

Isaiah 65-66

Bible Study

Review

Chapter 62—Preparation for the Lord's coming and the people's restoration

God says that He will not rest (will continue to work) for Jerusalem, until her righteousness, salvation and glory are seen by all

- An announcement to all the world: “Your salvation is coming”

The Lord is coming to Jerusalem—a coming king

- His reward is with Him—for the faithful
- His work—to teach all nations

Chapter 63—The Lord in judgment and salvation

v. 1-6 Judgment as Christ returns

New section: 63:7—64:12 (Israel's prayer for mercy and deliverance)

- After seeing the vision of judgment Isaiah prays on behalf of the nation, for the Jews under Babylonian captivity

Chapter 64—Israel's prayer for mercy and deliverance continues

The remnant ask God to intervene for them, they confess their sin

God gives Isaiah a vision of the eventual destruction of Jerusalem, including the temple

- Isaiah/Judah appeal to God to have mercy on the people and not to afflict the people to the full measure
 - The answer to this prayer is given in the last two chapters of the book

Isaiah 65

God's answer to the nation's prayer brought by Isaiah

- The reason for the coming judgment on the nation (v. 1-16)

1 "I was sought by those who did not ask for Me; I was found by those who did not seek Me. I said, 'Here I am, here I am,' To a nation that was not called by My name.

2 I have stretched out My hands all day long to a rebellious people, Who walk in a way that is not good, According to their own thoughts;

v. 1 "I was found by those who did not seek Me"—God was found by others, not Israel (Gentiles future opportunity)

- Israel/Judah do not find God because of their rebellion against Him

v. 2 God had been patient in dealing with Israel/Judah throughout their history, but they walked in their own way of disobedience

Romans 10: 19-21

19 But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says: "I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation, I will move you to anger by a foolish nation."

20 But 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."

21 But to Israel he says: "All day long I have stretched out My hands To a disobedient and contrary people."

v. 2-7 Israel's/Judah's rebellious actions described (Why they are punished)

3 A people who provoke Me to anger continually to My face; Who sacrifice in gardens, And burn incense on altars of brick;

4 Who sit among the graves, And spend the night in the tombs; Who eat swine's flesh, And the broth of abominable things is in their vessels;

5 Who say, 'Keep to yourself, Do not come near me, For I am holier than you!' These are smoke in My nostrils, A fire that burns all the day.

v. 3 'sacrifice in gardens'=worshipping in pagan sanctuaries (beautiful garden areas turned into pagan worship centers)

'burn incense on altars of brick'—used in false worship

- Altars were to be made of unhewn stone (Ex. 20: 24-25)

v. 4 [1st part] "sit among the graves, spend the night in the tombs"= vigils and candle burning for the dead

- Eating of pork and other abominable things—which is forbidden (Lev. 11)

"broth of abominable things in their vessels"—unclean broths brought to the tables before the idols, to 'appease them'

v. 5 A self-righteous/ proud... 'holier than you' attitude among the people towards God
Like a smoke that irritates the nostrils—to God

6 Behold, it is written before Me: I will not keep silence, but will repay— Even repay into their bosom—

7 Your iniquities and the iniquities of your fathers together,” Says the Lord, “Who have burned incense on the mountains And blasphemed Me on the hills; Therefore I will measure their former work into their bosom.”

v. 6 God’s announcement of their judgment

“it is written before Me” —the judgment is set... “the books are opened”

v. 7 God summarizes their history of disobedience—your iniquities, and your ancestors

“burned incense on the mountains’... ‘blasphemed Me on the hills’= pagan worship on altars in the high places

There will be a remnant, not all destroyed...moves to the end of the age

8 Thus says the Lord: “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.

9 I will bring forth descendants from Jacob, And from Judah an heir of My mountains; My elect shall inherit it, And My servants shall dwell there.

10 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.

v. 8 In judging Israel and Judah, in their time of judgment, God always leaves a remnant

- At the end of the age God will not only leave a physical remnant but a spiritual remnant as well, of believers... “a blessing is in it”—people who praise and worship God

v. 9 “descendants from Jacob”—the scattered Israelites (goes to the future, beyond the Jewish captivity)

v. 10 In the millennium, God’s elect, and His servants shall inherit Sharon and the Valley of Achor which will blossom forth in peace and prosperity

Condemnation for those who forsake God

11“But you are those who forsake the Lord, Who forget My holy mountain, Who prepare a table for Gad, And who furnish a drink offering for Meni.

12 Therefore I will number you for the sword, And you shall all bow down to the slaughter; Because, when I called, you did not answer; When I spoke, you did not hear, But did evil before My eyes, And chose that in which I do not delight.”

v. 11 Those who forsake and forget God will receive judgment
Gad and Meni –pagan deities who represent fortune and fate

(KJV) “that troop”= (Heb. *Gad*), ‘the well know Syrian god of fate’ (Companion Bible)

(KJV) “that number”= (Heb. *meni*), ‘Same as the god *Manu*—destiny of the Assyrian inscriptions’

- They worshipped these gods attempting to know the future, instead of the true God who actually knows it

v. 12 For choosing evil and not answering God’s call, they will receive the judgment of the sword

Contrast of the obedient vs. the disobedient

13 Therefore thus says the Lord God: “Behold, My servants shall eat, But you shall be hungry; Behold, My servants shall drink, But you shall be thirsty;

14 Behold, My servants shall rejoice, But you shall be ashamed; Behold, My servants shall sing for joy of heart, But you shall cry for sorrow of heart, And wail for grief of spirit.

v. 13 “thus says the Lord God” —expression used in predicting new things (Companion Bible)
“Behold”—used to draw attention to God’s servants (Banquet celebration—eating and drinking)

- “My servants”—the new Israel who will follow God
- God’s servants will eat and drink plenty (blessings), but those who disobey will go hungry and thirsty

v. 14 God’s servants will rejoice and sing for joy of heart

- Those who disobey will be ashamed and have sorrow of heart

The answer to the prayer concludes...looking to the far future

15 You shall leave your name as a curse to My chosen; For the Lord God will slay you, And call His servants by another name;

16 So that he who blesses himself in the earth Shall bless himself in the God of truth; And he who swears in the earth Shall swear by the God of truth; Because the former troubles are forgotten, And because they are hidden from My eyes.

v. 15 [1st part] (Paraphrase) “Your name shall be a curse word among my people” (for disobedience)

Contrast:

[Last part] “call His servants by another name”—as in Hephzibah= ‘in her is my delight’ (62:4)

- The future nation who is obedient

v. 16 [1st part] (TEV) “Anyone in the land who asks for a blessing will ask to be blessed by the faithful God.”

Conclusion of the answer: “the former troubles are forgotten...hidden from My eyes”—upon the nation’s future repentance

The glorious new creation

17 “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.

18 But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, And her people a joy.

19 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.

v. 17 The new heavens and a new earth are described in Revelation 21:1, which will come at the time that the New Jerusalem descends to the earth

However the time frame being described here, is when humans are living on the earth in the flesh (v. 21-25)

The reign of Christ during the millennium will experience a measure of the renewed creation, in anticipation of the final new heavens and earth described in Revelation...

Period of judgment to learn God's way

20 No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; For the child shall die one hundred years old, But the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed.

v. 20 (NIV) "Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered a curse"

v. 20 (TEV) "Babies will no longer die in infancy, and all people will live out their life span. Those who live to be a hundred will be considered young. To die before that would be a sign that I had punished them."

Description of man's judgment period (Great White Throne Judgment period)

20 No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; For the child shall die one hundred years old, But the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed.

UCG Personal Correspondence Department letter

The setting of Isaiah 65 is a prophecy about the time when the Kingdom of God will govern the entire world. The book of Revelation complements many Old Testament prophecies, including this one. Revelation 20:5 tells us there will be a resurrection after the first 1,000 years of Christ's reign. Verses 11-13 add more detail, explaining that God will bring people who were not called to salvation during their initial lifetime back to life again.

In the Church of God, we often refer to this time as the "Great White Throne Judgment," because of the description of God's throne in these verses. How long is this period? These verses in Revelation do not tell us. Instead, they focus on the purpose for it—to give everyone an opportunity to respond to God's calling and to live the Christian way of life. Some have said that God intends to show us through Isaiah 65:20, where the phrase "one hundred years" appears twice, that this time frame is 100 years. That may be the case, or it may be a way to emphasize the same principle given in Revelation 20. That is, the people will have the time that they need to respond to God's calling and live the Christian way of life. "One hundred years" may be a way of making that point, rather than a literal prophecy.

Due to the limited evidence available, the Church cannot say with certainty the Great White Throne Judgment will be 100 years. Here are different alternatives for interpreting this verse, while maintaining the teaching of three resurrections. The following is an excerpt from our "Resurrections" study paper:

From the UCG Study Paper: "The Resurrections"
Three possible explanations of Isaiah 65: 20

1. "The Great White Throne Judgment will last for 100 years. The Church of God has taught that this will be a testing period of 100 years, during which billions of children and adults would have an opportunity to inherit eternal life. Therefore, the death of the "sinner being one hundred years old" has been considered to be the second death. God certainly could do things this way if He so chooses.

2. Life spans must exceed 100 years during the Great White Throne Judgment, because people likely would be resurrected at different chronological ages. No life would be cut short prematurely because of disease or accident. This verse certainly conveys a time of longevity to at least "one hundred years." Isaiah 65:20 says, "*No more shall an infant ['suckling'] from there live but a few days, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; For the child [young, youth, young man] shall die one hundred years old, but the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed.*"

3. Isaiah 65:20 describes a time during the Millennium. If so, then this would provide plenty of time for the pre-Flood-type extended life spans (see above). Under this scenario, one might expect the same type of life spans during the Great White Throne Judgment time period."

v. 21-25 Describing the millennium with humans living on earth

21 They shall build houses and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

22 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, And My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

23 They shall not labor in vain, Nor bring forth children for trouble; For they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the Lord, And their offspring with them.

v. 21 -22 During the millennium, and the last judgment period, people will enjoy safety and their produce of the vineyards

v. 22-23 God's blessing will be on their families and their work

The blessing of that future time

24 “It shall come to pass That before they call, I will answer; And while they are still speaking, I will hear.

25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, The lion shall eat straw like the ox, And dust shall be the serpent’s food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,” Says the Lord.

v. 24 Prayers will be speedily answered by God...even while they are still speaking

v. 25 A time of peace and security...wild animals will be tame

“dust shall be the serpent's food”—allusion to the sentence on the serpent being permanent

Isaiah 11: 6-9

“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them.

The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

The nursing child shall play by the cobra’s hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper’s den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord As the waters cover the sea.

1 Thus says the Lord: "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?
2 For all those things My hand has made, And all those things exist," Says the Lord. "But on this one will I look: On
him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word.

v. 1 Because of God's majesty and He is the creator, no one can build Him a house to dwell in

➤ That is not what God is looking for from His people, to build Him a place

v. 2 God looks for those who are of a poor and contrite spirit, and trembles at His word

➤ Those who have a lowly and repentant mind and heart, and a proper fear to not disobey His word

"trembles at My word"

"trembles" (Heb. *hared*) "before God's word or commandment...these are the penitent and faithful"
(Theological Wordbook OT)

The contrast (of v. 2)—to those who disobey God

- In the context of sacrificing but in a wrong attitude

3 “He who kills a bull is as if he slays a man; He who sacrifices a lamb, as if he breaks a dog’s neck; He who offers a grain offering, as if he offers swine’s blood; He who burns incense, as if he blesses an idol. Just as they have chosen their own ways, And their soul delights in their abominations,

4 So will I 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.”

v. 3 Speaking of gifts or service to God that if done in a wrong attitude is abhorred by God

- The people sacrifices were ritual/external not from the heart, they trample God’s law

v. 4 (NIV) [1st part] “so I will choose harsh treatment for them and will bring upon them what they dread”

Those who choose rebellion and an evil heart will have their worst fears to come upon them

The Lord vindicates Zion—symbol of the Church

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.”

6 The sound of noise from the city! A voice from the temple! The voice of the Lord, Who fully repays His enemies!

v. 5 (TEV) “Listen to what the Lord says, you that fear him and obey him: “Because you are faithful to me, some of your own people hate you and will have nothing to do with you. They mock you and say, ‘Let the Lord show his greatness and save you, so that we may see you rejoice.’ But they themselves will be disgraced!

- Those who tremble at God’ word will rejoice at His (Christ’s) appearing
 - But those who don’t tremble at His word will be ashamed

v. 6 Christ returning in judgment upon His enemies
(NIV) “Hear that uproar from the city, hear that noise from the temple! It is the sound of the Lord repaying His enemies all they deserve.”

Analogy of Zion in childbirth

7 Before she was in labor, she gave birth; Before her pain came, She delivered a male child.

8 Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion was in labor, She gave birth to her children.

v. 7 (NIV) “Before she goes into labor, she gives birth; before her pains come upon her, she delivers a son.”

- Birth pangs in other scriptures symbolize the time of tribulation leading up to Christ’s return
- “She delivered a male child” —Christ’s resurrection from the grave...was long before the tribulation
 - Revelation 12: 1-5

v. 8 “Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day” —the spiritual glorification of God’s people resurrected to immortality

‘Zion’ —a symbol of the Church...giving birth to spiritual children

9 Shall I bring to the time of birth, and not cause delivery?" says the Lord. "Shall I who cause delivery shut up the womb?" says your God.

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."

v. 9 What God sets out to do, His plans, He will carry through and not leave it unfinished

➤ The family of God will be expanded

v. 10 God's plans for Jerusalem will be fulfilled...those who had previously mourned will rejoice for her
"Rejoice with Jerusalem" —fulfilled with Christ ruling

v. 11 The inhabitants will delight in Jerusalem as an infant delights in its mother's milk
"That you may feed and be satisfied" —spiritually with Christ ruling

12 For thus says the Lord: “Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, And the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream. Then you shall feed; On her sides shall you be carried, And be dandled on her knees.

13 As one whom his mother comforts, So I will comfort you; And you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.”

v. 12 Peace will be established in Jerusalem, like a river...with people living God's way

Isaiah 48:18

O, that you had heeded My commandments!

Then your peace would have been like a river, And your righteousness like the waves of the sea.

v. 13 God is compared to a mother, who comforts her child (Isaiah 40: 1-2)

Isaiah 40: 1-2

1 Comfort, yes, comfort My people!” Says your God.

2 “Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, That her warfare is ended, That her iniquity is pardoned; For she has received from the Lord's hand Double for all her sins.”

The reign and indignation of God

14 When you see this, your heart shall rejoice, And your bones shall flourish like grass; The hand of the Lord shall be known to His servants, And His indignation to His enemies.

15 For behold, the Lord will come with fire And with His chariots, like a whirlwind, To render His anger with fury, And His rebuke with flames of fire.

16 For by fire and by His sword The Lord will judge all flesh; And the slain of the Lord shall be many.

17 “Those who sanctify themselves and purify themselves, To go to the gardens After an idol in the midst, Eating swine’s flesh and the abomination and the mouse, Shall be consumed together,” says the Lord.

v. 14 When God’s people are restored to Jerusalem they shall rejoice and flourish...and they will know it comes from His hand...but the enemies will have learned about His judgment

v. 15-16 Christ’s judgment on the rebellious enemies at His return
“by fire and sword” (Rev. 19: 11-15)

v. 17 Reasons for the judgment...idol worship, eating of unclean animals
Eating mice was a pagan practice (Lev. 11: 29)—forbidden

18 “For I know their works and their thoughts. It shall be that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see My glory.

19 I will set a sign among them; and those among them who escape I will send to the nations: to Tarshish and Pul and Lud, who draw the bow, and Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands afar off who have not heard My fame nor seen My glory. And they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles.

v. 18 The judgment will be on all nations who rebel, but afterward and because of the judgment, they shall see His glory

Jeremiah 3: 17

At that time Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the Lord, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem. No more shall they follow the dictates of their evil hearts.

v. 19 Israelites who have escaped and turned to God, will be sent to nations around the world, and they shall teach of God and His way, to people who have not known God before

20 Then they shall bring all your brethren for an offering to the Lord out of all nations, on horses and in chariots and in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem,” says the Lord, “as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord.

21 And I will also take some of them for priests and Levites,” says the Lord.

v. 20 “brethren” —children of Israel who have been scattered brought to Jerusalem

‘an offering in a clean vessel’ –to serve the Lord

v. 21 Some of them will then be selected to be teachers of God’s way...completing the fulfillment of Exodus 19: 6 (To be a nation of kings and priests)

22 “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.

23 And it shall come to pass That from one New Moon to another, And from one Sabbath to another, All flesh shall come to worship before Me,” says the Lord.

v.22 The new heavens and new earth which God will bring down after the millennium and last judgment period and will remain permanent, eternal...parallels the permanence of God’s redeemed people

v. 23 All nations and peoples will worship God and they will honor God using His calendar

- The new moons—which define the months on God’s calendar, marking the Holy Days, and His Sabbath

Zechariah 14: 16

And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

A warning concludes the book of Isaiah

24 “And they shall go forth and look Upon the corpses of the men Who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, And their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.”

v. 24 A sobering conclusion to the book of Isaiah

- Those who refuse to obey God and continue to transgress will face the judgment fire

Christ quoted last part of the verse in (Mark 9: 44, 46, 48)

As a warning to serve and worship God uprightly to avoid the judgment

Lessons

God's servants shall eat...shall drink...shall rejoice in the kingdom

- Those who obey and follow God

God looks to one who has a humble and contrite heart and trembles at His word

- These are the faithful to Him, what we need to be

The book of Isaiah contains many wonderful prophecies of Christ's return and the millennium...but the book ends with a warning of the judgment upon the wicked

- Strive to be among the righteous, live God's way of life...to become part of His family