

Incomparable Yahweh

The prophet Isaiah develops God as King. Yahweh is explicitly demonstrated to be king through the words *adon* and *melek*. The word $\overset{\sim}{\text{adon}}$ is built off *adhan* and *adhath*, onomatopoeic words for father and mother.¹ The word is mainly used of earthly lords in the O.T. but at times it is used of God “to emphasize Yahweh’s rule over all the world.”² When $\overset{\sim}{\text{adonai}}$ is used it is a distinctive title for God, meaning Lord over all.³ Parallel to this usage is the epithet *melek*, which was used frequently of Yahweh as the One who reigns. The term is often used of Yahweh’s reign over Israel reflective of their covenant relationship (Isa. 8:21; 33:22; 41:22; 43:15; 44:6). The verb is employed in an eschatological sense when God rules during the Kingdom age (Isa. 24:23; 52:7). In contrast to the earthly kings who die in their temporality, $\overset{\sim}{\text{adonai}}$ continues as the everlasting king over all (Isa. 6:1, 5). In fact, the concept of God’s holiness (*qāḏōsh*) in Isaiah has to do with His being set apart to this distinct category of everlasting transcendent king.⁴ In the vision Isaiah spends few words to describe God except to focus on His distinctive regal glory. When Isaiah sees this vision

¹ Eissfeldt, $\overset{\sim}{\text{adhon}}$; $\overset{\sim}{\text{adhonai}}$, *TDOT*, p. 59; cf. Ugaritic texts CTA, 23 [SS] and 24 [NK].

² *Ibid.*, p. 61-62.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 63, 72; cf. Th. C. Vrizen, “Essentials of the Theology of Isaiah,” *Israel’s Prophetic Heritage*, p. 132. The suffix is an honorific or intensive plural of rank which strengthens the meaning of the root. Kenneth Barker, “Lord,” *Wycliffe Bible Encyclopaedia*, p. 1048.

⁴ Unlike Rudolf Otto *The Idea of the Holy* (pp. 6, 25), who develops the concept of “Wholly Other” as a negative idea of what man is not, holiness is better understood as a positive concept of separate to whatever is being emphasized in the context. In Isaiah six God’s holiness is His everlasting transcendent kingship.

and hears the glowing ones (*serāphîm*) call out God's holiness, Isaiah recoils in terror of his sin. Such fear and reverence is the proper response when confronted with the transcendence of Yahweh (Isa. 6:2-3, 5; 8:13). Yahweh's holiness is then communicated through the glowing coal by the glowing one who carries it to Isaiah to touch his lips and make Isaiah appropriate to carry the message of judgment.

The ancient Near Eastern concept of king included six major functions of which Yahweh fulfills them all. In the ancient Near East, the king was a mediator, representing the gods to the people, and a priest representing the people before the gods.⁵ The people viewed the king as the "deputy of the supreme god," and for the Hittites and Egyptians the king upon death became a god.⁶ The king maintained justice as judge and thus spoke the law as the absolute, the sovereign lord in his empire.⁷ He was the commander-in-chief of the military in his role as warrior.⁸ As shepherd he tended his people providing protection, provision, and guidance. He also maintained well-being and harmony in society and nature. In Israel the king provided all these roles except that of priest. Yahweh provides all these functions as king overall. Yahweh, Himself, as Israel's king, represents the divine will to the people primarily through the established covenant relationship and specific prophecies which remind them of their obligations and blessings. Yahweh is in covenant relationship with Israel and responds as their king and judge with covenant lawsuit (*rib*) concerning their sin (Isa. 1-39).⁹ "Yahweh takes his place in court; He rises to judge the people. Yahweh enters into

⁵ Kenneth Barker, "The Office and Functions of Ancient Kingship."

⁶ H.G. Guterbock, "Authority and Law in the Hittite Kingdom," *Authority and Law in the Ancient Orient, Supplement to Journal of the American Oriental Society*, no. 17:23; Albrecht Goetze, *Kleinasiens in Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft*, 3:95.

⁷ Viktor Korosec, *Hethitische Staatsverträge in Leipziger rechtswissenschaftliche Studien*, 60, p. 51.

⁸ Goetze, p. 86; Korosec, p. 51.

⁹ For a description of the patterns of covenant lawsuit see: Herbert B. Huffman, "The Covenant Lawsuit in the Prophets," *JBL*, 78:285-6; Kristen Nielson, *Yahweh as Prosecutor and Judge*, pp. 15-17, 27-32, 62-83; James Limberg, "The Root *rib* and the prophetic Lawsuit Speeches," *JBL*, 88:297, 301; Charles Fensham, "Common Trends in Curses of the Near Eastern

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judgment against the elders and leaders of His people”(Isa. 3:13-14). As divine warrior God carries out this sentence of judgment. The title Yahweh Sabaoth reflects the militancy of God as warrior leader of the armies of Israel, angels, and the whole creation (Isa. 48:2; 51:15).¹⁰ The term *sabaoth* is from the form meaning “soldier or army” and “characterizes God as the Lord who makes all things possible. What appears to men as totally improbably and impossible he can do at any time, as Lord of all things.”¹¹ Yahweh is also the Great Shepherd over Israel and the nations enabling His people to hope for a new exodus of regathering them from dispersion into the land, to pasture them safely and even enable them to lie down relaxed knowing that they are protected from any wild beast (Isa. 14:30; 34:6; 40:11; 49:9-10; 63:11).¹² Compared to Yahweh the other kings in Isaiah are impotent and fleeting, for the only successful kings in Isaiah are Yahweh and His anointed.

C. J. Labuschagne develops the incomparability of Yahweh as of supreme importance especially with those qualities that distinguish Yahweh from other god concepts.¹³ Incomparability is a polemic theme and an affirmation of loyalty in ancient Near Eastern documents, but no section has so prolonged a development and depth of polemic for the incomparability of Yahweh as the section of Isaiah 40-48.

Yahweh is the living and true God (Isa. 37:4, 17; 57:15). Yahweh repeatedly says through the prophet, “I am Yahweh, there is none else, there is no God beside me” (Isa. 45:5-6, 14, 18, 21; 44:6-8; 46:9). This stress on monotheism contributes to the incomparability theme in that there are no other existing Gods, nor does Yahweh have an equal. For example, idols cannot be

Treaties and Kudurru- Inscriptions Compared with Maledictions of Amos and Isaiah,” *ZAW*, 75: 155-75.

¹⁰ J. P. Ross, “Jahweh Seba’ot in Samuel and Psalms” *Vetus Testamentum*, 17:76.

¹¹ Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1972), p. 41.

¹² Walter Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961) I: 236-7; also L. Durr, *Ursprung und Aushau der isr.-jud.*, p. 406.

¹³ C. J. Labuschagne, *The Incomparability of Yahweh in the Old Testament* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1966).

favorably compared to Yahweh for they are the work of men's hands and thus totally dependent upon men for their existence and form (Isa. 40:18-20; 44:9-20).

Yahweh cannot be portrayed by an idol or by any likeness in the creation which he has made (40:18ff.). Yahweh is Lord over the gods who are being represented in various forms (40:19-20). For this reason he is incomparable. The worthlessness of the Babylonian gods is shown by the fact that they can be reproduced in various forms (40:25).¹⁴

The idols come from common trees, which serve as the source for firewood (Isa. 44:14-20). These idols are of no significance.

Isaiah has a sarcastic term for naming the idols, 'elohim; this, though not of the same terminology as el, yet reminds of it, but by making out of the word a diminutive, represents the pagan gods as 'godlets,' or (etymologically taken) as 'good-for nothing-ones.' The false god fails to measure up to the conception of full deity (2:8, 18, 20; 10:10ff.; 19:1, 3; 31:7).¹⁵

In this same vein, Yahweh calls the idol worshippers before Him in judgment (Isa. 41:21-24). In His accusation He demonstrates they are unable to do that which is characteristic of deity. Then He further demonstrates that they are unable to do any thing at all: "Do something, whether good or bad" (Isa. 41:23). To which Yahweh concludes that these false gods are nothings; they do not exist. They cannot accomplish anything. "But you are less than nothing and your works are utterly worthless. He who chooses you is detestable" (Isa. 41:24). From this basis the idol worshippers should be ashamed. Those who make idols are nothing (Isa. 44:9). They are ignorant, with blinded eyes and a deluded heart (Isa. 44:18-20).

Yahweh is incomparable in that while idols are time-bound, Yahweh is far superior, being beyond time and everlasting with time. Yahweh is the first and

¹⁴ Joseph Mihelic, 'The Concept of God in Deutero-Isaiah,' *Biblical Research*, 11:36.

¹⁵ Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology, Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), p. 236.

the last, before Whom no being was formed and after whom nothing will exist (Isa. 40:28; 41:4; 43:10ff.; 44:6; 48:12). When this is coupled with His consistent intervention in history it leads to a concept of immutability of His nature.¹⁶ "What is expressed here is not the permanence of an always existent divine being, but the contrast between god and history in its totality ('and with the last I am still he')."¹⁷ This contrast includes a strong polemic against all other gods who are temporal. The merism (first and last) declares that Yahweh is the only God Who is from everlasting to everlasting (Isa. 43:10). In contrast, in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Canaan, the gods grew old and younger ones came along and replaced them. There is no hint of this concerning Yahweh in Isaiah. These declarations of Yahweh's transcendence over the world and time provided a basis for comfort within Judah's captivity.

Men only learned to value Yahweh as the eternal, immortal God, when they had brought home to them in the most painful manner the transience of the nation, an experience which caused many to question even the living power of the national God. During the Exile, therefore, there are frequent references to the eternal God, whom the stars obey, and before whom this fleeting world cannot but tremble (40:28; cf. 60:19); to the everlasting King, who puts the false gods to shame; to the eternal Governor, exalted over the world and time (26:4). With this intense emphasis on the transcendence of God eternity was also naturally included within his attributes.¹⁸

Christopher North even defends that Yahweh is contemporary with all history.¹⁹ For the Hebrew, history had a beginning in creation and it would have a consummation. Yahweh stands apart from this in a different dimension, which allows Him to extend beyond the bounds of time and exist during time. That is, Yahweh's involvement with time is not the same as the concept of time, which

¹⁶ Eichrodt, I: 192.

¹⁷ Claus Westerman, *Isaiah 40-66* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969), p. 65.

¹⁸ Eichrodt, I: 183.

¹⁹ Christopher North, *The Second Isaiah* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1964), pp. 180-

people possess. Isaiah uses mixed tenses, which seem to imply that the past, present, and future are all present to Yahweh. North explores this concept with passages such as Isaiah 48:4-5 which says, "I *knew* how stubborn you *are*" and "therefore I told you long ago," before the nation existed. No eternity of Yahweh is worked out in detail but there are a few hints in that direction as an advance over the everlastingness of Yahweh. Yahweh is contemporary with all history. "Ever since anything came to pass, there am I" (Isaiah 41:4; 48:16).

Yahweh is also the creator in ways that show His incomparable superiority. For example, Babylon had gods associated with sun (*Shamash*), moon (*Sin*) and all planets and stars were identified with named deities who governed different aspects of life, be it: national, royal, natural or daily life. In this polemical challenge Yahweh alone creates all of these heavenly objects which had been taken to symbolize Babylon's pantheon (Isa. 42:5; 44:24; 48:12-13; Ps. 89:11-13). Then Isaiah develops Yahweh's sovereignty over them in leading them forth, naming them and bestowing on them His vigor and strength, which leaves no star lacking (Isa. 40:25-26; Ps. 147:4). Isaiah is bold in affirming that the God of the captive people "created" the stars, whom their captors worshipped as gods. Yahweh is alone as creator of heaven, earth, and man (Isa. 27:11; 40:28; 44:24). This means that He is sovereign as the potter is for the potsherd and as parents are for their baby (Isa. 45:9-10). Thus Yahweh is in absolute control of all things (Isa. 45:5-13); there is no other god.

Yahweh as creator serves to identify that Yahweh is the one who intervenes in history (Isa. 40:25-31; 45:7-25; 48:12-3). "Yahweh is great, and that our Lord is above all gods. Whatever Yahweh pleases He does, in heaven and earth" (Ps 135:5-6). Only One with supreme creative power could comprehensibly direct the events of history and overcome all obstacles placed in the way of the salvation of His people. Isaiah, more than any other prophet, has a comprehensive conception of God's activity in the whole history of Israel. Yahweh's incomparable greatness over the rulers of the earth is evident in His

transcendent throne being above the heavens in contrast to the temporary reign of earthly rulers (Isa. 40:21-24). He uses these earthly rulers, such as Cyrus, to accomplish His purpose because He is the creator of all and none can oppose Him (Isa. 45:11-13; 51:12-16; 52:1-6). Yahweh is the only God and thus creates light and darkness, prosperity and disaster; there is no room for a dualism or a supposed rival (Isa. 45:5-6). In Yahweh's victory over the nations His supremacy in history is evident. "If the impotence and untrustworthiness of Egypt had been demonstrated in this crisis and the might of Assyria had been humiliated before the power of Yahweh, then there was no other god who could vie with him or pretend to share his supremacy."²⁰ Yahweh is He who intervenes in history showing Himself as the only supreme being; all gods are impotent. Labuschagne writes concerning Isaiah 46.

It is interesting to note that the prophet regarded as the primary difference between Yahweh and the idols, the fact, that Yahweh actively carries and saves (verse 4), while the idols have to be carried 'as burdens on weary beasts' (verses 1 and 7), unable to save (verse 7; cf. 45:20), unable to move from their place (verse 7).²¹

In fact, Babylon's idols cannot save themselves from captivity (Isa. 46:1-2). Yahweh the sustainer of Israel shall rescue it in the end (Isa. 46:3-4). The idols cannot act but Yahweh does what He pleases (Isa. 46:5-11).

Yahweh not only controls history as it happens, He fulfills it before it occurs through His prophetic pronouncements. In Judaism a prophet had to have complete accuracy of his prophecy or he could be considered presumptuous and thus be stoned (Deut. 18:17-22). This ability and requirement of complete accuracy leaves Yahweh as the only One who can predict the future accurately, even with details. Yahweh is thus supreme such that no one and nothing can be

²⁰ John Mauchlie, *Isaiah 1-39*, p.39.

²¹ Labuschagne, p. 112.

favorably compared with Him. Labuschagne develops this in commenting on Isaiah 49:9.

Yahweh proclaims His incomparability: 'I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done.' For Deutero-Isaiah this quality of Yahweh affords clear proof that He is utterly distinct from the gods and that He is the only true God (cf. also 44:6 and 41:23). Yahweh's ability to declare the future, which Deutero-Isaiah associates with His incomparability (cf. also Jer. 10:7), is consequent upon the fact that He has revealed Himself as the all-wise Controller of history. Yahweh not only regulates human history, but also determines what is yet to be. Here we meet the idea of Yahweh's intervention in history carried to its ultimate conclusions, the most outstanding attribute of the incomparable God spanning past, present and future.²²

Yahweh is the vocal God in contrast to the dumb idols. Yahweh makes prophecy that is fulfilled both in the book and now in the historical record (Isa. 46:9-10). Kenneth Barker explains that Yahweh's sovereignty is the dynamic reason why Yahweh can declare His incomparability, "since Yahweh's rule extends into the future-indeed, he reigns forever-he can predict what will happen (41:4; 43:10; 44:6-8; 45:21-22; 46:9-10)."²³ Yahweh puts the idols on trial and challenges them to produce fulfilled prophecy. The conclusion is that they are silent, unable to speak, let alone predict. Those gods are false (Isa. 41:26, 28-29). Yahweh next takes up His own challenge (41:8-9).

I am Yahweh; that is my name!
 I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols.
 See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare;
 Before they spring into being I announce them to you.

The background for Yahweh's boldness is the fulfillment of the intricate prophecy throughout the book. For one example, Yahweh demonstrates His

²² Labuschagne, p. 114.

incomparability and supremacy by declaring that He will raise a king from the East named Cyrus, who will liberate His people Israel from the Babylonians (Isa. 41:2-4; 45:1ff.). Presumably, Yahweh uses Cyrus' free agency to choose to reestablish Israel as well as His own sovereign choice. This occurred in 539 B. C. with the conquering of Babylon by Cyrus (king of the Medes and Persians). No other person could foretell the coming of Cyrus; only Yahweh was able to foretell his coming and make his victorious conquest of the nations possible. This predictive accuracy continues in Jesus' ministry as well. While Peter is protesting that he will if necessary die with Christ, Jesus predicts that Peter will deny Him three times before a cock will crow that very night (Jn. 13:37-38; 18:15-18, 25-27). Again presumably, Peter freely chose to deny Jesus, then to repent in grief, which enabled Jesus to recover him graciously for ministry (Mt. 26:69-75; perhaps Jn. 21:15-9 three questions paralleling the three denials).

The prophet's role as the "called" (*nābī*) by Yahweh is to speak for Him. The *malāk* are the messengers of God. They are officers of the heavenly court sent by Yahweh to tell His people the message in the same way as a Near Eastern royal messenger would.²⁴ Since Isaiah received the message from God it was expounded with divine authority. Usually the message is quite clear and is communicated to the audience who need to repent. At times signs and reliable witnesses to signed documents are used to help confirm the certainty of the prophecy as unforgeable and thus increase the faith of those who hear the prophecy. When the prophecy did not go to the group described within the prophecy (such as Isaiah's prophecy against Assyria or Babylon) then the prophecy is as good as accomplished when its time will come. In such conditions judgment is certain. However, if the word of Yahweh is given directly to the person to be judged this may imply that a prophecy is conditional upon their response. For example, Isaiah tells sick Hezekiah, "Thus says Yahweh, set your

²³ Kenneth Barker, "Toward a Theology of Satan," p. 8.

²⁴ John Holladay, "Assyrian Statecraft and the Prophets of Israel," *Harvard Theological Review* 63:31.

house in order for you shall die and not live" (Isa. 38:1). Yet when Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to Yahweh reminding Yahweh of his faithfulness and weeping bitterly, Isaiah was sent back to inform Hezekiah, "Thus says Yahweh, I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; behold I will add fifteen years to your life" (Isa. 38:4-5). That is what seemed unconditional as a prophecy because it went to the person who could repent and deal with it, actually had an implied condition within it as the word from Yahweh. This is not alone since other examples such as Jonah's prophecy also show its conditional nature when the Ninevites repent upon hearing of the impending judgment and the forty days pass without God bringing the judgment upon them (Jonah 3:4-10). However, much of the prophecy in Isaiah comes with the proviso that Israel will not be turned back (Isa. 6:9-13). That is, though Isaiah had earlier offered redemption for his people they were unresponsive and finally went over the line of certain captivity. The Isaiah six vision is changing the openness to heal to the certainty to judge. The prophecy that comes to Israel thereafter comes with certain judgment, thus without any condition. The prophecy that is proclaimed against the other nations, such as Babylon, gives no evidence of the other nations' having received these messages, so that they stand as unconditional prophecies from Yahweh.

Many would see that the concept of the divine word has empowerment inherent in the word. One of this author's professors, Isaac Rabinowitz, explained this view from Isaiah 55:10-11.

The author of these verses obviously believed that the "word of the Lord" -- a phenomenon, be it noted, comparable in palpability to rain or snow -- was such that, once introduced ("sent") into the world, it had the capacity of acting to fulfill itself at some subsequent time, to make its communicative or expressive signification 'come true' as accomplished fact.²⁵

²⁵ Isaac Rabinowitz, *Toward a Valid Theory of Biblical Hebrew Literature*, p. 319; also: John Mckenzie, 'The Word of God in the Old Testament,' *Theological Studies*, 21:183-206; Wesley Fuerst, 'The Word of God in the Old Testament,' *The Lutheran Quarterly*, 10:316; O. Grether, *Name und Wort Gottes im Alten Testament*, pp.103-7 describes the Word of God as a

In this view the Word of God is power laden, which irresistibly achieves its end. Such an empowered word is common among Israel's neighbors as well. For example Marduk proves his kingship in heaven by speaking a word of power which annihilates a robe and then recreates it.²⁶ Additionally, in a hymn to the moon-god Sin, it is said "When thy word settles down on the earth, green vegetation is produced ...The word makes fat the sheepfold...The word causes truth and justice to be."²⁷ Likewise, an Egyptian hymn speaks of *Amon Re-Atum-Har-Ashti*, who spoke with his mouth and there came into existence all men, gods, and animals.²⁸ Isaiah has similar speech concerning the power of Yahweh's word as a polemic against the silence of the idols and false gods (Isa. 41:17-29; 42:9; 44: 6-8; 45:4). Yahweh pronounces weighty declarations of judgment against nations (Isa. 13:1; 14:28; 15:1; 17:1; 19:1; 21:1, 11, 13; 22:1; 23:1). These words of judgment overtake the group Yahweh addressed (Deut. 28:15; Isa. 9:8; Zech. 1:5-6). This is similar to Yahweh striking the earth, setting it ablaze, and slaying the wicked with His breath (Isa. 11:4; 30:33). What Yahweh says will be fulfilled because His purpose of destruction or deliverance is revealed through His speech (Isa. 1:19-20; 21:16-17; 24:3; 25:8; 40:5; 44:24-28; 58:14) and He does not take back His word (Isa. 31:2). Likewise the sure word of divine promise (particularly about Yahweh's coming to deliver and restore His beleaguered people) will endure forever to be fulfilled (Isa. 40:6-8). In Isaiah the word is not an actual essence in itself but finds its effectiveness in the powerful will of God for which it

missile with a time fuse; Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1967) vol. 2, p. 69 insists that words, once spoken, remain effective or even dangerous "for a long time, like a long-forgotten mine in the sea, or a grenade buried in a ploughed field," E. Jacob, *Theology of the Old Testament*, p. 127 speaks of it as a "projectile shot into the enemy camp whose explosion must sometimes be awaited but which is always inevitable;" O. Procksch, "The Word of God in the Old Testament," within G. Kittle, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 4:93; Walter Roehrs, "The Theology of the Word of God in the Old Testament," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, 32: 264; a helpful summary of these views is surveyed by Anthony Thiselton, "The Supposed Power of Words in the Biblical Writings," *Journal of Theological Studies*, 25:283.

²⁶ *Enuma elish*, iv. 22-26.

²⁷ J. B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, p. 386, "Hymn to the Moon-god."

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 371, col.ii, "Hymns to the Gods as a Single God."

is the audible expression and thus together they change the course of history. The effectiveness of Yahweh's word rests upon God Who stands behind His word and accomplishes it. This pattern is evident in Isaiah 48:3 where Yahweh speaks, "I foretold the former things long ago, my mouth announced them and I made them known; then suddenly I acted, and they came to pass."

Yahweh Sabaoth is the warrior par excellence. He takes the outfit of a warrior with breastplate of righteousness, helmet of salvation, His garments of vengeance to execute His judgments, and the cloak of zeal because whatever He does He does effectively and whole-heartedly (Isa.59:16-17). With this preparation Yahweh will raise the battle cry and triumph over His enemies (Isa. 42:13). Through His arm of power He conquered over Rahab and the primordial forces for chaos (drying up the waters of Teham), showing in a polemical form that Yahweh is the sovereign warrior who conquers all opposition from the earliest beginning (Isa. 51:9-10). Likewise, through His arm of power He works salvation for Israel (Isa. 52:10; 59:16; 63:5, 12). In addition He will repay wrath and retribution to His enemies according to what they have done (Isa. 59:18).

It is Yahweh and not Ba'al who rides swiftly on the clouds as His chariot (Isa. 19:1). He comes; the nations fear. They melt before Him. He brings their plans to nothing and defeats Egypt, Babylon and Assyria (Isa. 13:2-5; 19:1-4; Rev.17-18). He uses human armies and supernatural means. Isaiah 63:1-6 describes that ultimately, Yahweh will bring the judgment against the enemies as He establishes His eschatological kingdom.

Who is this coming from Edom, from Bozrah, with His garments stained crimson? Who is this, robed in splendor, striding forward in the greatness of his strength? 'It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save. 'Why are your garments red, like those of one treading the winepress? I have trodden the winepress alone; from the nations no one was with me. I trampled them in my anger and trod them down in my wrath; their blood spattered my garments, and I stained all my clothing for the day of vengeance was in my heart, and the year of my redemption has come. I looked, but there

was no one to help, I was appalled that no one gave support; so my own arm worked salvation for Me. I trampled the nations in my anger; in My wrath I made them drunk and poured their blood on the ground.'

The eschatological victory is guaranteed because of Yahweh's omnipotence, irresistibility, and righteousness. Such a commitment to righteousness is on such a pure and deep level that wrath and anger are appropriate divine responses of God to the creation, which warrants this level of judgment.

In Isaiah 54, Yahweh promises Israel, His bride, who had been chastened by expulsion, to take her back into his favor and forever to show her the loyal love that is entailed in their marriage union. To convey these truths with appropriate accurate force Yahweh claims and demonstrates emotions of anger, loyal love, and compassion that connects Him as feeling deeply for His beleaguered people.

In a surge of anger I hid My face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you, says Yahweh your redeemer. Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet My unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed, says Yahweh, who has compassion on you (Isa. 54:8, 10).

From this love and compassion, Yahweh provides profound comfort for His people (Isa. 40:1-2). The thought of them is always before Yahweh (Isa. 49:13-16). The new covenant is an expression of Yahweh's faithfulness to Israel and His servant (Isa. 49:7; 61:8). Yahweh delights in restored Israel as a bridegroom over His bride (Isa. 62:5). This loyal love is so compassionate that Isaiah breaks out into praise of Yahweh's greatness.

I will tell of the kindness of Yahweh,
The deeds for which He is to be praised
According to all Yahweh has done for us—
Yes, the many good things He has done

For the house of Israel,
According to His compassion and many kindnesses (Isa. 63:7).

Yahweh is incomparable as the God Who exists, predicts, acts, creates, intervenes in history, feels emotions deeply, judges the rebellious and redeems His people. Yahweh has no equal! No one even comes close!