

**Two Kinds of People  
Follower of God or Rebel...Your Choice = Your Final Destination  
Isaiah 66**

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Last time we were together we concluded with Isaiah 65 and the glorious picture provided for us of life in the eternal state as well as life during the millennial reign of Jesus Christ.

As we come to the closing chapter of Isaiah, the Lord is the one who is speaking and the message He gives provides us the overview and reflects the consistency of the message we have seen throughout the book of Isaiah. The first six verses are about judgement, that judgment to be specifically for those of His people who have lost focus and left the Lord, but they like looking religious doing so.

They are hypocrites.

All throughout the book we have heard about impending judgement on those who rely on external performance rather than a heartfelt love for YAHWEH. He nailed it earlier when He identified the religious hypocrisy of the nation (Isaiah 58:1 – 12).

As we learned then, hypocrisy is not anything new, legalistic hypocrisy has been around way before 700BC. True worship of Yahweh is a theme that binds the entire book of Isaiah together. This theme is also evident here.

God will not be impressed or influenced by people's gifts, because the whole universe is his creation and thus belongs to him. (Ogden and Sterk 2011, 1832)

Romans 2:11 "For God shows no partiality." (ESV)

### Isaiah 66:1–6

“This is what the LORD says: “Heaven is My throne and the earth is the footstool for My feet. Where then is a house you could build for Me? And where is a place that I may rest? For My hand made all these things, So all these things came into being,” declares the LORD. “But I will look to this one, At one who is humble and contrite in spirit, and who trembles at My word. But the one who slaughters an ox is like one who kills a person; The one who sacrifices a lamb is like one who breaks a dog’s neck; One who offers a grain offering is like one who offers pig’s blood; One who burns incense is like one who blesses an idol. As they have chosen their own ways, And their souls delight in their abominations, So I will choose their punishments And bring on them what they dread. Because I called, but no one answered; I spoke, but they did not listen. Instead, they did evil in My sight And chose that in which I did not delight.” Hear the word of the LORD, you who tremble at His word: “Your brothers who hate you, who exclude you on account of My name, Have said, ‘Let the LORD be glorified, so that we may see your joy.’ But they will be put to shame. A sound of uproar from the city, a voice from the temple, The voice of the LORD who is dealing retribution to His enemies.”” (NASB 2020)

The words being used by YAHWEH were used by Solomon when the Temple was dedicated. “But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built!” (1 Kings 8:27, ESV)

The problem that exists in Jerusalem now though is the people have really begun to think like the surrounding nations. They believe that God has a house, and He lives only in their little section of the world. They have a corner on the market for God just like other nations have one on their god.

In the Ugaritic Baal Cycle Baal wants to build a house for himself so that he will have a resting place. Likewise Ningirsu makes a request that Gudea build a house for his repose. The former is more pertinent here because Baal is building the house for himself, just as Yahweh has done. In Enuma Elish, after Marduk has defeated the enemy Tiamat, he proclaims that he will make a house for himself, which he names Babylon, that will serve as a resting place for the gods. (Matthews, Chavalas and Walton 2000, Is 66:1)

But what about the command to Moses to build a Tabernacle? “Moses was told to construct the tabernacle and its equipment according to the pattern shown to him by Yahweh on the holy mountain (Exod 25:9, 40; 26:30). The implication is that the tabernacle on earth was to be a copy of the heavenly tent in accord with the religious principle of “as in heaven, so on earth.”” (Heiser 2015, 175)

God’s intent was to live among His people. When He gave instructions to Moses about how to do that, there were reasons for the specific details provided.

“The implication of God having Moses follow a divine pattern is that the tabernacle tent structure on earth was to be a copy of the heavenly tent—as in heaven, so on earth. The heavenly tent prototype was the heavens themselves, as Isaiah 40:22 tells us (“He is the one who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; the one who stretches out the heavens like a veil and spreads them out like a tent to live in”). In other words, the heavens and earth were conceived of as Yahweh’s true tabernacle or temple. The earthly dwelling place erected by the Israelites mimicked the grand habitation of the cosmos. The tabernacle was not only the abode of Yahweh; it was also his throne room. Yahweh sits above the circle of the earth, in his heavenly tent, on his throne above the waters that are above “the firmament,” and rests his feet on the earth (“Thus says the LORD: ‘Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool’ ”—Isaiah 66:1 ESV). The ark of the covenant was there, the sacred object associated with Yahweh’s presence—his Name.” (Heiser 2015, 222)

The Ark of the Covenant is where the presence of God was located visibly in the Tabernacle as a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. On the day of atonement, the High Priest would enter into the Holy of Holies and right in the center between the two cherubim, He would apply blood as part of the annual process of the confession and atonement of the sin of the people. The implication is that the ark is the

footstool of God. “The effect of this was that the cherubim wings formed the seat of a throne for Yahweh, and the ark was his footstool.” (Heiser 2015, 225)

When God asks the question, “Where then is a house you could build for Me,” He is beginning another dig into the hypocrisy of the people. God cannot be localized. So, He asks “a rhetorical question that makes fun of the people’s idea that God can be confined within the Temple when they rebuild it. If he fills the universe, then how can he be contained within a building?” (Ogden and Sterk 2011, 1834)

His opening remarks are more about pointing out the hypocrisy of the people and what they now think rather than making a point about Himself which He has made multiple times already in Isaiah.

Isaiah 66:2

“For My hand made all these things, So all these things came into being,” declares the LORD. “But I will look to this one, At one who is humble and contrite in spirit, and who trembles at My word.” (NASB 2020)

After all, He made everything and now He has reached the point that He must remind those who He shouldn’t have to remind, that that really is the case. Just like to Laodicea in Revelation 3:14.

God is the one who, because of who He is, sets the standards for who may approach Him. “God looks approvingly to the person who is poor in spirit (seeing that wealth is in the Lord, not in material securities), contrite or humble, and trembling at His Word. The trembling is in respect that honors the Word, in contrast to trifling with or dismissing it.” (Rosscup 2008, 1154)

The humble are, socially, those who are at the bottom of life’s heap, dominated by stronger forces and interests; religiously, they are those who willingly take the lowest place before God. Contrite (nēkēh): ‘lamed’ (2 Sam. 9:3), or disabled, here used with spiritual significance: one who is aware of the damage wrought by sin, of personal inability to stand upright before God. (Motyer 1999, 453)

Those who He regards are those who have rejected pride humbling themselves and allowing themselves to be broken before Him. There is an awareness of the damage that sin has done, and it is that damage that undoes the one who approaches the Lord on His conditions. In His grace, He seeks those.

Ephesians 2:8–10

“For it is by God’s grace that you have been saved through faith. It is not the result of your own efforts, but God’s gift, so that no one can boast about it. God has made us what we are, and in our union with Christ Jesus he has created us for a life of good deeds, which he has already prepared for us to do.” (GNB)

Coming to verse 3 YAHWEH tells us of four forms of acceptable acts of worship and contrasts them with four that are unacceptable as they reflect man’s attempt to approach God on their terms.

Isaiah 66:3

“But the one who slaughters an ox is like one who kills a person; The one who sacrifices a lamb is like one who breaks a dog’s neck; One who offers a grain offering is like one who offers pig’s blood; One who burns incense is like one who blesses an idol. As they have chosen their own ways, And their souls delight in their abominations,” (NASB 2020)

For the one who is simply going through the motions, in other words, a religious hypocrite, when they perform what outwardly looks like acceptable worship, it does not have that same meaning to God. One who performs a peace offering without meaning is no better than someone who has sacrificed to Molech and murdered a human being. There is no peace with God when the heart is far from Him.

What they do is an abomination to the Lord (Leviticus 18:24 – 30). A loathsome, detestable thing.

When someone plays at covering their sin, but they are doing so hypocritically, they are no better than a Hittite. The dog was not a sacrificial animal in Israel, although it was used in this manner in Hittite Anatolia. (Deuteronomy 23:18). (Matthews, Chavalas and Walton 2000, Is 66:3)

Grain offerings were a part of several types of offerings to be made, but when done as a hypocrite, it is no better than a Hittite offering up pig's blood. Another abomination (Leviticus 18:24 – 30).

YAHWEH then closes His thoughts about their hypocrisy by describing what is really on their hearts as they offer up incense in the Temple. They are not offering it up to the Lord but are instead blessing false gods and doing so in front of idols. An abomination (Deuteronomy 27:15).

And here is the thing, the people have gone so low that they are taking continual pleasure being detestable.

For this abomination there was no excuse, for those who so sacrifice have themselves chosen their ways and find their delight in what they are doing. Not through ignorance have they turned to this way but through their own willful desire. And this is where man's free will leads him. The sinner chooses to delight in what God abominates. (Young 1972, 521)

Outwardly, they look good, but inside, we now see their heart.

Because of the continuing hypocrisy, God details the way they will be judged.

Isaiah 66:4

"So I will choose their punishments And bring on them what they dread. Because I called, but no one answered; I spoke, but they did not listen. Instead, they did evil in My sight And chose that in which I did not delight." (NASB 2020)

They choose and delight in the opposite of what Yahweh chooses and delights in, so they will get the opposite of what they desire. (House 2018, 716)

The Lord then turns to the remnant and tells them what will happen to those who have rejected Him and persecuted them.

Isaiah 66:5–6

"Hear the word of the LORD, you who tremble at His word: "Your brothers who hate you, who exclude you on account of My name, Have said, 'Let the LORD be glorified, so that we may see your joy.' But they will be put to shame. A sound of uproar from the city, a voice from the temple, The voice of the LORD who is dealing retribution to His enemies." (NASB 2020)

We see this today. Those who make a show of being believers mock and make fun of those who are truly following the Lord. Usually, they start off by saying I'm a "denomination of choice" and they follow up by statements like we don't believe that, or you are intolerant, or the Bible says not to judge.

Isaiah 5:20–21

"Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight!" (ESV)

Empty religion mocks with spiritual sounding words. But as we examine what is being said, it really does read more like Isaiah 5:20-21. Our culture today has embraced this and it is showing up under the guise of tolerance, love is love, and post-Christian thought.

People who said they were believers, are simply walking away.

Their faith is being deconstructed.

Deconstructed faith stories are the new normal. We all know people who once seemed to be solid Christians but have walked away. (Childers 2020, i)

This is something being taught as “new” in progressive churches. Ones which have thrown out all of the fundamentals of the faith. This is a danger for many today who are not grounded in the word and then confront the enemy in the guise of a slick “pastor.” They find a progressive church.

They were going through what would practically become a rite of passage in this new and flourishing movement: deconstruction. In the context of faith, deconstruction is the process of systematically dissecting and often rejecting the beliefs you grew up with. Sometimes the Christian will deconstruct all the way into atheism. (Childers 2020, 24)

For those being talked about by the Lord, they had found a newer more progressive form of Judaism. The Lord calls it hypocrisy.

In the days of a more Christian culture, a lone individual with the Bible could judge and warn society, regardless of the majority vote, because there was an absolute by which to judge. There was an absolute for both morals and law. But to the extent that the Christian consensus is gone, this absolute is gone as a social force. Let us remember that on the basis of the absoluteness of the 51 percent vote, Hitler was perfectly entitled to do as he wished if he had the popular support. (Schaeffer 1982, 223-224)

Here, God is telling those who are standing in the minority for what is a Biblical worldview...the Lord will be the one dealing with those who are the hypocrites and have perverted His word. “He will avenge himself on those within the community of faith who worship in their own ways, not having a heartfelt love for God and for their brothers and sisters in the faith.” (Burge and Hill 2012, 684-685)

The Laodicean church of the last days seen in Revelation 3:14 – 22 has nothing good said about it, in fact, their salvation is in question.

Revelation 3:18–20

“I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.” (ESV)

With the end of verse 6, the Lord turns towards the coming deliverance of Jerusalem.

Isaiah 66:7–9

“Before she was in labor, she delivered; Before her pain came, she gave birth to a boy. Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Can a land be born in one day? Can a nation be given birth all at once? As soon as Zion was in labor, she also delivered her sons. Shall I bring to the point of birth but not give delivery?” says the LORD. “Or shall I who gives delivery shut the womb?” says your God.” (NASB 2020)

We are being given a picture of life in Jerusalem after King Jesus. A change has taken place and we also see a picture of life and a picture of His people returning. We are also given a picture that starts with the conditions leading to His people beginning to return to the land. The lead up to what will be seen under Messiah.

The picture is one of Jerusalem's exiled children being suddenly restored. The Lord compares their restoration to a pregnant woman who gives birth without any birth pangs. In other words, restoration will be sudden.

Isaiah 66:8

"Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Can a land be born in one day? Can a nation be given birth all at once? As soon as Zion was in labor, she also delivered her sons." (NASB 2020)

The prophets speak about two returns for Israel from the nations. "First, there was to be a regathering in unbelief in preparation for judgment, namely the judgment of the Tribulation. This was to be followed by a second worldwide regathering in faith in preparation for blessings, namely the blessings of the messianic age.

Once it is recognized that the Bible speaks of two such regatherings, it is easy to see how the present State of Israel fits into prophecy." (Fruchtenbaum 1994, 716)

References for two regatherings, Ezekiel 20:30 – 38, 22:17 – 22, Isaiah 11:1 – 12:6.

Isaiah 66:9 speaks to the events which took place on May 14, 1948, when the modern state of Israel was founded. It will also happen again when Messiah returns.

Zephaniah 2:1–3

"Bunch yourselves together like straw, you undesirable nation, before God's decree becomes reality and the day of opportunity disappears like windblown chaff, before the LORD's raging anger overtakes you—before the day of the LORD's angry judgment overtakes you! Seek the LORD's favor, all you humble people of the land who have obeyed his commands! Strive to do what is right! Strive to be humble! Maybe you will be protected on the day of the LORD's angry judgment." (NET)

In verse one, the nation of Israel is told to gather together. It is clear from this verse that this is a gathering in unbelief. In verse two, the word before is used three times in relationship to the preceding passage regarding the Tribulation. One of these "befores" includes the before the day of Jehovah itself. While other texts speak of a regathering in unbelief in preparation for judgment, this passage clearly states that this regathering in unbelief will occur before the Tribulation actually begins. (Fruchtenbaum 1994, 719)

How certain is it that this will take place? Will Jerusalem really be restored, and will the nation really come together as quickly as depicted? Verse 9 tells us He is determined to make this happen.

For those of us living in the 21st century, we also have the lesson of history from 1948. Prophecy is being fulfilled right before our eyes.

Isaiah 66:9

"Shall I bring to the point of birth but not give delivery?" says the LORD. "Or shall I who gives delivery shut the womb?" says your God." (NASB 2020)

Everything comes down to what the Lord is (9). First, he is faithful to the end: he does not advance his purposes (bring to the moment of birth) only to abandon them; secondly, he is sovereign: what he initiates he completes—(lit.) 'Do I beget and (then) close (the womb)?', start what I do not intend to finish? (Motyer 1999, 454-455)

Let me state a fact. We have already seen the first part of this take place. Literally. Is there any doubt we are in the last days?

#### Isaiah 66:10–17

“Be joyful with Jerusalem and rejoice for her, all you who love her; Be exceedingly glad with her, all you who mourn over her, So that you may nurse and be satisfied with her comforting breasts, So that you may drink fully and be delighted with her bountiful breasts.” For this is what the LORD says: “Behold, I extend peace to her like a river, And the glory of the nations like an overflowing stream; And you will be nursed, you will be carried on the hip and rocked back and forth on the knees. As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; And you will be comforted in Jerusalem.” Then you will see this, and your heart will be glad, And your bones will flourish like the new grass; And the hand of the LORD will be made known to His servants, But He will be indignant toward His enemies. For behold, the LORD will come in fire, And His chariots like the whirlwind, To render His anger with fury, And His rebuke with flames of fire. For the LORD will execute judgment by fire And by His sword on humanity, And those put to death by the LORD will be many. “Those who sanctify and purify themselves to go to the gardens, Following one in the center, Who eat pig’s flesh, detestable things, and mice, Will come to an end altogether,” declares the LORD.” (NASB 2020)

In order to further drive the point home of the absolute certainty of this all taking place, the Lord turns and addresses the remnant and those who love Jerusalem. This is not optional; it is a command.

The two words *śimḥu* and *gilu* are practical synonyms, each meaning rejoice or be joyful. In her is probably to be taken in the sense of with respect to her, or because of her. Jerusalem is then the object of joy. It is also possible to take the words locally, implying that the rejoicing is to take place within the city. Jerusalem is pictured as rejoicing, and those who love her are to joy with her. (Young 1972, 525)

No more wailing wall, no more mourning or sorrow over the city and the state of the nation.

#### Isaiah 66:12

“For this is what the LORD says: “Look, I am ready to extend to her prosperity that will flow like a river, the riches of nations will flow into her like a stream that floods its banks. You will nurse from her breast and be carried at her side; you will play on her knees.” (NET)

The idea is shalom is not a temporary thing. It is flowing like a river. And it now carries the full meaning of peace, prosperity, success, welfare, deliverance, and salvation.

Here too the *šālôm* accomplished by Yahweh means general well-being, including the alleviation of material poverty when the wealth of the nations flows to Jerusalem (cf. 48:18; 60:5). In this salvific act on Yahweh’s part, his motherliness is experienced (v. 13). The ultimate ground and inmost substance of *šālôm* is God’s loving favor toward his people. (Stendebach 2006, 35-36)

Everything has changed after Messiah returns, now the nations are assisting God’s people. They will do so in ways that we do not see presently. The nations will ensure Israel is well nourished, they will provide logistical support to bring them back to the land and they will fully participate with them in everything, even in sport. So much for boycotts in the future.

YAHWEH promises to be the source of comfort for His people and He emphasizes again, He will do so in Jerusalem. WE have already seen earlier that Jesus will rule from there and God will be visibly in the Temple.

#### Isaiah 66:14

“Then you will see this, and your heart will be glad, And your bones will flourish like the new grass; And the hand of the LORD will be made known to His servants, But He will be indignant toward His enemies.” (NASB 2020)

The fullness of comfort will come when God’s people will see and actually experience all the results of God’s marvelous deeds on their behalf. Once this happens, their emotions will be uncontrollable, for their hearts will rejoice with unstoppable gladness that will surely be mixed with praise. (Smith 2009, 742)

And at the end of verse 14 we see again, the reference to the fact that when Jesus returns a second time, He does so as the avenger of blood. This is a theme we see elsewhere in Isaiah, as well as in Zechariah 14 and Revelation 19.

Isaiah 66:15–16

“For behold, the LORD will come in fire, And His chariots like the whirlwind, To render His anger with fury, And His rebuke with flames of fire. For the LORD will execute judgment by fire And by His sword on humanity, And those put to death by the LORD will be many.” (NASB 2020)

Jesus has already fulfilled the first piece of His mission statement in Isaiah 61.

Isaiah 61:1–3

“The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is upon me, for the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted and to proclaim that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed. He has sent me to tell those who mourn that the time of the LORD’s favor has come, and with it, **the day of God’s anger against their enemies. To all who mourn in Israel, he will give a crown of beauty for ashes, a joyous blessing instead of mourning, festive praise instead of despair. In their righteousness, they will be like great oaks that the LORD has planted for his own glory.**” (NLT)

The warning has been given multiple times and in multiple places in the scriptures. When He returns, He will be doing so to avenge His people. This is not a secret. It is certain.

Isaiah 2:19

“People will go into caves of the rocks And into holes in the ground Away from the terror of the LORD And the splendor of His majesty, When He arises to terrify the earth.” (NASB 2020)

Revelation 6:15–17

“Then the kings of the earth, the very important people, the generals, the rich, the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They said to the mountains and to the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of the one who is seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb, because the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to withstand it?”” (NET)

The Lord continues speaking to the remnant and those who love Jerusalem telling us again who are the ones being subjected to judgement.

Isaiah 66:17

“Those who sanctify and purify themselves to go to the gardens, Following one in the center, Who eat pig’s flesh, detestable things, and mice, Will come to an end altogether,” declares the LORD.” (NASB 2020)

This does not mean if you eat ham or bacon, you are in trouble. This is pointing back to the abominations earlier outlined. The reference is to those who are ceremonially making themselves clean in order to worship in gardens. Gardens?

Gardens in the ancient Near East were often parks of fruit and shade trees, arboretums serving as outdoor shrines or providing comfortable surroundings for sacred enclosures. Sacred trees played a significant role in popular religion of the day. These popular beliefs would have viewed stone and tree as potential divine dwellings. (Matthews, Chavalas and Walton 2000, Is 65:3)

Isaiah 66:18–21

“For I know their works and their thoughts; the time is coming to gather all the nations and tongues. And they shall come and see My glory. And I will put a sign among them and send survivors from them to the nations: Tarshish, Put, Lud, Meshech, Tubal, and Javan, to the distant coastlands that have neither heard



of My fame nor seen My glory. And they will declare My glory among the nations. Then they shall bring all your countrymen from all the nations as a grain offering to the LORD, on horses, in chariots, in litters, on mules, and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem,” says the LORD, “just as the sons of Israel bring their grain offering in a clean vessel to the house of the LORD. I will also take some of them as priests and Levites,” says the LORD.” (NASB 2020)

Not only will God regather His people the Jews, but He will also regather those from the nations to see His glory. This again points to the importance we discussed earlier in our study to rebuild the logistics and transportation infrastructure after Jesus returns.

What is the sign that God will set up for the nations? What kind of sign will motivate the nations to go all over the planet telling of the glory of God? Jesus Christ, the Messiah. He will be ruling and reigning from Jerusalem and those who come to see God’s glory will also see Jesus and be driven by their love for Him to go out into the entire planet telling others about Him.

Why is that necessary? Because the sheep who go into the Millennium, are in human form and they will have babies who need to hear about Jesus.

This is also a prophetic word about what will happen when Jesus is lifted up on the cross. He will be the sign.

John 12:32

“When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to me.” (GNB)

Missionary work was predicted to take place, not only in the Millennium, but also during the church age.

Those areas referenced are the same that Paul was determined to go and reach as part of his missionary work.

How did the message wind up going everywhere? It was prophesied here in Isaiah 66 to do so. This passage “plays a crucial role in explaining the explosion of the gospel after the resurrection, describes the judgment and hope looming in a time future to the Old Testament period...” (Heiser 2015, 260)

What began on Pentecost was the beginning of the fulfillment of Isaiah 66. The nations are being brought back into relationship with YAHWEH through the ministry of the Holy Spirit and the preaching of the gospel.

Ultimately, these may be the 144,000 witnesses during the Great Tribulation; they may be Jewish evangelists in the days of the millennial earth. (Guzik 2000, Is 66:18-21)

Isaiah 66:20–21.

““Then they shall bring all your countrymen from all the nations as a grain offering to the LORD, on horses, in chariots, in litters, on mules, and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem,” says the LORD, “just as the sons of Israel bring their grain offering in a clean vessel to the house of the LORD. I will also take some of them as priests and Levites,” says the LORD.” (NASB 2020)

This has already been partially fulfilled with the State of Israel being founded in 1948 and the ongoing Aliyah taking place. For example, “the Israeli government is helping a group of hundreds of more people from Northern India who describe themselves as “Bnei Menashe,” meaning sons of Menashe (the tribe of Menashe was one of the ten lost tribes), to return to Israel.” (Berrien 2020)

We also see something else that is an amazing thing, after Jesus returns, the priesthood will be expanded and will also include gentiles. “Now the ideal is extended further. In Isaiah’s day only some Israelites were priests or Levites, and he works on this analogy, but by doing so demonstrates that the Gentiles come in on equal terms and into equal privileges.” (J. A. Motyer 1996, 542-543)

This is also a view held by some Rabbi's today.

The decision to take some of the foreigners as "levitical priests" for the Temple (Isa. 66:21) expresses the universalistic tenor of the prophet whose concern for foreign involvement in Israelite sacrifice is also mentioned in 56:7. The position was sharply at variance with certain priestly proclamations of the time (cf. Ezek. 44:9). (Fishbane 2002, 330-331)

Isaiah 66:22-24

"For just as the new heavens and the new earth, Which I make, will endure before Me," declares the LORD, "So will your descendants and your name endure. And it shall be from new moon to new moon And from Sabbath to Sabbath, All mankind will come to bow down before Me," says the LORD. "Then they will go out and look At the corpses of the people Who have rebelled against Me. For their worm will not die And their fire will not be extinguished; And they will be an abhorrence to all mankind." (NASB 2020)

Isaiah concludes with YAHWEH still speaking and just as in the book of Revelation, He moves out to the eternal state after He makes everything new. The promise is amazing, the new heavens and new earth will last forever one they are created by the Lord, He says the descendants of those who are of the remnant, they too will last just as long. "God's purposes and promises for Israel are as eternal as the new heavens and the new earth." (McGee 1997, 349)

Just as those in Jerusalem in 700 BC would gather to worship regularly, in the future, when King Jesus is on the throne, the entire planet will do so.

There are only two classes of people. Those who willingly worship the Lord, and those who rebel.

What happens to those who rebel?

Isaiah 66:24

"Then they will go out and look At the corpses of the people Who have rebelled against Me. For their worm will not die And their fire will not be extinguished; And they will be an abhorrence to all mankind." (NASB 2020)

They who go on pilgrimage to Jerusalem every new moon and Sabbath, see there with their own eyes the terrible punishment of the rebellious. (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 640)

He is speaking of the future state, but in figures drawn from the present world. The object of his prediction is no other than the new Jerusalem of the world to come, and the eternal torment of the damned; but the way in which he pictures it, forces us to translate it out of the figures drawn from this life into the realities of the life to come... (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 640)

Heaven is a real place and what we have seen in Isaiah is that ultimately, it is here on earth.

Judith 16:17

Woe to the nations that rise up against my people! The Lord Almighty will take vengeance on them in the day of judgment; he will send fire and worms into their flesh; they shall weep in pain forever." (NRSV)

The Bible teaches and Jesus talks about another thing, hell is a real place too. Currently no one resides there. But it has been prepared for the devil and his angels.

All who are members of the kingdom of Jesus are no longer under the curse of death. By definition this means Satan's kingdom (and the curse of death) no longer has any hold upon them. The "accuser of our brothers" (Rev 12:10) remains active in the world until the final judgment, blinding the minds of people to prevent them from joining the kingdom of Jesus, but he has no accusation to bring against those who belong to Christ. His rightful claim over their lives in the realm of the dead is nullified through the

resurrection of Christ and the union with Christ for all who believe the gospel. In the final judgment, Satan's domicile, the realm of the dead, is transformed into the place of his torment. (Heiser, *Demons: What the Bible Really Says about the Powers of Darkness* 2020, 192-193)

That brings us to the end of Isaiah. As we have seen, the book began with an indictment of the northern and southern kingdoms, and we see at the end the indictment expands to all who choose to follow self rather than the Lord. "Sin is rebellion for Isaiah that springs from pride. The book begins and ends on this note (1:2; 66:24). All the evil in the world results from man's refusal to accept Yahweh's lordship." (Constable 2003, So 8:11)

Those who appreciate Isaiah's book will know that the prophet's greatest achievement was declaring Yahweh's glory, which after all fills the earth (6:3). As the aged servant of Yahweh looked over Jerusalem, he saw it new, righteous, and cleansed. He saw what it would become due to Yahweh's power to make all things new. His words still beckon all readers, even commentators, to enter that kingdom. (House 2018, 730)

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