

Shalom AZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption



The God Who Comes in Fire

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): *Is 66:15-17; Ex. 3:2, 5-8; Deut. 4:23-24; Is. 33:13-17, 20-22; Ps. 73:4-5, 13, 16-20; Ezek. 8:7-12; Matt. 25:31-46*

Isaiah 66 begins with a question from ADONAI that should slow us down: *"Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool. Where then is the House you would build for Me? Where is the place of My rest?"* (Is. 66:1). The Lord is not looking for a building because He lacks a place to sit. He made the heavens and the earth. His hands brought all these things into being. What He is looking for is a heart that can truly become the place of His rest.

And then He tells us plainly what kind of person He looks upon: *"But on this one will I look, one humble and of a contrite spirit, who trembles at My word"* (Is. 66:2). This becomes the dividing line in the passage. There are those who tremble at His word, and there are those who use religion as a covering while choosing their own ways. But Isaiah 66:15-17 shows us that the same God who comforts His servants is also the God who comes in fire to deal with rebellion, injustice, and empty religion.

1. ADONAI COMES IN FIRE TO REVEAL WHAT IS HOLY

Isaiah says, *"For behold, ADONAI will come in fire, and His chariots like the whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire"* (Is. 66:15). This is not a new picture of God. When Moses first encountered ADONAI, He appeared in a flame of fire from within a bush, and the bush burned without being consumed. The Lord told Moses, *"Come no closer. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground"* (Ex. 3:5). The fire of God revealed holiness, but it also revealed His compassion. He had seen the affliction of His people, heard their cry, and came down to deliver them.

So when Isaiah says ADONAI comes in fire, we should not only hear terror. We should hear holiness. We should hear the God who sees. We should hear the God who knows the pains of His people. But we should also remember Moses' warning: *"For ADONAI your God is a consuming fire—a jealous God"* (Deut. 4:24). To those humbled by His grace, the fire of His character poses no horror. But to those clinging to rebellion, pride, and self-made righteousness, that same fire becomes a roaring blast furnace. The question is not whether God's fire will come. The question is whether we will let His fire purify us now or harden ourselves against Him.

2. ADONAI COMES IN JUDGMENT TO SETTLE WHAT SEEMS UNANSWERED

Isaiah continues, *"For by fire and His sword ADONAI will execute judgment on all flesh, and those slain by ADONAI will be many"* (Is. 66:16). There is a kind of evil in this world that

seems to escape justice again and again. Abuse, oppression, corruption, deception, and cruelty often appear to win in the moment. We can find ourselves asking, “Doesn’t the Lord see? How long, O Lord?” Like the psalmist, we may even begin to wonder whether the wicked are getting away with everything while the righteous suffer for nothing.

But Psalm 73 reminds us that the picture changes when we enter the sanctuary of God. The psalmist says, *“But when I tried to make sense of this, it was troubling in my eyes—until I entered the Sanctuary of God, and perceived their end”* (Ps. 73:16–17). Evil may seem untouchable for a season, but it will not prevail forever. ADONAI is slow to anger, but His justice is not asleep. When His consuming holiness comes, wickedness will not be able to hide in some untouched corner. His judgment will settle what seemed unanswered. His fire will expose what was hidden. His sword will deal with what no human court could ever fully reach.

3. ADONAI COMES TO EXPOSE EMPTY RELIGION IN THE MIDST OF HIS PEOPLE

Isaiah then identifies the kind of people being judged: *“Those who consecrate and purify themselves to enter the groves, following after one in the midst, who eat swine’s flesh, vermin and mice, will come to an end altogether. It is a declaration of ADONAI”* (Is. 66:17). These are not merely outsiders who never claimed to know the Lord. These are religious people. They consecrate themselves. They purify themselves. They do spiritual-looking things. But they are not trembling at His word. They are choosing their own ways and mixing religious form with rebellion.

That is why this passage should not make us smug. It should make us humble. It is easy to read about the destruction of the wicked and think, “Yes, Lord, finally deal with them.” But the Lord is showing that empty religion can happen in the midst of His own people. Ezekiel saw leaders doing hidden abominations in the dark while saying, *“ADONAI does not see us. ADONAI has forsaken the land”* (Ezek. 8:12). But ADONAI does see. He sees the works and the thoughts. He sees when worship becomes routine without righteousness, when spiritual acts become self-serving, and when our devotion becomes disconnected from how we treat people. Religion that misses the heart of God is not pleasing to Him.

CONCLUSION

Today, the Lord is not asking us to perform for Him. He is inviting us to humble ourselves before Him. If there is any place where we have chosen our own way while still trying to keep religious appearances, this is the moment to bring it into the light. If there is any place where we have said, “ADONAI does not see,” this is the moment to remember that He sees—and because He sees, He is calling us to repentance, restoration, and life.

Yeshua is our righteousness, but we are called to walk in that righteousness. We do not come in condemnation; we come in surrender. We come asking the Lord to make us humble and contrite, to teach us to tremble at His word, and to let His fire purify us rather than consume us. Today, say to Him: “Lord, I do not want empty religion. I want Your heart. I want Your ways. I want to make You smile.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Isaiah 66:2 says ADONAI looks to the one who is humble, contrite, and trembling at His word. What does it mean practically to “tremble at His word” without living in fear or condemnation?
2. The fire of God can purify or consume. Where in your life do you need to invite the Lord’s refining fire rather than resist it?
3. Psalm 73 wrestles with the frustration of seeing the wicked prosper. How do you personally respond when injustice seems to go unanswered?
4. Isaiah 66 warns against religious activity that is disconnected from obedience and the heart of God. What are some modern ways believers can fall into the pattern of “empty religion”?
5. Matthew 25 connects our relationship with the Lord to how we treat “the least of these.” How might God be calling you to better reflect His heart in the way you treat people around you?

CLOSING PRAYER:

ADONAI, You are holy, righteous, merciful, and true. You are the God who comes in fire, the God who sees affliction, hears the cry of Your people, and deals with injustice. Teach us not to fear Your holiness in a way that makes us run from You, but to tremble at Your word in a way that draws us near with humility and surrender.

Lord, expose anything in us that is empty, hidden, self-serving, or disconnected from Your heart. Purify us by Your Spirit. Make us humble and contrite before You. Clothe us in the righteousness of Yeshua and teach us to walk in that righteousness with compassion, justice, mercy, and faithfulness. May our worship be pleasing to You, and may our lives make You smile.

B'Shem Yeshua, In the name of Yeshua, amen.