

A Trek Through Isaiah 91 - 66:1-9

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<u>The New Heavens and New Earth: Prayers and Promises 63:7 - 66:24</u>
The watcher praying 63:7 - 64:12
The Lord responding 65:1 - 66:24

- In the book of the Conqueror (56 - 66)
 - Question: How will God's people fulfill their promise?
 - Three areas of emphasis
 - The contrast between the ideal community and the actual community
 - God's glorious promises for the faithful.
 - A Conqueror: the third messianic figure who accomplishes God's purpose and fulfills His promises.
- This section: The New Heavens and New Earth: Prayers and Promises 63:7 - 66:24
 - The work is completed. Now what?
 - The watcher praying 63:7 - 64:12
 - The Lord responding 65:1 - 66:24
- Today:
 - The Lord responding (part 3) 66:1-9

Recap of the Lord's response

- 65:1-12 Reaching out to the peoples and to the people
 - 65:1 Reaching out to the nations

1 I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me;

- 65:2-7 Reaching out to Israel
 - V2-5 Appeal and provocations

2 I spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people,

- V6-7 The LORD's reaction

6 Behold, it is written before me: "I will not keep silent, but I will repay;

- 65:8-10 Blessings for the faithful remnant
- 65:11-12 Recompense for the wicked

11 But you who forsake the LORD, ...I will destine you to the sword

- 65:13-15 Contrasting ends

13 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, my servants shall eat, but you shall be hungry;

- 65:16 Blessings of the redeemed

16 ... he who blesses himself in the land shall bless himself by the God of truth, and he who takes an oath in the land shall swear by the God of truth;

- 65:17-25 All things made new
 - V17-18a New creation

17 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth,

- V18b-19 New city

18 ...for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness.

- V20 New life

20 No more shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days

- V21-24 New society
 - V21-22 Security of tenure

21 They shall build houses and inhabit them;

- V23 Fulfillment in blessing

23 They shall not labor in vain or bear children for calamity,

- V24 Peace with God

24 Before they call I will answer; while they are yet speaking I will hear.

- V25 Nature renewed

25 The wolf and the lamb shall graze together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain," says the LORD.

- 66:1-24 Judgment and hope
 - Structure
 - V1-4 Judgment for false worship
 - V5-22 Comfort for true worship
 - V1-2 False and true houses
 - V1-2a The false house

1 Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? 2 All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the LORD.

- Thus says the LORD.
 - God speaking to the returned exiles who were focused on the religious rituals prescribed in the Mosaic law.
- what is the house that you would build for me,
 - Solomon understood that the temple that he had built could not contain God.
 - 1 Kings 8:27 (ESV): 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!
 - The returning exiles did not understand this. They saw the temple as containing God. They thought that performance of the rituals that His law prescribed was the way to please Him.
 - Stephen used this passage as his last argument in his defense in Acts 7:48-50: Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made by hands, as the prophet says, 49 " 'Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest? 50 Did not my hand make all these things?'
 - Accusing his accusers
 - of worshipping a god of ritual rather than the LORD.
 - Of resisting the Holy Spirit
 - Of killing the prophets who brought God's word
- Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool...All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be,
 - But God is king over all.
 - Not only that, but He made all things.

■ V2b The true house

2 ...But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.

- God is not interested in buildings made by disobedient rebels.
- He looks to those who are humble and contrite in spirit and tremble at His word
- Humble.
 - Not arrogant
 - Not declaring right and wrong
 - Not deciding what is acceptable worship
 - Not saying, "There is no God."
- Contrite
 - Not saying they have no sin.
 - Rather acknowledging their sin and being broken over it.
- Trembles at My word
 - Sees the Scriptures as the word of God.
 - Seeks to understand them
 - Puts understanding into action.
- With these He will come to dwell
 - As Ephesians 2:20–22 (ESV): 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

- V3-4 False worship and its end
 - V3a Worthless sacrifices

3 “He who slaughters an ox is like one who kills a man; he who sacrifices a lamb, like one who breaks a dog’s neck; he who presents a grain offering, like one who offers pig’s blood; he who makes a memorial offering of frankincense, like one who blesses an idol.

- Structure
 - Isaiah gives four pairs. First is a practice prescribed in the Mosaic law; second is an action contrary to the law.
 - “Is like one” is not in the Hebrew text. The practices are presented side by side for maximum contrast.
 - Isaiah is showing that all sacrifice is an abomination if offered in the wrong spirit.
- slaughters an ox is like one who kills a man;
 - Sacrifice is as murder
- sacrifices a lamb, like one who breaks a dog’s neck;
 - Dog an unclean animal. Mosaic law prescribed breaking the neck of an unclean animal that was not redeemed.
 - Sacrifice is as unclean
- he who presents a grain offering, like one who offers pig’s blood;
 - Grain offering not bloody.
 - Pig is unclean.
 - Offering is as pig’s blood
- he who makes a memorial offering of frankincense, like one who blesses an idol.
 - Memorial offering intended to bring the one making the offering to the attention of God
 - Offering seen as idol worship: not worshipping the God of Scripture but a god of their own making.

■ V3b Diagnosis 1

3 ...These have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations;

- These have chosen their own ways,
 - Rather than trembling at God’s word
- their soul delights in their abominations;
 - Unregenerate man chooses what God hates, and delights in it.
- As Romans 8:7–8 (ESV): For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

■ V4a God's response

4 I also will choose harsh treatment for them and bring their fears upon them,

- I also will choose. As the unbelievers have chosen, God also chooses
- Harsh treatment.
 - Not compassion and mercy
- Bring their fears upon them.
 - The unbelievers looked to their religion for security. God will ensure that what they most fear will come upon them.
- As Is 7:17 The LORD will bring upon you and upon your people and upon your father's house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—the king of Assyria!
 - Ahaz had chosen security through alliance with Assyria rather than trusting the LORD.
 - Therefore the LORD brought Assyria to conquer them.

■ V4b Diagnosis 2

because when I called, no one answered, when I spoke, they did not listen; but they did what was evil in my eyes and chose that in which I did not delight.”

- when I called, no one answered, when I spoke, they did not listen
 - The wicked had complained that God was silent. But when He spoke through His prophets, they disregarded His word.
- they did what was evil in my eyes, and chose that in which I did not delight.
 - Repeating for emphasis

- V5-6 Comfort for the redeemed
 - From here on God speaks to the redeemed, and mentions unbelievers in the third person.
 - V5 Certain justification

5 Hear the word of the LORD, you who tremble at his word: “Your brothers who hate you and cast you out for my name’s sake have said, ‘Let the LORD be glorified, that we may see your joy’; but it is they who shall be put to shame.

- Hear the word of the LORD, you who tremble at his word
 - As v2. God speaking to the believing remnant
- Your brothers who hate you and cast you out for my name’s sake
 - Here is the response of unbelievers to the redeemed brothers. Members of the same nation.
 - Hate you.
 - How they feel.
 - Cast you out.
 - What they do.
 - Engaging in false worship, they seek to get rid of true worship
 - For my name’s sake.
 - Why they do it.
 - They think they are pleasing God.
 - As John 16:2 (ESV): They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God.
- have said, ‘Let the LORD be glorified, that we may see your joy’; but it is they who shall be put to shame.
 - Here is the taunt of the unbeliever.
 - Sarcastic and mocking
 - Spoken to shame the believer.
 - Here is God’s answer
 - the unbelievers seek to shame but they will be shamed

■ V6 The sound of judgment

6 “The sound of an uproar from the city! A sound from the temple! The sound of the LORD, rendering recompense to his enemies!

- Sound.
 - 3x for emphasis
 - The voice of the Lord
- Prophetically Isaiah hears the Lord’s voice announcing retribution on His enemies.
- The sound comes from within the city, from the temple itself; precisely the center of the worthless ritual.

- V7-9 The LORD's faithfulness

- Two questions

- Can a nation be born instantly?
 - Will God be faithful to accomplish His word?

- V7-8 Sudden birth of a new people

7 "Before she was in labor she gave birth; before her pain came upon her she delivered a son. 8 Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall a land be born in one day? Shall a nation be brought forth in one moment? For as soon as Zion was in labor she brought forth her children.

- Picture of a woman giving birth suddenly before labor; an unexpected event.
 - She delivers a son, then brings forth children.
 - Various interpretations
 - Both son and children may refer to the church
 - Son may refer to Jesus Christ; children to the church
 - Son may refer to Jesus Christ; children to the nation of Israel turning to Christ in the Tribulation..
 - Speaking of the birth of the new Zion from the old: sudden and unexpected.

- V9 God's faithfulness to accomplish His word

9 Shall I bring to the point of birth and not cause to bring forth?" says the LORD; "shall I, who cause to bring forth, shut the womb?" says your God.

- Two questions to show God's faithfulness
 - Shall I bring to the point of birth and not cause to bring forth?" says the LORD
 - shall I, who cause to bring forth, shut the womb?
 - He will fulfill His promise to gather from the nations a new people. These will be the spiritual children of Zion.
 - Says the LORD...says your God.
 - He is the King of history.
 - He is the personal Comforter to the redeemed

Discussion

We will break into three groups for discussion. The questions are

- 1. This is the one to whom I will look 66:2**
 - a. Humble**
 - b. Contrite**
 - c. Trembles at My word**
- 2. Choosing their own ways 66:3-4**
 - a. when I called, no one answered**
 - b. when I spoke, they did not listen**
 - c. they did what was evil in my eyes**
 - d. [they] chose that in which I did not delight**
- 3. They shall be put to shame 66:5**
 - a. What they do**
 - i. Hate you**
 - ii. Cast you out for My name's sake**
 - iii. Taunt you: "Let the LORD be glorified, that we may see your joy"**
 - b. They shall be put to shame**
 - c. What should we do?**
 - i. Col 4:6 ...that you may know how you ought to answer each person.**

Remember to worship the Lord: (1) See (2) Know (3) Respond

For next week: The Lord responding (part 4) 66:10-24

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