

Isaiah Chapter 66

Verses 1-16: Isaiah's final prophecy begins with the assertion, "Thus saith the Lord." The passage points to the magnitude and immensity of God, who is greater than the heavens. Thus "heaven" is His "throne" and "earth" His "footstool." He is not limited to any "house" (temple) made by man.

The apostle John tells us that in eternity there is no need for a temple, "for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it" (Rev. 21:22). God's desire is to dwell in men and women who are of a "poor and ... contrite spirit."

Thus, Isaiah foresees the New Testament doctrine of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the temple of man's body (1 Cor. 6:19).

Verses 1-2: Isaiah began the final summary of his prophecy with a reminder that God is not looking for a temple of stone, since as Creator of all things; the whole universe is His dwelling place. Stephen cited this passage before the Sanhedrin to point out their error in limiting God to a temple made with hands (Acts 7:49-50).

On the contrary, God is looking for a heart to dwell in, a heart that is tender and broken, not one concerned with the externalities of religion (Matt. 5:3-9). God is looking to dwell in the heart of a person who takes His Word seriously (66:5; John 14:23).

Isaiah 66:1 "Thus saith the LORD, The heaven [is] my throne, and the earth [is] my footstool: where [is] the house that ye build unto me? and where [is] the place of my rest?"

Solomon said it best, when he said (in 1 Kings):

1 Kings 8:27 "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?"

God is Omnipresent, which means He is everywhere all the time. All of creation belongs to Him. This includes the heaven and the earth.

Isaiah 66:2 "For all those [things] hath mine hand made, and all those [things] have been, saith the LORD: but to this [man] will I look, [even] to [him that is] poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."

To fear the LORD is the beginning of wisdom. The Gospel was good news to the poor.

James 4:10 "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."

Matthew 18:4 "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

Psalm 51:17 "The sacrifices of God [are] a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

Isaiah 66:3 "He that killeth an ox [is as if] he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, [as if] he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, [as if he offered] swine's blood; he that burneth incense, [as if] he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations."

“As if he slew a man”: God loathes even the sacrifices of the wicked (Prov. 15:8; 28:9). They often killed children to offer in sacrifice (Ezek. 23:39). Some of the Jews were offering bulls as sacrifices with the same empty heartedness as the pagans offering “a man” on the altar.

“Cut off a dog’s neck”: This refers to offering dogs in sacrifice, which, as unclean (Jeremiah 15:3; 56:10-11), are associated with swine (Matt. 7:6; 2 Pet. 2:22). To sacrifice a lamb with an attitude no different that if it were a dog betrayed the empty heartedness of the offeror.

All of these images are meant to illustrate the shallow hypocrisy of one who makes an offering to God, but with no more heartbrokenness that a pagan who kills a child, offers a dog, sacrifices pig’s blood, blesses an idol, and loves such abominations. God will judge such (verse 4).

To sacrifice, after the great sacrifice of Jesus on the cross would be as if we were saying His sacrifice was not enough. It then would be a sin to sacrifice after Jesus (the perfect Lamb), was sacrificed for the sin of the whole world.

It would be a rejection of Jesus. The sacrifice of this kind would be an operation in futility. God would not accept another sacrifice.

Isaiah 66:4 "I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose [that] in which I delighted not."

This is speaking of those who rejected Jesus. They believed a lie, instead of Jesus. They had eyes to see, and did not see. They had ears to hear, but did not hear. They were a sinful and perverse generation.

Isaiah 66:5 "Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the LORD be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed."

“Your brethren that hated you” The apostate Israelites intensified their rivalry with the faithful remnant (65:11-15), and blasphemously said, “Let the Lord be glorified,” words uttered in the sarcastic spirit (of 5:19), by these apostates. In the end, “they will be put to shame” because God’s judgment will fall.

The Word of God is the only Truth. The Word was God. Those that tremble at the Word are the believers. They reverently fear God. To be cast out, because you are a believer in Christ, should bring you great joy, because great is your reward in heaven.

Some of the first disciples were martyred for the name of the Lord.

Isaiah 66:6 "A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the LORD that rendereth recompence to his enemies."

This voice is of the LORD. Jesus spoke in the city. He spoke in the temple also. He speaks on judgment day, as well. He is the righteous judge. His enemies will regret their decision to deny Him on judgment day.

The righteous judge will give to each person his rightful rewards. Some will inherit heaven, some will inherit hell.

Verses 7-9" Here is another comparison with the human birth process (see 13:8), this time to teach two lessons:

- (1) No birth can come until labor pains have occurred (verses 7-8); and
- (2) When labor occurs, birth will surely follow (verse 9; Jeremiah 30:6-7; Matthew 24:8; and 1 Thess. 5:3).

The point is that Israel's suffering will end with a delivery! The Lord will not impose travail on the remnant without bringing them to the kingdom (verse 10).

Isaiah 66:7-8 Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child." "Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? [or] shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children."

This is speaking of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. Israel is the she. The Man Child is Jesus and He brought Christianity to life.

Many believe this is speaking of the nation of Israel. It could be that, but it could also be the birth of spiritual Israel. At the beginning, thousands were saved in just one day. Peter is a good example of that, when in just one day, thousands came to the LORD.

Zion many times is speaking of the church.

Isaiah 66:9 "Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the LORD: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut [the womb]? saith thy God."

The law had brought them thus far, but it condemned to death. This brings life everlasting to all who would dare to believe. Jesus will set up His throne in Jerusalem for His 1,000 year reign on the earth.

Isaiah 66:10 Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her:

Jerusalem is the city of God. Those who love God must love Jerusalem, as well. In the 1,000 year reign, many people will come to Jerusalem to worship.

Isaiah 66:11 "That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory."

“Suck, and be satisfied”: The prophet compares Jerusalem to a nursing mother.

This filling is like the milk and honey the Lord provides. It will bring spiritual fullness to the believers. The Christians will not seek other gods. They will be satisfied with the LORD. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, will now be their King.

Isaiah 66:12 "For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon [her] sides, and be dandled upon [her] knees."

“Peace ... like a river”: The picture is of abundant peace that compares to a wadi filled with a rushing torrent of water.

Jesus is the King of Peace. Wherever He is has perfect peace. This peace is not temporary, it goes on and on. The peace of the Lord Jesus flows out to the Gentiles like a river. This is the birth of Christianity.

Isaiah 66:13 "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem."

This is speaking of that time when the devil is chained up for a thousand years.

Revelation 20:2 "And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years," The Lord Jesus bought us, and gave us to the Father.

Isaiah 66:14 "And when ye see [this], your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb: and the hand of the LORD shall be known toward his servants, and [his] indignation toward his enemies."

“Toward his servants ... toward his enemies”: Prosperity will belong to the faithful remnant, but wrath to those who oppose the Lord.

It will certainly be time to rejoice, when the old serpent, the devil, is chained up for a thousand years. God's helping hand is extended to all of His own at this time. This is a time of perfect peace.

The family of God will rule with Jesus at this time. The enemies will be under subjection.

Isaiah 66:15 "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."

"Whirlwind ... Flames of fire": That the wrath of God will come to the rebels is expressed in language describing the end-time judgment (29:6).

The fire of God will purge all the sin away. This could be speaking of the wrath of God, which is poured out upon the earth, just before the Christians come back to the earth to reign with Jesus.

The chariots speak of war. Whatever occurs on the earth during the wrath of God is terrible. He will be burning the evil away with His fire to prepare the earth for the Christians.

Isaiah 66:16 "For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many."

"Slain ... shall be many": The many who fight against the Lord when He comes to establish His kingdom will die (34:6-7; Rev. 19:21).

This could be when Jesus comes to judge, and make war on God's enemies. His sword is the Word of God. Those who will not change will die.

Verses 17-24: The book ends with a fearful glimpse of final judgment. The prophet foresees a time when "those that escape" the Tribulation period will be sent "unto the nations" (Gentiles), to "declare" God's "glory" among them. During the millennial kingdom, they will come to "Jerusalem" to worship Him. "All flesh" refers to the redeemed of the Lord from all nations who will "come to worship" Him.

The book ends with the awesome statement that the redeemed will "go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me." Their suffering is described as being in the place where "their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched" (Mark 9:44; Rev. 20:14-15).

The scene described here is that of the redeemed of heaven in their final glorified state and of those who are lost forever in the lake of fire. Thus, Isaiah closes his prophecy with a stern reminder that there is a real heaven to be gained and a real hell to be avoided.

Isaiah 66:17 "They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one [tree] in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD."

“Sanctify ... purify themselves”: Sanctification and purification for right purposes are right, but when done for purposes of idol worship, will draw judgment from the one true God.

Man cannot sanctify himself. Those that try to do that are worshipping a false god. Sometimes the false god is self.

Isaiah 66:18 "For I [know] their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory."

“Their works and their thoughts”: The Lord was aware of the motivations behind the actions of apostate Israelites (verse 17).

“Gather all nations and tongues” (see 2:2-4). Jerusalem will be the center of world attention because of the presence of the Messiah there.

God is saying here, that not only does He know their evil works, but even their evil thoughts that go before their sins. All nations and tongues will know who He is. The Bible says, every eye will see Him.

Isaiah 66:19 "And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, [to] Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, [to] Tubal, and Javan, [to] the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles."

“Those that escape”: The faithful remnant of Israel are in view, who had escaped both the persecutions of their enemies and the judgment of God against those enemies (verse 16).

“Tarshish, Pul and Lud ... Tubal and Javan”: Tarshish was possibly in Spain, Pul or Put and Lud in North Africa, Tubal in North East Asia Minor, and Javan in Greece. These were representative Gentile populations that will hear of God’s glory through the faithful remnant.

The name of the Lord Jesus Christ will be known in every nation of the world. When all the enemies are destroyed, the worship of the Lord Jesus Christ will be universal. There will be missionaries to carry the message of the resurrected Christ to the whole world.

Isaiah 66:20 "And they shall bring all your brethren [for] an offering unto the LORD out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the LORD, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD."

“Bring all your brethren”: As their offering to the Lord, the Gentiles who hear of God’s glory will expedite the return of Israel’s faithful remnant (43:6; 49:22).

This could be the time of the return of the Jews dispersed around the world. This could also, be the time when all the world will flow to Jerusalem to worship.

Isaiah 66:21 "And I will also take of them for priests [and] for Levites, saith the LORD."

“For priests and for Levites”: Some of the returning remnant will function in these specialized roles in the services of the millennial temple and memorial sacrifices (Ezekiel 44-46).

God has an order, just as there is order in government here on the earth. This just means that God will choose new spiritual leaders.

Isaiah 66:22 "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain."

“Your seed ... remain”: National Israel will have a never-ending existence through the Millennium, and on into the new heavens and the new earth throughout eternity.

Those, who are truly followers of God, will be like the new heavens and the new earth. They will live on for all of eternity.

Isaiah 66:23 "And it shall come to pass, [that] from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD."

“All flesh ... worship before me”: All humanity will participate in worshipping the Lord at stipulated times during the temporal phase of the messianic kingdom.

This just means that they will worship God continuously. There will be one eternal day. There will be no new moons. LORD here, is Jehovah, the self-existent One.

Isaiah 66:24 "And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."

“Worm shall not die ... neither shall their fire be quenched”: The corpses of those enduring everlasting torment will serve as a vivid reminder to all of the grievous nature and terrible consequences of rebellion against God.

In referring to this verse, Jesus referred to the Valley of Hinnom. I.e., Gehenna, where a continually burning trash heap pictured the never-ending pain of the lost (Mark 9:47).

This is a warning from Isaiah that the punishment for the evil ones will continue on. It appears that the Christians will know the terrible things that happen to the evil ones, but it will not worry them, because they know Jesus' judgment is righteous.

Isaiah Chapter 66 Questions

1. Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my _____.
2. The earth is my _____.
3. What did Solomon have to say about this very thing?
4. What are the sacrifices of God?
5. What is meant by verse 3?
6. Why did God bring their fears upon them?
7. Hear the Word of the _____.
8. How should you feel about being cast out, because you believe?
9. Whose voice is verse 6 speaking of?
10. What is the birth in verse 7?
11. What do you believe about the nation born in a day in verse 8?
12. The law brought what?
13. _____ is the city of God.
14. _____ is the King of Peace.
15. Verse 13 says He will comfort how?
16. Who will rule with Jesus?
17. What will purge the sin?
18. How does the LORD plead with all flesh?
19. What is wrong with their attitude in verse 17?
20. How are the believers like the new heaven and new earth?
21. LORD, in verse 23, is whom?
22. What is the last verse of Isaiah warning of?