

Session 9 The Forerunner Message in Isaiah 66

I. REVIEW

- A. Many commentators see Isaiah 65-66 as one message or one unit. One of main themes is that the Lord will give His salvation to the humble and will judge those who persist in sin and rebellion. Last week we looked at various indicators that this is one message or unified passage.
- B. This passage provides the conclusion to both the book of Isaiah and its final section (Isa. 56-66).
- C. In Isaiah 65-66, the Lord answered Israel's national prayer (63:7-64:12). They had complained that God "restrained" Himself from using His strength to deliver them, "restrained the yearning of His heart" (His affections) towards them (63:15), "hid His face" (64:7), and "held His peace" or remained silent (64:12) and inactive in terms of helping them.
1. Isaiah's prayer expressed a prayer and complaint that Israel had in his day and will have again in the end times. They complained that the Lord was silent and unresponsive. Many in the body of Christ living in compromise or bitterness today have this same complaint.
 2. The Lord's answer is that He is responsive and gracious to the humble who seek Him; He called them, but they did not answer Him "on His terms" (65:12; 66:4; cf. 55:1-7).
- D. Two common complaints about the Lord's leadership among His people in both Israel and the Church are that He is *too harsh in His judgments* (63:1-6) and *too unresponsive relationally* or "too hard to find" (63:15). The pastoral answer to both complaints is found in Isaiah 65-66.
- E. Isaiah 65-66 is a part of the forerunner message that prepares people to respond to God. Isaiah 60-66 focuses on Jerusalem (60:14-15; 61:3; 62:11; 64:10; 65:18-18; 66:6, 8, 10, 13, 20).
- ¹⁴*...and they shall call you **The City of the LORD, Zion of the Holy One of Israel.** ¹⁵Whereas you have been forsaken and hated...I will make you an eternal excellence... (Isa. 60:14-15)*
- ¹⁰*Your holy cities are a wilderness. Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. (Isa. 64:10)*
- ⁸*...for as soon as Zion was in labor, she gave birth to her children. (Isa. 66:8)*
- ¹⁹*"I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people." (Isa. 65:18-19)*
- ¹⁰*Rejoice with Jerusalem...all you who love her...all you who mourn for her... (Isa. 66:10)*
- F. Outline for Isaiah 66:
- 66:1-2 The Lord desires a house and a place of rest
 - 66:3-5 The Lord's judgment on those who refuse His goodness
 - 66:7-9 Zion will labor and give birth to many children
 - 66:10-14 God will bless all who engage in His purpose for Jerusalem
 - 66:15-17 When Jesus returns, He will confront His enemies
 - 66:18-24 God's glory seen and proclaimed in the nations
- G. I recommend "*The Promised Son and Promised Nation of Isaiah 66:7-9*" by Samuel Whitefield.

II. JERUSALEM: GOD'S ETERNAL RESTING PLACE

- A. Jerusalem will be the eternal dwelling place, or final resting place, for God's glory (Ps. 132:5).
- B. Scripture describes *two Jerusalems* in God's plan: the *heavenly Jerusalem* (New Jerusalem) and *earthly Jerusalem* (millennial Jerusalem). In context to Jesus' return, the New Jerusalem will descend to the earth to connect with the Millennial Jerusalem.
¹⁰He...showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven... (Rev. 21:10)
- C. Jesus' throne will be expressed in earthly Jerusalem (Jer. 3:17) and the New Jerusalem (Rev. 22:3). There will be a dynamic convergence of the heavenly and earthly realms in the union of the two Jerusalems. The Lord's "*Mountain-City-House*" will be His resting place on the earth (66:1).
- D. The Spirit is preparing the Church for Jesus to come and establish His throne on earth.
- E. Jesus will prepare the nations for the Father to come and establish His throne on earth (1 Cor. 15:28; Rev. 21:3). Jesus will subject the kingdom to the Father at the end of the Millennium.
*²⁴Then comes the end [of the Millennium], when He [Jesus] delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He [Jesus] puts an end to all rule [resisting authorities in the Millennium]...
²⁸When all things are made subject to Him [Jesus], then the Son Himself will be subject to Him [the Father] who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all. (1 Cor. 15:20-28)*
- F. God's purpose has always been to live together with His people *face to face on this earth*. This is the most difficult yet ultimate reality that God determined to accomplish through Christ.
³..."Behold, the tabernacle of God [Father's throne] is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. (Rev. 21:3)
1. The dilemma is that God cannot violate His blazing holiness while honoring man's free will.
 2. He had to establish a salvation process that created the context for Him to dwell face to face with humans. God can only make His habitation on earth *after* the nations live in obedience to Him. There are many implications to this grand reality of God fully removing "the veil."
- G. Revelation 21-22 quotes Isaiah 65-66, giving a biblical context to understand Isaiah better. Isaiah 65-66 provides an earthly, historic, geographic context to understand Revelation 19-22.
- H. Isaiah prophesied that the Lord would create a new earth and provide safety for the redeemed when ascending God's holy mountain (65:17, 25). Are these promises far-fetched? Isaiah 66 encourages each to believe in the promises in 65:17-25, for Jesus' heavenly rule will be expressed on earth.
¹⁷...I create new heavens and a new earth...¹⁸I create Jerusalem...¹⁹I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people...²⁵The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox...they shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain" (Isa. 65:17-25)
- I. Who has access to God's holy mountain? God's throne is coming to earth, but only the humble will have access to it (66:2). God desires to live on the new earth with His family forever (Rev. 21:3).

III. THE LORD DESIRES A HOUSE AND A PLACE OF REST (ISA. 66:1-2)

- A. Isaiah spoke of the Lord's throne, footstool, house, and rest (66:1). The Lord asked two questions: "Where or what kind of house could you build for Me?" and "Where is My resting place?"
¹... "Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest?" ²For all those things My hand has made..." (Isa. 66:1)
- B. **Heaven in My throne:** The Lord sits on a throne in heaven with authority over all (Rev. 4). The supernatural realm of heaven is far more powerful than the natural realm. His throne is in place, yet He wants something more; He desires to rest in His home with His people *on earth*.
- C. **Earth is My footstool:** The place where King Jesus sets His feet in the natural realm, His earthly footstool is the place of His inheritance (Ps. 2:8-9). A king's throne and its footstool are designed together. The footstool of a throne is part of the throne furniture. There is a close association. The ark in the temple was the Lord's footstool (1 Chr. 28:2-3; Ps 99:5; 132:7-8; Lam. 2:1)
⁸...I will give You the nations for Your inheritance...the ends of the earth for Your possession." (Ps. 2:8)
- D. Where is the house that you will build Me? Where is the place of My rest? Both questions have the same answer. The Lord's house has physical, spiritual, and relational dimensions to it. Though His throne is established, His *ultimate* home of rest is something future for which He longs (Ps. 132).
*¹³For the LORD has chosen Zion [Jerusalem]; He has desired it for His dwelling place:
¹⁴"This is My resting place forever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it." (Ps. 132:13-14)*
1. His "Mountain-City-House" includes the millennial temple connected to the New Jerusalem. Jesus spoke to Ezekiel about His throne as "the place of the soles of My feet."
⁴The glory of the LORD came into the temple [millennial temple]...⁶I heard Him [Jesus] speak to me from the temple...⁷He said, "Son of man, this is the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell [live] in the midst of...Israel forever." (Ezek. 43:4-7)
 2. His house is the place where His family connects with Him and enjoys a shared inheritance. His home is on earth with His people enjoying conditions described in 65:20-25.
- E. His house or place of rest on earth is where He does not strive with those He loves (Gen. 6:3).
³And the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever..." (Gen. 6:3)
- F. The Lord rests in a house made of people who voluntarily walk in humility and the fear of God (66:2). The Lord "looks for" people with humility and who respect His Word (66:2; 57:15).
¹"Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest?... ²But on this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word." (Isa. 66:1-2)
¹⁵For thus says the High and Lofty One... "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and...contrite ones. (Isa. 57:15)

IV. THE LORD'S JUDGMENT ON THOSE WHO REFUSE HIS GOODNESS (ISA. 66:3-6)

- A. God totally rejects syncretic religion (66:3). Israel offered both biblical and non-biblical sacrifices in their syncretistic, idolatrous rituals. He was not rebuking them for offering biblical sacrifices but for combining them with pagan sacrifices and secular religion.
- ³*He who kills a bull is as if he slays a man [human sacrifices]; he who sacrifices a lamb, as if he breaks a dog's neck [a pagan ritual]... he who burns incense, as if he blesses an idol. (Isa. 66:3)*
- B. God calls out to all people, but many refuse Him. They choose their own ways instead (66:4).
- ³*“Just as they have chosen their own ways...⁴I choose their delusions, and bring their fears on them; because, when I called, no one answered, when I spoke they did not hear; but they did evil before My eyes and chose that in which I do not delight.” (Isa. 66:3-4)*
- C. The Lord assures the godly that He sees those who are persecuting them (66:5). The wicked sarcastically said, “Let the Lord be glorified,” mocking the godly for honoring God’s Word.
- ⁵*“Hear the word of the LORD, you who tremble at His word: “Your brethren who hated you, who cast you out for My name’s sake, said, ‘Let the LORD be glorified, that we may see your joy.’ But they shall be ashamed [be judged by God].” (Isa. 66:5)*
- D. God announces to those who tremble at His word that judgment is coming (66:6). This judgment is described as a sound of trouble coming in the city of Jerusalem. Isaiah heard an uproar from the city and a voice in the temple. It seems to have been the Lord’s voice calling judgment on His enemies.
- ⁶*The sound of noise [tumult] from the city! A voice from the temple! The voice of the LORD, who fully repays His enemies! (Isa. 66:6)*
- ¹⁶*The LORD also will roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem... (Joel 3:16)*

V. ZION WILL LABOR AND GIVE BIRTH TO MANY CHILDREN (ISA. 66:7-9)

- A. God’s plan to find rest on earth involves the birth of a male child and the labor of Zion (66:7-9).
- ⁷*“Before she was in labor, she gave birth...she delivered a male child.⁸Who has heard such a thing?... Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day [Jesus’ second coming]? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion was in labor, she gave birth to her [end-time] children. ⁹Shall I bring to the time of birth and not cause delivery?” (Isa. 66:7-9)*
- B. Israel expected the Messiah to come in glory “after” a time of birth pains (Jer. 30:6-7; Mic. 5:3; Mt. 24:8). However, the labor is the Great Tribulation described as birth pains coming on Zion.
- ³*He [the Lord] shall give them up [Israel], until the time that she who is in labor has given birth; then the remnant of His brethren shall return to the children of Israel. (Mic. 5:3)*
- ⁶*“Ask now, and see whether a man is ever in labor with child? So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in labor...? For that day is great, so that none is like it; And it is the time of Jacob’s trouble [Great Tribulation], but he shall be saved out of it.” (Jer. 30:6-7)*

- C. ***A male child***: Jesus' first coming was a surprise to the leaders in Jerusalem (Zion). They expected the Messiah to come after national birth pains. This is how John interpreted this verse (Rev. 12:5).

⁷***Before she was in labor, she gave birth...she delivered a male child.*** (Isa. 66:7)

⁵***She [remnant of Israel] bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child [Jesus] was caught up to God and His throne.*** (Rev. 12:5)

- D. God will cause the earth to be reborn in one day when Jesus replaces all the evil kings, casts Satan into prison (Rev. 20:1), restores the plant and animal life to the conditions of the garden of Eden, establishes His throne in Jerusalem, and causes the New Jerusalem to descend to Jerusalem.

⁸***...Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once?*** (Isa. 66:8)

- E. ***A nation born at once***: Israel's national salvation be "birthed" in one day (66:9).

⁸***...Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion was in labor, she gave birth to her [end-time] children.*** ⁹***Shall I bring to the time of birth and not cause delivery?*** (Isa. 66:8-9)

1. ***Barren***: Isaiah personified Zion or Jerusalem as a woman who did not bear children (54:1).

¹***"Sing, O barren, you who have not borne... you who have not labored with child! For more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married woman."*** (Isa. 54:1)

2. In what sense is Zion barren? God promised Abraham that he would have more descendants than the stars. The Lord was referring to offspring who would faithfully honor the covenant that He made with them as nation. Zion is "spiritually barren" in terms of the small number of messianic believers who walk in covenant with their Messiah, the God of Israel.

3. Israel will be "born" in one day as a nation walking in covenant with God (Ezek. 36:33)

³³***... "On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities..."*** (Ezek. 36:33)

- F. ***As soon as***: A short season of labor in Jerusalem will result in a vast family of godly new children. The labor will be short yet long enough for some to be fearful. Scripture describes it as a 3½-year period (Dan. 7:25; 9:27; 12:7; Rev. 11:2; 13:5). This labor is related to a siege of Jerusalem.

VI. GOD WILL BLESS ALL WHO ENGAGE IN HIS PURPOSE FOR JERUSALEM (66:10-14)

- A. The saints rejoicing with Jerusalem is essential to participating in her blessing (66:10-11). To rejoice with Jerusalem involves understanding and engaging in God's purpose of Jerusalem.

¹⁰***Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad with her, all you who love her; rejoice for joy with her, all you who mourn for her;*** ¹¹***that you may feed and be satisfied with the consolation of her bosom, that you may drink deeply and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.*** (Isa. 66:10-11)

- B. ***All you who love her***: Gentile believers are to love and be glad with "mother Zion," even in her labor pains, without disengaging from her or accusing or despising her (60:5, 15; 65:18; Jer. 31:10).

- C. ***All you who mourn for her***: Great trouble is coming to Zion, and the Church must stand with her.

¹⁰***Your holy cities are a wilderness. Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation.*** (Isa. 64:10)

- D. **Jerusalem's consolation:** Those who stand with Jerusalem in her trouble will be blessed to drink deeply and be delighted with the abundance of her glory (Isaiah 60-62).

⁶**Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: “May they prosper who love you.” (Ps 122:6)**

- E. Isaiah elaborates on the blessing upon those who love Jerusalem (66:12-14).

VII. WHEN JESUS RETURNS, HE WILL CONFRONT HIS ENEMIES (ISA. 66:15-17)

- A. Jesus is coming to Jerusalem (66:15-16). He will judge all flesh using His fire and sword.

¹⁵**Behold, the LORD will come with fire and with His chariots...to render His anger... ¹⁶For by fire and by His sword the LORD will judge all flesh; and the slain of the LORD shall be many. (Isa. 66:15-16)**

- B. The Lord will judge idolaters including those who take the mark of the Beast (66:17).

VIII. GOD'S GLORY SEEN AND PROCLAIMED TO THE NATIONS (ISA. 66:18-24)

- A. The Lord will gather all the nations to see His glory (66:18; cf. 40:5; Ezek. 38:16-23; 39:21). He will gather the nations to witness His glory in context to His judgments.

¹⁸**“For I know their works and their thoughts. It shall be that I will gather all nations [Gentiles] and tongues; and they shall come and see My glory.” (Isa. 66:18)**

- B. The Lord will sanctify His name before Israel and all the nations by causing them to see what Jesus will do in the winepress of 63:1-6 in judging wickedness (Ezek. 38:16-17).

⁴**“You [the Antichrist] shall fall upon the mountains of Israel...” ⁷The nations shall know that I am the LORD... ²¹I will set My glory among the nations; all the nations shall see My judgment which I have executed... ²²Israel shall know that I am the LORD...” (Ezek. 39:4-22)**

- C. The Lord will set a sign among the survivors of the Great Tribulation and send them to the nations to proclaim His glory, including details on how He judged the nations who attacked Israel.

¹⁹**“I will set a sign among them; and those among them who escape [unsaved survivors of the Great Tribulation] I will send to the nations...who have not heard My fame nor seen My glory. And they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles.” (Isa. 66:19)**

- D. Because of these missionary efforts, many will come to Jerusalem (66:20-21). All those who survive the Great Tribulation will worship Jesus in Jerusalem (66:23; Zech. 14:16-21).

²⁰**“Then they shall bring all your brethren for an offering to the LORD out of all nations...to My holy mountain Jerusalem...” ²¹I will also take some of them for priests... ²³And it shall come to pass that...all flesh shall come to worship before Me”... (Isa. 66:20-23)**

- E. Isaiah contrasts the eternal destiny of God's servants with eternal destiny of sinners (66:24).

²⁴**They shall...look upon the corpses of the men who have transgressed...their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.” (Isa. 66:24)**