense is like blessing an idol) are unusually sharp. The community's worship-forms have not remained pure; the forms are being paired with the community's continued syncretistic practices. The LORD is not pleased.

The birthing-vocabulary of 66:7-9 addresses the community's question about how the eschatological restoration will come. The imagery is unusual. Zion gives birth before she is in labor. The child is delivered before the pain comes. The community is being born rapidly. The eschatological new community's coming will not be a slow gestation; the coming will be sudden.

The New Testament's Pentecost narrative (Acts 2) can be read against this passage. The Spirit's outpouring produced the church's rapid birth. Three thousand added in one day. The community that had been waiting during Christ's absence was born as the community that would witness to the nations. The Isaiah 66:7-9 sudden-birth vocabulary anticipates this Pentecost dynamic.

The mother-imagery of 66:10-13 is theologically substantial. The LORD is compared to a mother comforting

her child. The gender-imagery for the LORD is unusual but not unprecedented in Isaiah (46:3-4 uses a similar maternal image; 49:15 asks if a mother can forget her nursing child, indicating that the LORD's remembering is even more sure than a mother's). The Isaiah 66 passage extends the maternal imagery.

The theological point is not that the LORD is essentially female (the LORD is always addressed with masculine grammatical forms in the Hebrew Bible; the LORD is properly Father, not Mother, in the covenant's primary relationship-vocabulary). The theological point is that the LORD's comfort of His people is as tender as a mother's comfort of her child. The maternal image is being deployed as a specific illustration of one aspect of the LORD's character, not as a redefinition of the LORD's essential identity.

The eschatological gathering of 66:18-21 is the most extensive Old Testament anticipation of the Gentile mission. The LORD gathers all nations and tongues. They come and see His glory. Survivors are sent to the coastlands far away, to nations that have not heard the LORD's fame. The declarations spread. The gathered are brought back as an offering to the LORD.

The vocabulary of the coastlands (66:19) has been developed across the earlier volumes. Isaiah 42:4 had spoken of the coastlands waiting for the Servant's teaching. Isaiah 49:1 had addressed the coastlands as the audience of the Servant's call. Isaiah 51:5 had promised that the LORD's salvation would reach the coastlands. Isaiah 60:9 had spoken of the coastlands' ships bringing sons back to Zion. The prophet's coastlands-vocabulary reaches its consummation here, in the sending of the survivors to the coastlands.

The Gentile-priesthood promise of 66:21 is theologically astonishing. "And some of them also I will take for priests and

for Levites, says the LORD.” The Mosaic constitution had restricted the priesthood to the tribe of Levi and specifically to the sons of Aaron. The Isaiah 66:21 promise breaks that restriction. Gentiles will be priests. The New Covenant’s explicit theology (1 Peter 2:9, every believer is a priest; Ephesians 3:6, the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, partakers of the promise) is being anticipated here.

The closing verses (66:22-24) end the book on the double note. The new heavens and new earth remain. The community worships from month to month and Sabbath to Sabbath. All flesh comes to worship. But the corpses of the rebels are seen, their worm not dying, their fire not quenched. The book closes with the somber recognition that the eschatological consummation includes both the redeemed’s worship and the rebellious’ judgment.

Christ’s citation of 66:24 in Mark 9:48 is the New Testament’s most direct use of this verse. Christ speaks of hell (Gehenna) using the Isaiah 66 vocabulary: the worm that does not die, the fire that is not quenched. The eschatological judgment is real. The rebellious who persist in opposition face the judgment the prophet had named.

The Apostolic Appropriation

Three apostolic appropriations of Isaiah 66 deserve direct treatment.

First, Christ cites Isaiah 66:24 in Mark 9:48 in His teaching on hell. Mark 9:43-48 records the teaching: “If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire... It is better for you to enter the kingdom

of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.”

The Christological weight of the citation is substantial. Christ is applying the Isaiah 66:24 eschatological judgment to His hearers. The eternal judgment is real. The unquenchable fire is not metaphorical decoration. The worm that does not die names the perpetual quality of the judgment. The Isaiah 66 book closes with this warning; Christ carries the warning into His own teaching.

The theological difficulty of hell as a doctrine is real. Modern sensibility recoils from the imagery. But Christ Himself teaches the reality. The New Testament’s teaching on hell is not the church’s later imposition; the teaching is Christ’s own. The Isaiah 66:24 vocabulary provides the specific imagery Christ deploys. The book’s closing warning becomes the gospel’s solemn ground for the call to repentance.

Second, Stephen’s speech in Acts 7 cites Isaiah 66:1-2 as the ground for the case that the LORD does not dwell in houses made by hands. Acts 7:48-50: “Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made by hands, as the prophet says: Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest? Did not my hand make all these things?”

The theological weight of Stephen’s citation is significant. Stephen is addressing the Sanhedrin’s charge that he had spoken against the temple. Stephen’s defense deploys Isaiah 66:1-2 to make the theological point: the LORD is not contained by the temple. The Mosaic tabernacle, Solomon’s temple, the second temple, none of them contain the LORD. The LORD’s essential dwelling is with the humble and contrite, not in any physical structure. Stephen’s speech

applies the Isaiah 66 theology to the situation just before his martyrdom.

The New Covenant's theology of the church as the temple (1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:19-22) develops the Isaiah 66:1-2 theology into its Christological fulfillment. The believer's body is the Spirit's temple. The church is the LORD's dwelling by the Spirit. The physical temple is being transcended by the New Covenant's reality.

Third, the Gentile-priesthood promise of Isaiah 66:21 finds its fulfillment in the New Covenant church's pastoral ministry. Gentile Christians are taken as elders and pastors. The New Testament's Timothy (a Gentile-Jewish believer) becomes Paul's pastoral protege. The pastoral letters commission Gentile Christians to lead the church. The Mosaic restriction of the priesthood to the tribe of Levi has been broken through Christ's finished work. The Isaiah 66:21 promise is being fulfilled.

Revelation 21-22 gathers the Isaiah 66 vision into the eschatological consummation. All the threads converge. The new heavens and new earth (Revelation 21:1, Isaiah 66:22). The New Jerusalem coming down (Revelation 21:2). The LORD dwelling with His people (Revelation 21:3). All the nations bringing their glory into the city (Revelation 21:24, 26). The perpetual worship (Revelation 22:3-5, Isaiah 66:23). But also the exclusion of the unrepentant from the city (Revelation 21:8, 22:15, Isaiah 66:24).

Christ is the temple the physical building could not contain. Christ is the Gentile-priesthood's ground. Christ is the one whose citation of Isaiah 66:24 warns of eternal judgment. The whole chapter finds its Christological completion in the incarnation, the church, and the eschatological consummation.

The Reader's Bridge

All flesh coming to worship.

The believer receives the final chapter of the prophet's book as the double announcement it is. The vision of the eschatological worship is comprehensive. All flesh comes to worship. The nations are gathered. The new heavens and new earth remain. The perpetual worship is the eternal condition of the redeemed. This is the destination toward which the believer's life is oriented.

The temple-transcendence of 66:1-2 shapes the believer's worship-life. The believer's worship is not tied to a specific physical location. The believer can worship in any place, in any circumstance, at any time. The believer's home. The believer's workplace. The believer's car during the commute. The believer's hospital bed. The believer's prison cell if it comes to that. The LORD's dwelling is with the humble and contrite heart, not with the specific building. This does not diminish the believer's participation in the corporate worship of the local congregation (which is essential); but it does mean that the believer's worship is not confined to the sanctuary's walls.

The believer's corporate participation in the local congregation's worship is important. The New Covenant's explicit teaching (Hebrews 10:25, do not neglect meeting together) preserves the covenant-community dimension. The believer participates in the worship of the LORD as part of the body of Christ. The individual worship and the corporate worship are complementary, not competing.

The mother-imagery of 66:10-13 addresses the believer's need for tender comfort. The LORD is not only the Father who disciplines and instructs; the LORD is also the mother-figure who comforts. The believer whose experience of the LORD has been primarily disciplinary can hear the tender note. The

LORD comforts as a mother comforts her child. The believer's specific griefs receive this tender ministry. The comfort is real.

The gathering-of-the-nations vision of 66:18-21 shapes the believer's missionary participation. The LORD is gathering. The survivors are being sent to the coastlands. The Gentile mission continues. The believer's specific participation in the LORD's missionary work (whether through the believer's vocational calling, financial support, direct engagement with those the LORD is drawing, or the believer's prayer for the nations) is participation in the Isaiah 66 gathering.

The double note of the closing verses (66:22-24) shapes the believer's posture toward the eschatological consummation. The believer's hope is grounded in the worship the redeemed will offer perpetually. The believer's current worship is a rehearsal for the eternal worship. But the believer's awareness of the other side (the unquenched worm, the unquenched fire) provides the ground for the believer's missionary urgency and the believer's own moral seriousness. The eschatological consummation includes both.

Christ's citation of Isaiah 66:24 in Mark 9:48 is not to be minimized. Christ warns of hell. The believer's participation in the New Covenant's teaching on eternal judgment is grounded in Christ's own words. The believer does not celebrate the judgment; the LORD does not delight in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 33:11). But the believer takes seriously the reality Christ Himself warned about. The believer's missionary participation is grounded in the reality of the eschatological judgment along with the reality of the eschatological invitation.

The book closes with the community's worship perpetuated. All flesh coming to worship. Month to month. Sabbath to Sabbath. The eschatological community's worship is not the occasional gathering; the eschatological

community's worship is the perpetual condition. The believer's current life, marked by the interruptions and distractions of the fallen order, is heading toward the perpetual worship. The specific worship the believer participates in this week is a foretaste.

Three movements follow from the chapter for the reader's present life.

First, the freeing of worship from location-restriction. The believer can worship the LORD in any place, at any time, in any circumstance. The LORD's dwelling is with the humble and contrite heart. The believer's daily worship (in the car, at the desk, in the kitchen, at the bedside) is real worship.

Second, the receiving of the mother-comfort. The believer can receive the tender comfort the passage promises. The LORD comforts as a mother comforts her child. The believer's specific griefs are being met with this tenderness.

Third, the orientation toward the perpetual worship. The believer can hold the vision of the eschatological worship as the destination. The believer's current worship is rehearsal. The believer's participation in the LORD's missionary gathering is participation in the LORD's eschatological work.

Not the temple-restricted worship. The worship of the humble heart everywhere.

Not the harsh discipline alone. The mother-comfort as well.

Not the temporary worship. The perpetual worship of all flesh.

Italic, indented:

The final chapter of the prophet's book announces the LORD's cosmic transcendence and His dwelling with the humble and contrite. The correct sacrificial forms without the ethical substance are worse than no sacrifice; the LORD is not fooled. Zion gives birth suddenly; the community is

being born rapidly (anticipating Pentecost). The LORD comforts as a mother comforts her child. All nations are gathered; the survivors are sent to the coastlands far away; some of the Gentiles are taken as priests and Levites. The new heavens and new earth remain; all flesh comes to worship from month to month and Sabbath to Sabbath. But the corpses of the rebels are seen, their worm not dying, their fire not quenched (Christ cites this verse in Mark 9:48). The book closes on the double note: the perpetual worship of the redeemed and the eternal judgment of the unrepentant. The believer's life is oriented toward the perpetual worship, freed from location-restriction, comforted by the LORD as a child by its mother, participating in the gathering of the nations. Not the temple-restricted worship. The worship of the humble heart everywhere. Not the harsh discipline alone. The mother-comfort as well. Not the temporary worship. The perpetual worship of all flesh.



hadom raglai (Hebrew). “Footstool of my feet.” The phrase from Isaiah 66:1. The earth is the LORD’s footstool. Christ deploys the vocabulary in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:35). Hebrews 1:13 (citing Psalm 110:1) uses the same footstool-vocabulary for the eschatological placing of the enemies under Christ’s feet. The Isaiah 66:1 cosmic transcendence provides the ground for the Christological application: no temple contains the LORD, and Christ’s eschatological reign extends over all creation.

tola’atam lo tamut (Hebrew). “Their worm shall not die.” The phrase from Isaiah 66:24. Christ cites the verse in Mark 9:48 in His teaching on hell (Gehenna).

The vocabulary of the unquenched worm and the unquenched fire becomes the standard eschatological imagery for final judgment. The book of Isaiah closes on the somber note: the worship of the redeemed continues perpetually; the judgment of the rebellious continues perpetually. The New Covenant's teaching on eternal judgment is grounded in Christ's citation of this verse.

u-mehem eqach la-kohanim la-Leviyim (Hebrew).
“And some of them I will take for priests and for Levites.” The phrase from Isaiah 66:21. The Mosaic constitution had restricted the priesthood to the tribe of Levi and specifically to the sons of Aaron. Isaiah 66:21 breaks that restriction: Gentiles will be taken as priests. The New Covenant's inclusion of Gentile Christians as full participants in the covenant community and specifically as pastoral leaders is anticipated here. 1 Peter 2:9 and Ephesians 3:6 develop the theology.

Closing Meditation for Volume V

Hebrews 13:8

Yeshua ha-Mashiach etmol ve-hayom hu, u-le-olamim.
“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”
The anchor verse that has closed each volume of this series closes Volume V. But the closing carries a different weight here. Volume V is the final volume. The Hebrews 13:8 anchor is being deployed for the last time within this series.

Volume V has walked eleven stations from the widening of the covenant community in Isaiah 56 to the new creation consummation of Isaiah 66. The stations have traced a distinctive arc. The Servant’s finished work of Volume IV has produced the widened community of Volume V. The covenant boundary has been opened. The foreigners and eunuchs have been welcomed. The temple has been redefined as the house of prayer for all peoples. The Christ who is the same yesterday and today and forever is the Christ whose cross has secured the widening.

The corrupt leadership indicted in Station 2 was addressed by the LORD’s dual dwelling: the high and lifted up God dwells also with the contrite and lowly. The peace preached to the far and the near was fulfilled in Christ’s reconciliation of Jew and Gentile in one body (Ephesians 2:17). The same Christ dwells with the humble heart today. The same Christ preaches peace across the dividing walls today. The Hebrews 13:8 anchor holds.

The true fast of Station 3 was defined as the release of the oppressed, the sharing of bread, the housing of the homeless, the covering of the naked. Christ inaugurated His public ministry with the mercy-ethic (Luke 4). Christ identified Himself with the poor (Matthew 25). The same Christ continues His mercy-ethic through His body today. The

believer's engagement with the specific mercy-ethic categories is participation in the Anointed's ongoing ministry. The Hebrews 13:8 anchor holds.

The Redeemer who came to Zion in Station 4 was the LORD Himself whose own arm brought salvation when no human intercessor could be found. Christ is that Redeemer. Christ is the arm of the LORD revealed. Christ came because no one else could come. The same Christ intercedes today at the Father's right hand (Hebrews 7:25). The same Christ's Spirit-and-word covenant continues generationally in the church. The Hebrews 13:8 anchor holds.

The light rising in Station 5 was the glory of the LORD upon Zion. Christ is the light that has come (John 1:9, 8:12). The same Christ shines through His body today in a world where darkness still covers the earth and thick darkness the peoples. The same Christ will be the eschatological city's everlasting light (Revelation 21:23). The Hebrews 13:8 anchor holds.

The Anointed of Station 6 was the one on whom the Spirit rested, sent to preach good news to the poor, bind up the brokenhearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, and inaugurate the year of the LORD's favor. Christ read these very verses at Nazareth (Luke 4). Christ inaugurated the year of favor at His first coming. The same Christ will bring the day of vengeance at His second coming. The Hebrews 13:8 anchor holds across the whole two-phase mission.

The watchmen on the walls of Station 7 were the intercessors giving the LORD no rest until He established Jerusalem. The same LORD invites the church's persistent intercession today. The new names given to Zion (My Delight Is in Her; Married) are the new names given to the church in Christ. The bridegroom's joy over the bride (Isaiah 62:5) is

Christ's joy over His church (Ephesians 5:25-27, Revelation 19:7-9). The Hebrews 13:8 anchor holds.

The Warrior from Edom of Station 8 is Christ enacting the day of vengeance at the second coming (Revelation 19:11-15). The Holy Spirit whom the wilderness community grieved is the same Holy Spirit present with the New Covenant church, whom Paul warns not to grieve (Ephesians 4:30). The affliction the LORD shared with His people is the affliction Christ shared in the incarnation. The Hebrews 13:8 anchor holds.

The rend-the-heavens prayer of Station 9 was answered in Christ's incarnation. The heavens were rent at Christ's baptism (Mark 1:10 uses the same vocabulary). The temple veil was torn at Christ's death (Mark 15:38). The Spirit was poured out at Pentecost. The community's ancient cry was answered in Christ. The same Christ continues to answer the church's cry today. The Hebrews 13:8 anchor holds.

The new creation of Station 10 was announced. Christ's resurrection is the first-fruits of the new creation (1 Corinthians 15:23). The same Christ will bring the full new heavens and new earth at His return (2 Peter 3:13, Revelation 21:1). The former things will not come into mind. Every tear will be wiped away. The Hebrews 13:8 anchor holds.

The consummation of Station 11 gathers all flesh to worship. The same Christ who was announced from Isaiah 1 through Isaiah 66 is the Christ who will be worshipped perpetually in the new heavens and new earth. The book's final vision (the redeemed worshipping from month to month and Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh coming to worship) is the destination toward which the whole prophetic arc has been pointing. The Hebrews 13:8 anchor holds.

Volume V's eleven stations are one long word about the same Christ. He is the widener of the covenant, the dweller

with the contrite, the fast's substance, the Redeemer, the light, the Anointed, the bridegroom, the Warrior, the answer to the rend-the-heavens prayer, the new creation's Creator, the consummation's worship-object. He is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Closing Meditation

One Christ Across Five Volumes

The series ends here. Five volumes. Sixty-five stations. Sixty-six chapters of Isaiah. One prophet. One book. One Christ.

The arc from Volume I's opening courtroom to Volume V's closing worship is one long word about the same Person. Isaiah 1:2 opened the series: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the LORD has spoken: Children have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against me." Isaiah 66:22-23 closes the book: "For as the new heavens and the new earth that I make shall remain before me, says the LORD, so shall your offspring and your name remain. From new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before me, declares the LORD."

The distance is comprehensive. From the courtroom where the rebellious children were being called to answer for their rebellion, to the perpetual worship of the eschatological community. From the covenant's indictment to the covenant's consummation. From the LORD's grieving over His people's unfaithfulness to the LORD's dwelling with His people forever. The distance is walked by the Person who holds the whole arc together: the Servant, the Anointed, the Redeemer, the King, the Warrior, the Bridegroom, the new-creation's Creator. The Christ.

Volume I walked fourteen stations from the courtroom to the highway. The throne-vision of Isaiah 6 introduced the Holy One of Israel whose train filled the temple, whose seraphim cried holy, whose glory required the coal on the prophet's lips. The Immanuel sign of Isaiah 7 was born to the virgin, God with us. The Davidic shoot of Isaiah 11 rose from the stump of Jesse, the Spirit of the LORD resting upon Him, the peaceable kingdom His inauguration. The cornerstone of

Isaiah 9 was laid in Zion, precious and tested. The Highway of Holiness of Isaiah 35 opened the way for the redeemed to walk on. Volume I established the Person who would carry the whole arc.

Volume II walked thirteen stations through the oracles against the nations and the great apocalypse. Babylon fell. Moab was judged. Egypt was disciplined. Tyre was chastened. The whole earth was shaken in the Isaiah 24-27 apocalypse. But through the shaking, the same Person emerged. The Rock of Ages (Isaiah 26:4). The great banquet on the mountain (Isaiah 25:6-8) where death itself would be swallowed up. The song of the vineyard restored (Isaiah 27:2-6). Volume II established the same Person as sovereign over the nations.

Volume III walked eleven stations through the six woes and the Hezekiah hinge. The cornerstone in Zion was named again (Isaiah 28:16). The King in His beauty was announced (Isaiah 33:17). The eyes of the blind were opened, the ears of the deaf were unstopped (Isaiah 35:5). The Hezekiah episode showed the LORD's deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib's hand, the same LORD who would ultimately deliver His people from every enemy. Volume III established the same Person as the King whose beauty would be seen and the LORD who delivered from Assyria as a foretaste of the greater deliverance to come.

Volume IV walked sixteen stations through the Book of Consolation. The comfort of Isaiah 40:1 was the LORD's address to His people. The voice in the wilderness prepared the way. The four Servant Songs unfolded: the gentle Servant in whom the LORD delighted (Isaiah 42), the Servant called from the womb whose mission extended to the ends of the earth (Isaiah 49), the Servant who set His face like flint and gave His back to those who strike (Isaiah 50), the Suffering Servant who bore our griefs and was pierced for our

transgressions (Isaiah 53). The bride was restored (Isaiah 54). The universal invitation was extended (Isaiah 55). Volume IV established the same Person as the Suffering Servant whose finished work produced the community's comfort and the world's invitation.

Volume V has walked eleven stations from the widening to the consummation. The house of prayer for all nations. The dual dwelling with the contrite. The true fast. The Redeemer coming to Zion. The light rising. The Anointed with the Spirit. The watchmen on the walls. The Warrior from Edom. The prayer that was answered. The new creation announced. The consummation of all flesh coming to worship. Volume V established the same Person as the eschatological consummator whose work produces the new heavens and new earth.

Sixty-five stations. Sixty-six chapters. One Christ. He is the Holy One of Israel who filled the temple in Volume I. He is the Rock of Ages of Volume II. He is the King in His beauty of Volume III. He is the Suffering Servant of Volume IV. He is the eschatological Consummator of Volume V. The same Person. Different aspects of the one Person's work, unfolded across the sixty-six chapters. The prophet was given the vision of one Christ, and the vision took sixty-six chapters to unfold in its fullness.

The five-volume method has walked each station in three layers: the Pentateuchal echo, the exile-and-return register (or in Volume V, the post-exilic community register shading into the eschatological horizon), and the apostolic appropriation. The method is grounded in the theological conviction that the prophet's book is not a stand-alone text; the book is embedded in the covenantal narrative that runs from Genesis to Revelation. The Mosaic constitution is the foundation. The prophet's book carries the covenant forward

from the Sinai foundation. The New Testament's apostolic writings reveal the whole trajectory's Christological consummation.

The three-layer method has revealed the density of the prophet's book at every station. Every image has Mosaic roots. Every announcement addresses a specific historical situation (the eighth-century Assyrian pressure, the exilic Babylonian condition, the post-exilic restoration). Every image and every announcement finds its Christological fulfillment in the New Testament's revelation of Christ. The prophet did not know how the fulfillment would happen; the prophet was given the vision and was faithful to speak what he was given. The unfolding of the fulfillment across the six centuries between Isaiah's ministry and Christ's incarnation, and the unfolding of the church's appropriation of the fulfillment across the two thousand years since, is the LORD's continued work with the vision the prophet was given.

The believer who has walked all five volumes has walked with the same Christ across the sixty-five stations. The Christ of Volume I's courtroom is the Christ of Volume V's consummation. The Christ who was announced under the Immanuel-sign is the Christ who will be worshipped by all flesh from month to month and Sabbath to Sabbath. The Christ whose finished work at the cross was named in Isaiah 53 is the Christ whose finished work produces the new heavens and new earth. The believer's relationship with this Christ is the deepest relationship the believer has, and the walk across the five volumes has been one long meditation on this Person.

The series has been written from the conviction that the Scripture belongs to every believer. The volumes have been distributed without cost through withoutcost.org, in the conviction that the LORD's word is His gift and should not be

sold. The Latin motto *gratis et amore* (freely and with love) names the posture. The series has been written from the study of Scripture under Mark Lanier's teaching at Champion Forest Baptist Church across nearly twenty years. The series has been written from the pastoral experience of preaching monthly at Houston's Open Door Mission, a ministry to homeless men, across more than twenty-six years. The author has not been to seminary. The author has walked with the LORD in the LORD's word and among the LORD's people.

The series closes with the recognition that the believer's walk with Christ has not ended with the reading of these five volumes. The believer's walk continues. The prophet's book will keep speaking. The Christ the prophet announced will keep being present with His people through the LORD's ordinary means of grace: the Scripture, the sacraments, the covenant community. The believer's life will keep unfolding under the same Christ whom the prophet was given to announce.

The final word of the series is the same word that has been the ground of every volume's closing. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Not one Christ then and another Christ now. Not one Christ for the pre-exilic community and another Christ for the New Covenant church. Not one Christ for the ancient reader and another Christ for the modern believer. One Christ. The same Christ. The Christ of Isaiah 1 and the Christ of Isaiah 66. The Christ of Volume I and the Christ of Volume V. The Christ of the reader's first day of faith and the Christ of the reader's last day on earth. The Christ of the eschatological consummation and the Christ of this present moment. He is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Yeshua ha-Mashiach etmol ve-hayom hu, u-le-olamim.

About the Author

Bobby Joseph writes to give the Scripture back to every believer. The conviction that God's word belongs to His people without cost has shaped the whole of his publishing work. His imprint is Sacred Cartography Press. His free-distribution site is withoutcost.org. His Latin motto is *gratis et amore*, freely and with love.

He has studied Scripture under Mark Lanier's Biblical Literacy teaching at Champion Forest Baptist Church in Houston for nearly twenty years. The methodological attention to the Pentateuchal foundations, the exilic register, and the apostolic appropriation that shapes this series has been developed through those years of study. He is grateful for Mark Lanier's pastoral and teaching ministry.

He has preached monthly for more than twenty-six years at Houston's Open Door Mission, a ministry to homeless men. The pastoral experience of preaching the LORD's word to men in the specific extremities that homelessness produces has shaped the pastoral voice of these volumes. The mercy-ethic developed in Volume V, Station 3 (Isaiah 58's true fast) is not academic material for him; the mercy-ethic is the pattern he has been trying to walk for more than a quarter century.

He has not been to seminary. The study he has done has been the ordinary Bible study of the ordinary believer, sustained across decades, in the company of the local congregation and under the pastoral teaching he has received. The series is written in the conviction that this pattern of Scripture-engagement is the pattern the LORD intends for every believer. The priesthood of all believers is not an abstract confession; the priesthood of all believers is the covenant community's practical shape.

His publishing work includes *The Geography of Redemption*, a five-volume series tracing the exile-journey-return pattern across Genesis through Malachi. It also includes *The Torah Blueprint*, a five-volume series on how each Gospel is architecturally built on a Pentateuchal book. And it includes several complete but not-yet-published series: *Between the Gates*, a four-volume series on the Ten Gates of Jerusalem; *Five Books of the Heart*, a Psalter companion; *The Words That Undo the Curse*, on Jesus's teachings reversing Genesis 3; and this series, *The Isaiah Blueprint: From Moses to the Messiah*, of which Volume V is the closing volume. Additional projects (*365 Days of Promise*, *Foundations: A Year in the Doctrines of Grace*, and the multi-volume *Church History* pair) are in development.

Volume V of *The Isaiah Blueprint* closes the series that has walked across sixty-six chapters of the prophet's book. The volume walks eleven stations from the widening of the covenant community (Isaiah 56) to the new creation consummation (Isaiah 66). The series-closing meditation gathers the arc of all five volumes into one Christ. He is the Servant announced in Volume I, developed across the Servant Songs of Volumes II through IV, and the eschatological consummator of Volume V. The same Christ, across sixty-five stations. The same Christ, from Isaiah 1:2 to Isaiah 66:23. The same Christ, yesterday and today and forever.

All volumes are available without cost at withoutcost.org. Print editions are available through Kindle Direct Publishing at material cost only. The material cost is recovered so that the print editions can continue to be produced; no profit is taken. The distribution model is deliberate. The LORD's word is His gift. His people should not be charged for what He has given.

The series closes with the doxology that has run under the whole work. To God alone the glory. The prophet was given

the vision. The Servant's work has been accomplished. The Spirit continues His illumination of the Scripture. The church continues her worship. The believer continues her walk. And through it all, the same Christ is being confessed as the LORD who was, and is, and is to come.

gratis et amore.

Soli Deo gloria.