

# Returning Victory

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     Isaiah chapter 63, we read in the last verse, verse 19, We are thine. Thou never bearest rule over them. They were not called by thy name.

In the context here, the prophet is speaking on behalf of the children of Israel, God's people who are pleading with the Lord to have mercy upon them and to deliver them from their oppressors, those who are oppressing them round about.

Elsewhere in the chapter, the Lord makes clear that any deliverance that is brought about is only ever going to be through him alone. And therefore, if we are to benefit from his deliverance, from his great work of salvation, it can only be by belonging to him who alone achieves this victory.

We don't achieve it. Isaiah doesn't achieve it. The children of Israel don't achieve it. It is the Lord who achieves it and him alone. And we'll come to that in just a moment.

But they are speaking of their plea that they only as a people are called by his name, belong to him in that sense, as part of his family.

[ 1 : 1 1 ]     Now, our own congregation would be well-weary of hearing me say that part of what we are doing with a baptism is that we are putting the name of the Lord upon a child.

We are putting the name of the Lord upon those who belong to us, who are important to us, that we want them to grow up into the love and nurture and knowledge of the Lord himself.

Now, the name of the Lord, they were not called by thy name. But the implication, it says here, is how is it? But we are, Lord. We are called by your name. Therefore, help us.

We belong to you, not for any good or merit. You might think, well, why should I help you if you're not good? Why should I do this for you if you're not righteous? Simply because we belong to you, Lord.

In the same way as those of you who are parents, you didn't stop feeding your child if it was naughty. You didn't refuse to give it a bed for the night or let it into the house at night if it had been disobedient or bad.

[ 2 : 1 1 ]     Yes, there may be discipline issues to be settled. There may be things to be trashed out in the house within the context of the family relationship or the parent-to-child interaction there.

But they don't stop being your child. You don't stop caring for them. You don't stop loving them. And you don't seek their welfare as opposed to welfare of all the other little children round about in your community or your village or your township or whatever.

It's not that you have any disregard for these others, but this child is your own. And so you feed it and care for it. You put it to bed at night. You make sure it does everything it needs. If there are discipline issues to be addressed, you address them.

If it is disobedient, it has to learn obedience. They are not called by thy name. In other words, look after us, Lord, because you alone are our father.

Now this business of being called by the name of the Lord, it's not just a personal thing that I keep banging on about, believe it or not. It is actually important to the Lord himself.

[ 3 : 15 ] You know, we read in the Revelation, for example, in chapter 3, where the Lord is addressing the different churches. He speaks to the church in Philadelphia, which is one of only two churches, the other being Smyrna out of the seven, only two about which he has nothing bad to say.

And in verse 12 of Revelation 3, he says, Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God. And he shall go no more out. And I will write upon him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God.

And I will write upon him my new name. And before that, he says, Behold, I come quickly. Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

The name of the Lord is important to him. It is important as it marks ownership. When you're a little child and perhaps going to school, your mum might have sewn on name tags on your socks or your shirt or your school jumper or whatever.

So if it got lost or if it got left in the classroom or a playground or whatever and somebody picked it up, they could see who it belonged to. And so likewise, when the Lord puts his name upon his children, it is because it's a statement of who they belong to.

[ 4 : 37 ] His name matters to him. Whether or not it matters to us, it should do. But it matters to him. It's not for nothing. And when Jesus teaches his own disciples the Lord's Prayer, he begins, Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Now our catechism describes that as a petition, a plea that the Lord would continue to make his name holy. Personally, I always see it as simply a statement of fact.

Hallowed be thy name. Holy is the name of the Lord. And we know, of course, and we'll use later on in the act of baptism, this blessing that Aaron is instructed to put upon the children of Israel.

In Numbers chapter 6, The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise he shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee and keep thee.

The Lord make his face shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel.

[ 5 : 49 ] And I will bless them. And this is what we read here. We are thine. Thou never bearest rule over them. They were not called by thy name.

It matters to God. Therefore it should matter to us. A couple of chapters previously in Isaiah 43, read of verses 6 and 7, And I will say to the north, Give up.

And to the south, Keep not back. Bring my sons from far, my daughters from the ends of the earth, even every one that is called by my name. For I have created him for my glory.

I have formed him. Yea, I have made him. Every one that is called by my name. Proverbs 18, verse 10, tells us, The name of the Lord is a strong tower.

The righteous runneth into it and is safe. What makes them safe? It's not their righteousness. It's him. It's his name. His identity.

[ 6 : 47 ] His holiness. Because as we've said in the past many times, as far as God's name is concerned, it is not merely a name time. It is not merely a form of identification.

It is rather that which sums up his whole being, his whole character. It is what the Lord is like. It is his essence expressed in words.

To have the name of the Lord put upon us is to have his protection. To run into that strong tower and be safe if we are trusting and believing in him.

You see, it's only the Lord that is able to deliver us or do us any good. None of us is baptized into the name of any branch of the church. Nobody gets baptized in the name of the Free Church of Scotland or the Church of Scotland or the Free Presbyterian Church or anything else.

We are baptized into the name of the Holy Trinity. The name of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what, you know, Peter taught his heroes at Pentecost.

[ 7 : 54 ] He said, Men and brethren, what must we do? He says, repent and be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Paul in Acts, I think it's 19, he comes across those at, I think it's Ephesus who have been baptized with John's baptism of repentance but they haven't been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

They haven't put all their trust in him. They've had, if you like, the preparation but they haven't had the fullness and the reality. It is Christ alone who is able to deliver.

The Lord alone who is our strength. And we see this if we go back to the beginning of this chapter 63. Who is this that cometh from Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah?

This that is glorious in his apparel traveling in the greatness of his strength. I that speak in righteousness mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winepress?

I have trodden the winepress alone and of the people there was none with me but I will tread them in mine anger trample in my fury their blood shall be sprinkled in my garments I will stain all my ribbons.

[ 9 : 01 ] Now, when we look at this people, what does that mean? Edom and Bozrah. The Edomites were the descendants of Esau and although they were you could say in a manner related to the children of Israel in practice they tended to be their deadly enemies.

they were located to the south of the Holy Land around an area called Mount Seir to the south of the Dead Sea and if you've got maps in the back of your Bible you'll be able to see roughly where that is and that was their strongholds and from time to time they would either make opportunistic attacks against the Israelites particularly against the south if Israel was being oppressed by a mightier enemy the Edomites would come in and pick up the spoil and the pieces and take every advantage they could of it.

So the Edomites were traditional enemies to the Lord's people and when we read who is this that cometh from Edom he is coming from the direction of Edom but he is not himself an Edomite with dyed garments from Bosra one of the capital areas one of the capital defences and fortifications and cities of the Edomites.

This then is glorious in his apparel travelling in the greatness of his strength. In other words this being a Messiah figure this is the Lord in his strength coming he is coming back from the heartland of the enemy he has not just been in the general area of the Edomites he has been as it were deep in the heart of enemy territory he has been to their very capital he is coming from Bosra he is coming with his garments that look as if they have been dyed red because they are so blood spattered if he is coming back in victory it means that he has been deep into enemy territory and he has won a victory but a victory that is costly it is a victory because he is coming back alive now if the kings of Israel in olden times if they went into battle and they lost they didn't tend to come back alive it was rare for them to come back alive if they went into battle and they lost they died so this is this Messiah figure he is coming back from the heart of enemy territory he is coming back because he is victorious but his garments are spattered and dyed the Lord looks like he has been in a winepress it looks splattered with all the juice of the grape in fact they are spattered with the blood of the enemies because he has won this tremendous victory but he has won it alone and he has won it at huge cost to himself now this is not a physical picture of a physical individual coming out of the south land of Israel this is the Lord inspiring his prophet to see a vision of the Messiah a vision of the Messiah who has been deep into the ultimate enemy territory down into the heartland of the real enemy stronghold and who has come back victorious in other words it is a picture in the Old Testament of the death and resurrection of our Lord it is a picture of the Lord the Messiah going deep into the heart of the enemy going deep into enemy territory the devil the Lord of death the Lord of all darkness and fear and such power is there he meets this death head on he is we could say engulfed by it he is enveloped by death he passes into death into the very heart of enemy territory into Edom into Bosnia now look he comes back again the third day he rises again victorious from the dead the third day he rises again but he comes back his garments demonstrate here in the vision his garments demonstrate the cost of battle and so likewise when our

Lord returns we don't grieve that always his garments are all spattered with blood he didn't have any garments left on the cross while he was wrapped in the fine linen Joseph of Arimathea had to give him but when he comes back from the dead when he rises again the first day of the week and people see him his disciples see him he still bears the wounds of his battle he still bears the marks in his hands and his feet which he tells his disciple Thomas put your finger into the marks in my hand and in my side behold I would see it's me you know it's me because of these wounds because this has been a great victory but it has been a costly victory and nobody else won it but him nobody else overcame the enemy but him nobody else has been able to destroy the power of the devil but him the day of vengeance is in my heart and the year of my redeemed is come now look again here at this verse 4 there's a little contrast here the

[14:16] Lord in his wrath destroys evil but the Lord does not delight in destruction it's a necessary thing to destroy evil yes it has to be done to go to the cross it had to be done to die on behalf of those who would trust in him it had to be done it would be wrong for us to say our Lord relish that prospect we know that he prayed that if it was possible that that cup would pass from him he would far rather that but it has to be done the day of vengeance the day of battle has to be come the enemy has to be conquered but it is done and it is swiftly done when he comes he comes suddenly when he destroys he destroys immediately the day of vengeance is in my heart but the year of my redeemed has come so for those for whom he purchases this redemption notice the contrast between a day and a year now I don't want to get too mathematical about it and we could say oh yes that means it's 365 times as long as the other one it's hundreds of times it's infinitely longer and greater because the moment of judgment of destruction of battle and of cost that is in a sense the work of a moment but the eternity that is purchased for those who love Christ it is as far removed from that time of battle as a year is from a day and more so the day of vengeance is in my heart the year of my redeemed is come the day is swift yes it happens but it passes quickly the year takes much much longer

I looked there was none to help I wondered that there was none to uphold therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me and my fury it upheld me I will tread down the people in mine anger make them drunk in my fury I will bring down their strength to the earth now the fact of there being nobody but him this is a recurring theme in scripture how the church ever came up with the idea in the dark ages or the middle ages or still today some people think that somehow it has to be a cooperation between God does his bit and I do my bit and together we get me into heaven because God does it every day I have to do my good works and my praying time and going to church and doing all that I do and if I do my bit and God does his bit then together we make a partnership and I get into heaven it doesn't work that way it is all of God it is all of God's grace all of God's mercy all that we do is a response to his love it is not part of what purchases our redemption it's not part of our salvation it is as though if say when I was a boy if my dad was buying a new house and he would have to go to the bank and he would have to arrange a mortgage and he would have to pledge so many years of his salary or whatever in order to gather if I were to say that dad I want to help you

I want to go empty out my wee piggy bank and my coppers and my wee sixpences and whatever slap them down the table and say there you go dad that'll help you take that to Mr.

so and so the bank manager and together you and me we'll get this house yeah it's a good intention yeah it's well well intentioned and yeah all the hope and all the right thought is there but it doesn't actually make a blind bit of difference Mr.

so and so the bank manager is going to sweep that waste and are you joking you brought this to me why have you brought me your son's coppers why have you brought me his piggyback I want to know what your salary is I want to know how many years you've got I want to know how this mortgage is going to pan out I want to know if you can pay I want to know if we're going to have to repossess this house or if it's going to belong to you at the end of the day they're talking big beggars they're talking big son I have nothing to contribute to that I may live in the house I may be part of the family for whom it is purchased but I can't make a difference to it not to that certainly he has to do that himself and so likewise my lord having purchased my salvation I can't contribute to that I haven't got the ones and washers and coppers and pennies that are going to actually make a difference to the price of this redemption the price of this purchase I looked there was none to help Ezekiel 22 verse 30 I sought for a man among them that should make up a hedge and stand in the gap before me for the land that I should not destroy it but I found none there wasn't anybody there isn't anybody except the lord who is able to do this able to deliver us

[19:17] I will tread down the people in my anger make them drunk in my fury this is this is the judgment of the lord he's talking about this is again what we read in revelation 19 where we read you know from verse 13 it says he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood and his name is called the word of god out of his mouth go the sharp two edged sword the sharp sword that whether he should smite the nations he shall rule them with a rod of iron he tread at the winepress of the fiercest and wrath of almighty god this is him treading the winepress alone but through that labour through that staining and all the work that he must do to do it that which is sweet and refreshing and lovely is brought forth verse 7 and I will mention the loving kindness of the lord and the praises of the lord according to all the lord hath bestowed to us the great goodness toward the house of Israel which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies and according to the multitude of his loving kindnesses notice these are all plurals mercies plural loving kindnesses plural great goodnesses plural it's all multiplying what he's giving to them he said surely they are my people children that will not lie who prove false so he was their saviour in all their affliction he was afflicted and the angel of his presence saved them in his love and his pity he redeemed them and he bare them and carried them all the days of all it is all his work it is all his grace when we suffer the lord knows what we are suffering because he has been human as we are we might think oh the lord doesn't know about my problems yes he does he knows every beat of your heart he knows every breath of your body he knows every pain that you suffer he has been there he has been through it all in all their affliction he was afflicted and the angel of his presence saved them in his love and his pity he redeemed them and he bare them and carried them all the days of old and then it says verse 10 but they rebelled and vexed the holy spirit therefore he was turned to be their enemy and he fought against that they go well it's all been lost but notice that's just one verse there's that one verse there in the middle and then we're back again that he remembered that he remembered the days of old Moses and his people where is he that brought them up out of the sea the shepherd of his flock where is he that put his holy spirit within them led them by the right hand of

Moses you see there's a brief moment a flare up of rebellion and of punishment and chastisement and of the relationship with the lord being strained and then he comes back to them again in his mercy because his name is upon them and his name is important to them in Acts 11 verse 26 we read about the believers in Antioch and we read that the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch that they had the name of Christ as their identity that is what we still seek to be and to have yes we may belong to one denomination or another denomination or this branch or that branch of the church but ultimately it is the name of Christ that defines us we are either Christians or we're not we are either in Christ or we're not the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch because the name of Christ was upon them and the love of Christ was in them and he cared for them he looked after them as a beast going down into the valley the spirit of the lord caused them to rest so didst thou lead thy people to make thyself for glorious name and then it says in verse 15 look down from heaven and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory where is thy zeal thy strength the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies toward me are they restrained doubtless thou art our father who ever be ignorant of us thou o lord art our father our redeemer thy name is from everlasting they say look down from heaven but if we go into the next chapter chapter 64 it begins with even more or that thou wouldst round the heavens and come down not just that the lord would look down but the lord would come down and in Jesus Christ that is exactly what he has done he has come down amongst us he has become one of us he has taken our bone and our flesh he has taken our afflictions upon him so that in all our afflictions he is afflicted in all our suffering he is suffering in all that we endure he has endured much worse already but likewise in all that he has purchased in all that he has laid up for them that love him we enter into that likewise he shares our afflictions we share in his glory because he has rent the heavens he has come down he will do so again at the last day but until then we hold on seeking to be faithful to him oh lord verse 17 why hast thou made us to err from thy ways we think that's a bit strange surely the lord doesn't make us do anything one sense of that word is that was left us to err from thy ways or we could think of what we read in Romans 1 verse 28 where the lord gives people up to their evil even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge God gave them over to a reprobate mind to do those things which are not convenient that he gave them up to that but that's not what we want to be that's not where we want to be that's not how we want to continue that the people of thy holiness have possessed their inheritance just a little while our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary we are thine thou never bearest rule over them they were not called by thy name yes it's tough being a Christian in this world because this is not our home we are on enemy territory we're on alien territory the prince of this world is no friend to the prince of peace and if we are seeking to be named by his men we are seeking to be called by the name of Christ to call Christians then we will be the enemy of the prince of this world and the inheritance the lord has laid up for us we only enjoy a

tiny little time here this is not the real blessing this is not the real inheritance we get tasters of his glory but for the lord's people the best is yet to come that is what he has laid up for them that love him that is what he says you know i go to prepare a place for you and if i go and prepare a place for you i will come again and receive you unto myself but where i am there he may be also this is something he has done alone this is why we are baptized into his name with his identity his power his great grace it is what he alone has done his redemption his purchase his battle his strife his garments dyed red his victory deep into the enemy territory that is what we are baptized not into each other not because of what a great family of the lord's people we are what a great branch of the church we are yeah let's call ourselves by our own name yes for identification purposes we have to just like the different children in a family maybe called john or paul or mary or peter or whatever but they all have the same name they all have the same family name they all belong to the same parents and so likewise we have to distinguish between different branches of the church different denominations different congregations but if we are in christ we all belong to the same father the same parents that is what we are baptized into because that is the one who alone has purchased the victory for us we are thine i'll never be to rule over them the unbelievers the world the flesh the devil well you can rule over them and he does rule over them in a sense but they were not called by thy name this is the plea of the lord's people come amongst us again oh that thou wouldst run to heavens and come down look down on us in mercy help us with thy strength for this victory lord is thine this victory is yours alone and we seek to be part of it not because we are worthy not because we are good not because we have earned it but because we trust and believe that by faith we are your children and we belong to you so feed us provide for us help us bless us bring us to your home because that's what we pray in the name of

Jesus the name that we take for ourselves amen amen amen