

## ***Session 8 The Forerunner Message in Isaiah 65***

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

- A. Many commentators see Isaiah 65-66 as one message. One of main themes is that the Lord will give the humble His salvation and will judge those who persist in their sin and rebellion.
- B. The Lord promised to judge the wicked, as He described in 63:1-6 when the Divine Warrior confronted them (65:6-7,12; 66:4-6), and to show compassion to the godly (66:2; 57:15).
- C. Outline for Isaiah 65:
- 65:1-7 The Lord will judge those who refuse Him
  - 65:8-10 The Lord will bless those who love Him
  - 65:11-12 The Lord will judge those who disobey Him
  - 65:13-16 Contrasting the fate of those who obey and disobey God
  - 65:17-19 Rejoice in the reality of the new heavens and earth
  - 65:20-25 Various blessings on life in the new earth
- D. Here, the Lord answers Israel's community prayer in 63:7-64:12 confessing national sins and asking God to show His power to save them from their enemies. They complained that God "hid His face" from them (64:7). The Lord's answer is that He is responsive and gracious to the humble who seek Him; He had called them, but Israel did not answer Him (65:12; 66:4).

***7... You have hidden Your face from us...<sup>10</sup>Your holy cities are a wilderness...<sup>12</sup>Will You restrain Yourself because of these things, O LORD? Will You hold Your peace...? (Isa 64:7-12)***

***<sup>12</sup>"...when I called, you did not answer...but did evil before My eyes..." (Isa. 65:12)***

### **II. THE LORD WILL JUDGE THOSE WHO REFUSE HIM (ISA. 65:1-7)**

- A. The Lord answered Israel by saying that He takes initiative to be gracious and relate to sinful Gentiles who will respond to Him (65:1).
- <sup>1</sup>"I was sought by those [Gentiles] who did not ask for Me [initially]; I was found by those who did not seek Me [initially]. I said, 'Here I am, here I am,' to a nation [Gentiles] that was not called by My name. <sup>2</sup>I have stretched out My hands all day long to a rebellious people [Israel], who walk in a way that is not good, according to their own thoughts." (Isa. 65:1-2)***
- B. ***I was found by those who did not seek Me:*** The Lord does not hide His face from those who seek Him but opens His heart even to pagan Gentiles as Paul interpreted 65:1 in Romans 10:20.
- <sup>20</sup>Isaiah is very bold and says: "I was found by those who did not seek Me; I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me." <sup>21</sup>But to Israel he says: "All day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and contrary people." (Rom. 10:20-21)***
- C. ***I was sought by those who did not ask for Me:*** He pursued Gentiles who had no history in God and who had not initially asked for Him. This reveals His desire to relate to people with grace.

- D. **Here I am:** “I said, ‘Here I am’ to a nation [Gentiles] that was not called by My name.”
- E. **I stretched out My hand:** The Lord offered grace and relationship all day long to a rebellious people. He offered Himself to Israel, but they refused to respond on God’s terms (55:6-11).  
<sup>12</sup>“...when I called, you did not answer...but did evil before My eyes...” (Isa. 65:12)  
<sup>4</sup>“When I called, no one answered...but they did evil before My eyes...” (Isa. 66:4)
- F. **According to their thoughts:** They had perverse understanding and wrong thoughts (Ps. 2:3), attitudes, and actions that continually provoked the Lord to anger.
- G. The Jews had made God angry by sacrificing to idols (65:3-4). Isaiah described what Judah did during the reign of Ahaz (2 Chr. 28:22-27) and possibly Manasseh (2 Kgs. 21; 2 Chr. 33).  
<sup>3</sup>“...a people who provoke Me to anger continually to My face; who sacrifice in gardens, and burn incense on altars of brick; <sup>4</sup>who sit among the graves, and spend the night in the tombs...  
<sup>6</sup>Behold, it is written before Me: I will not keep silence, but will repay— even repay into their bosom— <sup>7</sup>your iniquities and the iniquities of your fathers together...who have burned incense on the mountains and blasphemed Me on the hills.” (Isa. 65:3-7)
1. **Provoke Me to anger continually:** Their actions continually provoked the Lord to anger.
  2. **Gardens and bricks:** Israel offered sacrifices to idols in gardens instead of offering them to God in the temple. They used bricks to build altars to their false gods.
  3. **Graves and tombs:** They talked to the dead and participated in Molech worship which engaged in necromancy (8:16-20; 19:3; 28:15,18; 29:4, 57:9). They were in the tombs seeking to receive “oracles” from the dead whom they were consulting (65:3-5; 66:3, 17).
- H. **I will not keep silent:** God will not keep silent but instead will answer them with judgment. They wanted God to speak, expecting to hear a word of deliverance from their enemies.
- I. There will be idolatry and false prophets in Israel in the end times. The idolatry described here will be far surpassed with the global worship center for Antichrist being in Jerusalem.  
<sup>8</sup>...the great city [Jerusalem] which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt... (Rev. 11:8)
- J. Paul said that to worship idols was in essence to worship demons (1 Cor. 10:20).  
<sup>20</sup>...the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God. (1 Cor. 10:20)
- K. Unlike the apostle John, Isaiah did not mention the term “the Antichrist,” nor did he prophesy directly about “Antichrist worship” (Rev. 13). Rather, Isaiah spoke of “the Assyrian” (10:5, 24; 52:4; Mic. 5:5) and idol worship which was in essence the worship of demons (1 Cor. 10:20). The king of Assyria was closest thing in Isaiah’s day to a mighty oppressor afflicting many nations, and idol worship involving demons was the closest counterpart to Antichrist worship (Rev. 13).

### III. THE LORD WILL BLESS THOSE WHO LOVE HIM (ISA 65:8-10)

- A. The Lord will save a godly remnant and bring them to the land (65:8-10). He will not destroy the whole nation (the cluster of grapes) but only the rebellious majority (bad grapes).
- <sup>8</sup>*“As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one says, ‘Do not destroy it, for a blessing is in it,’ so will I do for My servants’ sake, that I may not destroy them all. <sup>9</sup>I will bring forth descendants from Jacob... My servants shall dwell there. <sup>10</sup>Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the Valley of Achor a place for herds to lie down, for My people who have sought Me. (Isa. 65:8-10)*
- B. **The new wine:** When the grape harvesters picked the grapes from the vine, they would find dried up clusters that still had a few grapes with juice in them. They were instructed to not destroy that cluster even though there were not many good grapes on it, implying a small number of godly remained. The reason not to throw out that cluster is that there was still a blessing in it.
- C. **I will bring forth descendants:** The Lord will save a remnant of Jewish people in the end times (1:26-27; 4:2-3; 6:13; 10:20-23; 17:4-6; 50:10-11; 57:3-13; 57:13-15).
- D. Israel will inherit the whole land, including the western coastal plain of Sharon and the eastern area of the valley of Achor (65:10).
1. **Sharon:** The plain of Sharon lies in western part of the land bordering the Mediterranean Sea and extends about 10 miles eastward to the hill country of Samaria. It reaches from Mount Carmel in the north about 55 miles to Tel Aviv (ancient Jaffa) in the south.
  2. **Valley of Achor:** The valley of Achor on the eastern side of Israel is a narrow, infertile valley that leads up from the Jordan River to the hill country. This was the place where Achan was executed under Joshua’s command because of his great sin (Josh. 7:24-26).
  3. Hosea prophesied a total reversal of the tragedy that occurred related to Achan in the valley of Achor. It would be known as a place of loyal love to the Lord (Hos. 2:15).
- <sup>14</sup>*“...I will allure her, will bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfort to her. <sup>15</sup>I will give her vineyards from there, and the Valley of Achor as a door of hope; she shall sing there... <sup>16</sup>In that day...you will call Me ‘My Husband’...” (Hos. 2:14-16)*

### IV. THE LORD WILL JUDGE THOSE WHO DISOBEY HIM (ISA 65:11-12)

- A. Those who forsake the Lord will be judged (65:11-12). When the Lord called, they did not answer, but instead they did evil (65:12; 66:4).
- <sup>11</sup>*“But you are those who forsake the LORD, who forget My holy mountain... <sup>12</sup>Therefore I will number you for the sword...because, when I called, you did not answer...” (Isa. 65:11-12)*
- B. In 65:1-7, 11-13, Isaiah explained why the Lord did not answer Israel’s prayer—they chose evil and did not respond when God called them to Him (66:4; 65:12).

V. CONTRASTING THE FATE OF THOSE WHO OBEY AND DISOBEY GOD (ISA. 65:13-16)

- A. God’s blessing on the obedient is contrasted with judgment on those who refuse Him (65:13-16).
- B. Those who obey the Lord will enjoy His blessings in fullness—they shall eat, drink, rejoice, and sing in Millennium and in the New Jerusalem. The curse of the law comes on those who persist in disobedience (Deut. 28). Based on one’s life choices, they will receive blessing or judgment.

<sup>13</sup>...“Behold, My servants shall eat, but you shall be hungry; behold, My servants shall drink, but you shall be thirsty; behold, My servants shall rejoice, but you shall be ashamed; <sup>14</sup>behold, My servants shall sing for joy of heart, but you shall cry for sorrow of heart...(Isa. 65:13-14)

- C. The redeemed will bless or invoke God’s blessing on their life (65:16).

<sup>16</sup>So that he who blesses himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth [Amen]; and he who swears in the earth shall swear by the God of truth [Amen]; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hidden from My eyes. (Isa. 65:16)

1. **He who blesses himself:** The redeemed will bless or invoke God’s blessing on their life. They will look to God alone for blessings, satisfaction, and provision of all their needs. In other words, they entrust themselves to His judgment if they break their oaths.
2. Where a person “looks” as their source of blessing will greatly affect their life. Many bless themselves in their money and possessions.
3. **God of truth:** The literal rendering of “The God of truth” is “The God of the Amen.”
4. *Amen* speaks of that which is reliable and true. To say “amen” means to agree. *Amen* was pronounced when people agreed with the promises and the consequences of an oath (Num. 5:22; Deut. 27:15ff.; Neh. 5:13; Jer. 11:5).
5. Jesus referred to Himself as “the Amen” (Rev. 3:14) because all of His promises are sure. As “the Amen,” Jesus lived in agreement with the Father. Jesus offers Himself to us as the “Amen of God,” saying we are to agree with His promises and their conditions.

<sup>14</sup>...These things says [Jesus] the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness... (Rev. 3:14)

<sup>20</sup>For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen... (2 Cor. 1:20)

6. **He who swears:** They shall swear by or call on the Lord as their witness to what they say, promise, or commit to do. He will be openly acknowledged by all as the only true God.
7. **In the earth:** In the millennial kingdom, the whole earth will be filled with people who see Jesus, the God of the Amen, as their only source of blessing.
8. **Former things are forgotten and hidden:** Their former sins, calamities, and judgments will be forgotten. God’s blessings will be so great that they will cause Israel’s troubles to be forgotten. This is possible because they are hidden from God’s eyes (65:16).

## VI. REJOICE IN THE REALITY OF THE NEW HEAVENS AND EARTH (ISA. 65:17-19)

- A. The fullness of salvation is seen when Jesus creates new heavens and a new earth (65:17; 66:1). This is essential to Jesus' glorious storyline that is unfolding in context to the Great Tribulation.
- <sup>17</sup>“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. <sup>18</sup>But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, and her people a joy. <sup>19</sup>I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people; the voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying.” (Isa. 65:17-19)*
- B. **New heavens and earth:** The Lord will transform the heavens, which includes the sky, weather, and atmosphere, and the earth, which includes all plant and animal life.
- <sup>22</sup>“For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me,” says the LORD, “So shall your descendants and your name remain. (Isa. 66:22)*
- C. This new earth occurs in two stages—first in the Millennium (Rev. 20:4-6) and then the eternal state (2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1). Isaiah emphasized the Millennium and John the eternal state.
- <sup>1</sup>Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. (Rev. 21:1)*
- D. **Former things:** Israel complained that they could not see God's zeal and compassion (63:15). It seemed God hid Himself (64:7) without intervening with power (63:15). When the new earth is created, Jesus will be openly seen to be attentive to His people.
- E. **Be glad and rejoice:** The redeemed are to rejoice forever in what God creates. We are to set our mind on truths related to heaven and the age to come—to study, meditate, talk, sing, and write about the millennial kingdom, new earth, and the New Jerusalem (Col. 3:1-2).
- <sup>1</sup>...seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup>Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. (Col. 3:1-2)*
- F. **I rejoice in Jerusalem:** The Lord rejoices in the city of Jerusalem (66:10). God calls us to love and focus on Jerusalem because He does. We are to cultivate love for Jerusalem simply because it is important to Jesus. His end-time purpose is “Jerusalem-centric.”
- <sup>2</sup>“I am zealous for Zion...<sup>3</sup>I will return to Zion, and  dwell in the midst...” (Zech. 8:2-3)*
- G. **Joy in My people:** The Lord has joy and delight in His people (62:1, 4-5, 7).
- H. **I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing:** Jesus created Jerusalem to cause rejoicing. We rejoice with Jerusalem by understanding her destiny and standing with her for its fulfillment.
- <sup>10</sup>“Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all you who love her; rejoice for joy with her, all you who mourn for her... (Isa. 66:10)*
- I. **Former things will not be remembered:** Things will be so much better that His people will not think about things as they used to be (Rev. 21:4). There will be no sorrow in the age to come.

## VII. VARIOUS BLESSINGS ON LIFE IN THE NEW EARTH (ISA. 65:20-25)

- A. There will be supernatural blessing on creation and human life in the new earth (65:20-25).  
*<sup>20</sup>“No more shall an infant...live but a few days...the child shall die one hundred years old, but the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed. <sup>21</sup>They shall build houses...shall plant vineyards... <sup>22</sup>They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people...<sup>23</sup>They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth children for trouble; for they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the LORD, ...<sup>24</sup>Before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear.  
<sup>25</sup>The 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. 65:20-25)*
- B. **Extended life span:** The people will live as long a tree lives (65:22). Some oak and cedar trees live over 1,000 years. The people living on the earth will have natural bodies, so eventually they will die. The saints will have resurrected bodies and live in the New Jerusalem.
- C. **Human processes will not be suspended:** The natural processes of life will not be suspended but supernaturally enhanced by the Holy Spirit. The natural realm and supernatural dimension will operate together (Eph. 1:10). Babies will be born, labor will be done, houses will be built, fields will be planted and harvested, and meals will be prepared and eaten (65:21-23).
- D. **Security and safety:** They shall not build and another inhabit (65:21). The social and political life will be transformed, resulting in peace and safety. Jerusalem will be the safest city in history.
- E. **Blessed families:** Families will be blessed with fruitful lives (65:23). Labor will be fruitful. Children will have productive lives without rebellion. The offspring of the redeemed will enjoy a dynamic partnership with the Lord in speaking or singing His word to release His power (59:21).  
*<sup>21</sup>“...this is My covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth [prophetic prayers/decrees], shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants...from this time and forevermore.” (Isa. 59:21)*
- F. **Vibrant spiritually:** There will be times when God will bless His people before or while they were still asking for it (65:24). They will enjoy a dynamic interaction with God.
- G. **Transformation of animals:** The animal kingdom will be transformed supernaturally.
- H. **God’s holy mountain:** On the holy mountain rests Jesus’ “mountain-house-temple” that will have a dynamic connection to the New Jerusalem (2:2-3).
- I. **Summary:** Jerusalem is where Jesus will live and reign forever. People from all the nations will come to there to worship Him, learn from Him, and encounter His power (2:2-4; 4:2-6). Animals and people will dwell together without any animosity (65:25), nature will be transformed to the conditions of Eden (35:1-8), people will work with great fruitfulness and enjoy wonderful food and drink (25:1-26:6), they will operate in the power of the Spirit, society will be safe and filled with justice (32:15-20), and God’s salvation will be experienced by all nations (60:3-11).