

## *Isaiah 56-58*

### **intro to Is 56-66**

- chs. 40-55's combo of conviction and 'comfort' (revisited)
- Motyer suggests the title 'characteristics of a waiting people'– combining the call to the faithful remnant to seek blessings within obedience and to look forward in anticipation of God's new activities
  - the latter most notably in the revelation of 'the Anointed Conqueror' (63:1-6; vs. ch. 40-55's Servant)– whose double task is salvation and vengeance<sup>1</sup> (w/ app. to Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> coming)
- also follows Ch. 55's invitation; MH's 'Chapter 55 summoned all alike to the free banquet; 56:1-8 portrays the gathering people in which all are at one, all are equal, all are welcome in the house of prayer.'

### **56:1-8** (read 56:1-3)

- 1a's be just and righteous (1:17)– 1b's because God's salvation and righteousness 'will soon be revealed' (46:13, 55:6)
  - 'salvation' speaks to physical (57:1-2) and spiritual deliverance
  - should motivate *their/our* righteousness
  - w/ app. to us, Motyer's '56:1 reflects precisely where the church stands today; looking back to the once-for-all redemption at Calvary (52:13-53:12) and awaiting a final divine act which will rescue the church from sin, failure, and oppression...'
- 2's 'blessed is the man who does this', incl. 'holds it [4b's 'covenant?'] fast', 'keeps the Sabbath' (56:6), and 'keeps his hand from doing any evil'
  - 'keeps' \* 2– the former, positive; the latter, negative
  - Sabbath as key for Israel in general<sup>2</sup> (Ez 20:12,20-21)
    - see: Sabbath motivated by God's activity/rest in Creation (Ex 20)– implying the blessing of a rest-- and their redemption from slavery in Egypt (in Dt 5; weekends?!)
  - here, Sabbath as key for Isaiah– at least as a barometer of faithfulness (58:13-14, 66:23's conclusion; Jer 17:21-27)
    - loving one's neighbor in 1's justice and righteousness as the key positive C; here, loving God positively reflected by one's attitude toward the Sabbath
    - Motyer's 'Nothing would be a clearer outward demonstration of

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<sup>1</sup> See: 61:2 and 59:16-17's inclusio with 63:4-5.

<sup>2</sup> Many see this pointing to a post-exilic setting (Neh 10:31, 13:15). But also a key pre-exilic theme (1:13; Jer 17:19-27, Ez 20:12,20, 22:8,26, Amos 8:5). See: Motyer, p. 464-465.

leaving the world and joining the Lord's people than the adoption of an institution which necessitated the wholesale reorganizing of life around the requirements and worship of Israel's God.'

-note also: emphasis here (esp. in context) may imply more importance for the Sabbath than is conveyed by the NT alone

-3's even for foreigners/Gentiles and eunuchs; Motyer's 'striking cases in point of the all-embracing inclusiveness of verse 2' and 8's 'still others' beyond Israel (49:6)

-aliens- vs. Ex 12:43 (but 12:48-49), Dt 23:3,7-8's special cases (Gal 3:28)

-eunuchs vs. Lev 21:20's not allowed to be priests (I Pet 2:5,9's spiritual priesthood) and Dt 23:1 (Acts 8:26-39; see also: the irony that he was reading Is 53- hope he kept reading!)

-> earlier reqs not about exclusion per se, but picturing purity and trying to maintain Israel's identity; Motyer's 'This is a vital task, for if the people of God lose distinctiveness, there is nothing for anyone to join nor any good reason for seeking to do so!'

-> 4-5's promise to faithful eunuchs they will be given 'a memorial' and 'an everlasting name' (impossible physically!; 3's 'dry tree') within God's 'temple and its walls' (place denote rest that is 5's 'better than' children)

-> 6-7a's promise to foreigners: will be brought 'to my holy mountain' (11:9) and given 'joy'; their offerings will be accepted in 'a house of prayer for *all* nations' (I Kings 8:41-43; quoted by Christ in Mt 21:13, Acts 10:34-35, Eph 2:19)

-> 56:1-8's vision/call vs. 56:9-57:21's reality...

### **56:9-57:2<sup>3</sup>**

-9's invite to the 'beasts of the field/forest' to 'come' \* 2 (55:1, 56:12, 57:3) and 'devour'<sup>4</sup> (Lev 26:22, Dt 28:26, 32:24, II Kings 17:25)

-see: Babylon-- and earlier, Assyria-- as God's (unconscious) instruments of wrath

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<sup>3</sup> On 56:9-57:21, Motyer: 'The style as well as the substance of these oracles proclaims disorder. The abrasiveness of the subject is matched by a sort of savagery in the Hebrew, especially in the harshness and irony of the opening oracle.'

<sup>4</sup> Isaiah uses the ordinary, polite term 'to eat' here. Motyer's 'After all, they are being asked to the palace!'

- bookending with 1-2's righteous<sup>5</sup> being 'taken away' (\*2), to be removed from evil and thus, 'enter into peace' and 'find rest'<sup>6</sup> (I Cor 10:13, Phil 1:21,23)
  - future (incl. pre-trib or mid-trib 'Rapture') or present (if under Manasseh)
  - on 1b's 'no one understands [this], Motyer's 'Behind the experience which the world fails to understand, the instructed eye sees a different purpose and another outcome. The righteous [are] not perishing, but entering peace.' (w/ app. to the Christian view of death)
  - as both compassion to them and wrath/punishment to the world
    - MH's 'It is a sign that God intends war when he calls home his ambassadors.'
- 10-12's 'watchmen' and 'shepherds' of Israel– two aspects of leadership, dealing with external threats and more internal needs, but instead, a massive failure of character
  - 10's blind (Mt 15:14), mute, lazy dreamers<sup>7</sup> (29:9-10)
  - 11a's 'dogs with mighty appetites' (vs. 52:8); 11b's 'shepherds': ignorant, selfish, and greedy
    - not exactly the servant/leader model (53:6; Ez 34)
    - on their greed, MH's 'they feed *not* the flock, but fleece it'
  - > combining 10-11, MH's 'As they were blind watchmen, that could not discern the danger, so they were dumb dogs, that would not give warning of it.'
  - Motyer's 'We are invited to sense the ludicrousness of it, to laugh if it were not tragic.'
- 12's drunk optimists (28:7; Lk 12:18-19)
  - Motyer's 'Nothing can recapture the taut anger of the Hebrew but even in translation the biting irony...is unmistakable. By the time the poem reaches verse 12, the leadership believes itself never to have had it so good, and we hear delighted voices calling to feasting, promising unending supply. They do not know that the wild beasts have already been invited.' (they don't know who's on the guest list)

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<sup>5</sup> 'Righteous' is the first and last word in the Hebrew in 57:1-2 (as 'wicked' in 57:20-21). See: Motyer, p. 471, for the proper order of translation. The subjects here alternate between singular and plural (NIV keeps it vague but plural) to emphasize both the universal and individual application of these principles.

<sup>6</sup> 'As they lie in death' vs. 56:10's beds of sloth for the leaders (same verb) and 57:7-8's beds of lust/adultery/idolatry.

<sup>7</sup> Each of 10-11's four stanzas contains the same phrase– 'lit. 'they do not know'.

**57:3-13** (read 57:3-10)

-> 1-2's righteous contrasted with 3-21's largely unrighteous, incl. 4a's 'whom are you mocking?' (28:9,14)- messing with Isaiah, the faithful remnant, and behind that, God!

-Motyer's 'Plainly, the ideal of 56:1-8 is far from being realized.'

-3's 'sons of a sorceress...adulterers and prostitutes'; 4b's 'brood of rebels, the offspring of liars' (vs. 56:3-5's eunuchs!)

-adulterers/prostitutes/liars speaks to character/identity vs. occasional actions

-3's 'sons' and 4's 'brood' imply a generational problem

-adultery and sorcery as MH's 'departing from God and dealing with the devil'

-adultery as breaking the covenant; prostitution as entering into an illicit contract

-> common language for idolaters<sup>8</sup> (1:21, 23:15-17)- sexual sin/infidelity and divination/rebellion (here, gods of wood/stone and national alliances- revisited)

-5-8a's idolatry: 5a's 'burn with lust among the oaks and...spreading trees' (Dt 12:2, I Kings 14:23, Jer 2:20) on 7's 'high and lofty hills' (vs. 6:1, 57:15!)

-trees and hills as practical meeting places and closer to nature/gods; also denotes public and brazen sin

-5b's 'sacrifice (lit. 'slaughter/butcher'- not sacrifice!) your children' ('ravines' may refer to the Valley of Gehenna)- alluding to worshipping Molech (II Kings 23:10, Ps 106:37-38, Jer 32:35)

-from 5a's life/fertility to 5b's death/slaughter

-8a's 'pagan symbols...behind your doors'- 8's households/private in combo with 5,7's nature/public

-not so much about secrecy (see: 7's hills!) as denoting the key to one's household- what one communicates to outsiders and to one's children (vs. Dt 6:9!)

-> 6-7's idols as their 'portion', their 'lot', the 'bed [they had] made'- given that they had offered sacrifices to them

-> 13a's 'when you cry out for help, let your collection of idols save you' (44:17; Jud 10:13-14)

-vs. 13b's blown away by the wind or even by breath

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<sup>8</sup> But only in pre-exilic references.

-8b-10's nations/alliances: 8b's 'forsaking me, you uncovered your bed...climbed into it and opened it wide' (Ez 16,23)

-8c's 'made a pact with those whose beds you love'<sup>9</sup>

-9a's 'Molech' in NIV (56:5b) as Heb. 'melek', meaning 'king' (NASB)- as Ahaz with Assyria and Hezekiah with Babylon

-9b's 'sent your ambassadors far away'- even to 'the grave' (as 28:14-15!)

-fig. for as far/hard they looked for worldly help-- and Motyer's 'a straight reminder that when the people of God seek strength and security in and thru the world, all they achieve is death.'

-> 10's 'wearied' but refused to say it was 'hopeless'-- and 'found renewal' (of a sort) in their 'strength' (lit. 'the life of [their] hand'; vs. 40:28-31)

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<sup>9</sup> Wrt 'looked on their nakedness', 'nakedness' as lit. 'hand'- which can be taken as a phallic symbol, but in context, fits well with its more common usage as a euphemism for power (Motyer, p. 473). He also notes that 'hand' can refer to a monument/memorial, alluding to enduring name and fame.

-> 11's why 'neither remembered [God] nor pondered [all] this? 11a's fear; 11b's God's silence<sup>10</sup>; 12's false 'righteousness/works' (ch. 58)

-> all this vs. 13c's transition: 'the man who makes me his refuge will inherit the land and possess my holy mountain'...

### 57:14-21

-14's transition (cont'd): '...prepare the road! Remove the obstacles...' (40:3-5)

-> from 3-13's prostitute and her family to 15-19's God and His family...

-15a's God as 'the high and lofty one...who lives forever, whose name is holy' and who lives in 'a high and holy place' (6:1-5, 33:5, 52:13)

-> but 15b's also lives 'with him who is contrite (lit. 'crushed'- 53:5,10) and lowly in spirit' (66:2b)- to 'revive' \* 2 their heart and spirit

-beautiful contrast, but also, given the emphasis on His holiness, Motyer's 'When the poem goes on to speak of others being taken as the family of God to share his dwelling, it is clear that this is not done by any reduction of the standards or the dignity of God, nor thru any adjustment or compromise of his nature. Somehow there are those who are brought to share in his holiness.'

-> how so? 15b's 'contrite' response/heart and 16-18's Motyer's 'an unexplained restraint within his own nature'- over the tension between His holiness and 16's His mercy<sup>11</sup> and 18's His grace (54:8-9):

-16a's mercy: He will not always be angry; MH's 'It is not promised that he will never be angry with his people, for their sins are displeasing to him, or that he will never contend with them, for they must expect the rod; but he will not contend [with them] forever...As he is not soon angry, so he is not long angry.'

-despite 17's 'greed' (as 56:11's leaders) and rebellion (57:4)

-on the extent of God's anger, but the subsequent failure to respond, Motyer's 'The history of humankind before God has not eased *the divine dilemma*...On the side of God, [our sin] produced anger ('enraged'), active opposition ('punished'), and withdrawal of divine fellowship and favor ('hid my face'). But none of this effected a change in sinful man who 17b's 'kept

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<sup>10</sup> Again, strongly implies a pre-exilic date. Motyer: 'Over what period can it truly be said that the Lord seemed inactive while his people pursued other gods and flirted with political alliances? The exile is excluded because it was itself a divine action against these very sins- never again could the people say the Lord had done nothing! Again, neither in exile nor in the post-exilic period were these sins in evidence to invite action. But during the pre-exilic period, the people could look back on...[their ignoring] prophetic warnings (5:12-19, 28:9-10; Ps 50:21).'

<sup>11</sup> Recognizes 16b's would crush us if not.

on in his willful ways'...'

-> 18a's 'have seen his ways', but 18b's grace: God would 'heal/guide/restore comfort to him'

-Motyer's 'Suddenly all is different...*not* because man has changed (17b,18a's 'ways'), *not* because the Lord has decided to overlook sin (18a's 'have seen'), but for a reason undeclared, something that is true in the heart of God and true to the nature of God.' (looking back to ch. 53; 12:1, 19:22)

-MH's 'See how God's goodness takes occasion from man's badness to appear so much the more illustrious; and where sin has abounded, grace much more abounds. God's reasons of mercy are fetched from within himself, for in us there appears nothing but what is provoking.'

-> 19a's 'creating praise (lit. 'fruit') and replacing mourning'<sup>12</sup> (Heb 13:15); 19b's establishing 'peace' \* 2- superlative 'shalom' (Eph 2:17; vs. Jer 6:13-14, 8:10-11); 19c's summary: 'I will heal them'

-19c's 'them as lit. 'him'; Motyer's 'As throughout verses 15-17, the references remain to the singular...Salvation is individually targeted and individually embraced.'

-> note: 18c's comfort (40:1), 19a's praise, and 19b's peace necessarily follow 16-18a's grace, 18b's healing and guidance

-> 20a's 'but...'

-20's '...the wicked are like the tossing sea, which cannot rest [even though it's offered], whose waves cast up mire and mud' (Jer 49:23, Eph 4:14, Jas 1:6-8)

-to themselves and to others (see: effect of a hurricane, even 100's of miles away); in terms of passions/lusts, guilt, selfishness; subject to forces within its nature; a lot of motion but never makes progress per se

-solutions: focus on the horizon, easier to get thru (effect of the motion is lessened); standing in the center of the boat as the least motion

-21's 'there is no peace for the wicked' (48:22<sup>13</sup>)- no grace or peace, in life or death (vs. 57:1-2)

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<sup>12</sup> The NIV is apparently inaccurate here- what Motyer calls 'large-scale interpretative work'. See: NASB and Motyer, p. 477 on the lit. trans.: 'I will make comfort complete for him and for his mourners, creating the fruit of the lips'.

<sup>13</sup> This can be taken to finish a section from chs. 49-57 (w/ ch. 48 ending the same way).

**58:1-7** (1:10-20's combo of religious observance and remarkable sin; Mt 23)

-1's 'trumpet' (Ex 19:19, 20:18) Israel's rebellion– despite...

-2a,c's they 'seek me out' (55:6) daily and ask me for just decisions; they 'seem eager to know my ways...and seem eager for God to come near them' (29:13)– 2b's 'as if they were a nation that does what is right and has not forsaken the commands of its God.'

-in practice, daily, committed ('seek'), devoted (lit. 'it is me they seek' as emphatic), and 'eager' \* 2; and in purpose, they seemingly want to know, do, learn, and to want the presence of God

-but religious observance and ritual (ironically, idolizing the rituals!) without obedience or relationship (w/ app.)– instead, seeking to manipulate God...

-3a's fasting and supposed humility– but they worry that God has not 'seen/noticed (!)' (Job 21:14-15, Mal 3:14)

-indicative of pride, self-seeking, rights/demands mentality

-MH's 'It is common for unhumiliated hearts to be proud of their professions of humiliation.' (Lk 18:11-12)

-fasting meant to honor God and to humble (vs. honor) ourselves

-II Tim 3:5's form of godliness without the power; even the Ninevites/Assyrians did better than this– at least for a time (Jonah 3:\_\_\_)!

-MH's 'They thought God should take great notice of them, and own himself a debtor *to them* for their services.'

-as structured in Canaanite religion with adherents pressuring gods to respond by performing their functions

-all this as unsolicited since the only fast commanded in the OT was for the annual Day of Atonement (Lev 16:29,31)

-Motyer's 'The essence of Israelite religion, however, [was their] response. Not doing things to influence the Lord but doing them to obey him; not works looking for rewards but faith acting in obedience.'

-> 3b-4a's 'yet...'

-while fasting 'you do as you please and exploit all your workers' (3:14-15, 10:2; Dt 24:14-15, Neh 5:5, Jer 34:8-11, Jas 5:1-6)

-'your fasting ends in quarreling and strife' and violence (!)

-MH's 'though they seemed to afflict their souls, they still gratified their lusts as much as ever...[and] instead of judging themselves, which is the proper work of a fast-day, they condemned one another.'

-lit. 'you fast for quarreling'; Motyer's 'The irony is heavy: since their fasts always end in a fight, surely that is what they must be 'for'! What was

- intended to influence God obviously brought out the worst in the human spirit, for one can easily imagine the edginess which would result if a basically unspiritual family spent the day together in increasing hunger!
- > 4b's 'you cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high' (1:12-15); Motyer's 'It has no currency in heaven.'
  - > 5a's 'Is this the kind of fast I have chosen, only a day for a man to humble himself?'; 5c's 'Is that what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord?' (Zech 7:5)
    - 5b's merely bowing like a reed and lying in sackcloth and ashes
      - on the former, Motyer's 'as automatic and uncomprehending as a reed before a wind' (w/ app. to ritual)
      - on the latter, apparently just for effect; could have been useful, but only added to the performance (Mt 6:16-18)
    - MH's 'He intimates that this was so far from being a cover or excuse for their sin that really it was an aggravation of it.'
  - > 6a's 'Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen...'
    - 6b's 'to loose the chains of injustice...to set the oppressed free' (1:16-17)
    - 7a's to share/provide food/shelter/clothing for the hungry/poor/naked (Job 31:17-23, Ez 18:7,16, Mt 25:35-40)
      - vs. 7b's 'turn away from your own flesh and blood'– family, but more broadly, the family of God (I Tim 5:8, etc.)
  - > speaks to a just society, individual needs, and caring for one's family<sup>14</sup>
    - Motyer's 'The assumption...is condemned...that it is possible to be truly religious and socially indifferent...the Lord is not rejecting the practice of fasting but is insisting that a fast day validates itself by being filled with [good] works...'

**58:8-14** (skim 58:8-12; read 58:13-14)

- > 8a's 'then...'
  - 8a's 'your light (42:6!) will break forth (as flood waters– Gen 7:11) like the dawn'– a new beginning
  - 8b's 'your healing will quickly appear'
  - 8c's 'your righteousness will go before you' and the Lord's glory 'will be your rear guard' (52:12; Rom 13:12, II Cor 6:7)
  - 9a's 'you will call/cry for help'– and 'the Lord will answer' (30:19)
- > 9b's if they get rid of oppression– now, personal (vs. 58:6's social): 'pointing (lit.

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<sup>14</sup> Motyer notes that 'is it possible to be socially sensitive and domestically short-sighted'.

'sending out') fingers' (in contempt or accusation– Pr 6:13) and malicious talk; 10a's if they 'satisfy the needs' (see: LJ's empower) the hungry and oppressed, then...

-10b's 'your light will rise in the darkness and your night will become like noonday'– a picture of sight and guidance

-11a's 'the Lord will guide you always'

-11b's He will 'satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land' (35:7, 49:10) and 'strengthen your frame' (40:29)– external provision and internal durability

-11c's compared to a 'well-watered garden' (1:30) and a never-failing spring (Jn 4:14)– continual supplies as in the Wilderness and Canaan (Ps 63:1)

-on Motyer's 'divine supply in times of need'– 'The thought is not what satisfaction the Lord will give but where he will give it– when everything is at its bleakest.'

-> 12's they would rebuild the ancient ruins/foundations/streets<sup>15</sup> (Zech 8:3-5)– and receive a good name and honor (MH's 'Good works shall be recompensed with a good name.')

-> 13's if they kept the Sabbath– vs. own agendas (Amos 8:5) or 'speaking idle words'– and viewing it as a 'delight' (vs. a duty/burden– as 2-3's fasting; Ps 1:2), then...

-14's 'you will find your joy in the Lord...ride on the heights...feast on your inheritance'<sup>16</sup> (33:16, 61:10)– MH's 'comfort, honor and profit'

-3-5's 'fast' vs. 14b's 'feast' resulting from 6-14a's 'true' fast; Motyer's 'The Lord is more interested in enjoyment of his blessings thru obedience than in self-imposed deprivations.' (I Cor 1:23)

-> Sabbath as lit. or symbolic importance (56:1-2); Motyer's 'the symbol of a whole life and heart devoted to the Lord...It is a real test of heart-religion to give a whole day to God and to do it with delight.'

-> interesting that Isaiah leaves undefined the 'proper' ways to observe the Sabbath– trying to leave as much freedom as possible and perhaps no need to correct abuses inherent with contemporary fasting

-not 'doing as you please' or 'going your own way'-- but if centered on God, one's choices of what to do and where to go that day will be a 'delight'! (Ps 37:4; see: Christ's healings)

-whether it results in delight in the Lord as the test of the spirit of the law

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<sup>15</sup> Certainly reasonable to see a post-exile setting here, but 1:6 indicates pre-exile is also reasonable.

<sup>16</sup> Note: inclusio with 58:1 of God's voice and blessing vs. accusation of rebellion.

## Isaiah 59:1-63:6

### 59:1-8

-1's 'Surely the arm/ear of the Lord is not too short/dull to save/hear' (40:10, 51:9; Num 11:23)

→ able and willing– but 2's 'your iniquities have separated you from your God' (1:15; Dt 31:17, Ps 66:18, Pr 28:9)

-3a's 'your hands/fingers<sup>17</sup> are stained with blood/guilt' (Ez 7:23)– actions with external and internal results

-3b's have spoken evil– speech (6:5)

-4a's 'no one calls for justice'

-may refer to legal corruption– injustice not fixed, punished (or even recognized?)– or simply to failing to stand up for what is right

-4b's 'no one pleads his case with integrity'– vs. 4c's 'rely on empty arguments (Heb. 'tohu') and...lies'

→ 4d's 'they conceive trouble and give birth to evil' (33:11; Job 15:35, Ps 7:14, Jas 1:15)

-see: 5-6a's spider's web as weak and cannot cover as clothing (Gen 3's fig leaves; Job 8:14-15) and viper's eggs which can cause death– as pictures of ineffective plans (28:20) and harmful products

-on the former, MH's 'Their thoughts are vain, like weaving the spider's web, which the poor silly animal takes a great deal of pains about, and, when all is done, it is a weak, insignificant thing...which the broom sweeps away in an instant.'

-but significant within its own world—and bothersome elsewhere (Pr 30:27-28!)—as the latter (MH's 'Happy are those that have least to do with such men.')

-6b's evil/violent deeds; 7a's 'feet rush into sin...swift to shed innocent blood' (Pr 1:16, Jer 22:17)

-7b's 'evil thoughts/ways' (vs. 55:8; Gen 6:5)– back to root causes

-8's no peace and don't know peace– given injustice and 'crooked roads'; Motyer's '[Their] future holds no prospect of peace because the road cannot lead there.'

→ 59:7-8 quoted in Rom 3:15-17 as Paul argues that 'all have sinned...'

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<sup>17</sup> 'Fingers' denote direct and detailed involvement.

### **59:9-13** (skim)

-9a,11b's justice/righteousness are far from 'us' (Isaiah identifying with the people-- e.g., 6:5); ch. 53's Servant has not yet arrived

-9b-10's look for light but only find darkness and blindness (9:2, 49:6, 60:1,3; Dt 28:29, Job 5:14)

-blindness includes 'without eyes'—reminiscent of Zedekiah; more broadly, Motyer's 'to have no eyes is, humanly speaking, an irreversible condition, which can only be mended by an act of new creation.'

-11a's 'growl like bears', but 'moan mournfully like doves'— angry and frustrated over the conditions of Life and their lives (Rom 8:22-23, incl. Motyer's 'Isaiah got there ahead of Paul.')

-> 12a's 'for...'

-12's sinfulness; 13's 'rebellion and treachery against the Lord'— stirring up oppression and revolt thru lies

-but at least 12b's 'acknowledge'— at least by Isaiah (Ezra 9:6-7) and the faithful/repentant remnant

### **intro to 59:14-63:6**

-> 56:1 promises that God salvation and righteousness will 'soon be revealed'; since then, table-setting with God's people as threatened by opponents and struggling with sin

-> 59:14-63:6 covers God's response to the sin and rebellion among many vs. the faithful few— salvation and judgment/vengeance

-thru Motyer's 'the emergence of an unexpected individual'— the Anointed Conqueror who is introduced as God's agent and begins to speak for himself as the passage continues

-four more 'songs' (with tailpieces) paralleling those of the Servant<sup>18</sup>

### **59:14-21**

-14-15a's mess: poetic description of justice, righteousness, truth-- and honesty being absent, and even driven away ('whoever shuns evil becomes a prey')

-on the latter, MH's 'It is crime enough with them for a man not to do as they do, and they treat him as an enemy who will not partake with them in their wickedness.'

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<sup>18</sup> See: Motyer, p. 490 for details.

- > 15b-16a's divine reaction: 'the Lord...was displeased/appalled' (vs. 52:14!) that 'there was no justice...[and] no one to intervene' (63:5; Ez 22:30, Rev 5:4-6)
  - on the need for intervention, MH's 'either none to intercede with God, to stand in the gap by prayer to turn away his wrath, or rather, none to interpose for the support of justice and truth, which were trampled upon and run down...'
  - on the former, W&Z's 'Only God could help her. This is true of salvation in any era. No one can save himself.'
  - > 16b's 'so his own arm worked *salvation* in righteousness (52:10)
  - 17's uniform: the 'breastplate' of righteousness, 'helmet of salvation', 'the garments of *vengeance*' (63:1-4), and the 'cloak' of zeal (Eph 6:14-17, I Thess 5:8)
    - MH's 'It is called the armor of God because he wore it first and so fitted it for us.' (except the garment of vengeance!)
  - 18's will repay them (even to 'the islands') according to what they have done- in wrath and retribution
  - 19b's 'like a pent-up flood' (or trans. 'when his enemies come at Him like a flood, He will put them to flight with a breath'<sup>19</sup>)
- > 19a's all people will fear/revere the Lord's name/glory
- > 20's 'the Lord will come to Zion, to those...who repent' (Mal 3:1)
  - 21's (new) 'covenant': 'my Spirit' will be on him (11:1-3, 42:1, 44:3, 48:16, 61:1) and His words will be with their descendants forever (53:10; Gen 3:15, 22:18, Joel 2:28-29, Mt 7:11, Jn 14:26, 16:13)
    - 'my' covenant (42:6, 49:8, 54:10, 55:3; Jer 31:31-34, Ez 36:27) to 'them' (plural)- working through 'you' (singular)
      - on 'my', Motyer's 'It is the Lord's because it is his idea that there should be a covenanted relationship and because it contains nothing, whether promises or stipulations, except what is his.'
      - 'you' as Christ, beginning the evolution from God to His agent- the Anointed Conqueror

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<sup>19</sup> Motyer notes that 'no translation here is free of difficulty; each possibility is apt.'

### 60:1-3

-1a's 'Arise, shine...'

-1b,2b's 'for your light has come and the glory of the Lord rises upon you' (Jn 12:35, Acts 26:18, Rom 2:19, Col 1:13, I Pet 2:9)

-2a's in the face of 'thick darkness' over 'the peoples'

-MH's 'What a foil there shall be to this light...darkness that might be felt, like that of Egypt, that shall overspread the people, yet the church, like Goshen, shall have light at the same time.'

-> 3's 'nations/kings will come to your light/the brightness of your dawn' (2:3, 52:15; Mt 28:19, Rev 21:24)

-on 'nations/kings' along with 2's 'peoples', Motyer's 'This is not merely a Zion experience, it is aimed at a world need...Regarding salvation, what the Lord does for Zion he does for the world.'

-> true in a very small sense post-exile Israel, but fulfilled in the NT church or in the Millennium; see: taking Jerusalem as lit. or fig. (Eph 2:19, Heb 12:22, Rev 1's lampstands)

### 60:4-22 (skim)

-4a's summary: 'all assemble and come to you'

-4b's 'sons (come) from afar' (60:9) and daughters escorted back (49:22)

-5a's 'radiant' and joyful

-9b's their splendor would result in 'the honor' of God, 15's 'I will make you the everlasting pride and the joy of all generations', and 21b's 'the shoot' (11:1) He had planted would display His 'splendor' (5x in this passage)

-from 21b's 'shoot' to 22a's population boom (51:2, 54:3; Lev 26:8)

-MH's 'The Christian church was...very small...at first- the number of their names was once 120; yet it became a thousand [thousands].'

-5b-6,9,11's world's wealth brought to them (Zech 14:14, Rev 21:26)

-5's 'seas' as lit. or fig. for that which opposes God

-6a's Midianite camels (9:4; Jud 6:1-8); 6b's Sheba (as I Kings 10:9); and 6-

7's mention of obscure Arabian desert tribes to denote all people

-wealth brought from a distance alludes to OT practice of bringing money vs. animals for sacrifice/festivals (Dt 14:24-26)

-7,9,13,17's temple/Solomon refs: 7's flocks for sacrifice; 9's Tarshish silver & gold (as I Kings 10:22); 13's lumber for 'my sanctuary' (I Kings 5); 17a's material upgrade for temple/palace (I Kings 10:21,27, Rev 21:18-21)

-10-16's focus on new op for relationship with foreigners/enemies: 10a's 'foreigners will rebuild your walls and their kings will serve you' (see: Cyrus/Darius); 14's 'the sons of your oppressors will come bowing before you' (Rev 3:9); 16a's 'nursed at royal breasts'— intimacy and the best nourishment (see also: 6b's 'proclaiming the praises of God')

-vs. 15's 'forsake and hated', Motyer's 'Such a transformation of relationship between Zion and the world can only be the work of God.'

-14's 'oppressors...bowing' meant fig./spiritual; Motyer's 'stating the truth within the political terms dictated by the metaphor of the city...The reality expressed is that of glad submission to the truth and recognition of the place due to those who have been its trustees and ministers.'

→ points to other purposes: 10b's 'though in anger I struck you, in favor I will show you compassion; 16b's 'then you will know that I...am your Savior/Redeemer'

-> but 12's those who fail to serve will 'perish' (Ps 2:12, Lk 19:27, II Thess 1:6-9); Motyer's 'The dark pivot of the whole poem (ch. 60)...To enter is to be blessed; to stand aloof is to perish.'

-17-22's refs to Revelation 21-22's NJ (Heb 12:22):

-17b's peace, 18a's absence of violence or destruction

-18b's 'walls' as 'salvation' and 'gates' as 'praise' (11a's gates open a la Rev 21:25)

-20b's no more sorrow (Rev 21:4)

-21a's righteousness of the people and 'will possess the land forever' ->

22b's all this done 'swiftly...in its time' (as Rev's 'soon')

-19-20a's God as their light (60:1-3; vs. need for sun or moon; Jas 1:17, Rev 21:23-24, 22:5)

-MH's 'such light as will swallow up the light of the sun as easily as the sun does that of a candle'

-more fig., as a picture of eternal happiness; MH's 'that shall not be thy sun which is sometimes eclipsed, often clouded, and though it shine ever so bright, ever so warm, will certainly set and leave thee in the dark, in the cold, in a few hours.'

### 61:1-3's reappearance of the Anointed One

-1a's 'the Spirit of the Lord is on me...' (59:21; as the Servant- 42:1)

-note: the Trinity mentioned within one phrase!

-1b's 'because the Lord has anointed/sent me to...' (Mt 3:16-17)

-1c's 'preach the good news to the poor'

-1d's 'bind up the brokenhearted'

-1e's 'proclaim freedom for the captives' (Jer 34:8; Lev 25:10's Jubilee-- and 2's 'year')

-1f's 'release...the blind/prisoners...from darkness'

-2a's 'proclaim the year of the Lord's favor-- salvation (49:8) and the day of vengeance of our God' (34:8)

- 'year' vs. 'day' indicates fig. proportion of length/quickness (63:4)

-2b-3a's 'comfort all who mourn and provide for those who grieve in Zion'

-what only God can 'provide' within grief

-3b's '...to bestow on them...'

-3c's 'a crown of beauty instead of ashes'

- 'instead of' as 'exact equivalence' or 'substitution'

- 'beauty...ashes' as Heb. 'pheer' & 'epher'-- nearly identical!

-> MH's 'God will turn their sorrow into joy as quickly and as easily as you can transpose a letter; for he speaks and it is done.'

-3d's 'the oil of gladness instead of mourning' (Ps 45:7)

-3e's 'a garment of praise (vs. vengeance!) instead of despair'

-garment implies complete covering

-on praise, MH's 'Where God gives the oil of joy he gives the garment of praise... Whatever we have the joy of, God must have the praise and glory of.'

-> 3f's 'They will be called oaks of righteousness'- planted by God (ch. 5), 'for the display of His splendor' (accomplishing 60:9b,21)

-the other two refs to 'large trees' (1:29, 57:5) represent false religion; Motyer's 'But they have been recovered to the Lord, transplanted and...established...in his garden.'

-w/ app. to us redeeming stuff

-> relates directly to Isaiah and hopefully us in one sense, but fulfilled in Christ- as preacher/prophet, healer, deliverer, in proclaiming peace to his friends and war against his enemies, bringing comfort and transforming lives

-accomplishing God's announced agenda (59:16-21)

- > in Lk 4:16-22 (Mt 11:2-5's response to John the B), Christ quotes 61:1-2a!
  - MH's 'As Isaiah was authorized and directed to proclaim liberty to the Jews in Babylon, so was Christ...to publish a more joyful Jubilee to a lost world.'
  - but stops mid-sentence here (11:2)- reserved for his 2<sup>nd</sup> coming (Rev 19:11-20; Jn 3:17 vs. Jn 5:22-29) and Heaven!
    - Motyer's 'What Isaiah sees as a double-faceted ministry, the Lord Jesus apportions respectively to his 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> comings, the work of the Servant and of the Anointed Conqueror.'

**61:4-11's** promises fulfilled in Israel and esp. in the Church thru Christ (skim)

- 4's rebuild, restore, and renew that which had been ruined and devastated; MH's 'Those whom God sets at liberty he sets to work.' (Ps 116:16, Lk 1:74-75)
- 5's foreigners would work for them
- 6a's 'you will be named priests/ministers' of the Lord (extended to Gentiles in 66:21; Ex 19:6, I Pet 2:5,9)
- 6b's wealth from the world
- 7's 'double portion' (vs. 40:2) and 'rejoice in their inheritance' vs. shame/disgrace
- 8c's 'reward them' and 'make an everlasting covenant with them' (59:21)
- 9's fame 'among the nations' and acknowledgment that they are God's blessed people (reflecting glory to God as well)
- 10a's 'I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God'- here, as Christ (53:11's 'satisfied'; Heb 12:2's 'joy') or God's people
- 10b's 'clothed/arrayed me with garments/a robe of salvation/righteousness' (23:18, fulfilling/transferring 59:16-17- as 49:2's prep for the Servant)
  - 10c's as a bridegroom and a priest; as a bride w/ her jewels (Ps 19:5, Rev 19:6-8)
- > 11's conclusion: as a garden, God will 'make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations' (53:2 for Christ, but in context, the beauty of the Church and His followers)
- > motivated by 8a's 'For I, the Lord, love justice; I hate robbery and iniquity'- latter lit. trans. as 'robbery in burnt offering'<sup>20</sup>
  - Motyer's 'surprising but makes a point...There were no half measures about the burnt offering (symbolizes...); it was all or nothing. The Lord required unreserved commitment from his people, and anything less was robbery.' And then along with 8b's 'in my faithfulness', Motyer's 'God now recalls this in order to illustrate the fact that in *his* faithfulness, he will himself hold nothing back when he recompenses his people.'

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<sup>20</sup> See: Motyer, p. 503.

**62:1-12** (skim)

-1a's 'For Zion's/Jerusalem's sake, I will not keep/remain silent/quiet'– Isaiah speaking?

-1b's 'till her righteousness/salvation shines out like the dawn/a blazing torch'

-2's to be seen by nations and kings– a new glory and a new name given by God

-3's as a 'crown of splendor' in God's hand (28:5; Zech 9:16)

-Motyer's 'To be in his hand is to be kept, guarded, and upheld; to be a crown is to be that which expresses kingliness...The Lord's people will be [a] sign that [God] is king.'

-4-5's name changes (Rev 2:17, 3:12, etc.)

-of Israel, from Deserted to Hephzibah (Pr 5:19; 'my delight is in her'– II Kings 21:1's Hezekiah's wife and Manasseh's mom!; see also: 'The Holy People', 'The Redeemed of the Lord', and 'Sought After')

-of Zion, from Desolate to Beulah ('married'-- Ps 113:9, Hos 2:19-20; see also: 12b's 'City No Longer Deserted')

-6-7's active watchmen (Mt 24:42, 25:13; vs. 26:40-41)<sup>21</sup>– 'you who call on the Lord': 'give yourselves no rest and give God no rest till he establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth' (Gen 32:26, Ex 32:10, I Kings 18:44, Ps 132:2-5, Mt 15:23, Lk 2:36-38, 11:5-10, 18:1-8)

-MH's '[God] suffers himself not only to be reasoned with, but to be wrestled with.'

-8-9's their food and drink would go to themselves vs. their enemies (1:7, 65:13,21-22; vs. Lev 26:16, Dt 28:33)

-10's 'pass thru the gates', 'prepare the way', 'build up the highway', 'raise a banner for the nations'

-repetition of 'pass thru' and 'build up' implies urgency

-> 11's proclamation that the 'Savior comes' with his reward

-> all this as available, at least in part, between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> comings; now from salvation to final song on vengeance...

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<sup>21</sup> Motyer paraphrases Smart: 'to interpret the reference to walls as implying that the passage must come from a time after the work of Nehemiah "ignores the dramatic and imaginative character of the writing", which is not descriptive of a situation but impressionistic of watchful urgency.'

**63:1-6** (Rev 6:2,15-17, 14:14-20, 19:13-21)

-1a's rhetorical Q: 'who is this?' (Ex 15:11, Josh 5:13)—and 2's follow-up Q: 'why are your garments red' as if He had been treading the winepress-- described as...

-1a's coming from Edom (21:11-12's oracle, 34:5-6; Gen 25:23, II Sam 8:13-14, Amos 1:11-12, Obadiah, Mal 1:2-4) & Bozrah (34:6; Amos 1:12)

-E&B as Motyer's 'the typical eschatological foe, the embodiment of ceaseless animosity against the Lord and his people.'

-Edom as 'red' and 'crimson' as Heb. 'adom'; Motyer's '[they] match each other...as if to say, where would one get one's garments reddened [except] in the red land itself? Likewise...Bozrah means 'vintage'— where else would one tread a winepress?'

-1b's robed in splendor with 'garments stained crimson' (59:17's transfer)

-1c's 'striding forward in the greatness of his strength'<sup>22</sup>

-1d's 'It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save'— even within judgment and vengeance, the emphasis on salvation (63:4's redemption)

-3a's 'have trodden the winepress alone'; 5's 'no one to help...appalled (cite) that no one gave support; so my own arm worked salvation and my own wrath sustained me' (see also: 4's 'my heart'; 59:16's transfer)

-see also: Christ deserted in his 1<sup>st</sup> coming

-no one would &/or no one could

-3b,6a's 'trampled [the nations] in anger'— 3b's 'spattered my garments' with their blood; 6b's 'made them drunk and (cite) poured their blood on the ground' (51:17,21-22 of Israel; Gen 49:11's 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> coming!; Joel 3:13, Zech 14:3)

-3b's 'stained' has the same Heb. letters and same root as 4b's 'redemption' (lit. redeemed); Motyer's 'This association must be intended; to him the defilement, to them the redemption.'

-> 4's summary: 'the day of vengeance...the year of redemption' (59:16-17, 61:2)

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22 Parallels 52:7-8's looking, 52:10 answered in 52:13, 53:1.

## *Isaiah 63:6-66:24*

### **intro**

-follows 63:1-6's sobering wrap-up of God/Christ's salvation and vengeance  
-63:7-64:12's prayer (as one of 62:6's watchmen; Ps 44's national lament) and ch. 65-66's God's response

-Motyer's 'The Isaianic literature is characterized by a wonderful perception of the future, yet every time we are brought to the point where all seems to be fulfilled we meet a "not yet". Chapter 12 sings in joy over the glory of the coming king (chs. 6-11), but chs. 13-27 intervene to remind us of the scale in time and space on which the Lord is working. Again, we trace, the work of the Servant to the point where all is done and only the enjoyment of the Messianic banquet remains (ch. 55), and then we discover that salvation is ["near", but] still to come (56:1). Finally, we reach the somber but marvelous 63:1-6. Surely now, with the overthrow of ever foe, the redeeming work is fully done! But no, the rememberers take their place on the walls to give the Lord no rest till he fulfills all that is promised. This is the theme of the final section: the praying church and the promising God.'

### **63:7-14's prelude to the prayer**

-7's summary: God's 'kindnesses/deeds/good things'– for Israel– 'according to his compassion'  
-8's calling them 'my people' and assuming they would not 'be false to' Him (vs. 1:2-4's first thing!), He became their Savior

-thru 9b's 'the angel of his presence'– Jesus Christ-- Ex 23:20-21, Mal 3:1)

-9a's 'in all their distress, he too was distressed'– picture of identification and empathy (esp. in Egypt [Ex 2:24, 3:7] and the Judges period)

-9c's 'in his love and mercy', He 'lifted/carried' them 'all the days of old' (3x in ch. 63)

-> MH's 'Here is an acknowledgment of God's goodness to them all along...of the goodness that is from God...[and] the goodness that is in God.'

-> from 8's election and salvation to 9's salvation and support; Motyer's God 'brought his people into the relationship...[and] accepted the implications of that relationship by acting in salvation according to their need. Whether they would live within, and live up to, their relationship with him was to be another matter.' ...

-> 10a's 'yet they rebelled (Ps 106:33) and grieved (Eph 4:30) his Holy Spirit

-on the Trinity: 7's God, 9's 'the angel of his presence [lit. face]' and 10's Spirit as three separate persons-- but all with the personality and character of God himself

-> 10b's 'so...he became their enemy' and 'fought against them' (43:28; Ps 78)

-MH's '[He] made war upon them, as a prince justly does upon the rebels.'

-MH on the damage caused by sin and 'the folly of sinners' in turning a loving and compassionate God into a formidable enemy

--> 11a's 'then his people recalled the days of old' (51:9-10)– from 11b-14's deliverance from Egypt thru the Red Sea, at Sinai with the tabernacle (and 11b's Spirit; Ex 29:44-46, Hag 2:5), and the Jordan to their Spirit-given rest in Canaan (Num 11:17, Dt 12:9, Josh 1:13, 21:44)

-12b's 'to gain...everlasting renown' and 14's 'to make...a glorious name'– for Israel and the nations (lit. 'him')

--> noting God's past faithfulness and their faithlessness before going to Him with their unmerited petitions and seeking His gracious response in 63:15-64:12's (seven-stanza) prayer<sup>23</sup>; Motyer's 'To such a God, prayer can confidently be made for such a people.' (w/ app. to us)

-as a model for set-up to prayer

-the irony that only by recognizing one's/their lack of merit do the requests gain any merit in God's economy

### **63:15-19**

-15's call to God– in His (seemingly absent) zeal and might, His tenderness and compassion

-16's identified as 'our Father' \* 2, 'our Redeemer from of old'– though unknown by Abraham/Israel [Jacob], the father of the family and the start of their name, given their history or their finite memories

MH's 'Abraham cast out his son Ishmael; Jacob disinherited his son Reuben and crushed Simeon and Levi; but our heavenly father, in pardoning sin, is God, not man (Hos 11:9).'; NIVSB's 'Even if their human fathers abandon them, God will not.'

-vs. 17a's 'why...do you make us wander from your ways and harden our hearts so we do not revere you?'-- make/harden vs. allow? (6:9-10's 'hardening ministry'; Ps 95:8)

-Motyer's emphasis on the point of no return after we have hardened our own hearts (a la Pharaoh—Ex 4:21 vs. 7:13)

-esp. in light of 7-14's repentance, MH's 'Some make it to be the language of those among them that were impious and profane...But I rather take it to be the language of those among them that lamented the unbelief and impenitence of their people, not accusing God of being the author of their wickedness, but complaining of it to him.' (see: Linda's why not until my 30's?)

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<sup>23</sup> See: Motyer, p. 516, on its structure.

-17b's call to God- 'for the sake of your servants'

-18a's Israel possessed 'your holy place...for a little while' (vs. Gen 17:8's promise) vs. 18b's now, 'trampled' (63:6) by their enemies (64:11; Ps 74:3-8)

-19a's 'we are yours from of old'- 19b's even though it hasn't seemed like it<sup>24</sup>

## 64:1-12

-1-3's call to God- 'to make your name known' and to strike fear into the nations

-63:15's look down from heaven vs. here, come down from heaven (Ps 18:9; w/ app. to the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming)

-4-5a's 'since ancient times', the only/sovereign God who is gracious toward those who 'wait for him' (in trust/faith), 'gladly do right' (correlated moral requirement), and 'remember your ways' (a heart to follow and a willingness to do Eph 4:1)

→ vs. 5b's 'but when we continued to sin...you were angry' → 5c's 'How then can we be saved?' (Motyer's 'the hard question' at the center of the poem/prayer<sup>25</sup>), esp. given...

-6a's 'all of us have become like one who is unclean' (6:5; Rom 3:23)

-6b's 'all our righteous acts are like filthy rags' (30:22; Heb. term means menstrual cloths- the cloth itself and at a time when she was ceremonially unclean)

-6c's 'all shrivel up like a leaf and...our sins sweep us away' (1:30)

-Motyer's 'a picture of decay, ending in death'

-MH's 'We not only wither and lose our beauty, but we fall and drop off.'

→ 7a's 'no one calls on your name or strives to lay/take hold of you' (vs. II Chron 7:14)

-MH's 'To pray is to take hold of God, by faith to take hold of the promises...to take hold of him as of one who is about to depart from us, earnestly begging of him not to leave...to take hold of him as he that wrestles...as the boatman with his hook takes hold [of] the shore, as if he would pull the shore to him, but really it is to pull himself to the shore; so we pray not to bring God to our mind, but to bring ourselves to him.'

→ 7b's 'for you have hidden your face from us and made us waste away because of our sins'

-Motyer's 'There is a colossal irony in the balance between this stanza and the matching third stanza (64:1-3). The expectation was that if the Lord showed his face, the world and the nations would tremble. The reality is that it is *we* who are shriveling and wasting away because the Lord has hidden his face.'

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<sup>24</sup> Temple destruction as prophecy vs. history. Motyer notes that it is common to see a post-exilic setting here. While it fits the context physically, it does not work historically or spiritually, since God would have obviously been moving if he had sent them to Babylon or redeemed them from there (63:15,17).

<sup>25</sup> 'Ancient times' and 'continued' are the same Heb. word and serve as an inclusio to this key passage- 'Just as God has gone on forever, so has our sin!'

-8-9's call to God- 8a's 'yet...', appealing to God on the basis of His relation to them as 8b's Father and Potter (vs. blaming them; earlier cite in Is; Jer 18:6), 9c's 'his people'

-Motyer's 'another side to the changelessness of God...he is changeless in his requirements [but]...he is equally changeless in his grace and mercy.'

→ 9a's 'do not be angry beyond measure' (lit. 'unto muchness'- i.e., don't let us feel the full force of your wrath); 9b's 'do not remember our sins forever'

-MH's 'They do not expressly pray for the removal of the judgment they were under; as to that, they refer themselves to God. But they pray that God would be reconciled to them...[and] they pray that they may not be dealt with according to the [just desserts] of their sin.' (Amos 3:2)

-vs. 10-11's contemporary prophetic/historical setting: desolate cities and destroyed temple<sup>26</sup> (II Chron 7:21)

-but 10's 'thy' vs. 11's 'our'!

-> 12's 'after all this...will you hold yourself back (63:15b)...keep silent and punish us beyond measure?'

→ Motyer's 'The people are now right with God...will not the Lord now leap into action?'

-> now, chs. 65-66's grand finale to chs. 56-66, 40-66, and the entire book...

-Motyer's 'The overall picture is the same...The Lord's people are set alongside others who are either compromisers or outright pagans. But it will not always be so, for the Lord will bring his servants into a new heaven, a new earth, and a new Zion, while a dreadful judgment awaits the rest. Undeniable grimness sits alongside unimaginable glories.'

-but Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> coming in salvation and vengeance as the Anointed Conqueror vs. chs. 1-37 on his birth as King and chs. 40-55 on the cross as Servant

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<sup>26</sup> As in 63:18-19, Motyer notes the argument for a post-exilic setting, but notes that the returning exiles could not have said 64:12. Moreover, he notes that this is a perfect and necessary answer to the inevitable questions begged by Isaiah's prophecies about Babylon.

### 65:1-7 (skim)

-1-2a's God's gracious efforts to reveal himself, incl. 1b's 'I was found by those who did not seek me', 1d's 'here am I' \* 2 (6:8), 2a's 'all day long, I have held out my hands...' (reversing its usual use for our prayer; quoted in Rom 10:20-21; Pr 1:24, 8:17)

-many take this to refer to Israel, but 'to a nation that did not call my name' as lit. 'to a nation not called by my name'); see also: matching section in 66:18-21 clearly on the Gentiles

-but 2b's all this 'to an obstinate people' (Jew, Gentile or both?27)- pursuing 2c's general sin; 3a's provoking God<sup>28</sup>; 3b's idolatry<sup>29</sup> (in a garden and on 'bricks' vs. the altar as undressed stone); 4a's consulting the dead and fortune-telling (8:19); 4b's unclean diet; 5a's remarkable religious pride resulting in spiritual classes/cliques (Mt 9:11, Lk 7:39, etc.)

-4's 'unclean diet' vs. the Maccabees later; see also: herd of swine in Christ's time; MH takes 'broth' to imply flirting with sin or so much passion for sin that broth suffices

-> 5b's 'such people are smoke in my nostrils, a fire that keeps burning all day' (66:24)  
-> 6-7's will be paid back 'in full' and 'into their laps'-- for their sin and idolatry; God 'will not keep silent' (answering 64:12)

### 65:8-16 (read 65:8-12; Mt 13:36-43, Rom 11:1,5)

-8's God's mercy to the faithful remnant (of grapes<sup>30</sup>) on a mostly rotten vine (5:1-7; see: gleaning)- 9-10's to be placed in God's land (10's Sharon & Achor as W&E- totality; Achor named after Achan)

-vs. 11's those who 'forsake' the Lord, 'forget his holy mountain', and appeal to Fortune/Destiny, 12b's ignored God's call, 12c's did evil and 'chose what displeases me' (vs. 56:4's eunuchs)

-7's busy on those mountains = 11's forget His holy mountain (vs. 9's possess same); Motyer's 'Religion is no substitute for personal relationship. They found no difficulty being religious. In fact, they would climb any mountain except the one where they might meet the holy God.'

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27 Many take this to refer to Israel, but 'to a nation that did not call my name' as lit. 'to a nation not called by my name'); see also: matching section in 66:18-21 clearly on the Gentiles

<sup>28</sup> 'To my very face' is 'before/besides me' (Ex 20:3).

<sup>29</sup> Describes pre-exilic Israel or Canaanite tribes. Motyer: 'In so far as evidence extends, the pre-exilic apostasies and syncretisms were burned out by the fires of the exile...[There were] other lapses in the community but not these.'

<sup>30</sup> 'Juice' is 'wine made from the first drippings of the juice before the press was trodden'- a separate type of juice valued more highly. As opposed to 63:3, Motyer's 'a lovely image of the assurance of salvation...All merit the winepress but some are saved from it.'

- > 12a's will 'destine' them for slaughter
  - Motyer's 'Punishment matches offense, and false religion brings the opposite of what it seems to promise.'
  - 12's sword designed for God's enemies– but Israel can subject itself to it as well (Mt cite on hell/Satan)
- 13-16a's compare/contrast for 'my servants' vs. 'you'<sup>31</sup>
  - 13a's eat/drink vs. hungry/thirsty (41:17-18, 49:10; Lk 16:24)
  - 13b's rejoice vs. 'put to shame'
  - 14's sing for joy (despite circumstances; 35:10, 54:1) vs. cry out in anguish– both from out of their hearts
  - 15-16a's 'another name' (Christians vs. Israel as 'the people of God?') and blessings vs. cursed name and death
  - all from 16b's 'the God of truth (lit. 'the Amen')' \* 2 (II Cor 1:20) and His promise: 'the past troubles will be forgotten'

**65:17-25** (skim)

- 17a's 'new heavens and a new earth' (climax of 42:9, 48:6's promises; II Pet 3:13, Rev 21:5; more fig.-- II Cor 5:17); 17b's 'former things (incl. 16's 'past troubles') will not be remembered'
- 18's Jerusalem created for them to be a delight– its people to be glad and rejoice, and to be a joy– and 19a's God will rejoice over it and its (now, 'my') people; Motyer's 'The new city and its people exactly match the divine design...Human experience too matches the new situation.'
- 19b's no more crying

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<sup>31</sup> 13's 'the Lord says' as an inclusio with 25's 'says the Lord'.

-20's no infant mortality and long life<sup>32</sup> (latter 'accursed' if not– not Heaven!)–  
22b's 'as the days of a tree' (Ps 1:3, 92:12-15)

-Motyer argues that this does not mean that death will still be present  
(25:7-8), but that the power of death will be destroyed

-21-22's enjoy the homes and vineyards they build– vs. not (Dt 28:30; Eccl)

-> 23's summary of 20-22

-24's intimacy of relationship: 'before they call I will answer; while they are still  
speaking I will hear'

-25's peace in Nature: wolf/lamb, lion/ox, serpents eat dust, 'neither harm nor  
destroy'– 'on all my holy mountain' (11:6-9)

-serpents eating dust (Gen 3:14) as chained and confined to the dust; or made to  
lick the dust in honor; not mentioned in 11:6 but appropriate here

-> 24-25 as MH's 'good correspondence between them and their God...[and]  
between them and their neighbors'

-> which kingdom? now in increasing measure, but fulfilled in Millennium/Heaven?

-W&Z's eschatological dance (in having to read Scripture so literally): 'In these verses,  
the Lord described the millennial kingdom, which is seemingly identified here with the  
eternal state. In Revelation, however, the new heavens and earth *follow* the M (Rev 20:4,  
21:1). Most likely Isaiah did not distinguish between these two aspects of God's rule; he  
saw them as one. (!)'

**66:1-6** -1-2a's God as Creator and Sovereign over the universe<sup>33</sup>– what's the big deal about a  
temple vs. 2b's the one I esteem...humble and contrite in spirit (57:15) trembles at my word'  
(66:5); MH's The temple is slighted in comparison with a gracious soul.'

-over-valuation of the temple as a persistent problem (Jer 7:2-15, 26:7-9; vs. I Kings  
8:12-29, esp. 8:27; quoted in Acts 7:49-50 in response to 6:13)

-MH's God 'did not need it' (if He did, He would have built himself and it would  
have lasted eternally!) and 'would not heed it' as much as a humble, penitent  
heart: 'He has a heaven and earth of his own making, and a temple of man's  
making; but he overlooks them all, that may look with favor to him that is poor in  
spirit, humble and serious, self-abasing and self-denying, whose heart is truly  
contrite for sin, penitent for it, and in pain to get it pardoned...Such a heart is a  
living temple for God...' (cites, incl. Rom 12:1)

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<sup>32</sup> See: Motyer, p. 530 on translating this phrase.

<sup>33</sup> The only place where earth is the divine footstool (vs. I Chron 28:2, Ps 99:5, 132:7's ark  
or temple).

-vs. 3's repeatedly saying that offerings (and perhaps the entire sacrificial system– esp. post-Christ!) are unacceptable (1:11-15; Pr 15:8, Mal 1:8,13)– at least because 3b-4's they delighted in sin and ignored Him (65:12; swine's blood follows 65:4's broth); and 5b's taunted God and His people (5:18-19; Jn 16:2, II Pet 3:3-7)

-Motyer's 'What he does here is simply to set items side by side. He contrasts the lawful with the sinful; the lawful with the meaningless; the lawful with the unacceptable; and the lawful with the apostate.' (Ez 8, Amos 4:4)

→ results in 6's judgment<sup>34</sup>; Motyer's 'Because they did not tremble at his word, they will certainly tremble before his wrath.'

-to be noticed by 5a's faithful– those 'who tremble at his word'

### **66:7-13** (skim)

-7-9's sudden delivery of Jerusalem and her children (56:1, 60:22; Ex 1:19, Dt 4:34; Rev's 'soon' revisited)– resulting in 10's rejoicing and 11's op to 'nurse at her comforting breasts...[to] drink deeply and delight in her overflowing abundance' (49:23, 60:16)

-childbirth as God fulfilling His plans/promises– God as faithful and sovereign

-painless childbirth as Motyer's 'a symbol of Eden restored and the curse removed'

-MH's 'Is it to be imagined that a woman at one birth should bring children sufficient to people a country and that they should in an instant grow up to maturity? No, something like this was done in the creation, but God has since rested from all such works, and leaves second causes to produce their effects gradually...Yet in this case, Cyrus' proclamation was no sooner issued out than the captives were formed into a body and were ready to make...their way to their own land.'

-see also: as a type of the establishment of the Christian church in Acts

-12a's 'peace like a river' (48:18) and wealth 'like a flooding stream' (vs. 8:6-8); 12b's 'nurse' and 'dandled on her knees'; 13's 'comfort' \* 3 (incl. motherly role reversal; 40:1)

### **66:14-21** (skim)

-14a's 'your heart will rejoice' and lit. 'your bones will flourish'– heart and bones as totality (spiritual/emotional and physical)

-14b's God's hand made known to his servants, but His fury made known to His foes

-latter as 15-16's fire, chariots like a whirlwind (5:28; II Kings 2:11, 6:17, Ps 68:17), anger, fury, rebuke with flames of fire, fire, sword, execute judgment, many slain

-fire/sword combo (Gen 3:24); Motyer's 'The whole of human history, from the fall to the last day, is bracketed about by the sword of holiness.'

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<sup>34</sup> 'Hear...hear...the sound' as lit. 'a voice' \* 3.

-> 17's those who engage in idolatry and uncleanness 'will meet their end' (Rev 21:27, 22:15) vs. 18's 'all nations and tongues...will come and see my glory'<sup>35</sup> (Zech 8:23)

-19's 'sign' (11:10,12's 'banner'?; Mt 24:30; Jn's 'signs' as key theme) and then missionaries to 'proclaim my glory' to the far ends of the earth<sup>36</sup>, where they 'have not heard of my fame or seen my glory'

-Motyer's 'the clearest OT statement on the theme of missionary outreach' vs. Israe as a magnet (2:2-5); NT as more balanced

-resulting in 20's coming to (fig.) Jerusalem by all means of transportation (Motyer's 'No distance or difficulty will stand in the way...[and] military transport will be transformed to works of the gospel of peace.'; see also: horses/chariots no longer to be idolized)

-21's even to become his priests & Levites (Rom 12:1, 15:16); 61:6 which fulfilled Ex 19:6 is now extended to Gentiles

### **66:22-24**

-22's 'your name and descendants will endure forever'— just like 'the new heavens and the new earth' (65:17)

-23's for all time, all people will 'come and bow down before me'

-on New Moons (monthly) and Sabbaths (weekly) vs. 3x annually at Feasts

-feasts vs. fasts— since the mourning is over (65:19)

-all people as a clear indication that Jerusalem is meant as fig.—for now &/or later (Rom 7:16, Gal 4:25-26, Heb 8:13, 12:22)

-24a's 'they will go out and look upon the dead bodies of those who rebelled against me'

-24b's 'their worm will not die, nor will their fire be quenched, and they will be loathsome to all mankind' (14:11, 48:22, 50:11, 57:21)

-fulfilled in Roman conquering of Israel— but as a type for Hades (quoted in Mk 9:47-48; vs. Hell, assuming we cannot see people there while we're in heaven)

-Motyer's 'Remarkably, there is a cemetery beside the city...[but] it is not out of place.' (See: A new creation and its people, but vengeance, winepress of God's wrath, the fiery sword of judgment, etc.); Motyer's 'Isaiah ends where he began (1:2,28).'

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<sup>35</sup> Apparently impossible to translate sensibly (see: Motyer, p. 541).

<sup>36</sup> Motyer's 'The place names are intended to be impressionistic rather than literal, creating a sense of world outreach (11:11).' On the inclusion of the blurb on 'archers', see: p. 542.

-Motyer's 'The purpose of visiting the cemetery is not to gloat, not even to pity (though who could restrain pity?), but to be repelled. To see and constantly refresh the memory that these are the consequences of rebellion, and so to turn in revulsion from such a thing and to be newly motivated to obedience by seeing that the wages of sin is indeed death.'

-within heaven? Are we tempted to rebel there? Is heaven an extension of Christ's kingdom—with only those who want to follow God? (see: nothing wrong in us or nature—except sin)

→ in conclusion, Motyer's 'There is a grandeur about Isaiah not found elsewhere in the most majestic rest of Scripture, a majesty full of glory and of solemnity, plain alike in the revelation vouchsafed to him and the language in which he was inspired to express it. But with the grandeur went a stern resoluteness, that if the glory does not win us to the life of obedience, if visions of the coming King, the sin-bearing Servant, and the liberating Anointed Conqueror will not suffice, then maybe the unmistakably horrible rewards of disobedience will drive our wayward hearts to tremble at the word of the Lord.'