

## ISAIAH – LESSON TWENTY FIVE

### ISAIAH 64:8 - 66

#### Chapter 64 vv. 8-12 – A Renewed Cry for Mercy

Though Jehovah is the Creator of all mankind, he is the Father only of his spiritual children. His children need to learn that a potter can only mold a vessel as the clay yields to his hand. If he is unable to make a vessel unto honor, then he makes on unto dishonor (Jer. 18:1-4). He seeks to make the best, but he may have to settle for something inferior. The people have not yielded themselves; therefore he has made of them a vessel of dishonor (8).

Jehovah has promised that, for his own sake, he will blot out their transgressions (43:25). Although that promise is not explicitly mentioned here, it may be in the people's mind as they cry out to God. They do not ask that there be no judgment, but that he not be angry with them forever. Instead of invoking God's nature as the basis of their cry, they invoke their standing as God's people. Habakkuk reports the cry, "In wrath remember mercy (Hab. 3:2). In Jehovah's reply (ch. 65), he separates the faithful from the unfaithful, declaring the destiny of each (9).

The condition of Judah is dire – its cities and Zion have become a wilderness and Jerusalem a desolation (10).

In the center of that desolation and destruction is the temple of God where their fathers praised Jehovah now burned with fire. Their "pleasant places" may be either their homes, gardens, and other things they esteemed and that therefore brought them delight, or the gardens and courtyards of the temple and the holy things associated with worship that brought them holy delight. Delitzsch suggests that, given the context, the latter is more likely (11).

The prayer closes with two questions to God. Given the conditions they describe, can God fail to act? Will he continue the affliction indefinitely (12)? Though the questions are not answered here, a negative answer seems to be implied in ch. 65.

## CHAPTER SIXTY-FIVE

### **Jehovah's Response to the Prayer**

#### **Vv. 1-7 – Destruction of the Apostates: A Just Recompense**

Because of their rebellion and idolatry, Jehovah cannot do that for which they plead. He will cast off the fleshly nation, but will redeem or save a remnant. The present order will pass away; he will create a new order.

Paul's use of this passage dictates that which the passage has in view. Paul applies v. 1 to the Gentiles and v. 2 to Israel (Rom. 10:20-21<sup>1</sup>). Israel has prayed to God for deliverance on the basis that they are his people. Jehovah's response is that he is rejecting them and that he will be **found of a people who have not sought him and who were not called by his name**. The Gentiles have not sought God, nor have they been called by his name. However, he will summon the people of a nation not hitherto included (55:5), inviting them through the gospel as Isaiah has earlier foretold (49:6) (1).

God now addresses Israel. To "spread out the hands" is a gesture of appeal imploring the people to hear him. He had done this **all the day**, but they have continued to be **a rebellious people, that walk in a way that is not good** (and thus is evil), **after their own**

---

1. Paul probably quoted from the Septuagint version and deleted part of the passage; however, his application of it is the surest commentary we have.

**thoughts** (devices and plans). In short, they did that which they wished to do (cf. 63:10) (2).

God now proceeds to cite the evidence to support his charges. They **provoke me to my face continually, sacrificing in gardens, and burning incense upon bricks; <sup>4</sup>that sit among the graves, and lodge in the secret places; that eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels; <sup>5</sup>that say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day.** While there is some disagreement concerning the precise rebellious acts to which reference is made, it is clear that the charge is that the people carry on their rebellious and blasphemous acts by throwing them in the very face of God, demonstrating no fear of consequences and taunting Jehovah to do anything about it (3-5).

God responds that he will not keep silent, *i.e.*, he will not overlook such conduct. Indeed, it is written before him. Just as he keeps records of the lives of his people (4:3), recording even the tears of his saints (Psa. 56:8), he keeps an account of the wicked and he will **recompense** their evil deeds **into their bosom**. Their sin that must be recompensed in full had continued from their fathers (Jer. 3:25; 7:25-26; 9:14). The mountains and hills were favorite places for erecting altars to offer sacrifices to idols, sacrifices that were often accompanied by immoral practices. Such conduct blasphemed God by bringing reproach upon his holy name. Because of that conduct God cannot grant the result for which they pray, but will **first measure their work into their bosom** (6-7).

### **Vv. 8-12 – Salvation of a Remnant – Destruction of the Faithless**

Though Israel will be destroyed, Jehovah will spare a remnant. No one destroys a good cluster of grapes just because it is surrounded by sour or worthless ones. It is spared because **a blessing is in it**. God will treat in the same manner those servants who choose to serve him. God has promised a blessing to all nations through the seed of Abraham and Jacob. To that end Jehovah will bring a seed out of Jacob and out of Judah shall come an inheritor, Jehovah's chosen, who will inherit his mountains (his land) where Jehovah's servants will dwell. The context makes clear that this is not the return

from Babylonian exile, but to those who take refuge in God (57:13). Their blessings for Jehovah's servants will be spiritual prosperity, figuratively represented by the flocks of Sharon<sup>2</sup> and the herds of the Valley of Achor<sup>3</sup> (8-10).

Jehovah now turns himself to those who forsake him, forget his holy mountain, prepare a table for Fortune, and fill up mingled wine unto Destiny. <sup>4</sup> For our purposes we need only mention that Fortune and Destiny were two heathen deities before whom Israel had spread tables (cf. Psa. 23:5; 69:22; 78:18-19) of food and offered drink oblations. With a play on the word Destiny, Jehovah says, "**I will destine you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter.**" The destiny and fate of the people did not rest in the hand of idols, but in the determined counsel and overruling providence of God. The reason for their destruction is two fold: **when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake ye did not hear.** Rather they chose to **do that which was evil in my eyes, and chose that wherein I delighted not.** They must now suffer the consequences 11-12).

### Vv. 13-16 – Blessings and Judgment

**Therefore** introduces conclusions based on the foregoing promises of blessings and threats of punishment. The conclusions are those of and are spoken by **the Lord**

---

2. Sharon was a plain, a level tract extending from the Mediterranean to the hill country to the west of Jerusalem, about 30 miles long and from 8 to 15 miles broad, celebrated for its beauty and fertility (1 Chr. 27:29; Isa. 33:9; 35:2; 65:10). The "rose of Sharon" is celebrated.

3. The Valley of Achor, (ay'kohr; Heb., 'trouble'), part of the north border of Judah (Josh. 15:7) and the location of the execution of Achan (Josh. 7:24-26) after his profiteering in a holy war. In Hos. 2:15 and Isa. 65:10 its reputation for that former 'trouble' is reversed and the prophets use it as a symbol of better times to come. It is probably modern el-Buqei'ah between Jericho and the north end of the Dead Sea.

4. The translations *Fortune* ("Gad," Hebrew) and *Destiny* ("Meni," Hebrew) are preferable to the KJV's renderings. These are evidently early Canaanitish deities. When Israel came into the land at least two towns bore the name *Gad*, Baal-Gad (Josh. 11:17) and Migdal-gad (Josh. 15:37). Delitzsch devotes four pages to a learned discussion of these two names.

**Jehovah.** Four contrasts are set forth between Jehovah’s servants and those who do evil in which he does not delight:

SERVANTS	DOERS OF EVIL
Shall eat	Shall be hungry
Shall drink	Shall be thirsty
Shall rejoice	Shall be put to shame
Shall sing for joy of heart	Shall cry for sorrow of heart and wail for vexation of spirit
Jehovah will call by another name	Shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen; and the Lord Jehovah shall slay thee

“Bless” means “to endue with power for success, prosperity, fecundity, longevity etc.”<sup>5</sup> One can be blessed only in the Lord (Eph. 1:3); apart from him there are no blessings. They can’t be found in Fortune and Destiny. The commitments of the God of Truth hold fast (2 Cor. 1:20).<sup>6</sup> All oaths will be sworn in the name of the God of truth and not of an idol deity. Such oaths are as binding as is the character of God in whose name they are taken. **The former troubles are forgotten;** the afflictions brought on by unfaithfulness are completely removed, blotted out. **They are hidden from [Jehovah’s] eyes,** not to be brought against his people again. The old order with its heavens “shall vanish away like smoke,” and its “earth shall wax old like a garment” to be laid aside

---

5. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*

6. For how many soever be the promises of God, in him is the yea: wherefore also through him is the Amen, unto the glory of God through us.

(51:6). At that time Jehovah will plant new spiritual heavens and lay the foundation of a new earth (13-16).

### **Vv. 17-25 – The New Heavens and the New Earth**

The coming of the Messiah will usher in a new spiritual and moral order or arrangement. Paul calls this new order “a dispensation [arrangement] of the fullness of the times,” when all things will be summed up (brought together under one head) in Christ (Eph. 1:10). Isaiah’s new heavens and new earth are the new arrangement to which Paul refers, and before which all old dispensations must pass away. **For, behold** – attention is focused on Jehovah and what he is about to do – **I create**. The word *create* is the same word used by Moses to describe the original creation (Gen. 1:1), emphasizes Jehovah’s intention to bring something new into being. A completely new order shall be created by God, **and the former things shall no be remembered, nor come into mind**. This strong language emphasizes that the entire former system, which included a special physical nation and geographical area, animal sacrifices, and ceremonial rites, will be completely removed and abolished forever. As Paul describes it, “The old things are passed away; behold, they are become new” (2 Cor. 5:17) (17).

The people are to **be glad and rejoice forever**, as long as the age shall last, **in that which I create**, the new heavens and the new earth – the new spiritual order. This new arrangement requires a new central city for the newly created people. Therefore, **behold I create Jerusalem a rejoicing and her people a joy**. As Jehovah has shared the affliction of his people (63:9), so he now shares their joy. He rejoices in Jerusalem and in his people cf. 62:5), *Jerusalem* and *my people* being equivalent. With former troubles forgotten and with joy and rejoicing in the new creation, weeping and crying are past (18-19).

V. 20 makes the top ten list of difficult passages in Isaiah. There are numerous and various unsatisfactory explanations. Perhaps the best way to begin is to determine that which the context is seeking to accomplish. Isaiah’s purpose here seems to be to describe the times of happiness and prosperity that would succeed the calamities under which the nation had been suffering. This he does by using a great number of

images, all denoting substantially the same thing. In v. 17 the change is represented as great as if a new heaven and a new earth should be created. In verse 20 the image is that the inhabitants would reach a great age, and that the comparatively happy times of the patriarchs would be restored. In verse 21 the image is taken from the perfect security in their plans of labor, and the fact that they would enjoy the fruit of their labor. In verse 25 the image is that taken from the change in the nature of the animal creation. All of these are poetic images designed as illustrations of the general truth, and, like other poetic images, they are not to be taken literally.

**There shall be no more hence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days.** The LXX renders it, “Nor shall there be there any more an untimely birth, and an old man who has not filled up his time.” The idea is not that there should be no infant deaths in those times. Such an idea would be so absurd that a prophet would not use it even under poetic license. The concept is that there will not be an infant who will not fill up his days or will be short-lived. All shall live long and be blessed with health. There shall be a longevity that will not be broken and feeble, but will be blessed with health and vigor. There is no reason to believe that such language will be literally fulfilled. If it is to be literally fulfilled we must also suppose that the nature of the lion will be changed so that it eats straw with the ox, and that the nature of the wolf and the lamb will be changed so greatly that they will lie down together. The promise of a long life is regarded in the Bible as a blessing, and is an image, everywhere, of prosperity and happiness. But what of the “sinner”? Some suggest that Isaiah is “hedging his bet” so to speak, and saying that even if a sinner lived to 100 years of age he would still be accursed. His length of years would not be a sign of God’s blessing. I am inclined to agree with those (Moffatt among them) who, based on the word for “sin” being related to “missing the mark,” suggest that it should be so understood here, thus translating, “Anyone dying under (falling short of) a hundred years must be accursed by God.” In any event that last part of the verse states a reason for the first part. **FOR the child shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed.** One dying at a hundred years shall be considered a child. Moffatt’s translation seems to fit that reason.

It is difficult to disallow Hailey's construction. He correctly argues that Jehovah's eternal nature does not reckon with time – a thousand years or as a day and a day is as a thousand years (2 Pet. 3:8). Thus, God measures his activities by the accomplishment of the several aspects of his purpose, not by years. From this he concludes that in the new order each citizen, whether for a brief moment as was the case of Stephen (Acts 7), or for a lengthy period, as was the case of Paul or John, will fulfill his mission in God's purpose. He adds that it is not the length but the fullness of one's days that counts, and the sinner, regardless of the length of his days, is accursed. All that Hailey says is true, but in this context it appears to be more of a forced explanation than an adequate exegesis (20)<sup>7</sup>.

Security and permanence, together with God's providential care and supply for all needs, are indicated here.<sup>8</sup> The people of the new order will not be robbed of their heritage and the fruit of their labor (62:8-9). The days of Jehovah's people, his chosen, will be as the days of a tree, a symbol of longevity, permanence, beauty, and fruitfulness (cf. 61:3; Jer. 17:8). They shall long enjoy the fruitful works of their hands (21-22).

In past years the people labored for that which did not satisfy (FF:2) and wearied themselves in following their own way (57:10). Now it will be different. Their labor in the new order will not be in vain (1 Cor. 15:58), not will it bring **calamity**, the sudden terror of death and destruction as punishment from the Lord, as had the idolatry and faithlessness of the old nation. The reason is that **they are the seed of the blessed of Jehovah** (cf. 53:10; 61:9). An additional part of God promise here is that their spiritual offspring will likewise share in the blessing (23).

Promising to answer prayer, Jehovah goes beyond what is pledged in 58:9 and Psalm 145: 18-19. Before his saints call on him, Jehovah will know their needs (Matt. 6:8),

---

7. Recall the beginning of our discussion of v. 20. Hailey may include my conclusions among the "numerous and various unsatisfactory explanations" that he rejected and that necessitated him to seek and find his conclusion.

8. The same concept is found in v. 10 though a different figure is used to express the same idea.



and will have made provision for them. This assurance does not mean that there will be no need to pray, but that “The eyes of Jehovah are toward the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry” (Psa. 34:15; cf. 1 Pet. 3:12). His chosen servants are never to be anxious, for the Lord is always at hand; so in everything they are to make their requests known unto him (Phil 4:4-7) (24).

This verse confirms that this passage related to the Messianic period. Isaiah condenses what he said in 11:6-9 – the wild and domesticated animals shall eat together – and adds the note that the serpent shall eat dust. **They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain** occurs both here and in 11:9. God’s holy mountain is the mountain of his house into which all nations shall flow (2:2-4), the mountain to which foreigners shall be brought when they join themselves to Jehovah (56:6-7), and the mountain which is the inheritance of those who take refuge in him (57:13; 66:20). The phrase **and dust shall be the serpent’s food** is related to Genesis 3:14 where the serpent was told “and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.” To “eat” or “lick the dust” is metaphorical for an humbled or defeated condition (cf. 49:23; Mic. 7:17). In the great spiritual conflict that began in Eden between Satan and his angels, and Jehovah and his forces of right, the Serpent was defeated. This defeat of Satan by Christ (Heb. 2:14; 1 John 3:8) guarantees the victory of the saints (Rom. 16:20). This is the holy mountain and heavenly Jerusalem to which we have come and in which we experience special blessings (Heb. 12:22; Eph. 1:3) (25).

## **CHAPTER SIXTY-SIX**

### **Jehovah’s Judgments – Zion’s Rejoicing**

#### **Vv. 1-6 – Jehovah’s Greatness and the Abomination of Idolatry**

In this concluding chapter Isaiah brings into focus Jehovah’s future judgments and the enlargement, rejoicing, and glory of Zion. The Lord seems to be pointing to the final

days of Judah and the coming glory of Zion in the new dispensation. He is speaking of things to come revealed to him by Jehovah through the Holy Spirit. He looks to the climax of judgment and the glorious hope about which he has been preaching throughout his long life of service to Jehovah and his people.

From the beginning of his prophetic work. Isaiah has spoken of the coming collapse and fall of the nation because of moral corruption within (ch.1; 5:5-7). But out of the ruin there will be established a new nation composed of many peoples and of a remnant that has been redeemed, cleansed, and purified (2:2-4; 4:2-6). The final chapter of the prophecy begins with the affirmation that Jehovah is speaking. In vision, Isaiah has seen the sanctuary trodden down (63:18) and the beautiful house of the Lord laid waste. And now in view of the fact that the spiritual remnant and the redeemed from the nations are coming to Zion, there is need to build another temple. Jehovah says, **Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool** (cf. Psa. 11:4; 103:19), and asks, **What manner of house will ye build unto me? And what place shall be my rest?**<sup>9</sup> A physical temple was necessary under that dispensation, but even it could not contain Jehovah (1 Kings 8:27). Accordingly, the people were not to put their trust in the temple, but in Jehovah himself. Yet they seemed to trust in the temple because it represented his presence (Jer. 7:1-4) (1).

The materials that went into the building of the temple were made by Jehovah, but were perishable and will pass away. The material from which God will construct his new temple are men who are **poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word**. Such individuals will be the building material of Jehovah's new house (cf. Eph. 2:21; 1 Pet. 2:5) (2).

---

9. This is not, as some commentators suggest, a criticism of Haggai's zeal for rebuilding the temple upon the return from captivity, for phrases like "saith Jehovah" and "the word of Jehovah" occur about twenty-five times in his short book, affirming that the urgency was from the Lord himself. And Zechariah, Haggai's contemporary, offers corroboration: "Therefore thus saith Jehovah: I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies; my house shall be built in it" (Zech. 1:16). A physical temple was necessary under that dispensation, but even it could not contain Jehovah

V. 3 has two possible meanings. First, it can mean that one who burns incense or offers legal sacrifices in the wrong spirit is guilty of murder and of offering abominable sacrifices to idols. Second, it can mean that in the new temple and under the new order, the offering of sacrifices that were formerly acceptable will be idolatry. The end result is the same in either case – **they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations**. What they are doing is displeasing to God; any worship offered in the wrong spirit or unauthorized by God, both then and now, is unacceptable to him (3).

Jehovah will determine the consequence of such actions, bringing upon those who delight in their abominations the full recompense of their rejection of his will and way. If they choose their own ways and sacrifices Jehovah **will choose their delusions** (cf. 65:12; 2 Thess. 2:11-12) (4).

The Lord now addresses those who hear his word, tremble at it, and yield to its instruction. He clearly distinguishes this group from **your brethren that hate you**. The phrase “your brethren” indicates that the two groups being distinguished are Jews. Those who tremble at God’s word are hated because of their righteousness and fear of Jehovah. They are cast out **for my names sake**, that is, excluded as if unclean. In an ironical or sarcastic spirit, those who hate the righteous say, **Let Jehovah be glorified, that we may see your joy**. But those who fear God will not be humiliated; **it is they** (those who hate the righteous) **that shall be put to shame** (5).

The entire passage (vv. 1-6) seems to point to the close of the old Jewish order when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed (AD 70). There is heard **a voice of tumult from the city, a voice from the temple**. The basic meaning of the word translated “tumult” is an uproar of a great crowd of people, or the crashing din of war (cf. 13:4). The **voice of Jehovah that rendereth recompense** is the havoc inflicted in response to his command bringing about the destruction of the city and temple in retribution for the mockers’ insults. This points to the destruction of Jerusalem by either the Babylonians or the Romans, probably the latter. But even if the Babylonian assault is in view, it foreshadows what will happen when the Jews reject the Servant, bringing

swift and sure recompense upon themselves. Both Jerusalem and the temple will be destroyed at the voice (command) of Jehovah (6).

### Vv. 7-14 – Blessings in the New Zion

Zion has earlier been portrayed as a mother who gives birth to the Servant (49:1-13). She is then portrayed as a mother who is comforted by the return of her wayward children (49:14-26). The unexpected increase of her children makes necessary an enlarged dwelling (54:1-3). The present passage give prominence to the sudden birth of the **man-child**, the new **nation** and **land**, and **her children**. The man-child is the long awaited Servant, the Messiah born of the spiritual Zion. **Who hath heard such a thing?** Here is something that is unparalleled in history. Immediately following the birth of the Man-Child, a nation, its land, and Zion's children are brought forth. Only the entrance of Christ into the world and the events of Pentecost can be in view here; the Son was exalted, the new nation was established, and Zion's children began to multiply (7-8).

Jehovah now asks, **Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth?** Having in his eternal purpose planned a scheme of redemption, foretold it by his prophets, and controlled history to that end, **Shall I that cause to bring forth shut the womb**, not bringing it to birth or fulfillment? This plan of redemption is the central theme of revelation; all other things are but contributors to its fulfillment. This vivid foretelling of his purpose together with its achievement is a stumbling block not to faith, but to unbelief (9).

The Servant to come will comfort all that mourn for and in Zion (61:2-3). At his coming mourning will cease (60:20). That time has now come; the mourners who love Zion will now rejoice. As an infant finds satisfaction and comfort at its mother's breasts, so shall those who love Zion and rejoice in her find complete satisfaction, and **be delighted with the abundance of her glory** (10-11).

If the people had obeyed God, Israel would have possessed "peace . . . as a river, and . . . righteousness as the waves of the sea" (48:18); all the glory of which the nations

boasted (60:5; 61:6) would have been hers. **For thus saith Jehovah, Behold I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the nations like an overflowing stream.** As it so often does, peace” here means welfare and prosperity, completion and fulfillment. In a beautiful picture of a suckling babe drawing nourishment from its mother’s breasts, being borne upon the side in Oriental fashion (cf. 60:4), and being bounced upon the knee in a playful and affectionate manner, Jehovah describes the future innocence and blessings of his people (12).

**As one**, either a child or a man, **whom his mother comforteth** (cf. 49:15), Zion’s children will be comforted in the spiritual Jerusalem (13).

**And ye shall see it** – the people will personally realize and experience the blessings of Zion in which they rejoice. **And your bones shall flourish**, grow and be made strong with freshness, vigor, and a new life such as characterized the early church and caused it to spread throughout the world. These blessings will be bestowed by the mighty hand of Jehovah, which **shall be known toward his servants**. As so often in Isaiah’s writing, he presents a contrast: Jehovah will bless Zion and her children, **and he will have indignation against his enemies**. His indignation is set forth in the following verses (14).

### **Vv. 15-17 – Indignation Against the Idolaters**

Throughout the scripture fire is used repeatedly as a symbol of divine punishment, of Jehovah’s wrath and indignation (see Psa. 97:3; Jer. 4:4; Ezek. 22:21; Nah 1:6; Isa. 29:5-6; 30:27-31; 42:25). Now Isaiah adds, **For, behold, Jehovah will come with fire, and his chariots shall be like the whirlwind; to render his anger with fierceness, and his rebuke with flames of fire.** This is a vivid and dramatic picture of Jehovah’s judgment against the rebellious idolaters in contrast to his blessings upon Zion (15).

By the fire of his righteous indignation and **by his sword**, the instrument which he uses, whether Babylon (Ezek. 30:24-25) or Rome (Luke 21:24, esp. v. 24), Jehovah will execute his judgment **upon all flesh**. The judgment extends beyond the Jews to include all who are in rebellion against him (for the phrase “all flesh” cf. Gen. 6:13; Lev. 17:14;

Isa. 40:5-6; 49:26; Jer. 32:27). **And the slain of Jehovah shall be many**, for many rebel against him and shall come under the judgment. Several commentators suggest that this language is looking toward the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans (Matt. 24:15-22; Luke 21:20-24). When the Roman Empire (the fourth beast in Daniel's vision) was itself brought to an end, it too was destroyed by divine judgment (Dan. 7:11, 26) (16).

While there are some questions about v. 17, it is clear that instead of going to the sanctuary of God to worship him in truth, the people are going into gardens of their own creation (cf. 1:29) to worship idols (cf. 65:3-5). This verse may be a summary of the idolatry, rebellion, and spiritual temper of the Jews from the days of Isaiah to the coming of Christ (cf. v. 3), at which time **they** (the nation and the Old Testament system) **shall come to an end together**. In language that the people of his day can understand, Isaiah is describing the spiritual condition that the Servant will find in the nation and which will bring about its destruction. That condition is the result of the people's conduct throughout their entire history. Because they have acted like heathen, they must suffer the consequences of heathenism (17).

### **Vv. 18-24 – Jehovah's Glory Proclaimed to the World and the Response**

This verse marks the transition to the final word of hope. Its sense is that **their works and their thoughts** are cause for gathering **all nations and tongues** and **they shall seed [Jehovah's] glory**. He will gather all the peoples of the world including ethnic (nations) and linguistic (tongues) to see his power and righteousness. The opening stands in sharp contrast to the subject of v. 17. Those persons, caught in the web of their own attempts to sanctify themselves and to project their religious attainments on the world, will simply disappear. "But" God will use their failed efforts as a foil to draw the world to himself and to the true light that is in him alone, and in those who reflect

him (cf. 60:1-3). The language of Matt. 24:31<sup>10</sup> may reflect this language in the judgment and destruction of Jerusalem. (18).

The sign that Jehovah will give is not identified. Suggestions range from the resurrection of the Messiah to the establishment of the church and its power in the world to the destruction of Jerusalem. The clause **and I will send such as escape of them unto the nations** suggests that the sign may have been the judgment of destruction that befell the apostate nation and its city and temple. From among the survivors of the judgment, men will be sent unto the various nations with a message. Those who had **not heard my fame, neither seen my glory**, will hear of it through the message of those who escape and are sent by Jehovah to the ends of the earth. Surely this speaks of the work of the apostles and other early Christians who carried “the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ” (2 Cor. 4:4) to the world of their day (19).

**They** (those sent to the ends of the earth) **shall bring all your brethren out of all the nations for an oblation unto Jehovah.** With the “middle wall of partition” broken down (Eph. 2:14), Gentiles from among all the nations will be brought with the redeemed Jews as brethren, as one new man, unto Jehovah. They will be brought to him **for an oblation**, a bloodless offering (the Old Testament meal offering). A great mixed caravan will hasten to Jehovah; they will come **upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters** (the Hebrew word is translated “covered wagons” in Num 7:3), **and upon mules, and upon dromedaries** (swift beasts, KJV; the Hebrew word occurs only here). In Isaiah’s day these were the swiftest means of travel. The redeemed will be brought to Jehovah’s **holy mountain Jerusalem** (cf. 56:7; 57:13), “the mountain of Jehovah’s house (2:2-4). As the children of Israel have brought their oblations to Jehovah in clean vessels, so will the redeemed from the nations be brought in cleanness to the house of Jehovah (20).

---

10. “And he shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” This language clearly applies to the destruction of Jerusalem (see Matt. 24:34).

No longer will the ministers in Jehovah's house be taken exclusively from among the descendants of Levi and Aaron, but **of them also**, the Gentile converts brought to the holy mountain, **will I take for priests** (cf. 61:6). All the redeemed under Christ are "a royal priesthood" who offer spiritual sacrifices to God through Christ (1 Pet. 2:9). Men purchased "of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation" have been made "a kingdom of priests; and they reign upon the earth" (Rev. 5:9-10) (21).

**For as the new heavens and the new earth . . . shall remain . . . so shall your seed remain before me.** The seed, a faithful remnant, will serve God (cf. Ps. 22:30-31). Confusing old national Israel with the new Israel is a chief error among religious teachers today. In his allegory based on the history of Hagar and Sarah, and Ishmael and Isaac, sons after the flesh and after the Spirit, respectively, Paul says, "Cast out the handmaid and her son: for the son of the handmaid shall not inherit with the son of the freewoman" (Gal. 4:21-31). Though fleshly (national) Israel is cast off (cf. 65:15), spiritual Israel is ever before Jehovah (cf. 49:16). It is the seed and name of the new spiritual Israel that shall endure before his presence (22).

Phrasing a spiritual truth in the idiom of his day, Isaiah writes, **From one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another** (Isaiah is here referring to specific times of worship prescribed by Jehovah) **shall all flesh come to worship.** The new moons and Sabbaths of the old dispensation are taken away (1:14; 2 Cor. 5:16; Heb. 10:9), for they are only a shadow of things to come (Col. 2:16-17). **All flesh**, that is, all those of the new spiritual order, will come before Jehovah to worship. That all mankind will come before him not in physical Jerusalem, but in the new spiritual city, is clearly apparent from the impossibility of the former. Under the new order all who make up spiritual Zion will come before the Lord to worship at divinely prescribed times (23).

As the previous sections of Part Two (40-66) concluded with a dark picture of the fate of the rebellious – "There is no peace . . . to the wicked" (48:22; 57:20), so this final section ends with an even darker picture that vividly portrays the destruction of sinners. This picture is not to be interpreted in a literal manner, but in the light of its context. As gold and silver have been used to describe the glory of future Zion (60:17), so fire and worms now depict the end of the transgressors. As the faithful worshipers



(v. 23) go forth from before Jehovah, they behold the terrible state of the apostates. Isaiah is probably contrasting the new spiritual Israel and old fleshly Israel. The latter are as **dead bodies** that shall never be brought to a full end as a people (Jer. 30:11). For the worms or maggots that consume them **shall not die**, and the fire of divine rebuke and judgment that torments them shall never be quenched (cf. vv. 15-16). Thus the people whom God chose, but who chose to reject him and his Christ, **shall be an abhorring unto all flesh** (cf. 43:28). In the sight of God and of the righteous, then, there is a clear contrast between spiritual Zion and her children on one hand, and physical Jerusalem and her children on the other. This contrast foreshadows the contrast between the ultimate destiny of the worshipers of Jehovah and the wicked at the end of time. The infinite difference between the glory of God and of the righteous and the terrible doom of idolatry, sin, and the wicked is graphically set forth. What a fitting climax to Isaiah's majestically spiritual book!