

ISAIAH

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Isaiah chapter 65 as we continue our study through the Word of God and we finish the book of Isaiah. In chapter 65 of Isaiah God is going to respond or answer a prayer that began back in Isaiah 63:15 and continued through Isaiah 64:12. In that prayer God's people were asking God to intervene, to do something and not let His wrath continue to fall upon them. They wanted God to respond like He did when He delivered their ancestors from bondage in Egypt.

And as you read through that prayer it seems like God is the one who is playing hard to get. He is the one being stiff-necked, not wanting to help His own people out. But, of course, that is not the case, nor is it ever the case.

God pictures Himself as a loving parent with His hands stretched out to His people day and night. The problem was not with God, but with the people, for they refused to turn to Him, they rejected Him or came to Him under their own ways instead of in truth. They did not see their need for a Savior; they did not see their sin!

Let me illustrate it like this. There was this advertisement for a dating service on this airline magazine and this is what it said, "See if you're a victim of bad luck or a soul in need of a massive intervention." Or, is you love life just the result of some bad luck or do you need some serious help in finding someone?

For many today, they see themselves as the victims of bad luck, misfortune and-so-on. You see, people are looking for love in all the wrong places and they are not finding what they are looking for. But there is One who loves them more than they will ever know but He will not force Himself upon them. They must see their need for a massive intervention and once they see themselves in that hopeless condition, then they can come to the Savior. You see, Jesus loves you this I know, for the Bible tells me so. You are not a victim, it is your choice, but until you come to you inability to do anything about the condition you are in, you will remain in that hopeless condition.

For the Jews, they turned from the One who loved them so and thus, God turned to the Gentiles and He is using them to proclaim His truth, His glory to the world. We call this the Church Age or the Age of Grace, the period of time we are living in.

And don't think that God is done with Israel, for He is using the Church to make Israel jealous so that they might turn back to Him. It is as Paul said in Romans 11:11 regarding the Jews, **“I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles.”** That is where we are at as God answers their question.

Remember how chapter 64 ended, **“But now, O Lord, You are our Father; We are the clay, and You our potter; And all we are the work of Your hand. Do not be furious, O Lord, Nor remember iniquity forever; Indeed, please look - we all are Your people! Your holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and beautiful temple, Where our fathers praised You, Is burned up with fire; And all our pleasant things are laid waste. Will You restrain Yourself because of these things, O Lord? Will You hold Your peace, and afflict us very severely?”** Isaiah 64:8-12.

With that as our background, let's begin reading in Isaiah chapter 65 starting in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

ISAIAH 65

VERSE 1

1. The big question here is, "Who is the Lord speaking about?" Some feel that it is Israel, the Jews but I don't think that is correct. The reason I say that is because in the last part of this verse the Lord says, "**... To a nation that was not called by My name.**" The Jews were called by God, birthed by God to be a people to represent Him to the world, so it can't be speaking of the Jews here in Isaiah 65:1.

What is interesting to me is that Paul quotes this verse and verse 2 of Isaiah chapter 65 in Romans 10:20-21, "**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.' But to Israel he says: 'All day long I have stretched out My hands To a disobedient and contrary people.'**"

Paul is speaking of two different groups of people. In verse 20 he is speaking of the Gentiles as he quotes Isaiah 65:1. Then, as he moves on, continuing to quote Isaiah he tells us specifically that now he is speaking of Israel, the Jews in Romans 10:21 and this corresponds to what we will read in Isaiah 65:2.

So I think it is pretty clear and if there was any confusion then Paul really clears that up for us. You see, the Gentiles who were not seeking God turned to Him while His own people turned away from Him. Paul said in Romans 9:25-26, **“As He says also in Hosea: ‘I will call them My people, who were not My people, and her beloved, who was not beloved.’ And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not My people,’ there they shall be called sons of the living God.”** God is now going to use the Gentiles as instruments to speak forth His truth but as I have said, God is not done with the Jews. They will turn to Him as a nation and receive the forgiveness of sins that is only found in Jesus!

VERSES 2-7

1. Now the Lord is speaking of His people the Jews and as you read this you can clearly see that God loves them even though they did not love Him. The Lord was not quick tempered, He did not overreact with His people, but He was patient, long-suffering, gentle, and kind to them. It is illustrated for us by the picture of God holding out His hand to them that they might return to Him, but they refused. They did what they wanted and blamed God for the consequences of their actions.

Please understand that there were those who loved the Lord, but the nation as a whole did not. We see Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel and the other prophets of God who loved Him as well as others but the nation as a whole did what they wanted to do and boasted in their sin!

2. God had warned them, sent them prophet after prophet and they refused to listen and in a sense, they were slapping God in the face by their actions. They began to worship false gods in the open for all to see. They weren't hiding what they were doing but were proud of their actions.

You see, what God warned them to stay away from was unclean and instead of staying away from these things they were embracing them. They had their pagan altars; they spent time among the dead to contact these spirits. They ate food that God said was unclean, pork and not only eating swine, which was forbidden, but they seem to be using it in the sacrifice to these gods. They placed in their vessels, their bodies, those things that God said were unclean, which made them unclean before God.

And look at how prideful they were in verse 5, **“Who say, ‘Keep to yourself, Do not come near me, For I am holier than you!’ . . .”** Talk about your pride! Sin had blinded their eyes and they saw themselves as holy and it would seem that they saw themselves as holier than God!

Listen to what Charles Spurgeon wrote on this subject of self-righteousness, pride. He wrote,

Moreover, self-righteous men, like foxes, have many tricks and schemes. They condemn in other people what they consider to be very excusable in themselves. They would cry out against others for a tenth part of the sin which they allow in themselves: certain constitutional tendencies, and necessities of circumstances, and various surroundings, all serve as ample apologies. Besides this, if it be admitted that they are wrong upon some points, yet in other directions they are beyond rebuke. If they drink, they do not swear; and if they swear, they do not steal: they make a great deal out of negatives: if they steal, they are not greedy and miserly, but spend their gains freely. If they practice fornication, yet they do not commit adultery; if they talk filthily, yet they boast they do not lie. They would be counted well because they are not universally bad. They do not break every hedge, and therefore they plead that they are not trespassers.

As if a debtor for a hundred pounds should claim to be excused because he does not owe two hundred: or, as if a highwayman should say, ‘I did not stop all the travelers on the road; I only robbed one or two, and therefore I ought not to be punished.’ If a man should willfully break the windows of your shop, I warrant you, you would not take it as an excuse if he pleaded, ‘I did not break them all; I only smashed one sheet of plate glass.’ Pleas which would not be mentioned in a human court are thought good enough to offer to God. O the folly of our race!

- Charles Spurgeon

How true that is. We negate our sin, we become blinded to it and we think that we are holy and maybe holier than God! For the Jews, they were doing all the things that the Gentiles were involved in and yet they saw themselves as holier than the Gentiles. Obviously they were self-righteous, but in God’s eyes they had become defiled like the Gentiles. In fact, God says, **“... These are smoke in My nostrils, A fire that burns all the day.”** Isaiah 65:5. God is not pleased nor does He condone this kind of behavior!

As righteous as they thought they were, God said they had become an irritant to Him just like smoke is an irritant to your nose, and it slowly and continually burns as they continued in their unrighteous activities before God.

3. The bottom line is this, man will not get away with his sin nor will the Jewish people. Sin must be paid for or atoned for and it is either by the shed blood of Jesus or you will pay for your own sins in the Lake of Fire for eternity!

And that is exactly what God is telling His people, that He will judge them for their actions, His justice will be executed upon their lives. Now that may seem very harsh, but God is righteous and holy, and by their actions, God is giving them what they deserve. They refused to turn to Him so that He could forgive them, and so He will judge them. Also understand that there are the faithful remnant that won't be judged as the unrighteous will be. We will see this played out in the next few verses.

VERSES 8-10

1. The Lord is speaking of the faithful remnant, that not all Israel had turned from Him. It is the same thought we see in Isaiah 1:8-9 where we are told, **“So the daughter of Zion is left as a booth in a vineyard, As a hut in a garden of cucumbers, As a besieged city. Unless the Lord of hosts Had left to us a very small remnant, We would have become like Sodom, We would have been made like Gomorrah.”**

What Isaiah is speaking of in chapter 1 is that our God is gracious and merciful and as verse 9 of Isaiah chapter 1 tells us, He has a remnant of faithful people, people who love Him because if there were none, we would be like Sodom and Gomorrah!

And keep in mind that Isaiah is trying to convict the nation of their sins and God is doing the same with us so that we may turn to Him. As one writer put it, “The only conviction of sin that ends up healing us is when we see how we have despised and forsaken the very One who died to save us. Conviction of that super-sin opens up healing for all our other sins.”

So here in Isaiah chapter 65 we see that same thought and the picture is that God is separating the good grapes from the bad, those that love Him from those who have rebelled against Him and refuse to repent of their sins.

2. Not only does God have His faithful remnant but the Lord is saying that He will bring back the faithful remnant into the land, He won't forget them. We see a partial fulfillment of that today as the Jews are back in the Land of Israel once again but the complete fulfillment will be seen in the Kingdom Age where the Lord gathers believing Jews from all over the world back to the land of Israel!

3. We also see in verse 10 what is in store **“For My people who have sought Me.”** He speaks of two locations, Sharon and the Valley of Achor. Sharon was to the west of Jerusalem along the Mediterranean seacoast, extending from Joppa to Mount Carmel.

And the Valley of Achor was located southwest of Jericho, east of Jerusalem, and named for the place where Achan was stoned to death for his disobeying God in the battle against Jericho, taking the spoil, which was to be given to God as the first fruits of the land. Both these areas are fertile and beautiful and God will bring the faithful remnant into this land. In fact, all of Israel will blossom forth!

4. But what about those that have forsaken the Lord? What about those who have turned away from God and refuse to return to Him? The Lord is going to speak about what they will get in the next few verses.

VERSES 11-12

1. It is hard to imagine with all that they have seen that they turned from the true and living God to worship idols. And the Lord speaks of two of these gods they were worshiping. The first was Gad, not the tribe but a Phoenician god meaning ***“fortune”*** or ***“good fortune.”***

They also worshiped the god Meni, which means “*destiny*.” I guess they saw their lives as having good fortune, it was their destiny or so they thought! And we are no different today. We strive after good fortune and plan out our destiny! These are the gods the world tends to worship.

The problem was they were totally wrong. God’s judgment was going to fall upon them after the period of His grace and long-suffering comes to an end. God’s grace does not last forever, sin must be dealt with! They refused to listen to the Word of God. They refused to listen to the prophets of God. They refused to listen to God! And for all who continue in sin, judgment will come, not might, it will because God is a righteous judge and must deal with sin!

2. Please understand we are no different today as I have said. It is not that we don’t sin; we do through ignorance or even weakness as Christians. And when we do we need to repent and get right with God. You see, God will deal with our sin, not as punishment for Christians, but He will chasten us to get us back on track because He loves us. The punishment for our sin was already paid for by Jesus, He bore our punishment on the cross of Calvary!

But if you refuse to repent, if you refuse to listen to the conviction that the Holy Spirit has placed upon your life, God will deal with you, not because He hates you but He loves you.

3. As we continue on we will see God compare the righteous with the wicked and it is a huge contrast between the two!

VERSES 13-16

1. As you can see God is contrasting the faithful remnant with those who rebelled against Him or the true believers from the unbelievers! And we can see this played out with their Babylonian captivity and their eventual release.

After their seventy years of captivity, when they were free to leave Babylon we see that only just under 50,000 out of 2 to 3 million actually returned. Those that remained in Babylon became comfortable but in the end they would be lacking. For those that returned, it was going to be difficult at first but in the end they would be blessed for they were in the place that God wanted them to be.

That is a good lesson for us. Just because it is easy does not make it the right thing to do. Walk in the ways that God has set before you, and as difficult as it may be, in the end, you will be blessed! And in the end, no matter how good you might say the unbelievers might have it, that is the best it gets for them. For us, this is the worst that it gets, we will be with the Lord for eternity and it does not get any better than that!

2. Now what is the new name that God calls His people? Interestingly enough, God calls His people *CHRISTIANS!* In Acts 11:26 we are told, **“And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.”**

3. Now beginning with verse 17 and on through the end of the chapter we are going to be looking into the future when the true and living God will rule and reign from Jerusalem and righteousness will fill this land – the *KINGDOM AGE!*

But also we see woven into this section a picture of the New Heavens and the New Earth as Revelation talks about. Just like the two comings of Christ are woven together many times, so too is this, and it gets a little tricky, but I think we can separate the two as we look to the New Testament to shed some light upon these things.

VERSES 17-19

1. These first three verses deal with what takes place after the Millennium reign or the thousand year reign of Jesus Christ as the Lord creates a New Heavens and a New Earth! What is interesting here is the Hebrew word that is used for “**create.**” This Hebrew word is not speaking of the reassembling of existing material. The word Isaiah used is BARA or to create something out of nothing.

It is the same word found in Genesis 1:1. Thus, this is not speaking of the Kingdom Age but of the creation of a New Heavens and a New Earth. This is the Eternal State where the curse will be done away with, death abolished, no more tears, the past things will not come to our remembrance. That of course is not true in the Kingdom Age, but in the Eternal State.

Remember what Peter tells us in II Peter 3:10, “**But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.**”

This again takes place after the Millennial Kingdom and with everything being destroyed, God will create something completely new, the Eternal State and He will create that from nothing! We see this played out in Revelation chapter 21 where we read, **“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. . . . And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. . . . And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.”** Revelation 21:1, 4 and 22:3.

Not only will the Lord create a New Heavens and a New Earth but also a New Jerusalem! Isaiah uses the same Hebrew word, BARA, to create something out of nothing. And of course, in the New Jerusalem there will be no more tears, no more crying, but rejoicing before the Lord.

Again in Revelation 21:4 we see John clearly connect this promise of no more tears, no more crying with the New Jerusalem as well as the New Heavens and New Earth! All are linked together and it is a time of great rejoicing as the former things have all passed away and all is new! It is the Eternal State with the Lord!

2. As we read on we are going to move backwards towards the Kingdom Age from the Eternal State. Keep that in mind as we read through these verses!

VERSES 20-25

1. Verse 20 speaks of infants and thus, there will be babies born and children raised in the Kingdom Age but that is not the case in the Eternal State. The earth will be populated during the Kingdom Age and at the end of that 1,000 years Satan will be loosed for a short time. You see, for those that were born during the Kingdom Age they have a choice to make, to follow the Lord or Satan and then the Lord will deal with this rebellion, which is short-lived. And there will be the Great White Throne Judgment and finally the Eternal State!

2. This also seems to imply that there will be death in the Kingdom Age, but it will be rare! At 100 years of age you are still considered a child. Thus, most people will live through those 1,000 years and not die.

What about those who were Raptured prior to the start of the Tribulation Period? We will be with the Lord and we will have our glorified bodies, we will not die! And as you can also see people will live incredibly longer just as they did in the days prior to the flood. As I have said, some may live the entire 1,000 years of the Kingdom Age!

3. As you look over Israel's history, because of their rebellion against God, the enemy would come in and steal their crops, their homes, their families. But not so in the Kingdom Age, they will be able to enjoy the fruits of their labor!

Even the children will be obedient in the Kingdom Age because the Lord is ruling and reigning and righteousness will fill this land. If there is any trouble, the Lord will deal with it immediately!

4. There is one more thing that I am going to enjoy in the Kingdom Age and that is I won't have to worry about being attacked by wild animals, there will be this beautiful harmony with all of creation! In fact, in the Kingdom Age all of creation will be vegetarians, you will not see the wolf feeding upon the lamb but they will be feeding together!

We read in Isaiah 11:6-9 of this period of time, **“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.”** I long for that day and I bet you do too!

5. Look at what the Kingdom Age is like. It will be a time of *biological transformation* as man lives longer. It will be a time of *social transformation* as there is peace in the land and righteousness fills this earth. It will be a time of *spiritual transformation* as the presence of God; His knowledge will cover the earth. It will be a time of *ecological transformation* as all of creation is living in harmony with each other.

6. What does Isaiah mean in verse 25 when he says, **“... And dust shall be the serpent’s food. . .”**? This could be a reference that the curse is not completely removed during the Kingdom Age, not until the New Heaven and the New Earth are created!

7. As people look at this world they can easily become skeptical about God. When they look at the evil that permeates this land it can be disheartening. But keep in mind that when God created the heavens and the earth it was perfect until sin entered this world through Adam and we continue to see the effects of it. And as the days get closer to the Lord's return we see that this world is getting darker and darker but for us, this is the worst that it will get. Let me share this with you because I think it illustrates very clearly what I am talking about. We are told,

At 9:40 on the morning of November 1, 1755, Lisbon was struck by an earthquake. It was All Saints' Day, and the churches of Lisbon were filled with worshipers. Thirty churches were destroyed. Within six minutes 15,000 people died. Survivors ran down to the waterfront and got on ships in the harbor to escape the aftershocks, only to be hit by three tsunami waves that then swept over the city. Thousands more died. Lamps, candles, and cooking fires were upset in homes all over the city and started uncontrollable fires that burned for days. More people died. Within a week 30,000 people were dead, and one of Europe's great cities lay in ruins.

The philosopher Voltaire in France saw this tragedy as proof positive that no reasonable person can believe in God. How can a good and all-powerful God create a world like this? Voltaire mocked the facile [simplistic] optimism of Alexander Pope in England who had affirmed, "Whatever is, is right." Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, the German scholar, had proposed that we live in "the best of all possible worlds." Voltaire despised that way of thinking. Isn't it painfully obvious that this world is *not* right and *not* the best of all possible worlds? Voltaire reasoned, "If this is the best of all possible worlds, what can the rest be?"

God agrees with Voltaire. This world is not what he had in mind at the creation. But he's doing something about it. And he's not just patching up this broken world; he is out to renew it wonderfully. Isaiah 65 – 66 is God's ultimate answer to our longings for his intervention. His answer is nothing less than "new heavens and a new earth" (Isaiah 65:17; 66:22).

- Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr., Isaiah, p. 447

That is what we are looking forward to and that is how Isaiah will close out his book. So let's dig into Isaiah chapter 66 and see what the Lord has for us.

ISAIAH 66

VERSES 1-2

1. It is important that we have a proper perspective of things or we will come to the wrong conclusions. What we see here is the Lord put things back into proper perspective for us. God is enthroned in Heaven and the earth is at His command or it is His footstool. If you don't get that, then you will try to do things your way and in the end you will lose.

It is interesting that we boast at all that we have done and the Lord gives us the correct perspective here on this issue. God is saying you have only given back to Him that which was already His, He created it all in the first place!

Then what does God want from us? He doesn't want big, beautiful monuments made with our hands, but a person who is poor in spirit, recognizing they can't do anything about their sinful condition. He is looking for a person who is contrite in spirit, or humble before Him. He is looking for a person who trembles at His Word or to have a godly fear of what He has said, and then applying it to their lives. Too often people come before God with all they have for Him, in a proud spirit, twisting and changing and bending the Word of God to fit their own preconceived ideas instead of just allowing God to speak for Himself.

Spurgeon summed it up like this, "They tremble at the searching power of God's Word. Do you never come into this place and sit down in the pew, and say, 'Lord, grant that thy Word may search me and try me, that I may not be deceived'? Certain people must always have sweets and comforts; but God's wise children do not wish for these in undue measure. Daily bread we ask for, not daily sugar." Amen to that!

2. As much as God is enthroned in the Heavens He is also enthroned upon our hearts, our own lives. Too often we see people play church, it is a façade and the reality is that God sees right through that. Let's read on and you will see what I mean.

VERSES 3-4

1. The people were going through their religious activity thinking they were pleasing God but God tells them that their religious activity did not take away their sin but it added to their sin. In Hosea 6:6 we are told, "**For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, And the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.**"

You see, their heart was wrong and their sacrifices were an abomination before Him. Yes, they were offering these things to the true and living God, but they had not established a relationship with Him and thus, all their righteousness was like filthy rags!

But they felt good about doing their own thing, even though it displeased God. They delighted in what they were doing, but God did not receive it. You can be very religious and apart from a relationship with Jesus Christ you are still dead in your sins, your faith is empty or as Jesus said, “**I never knew you!**” (Matthew 7:23)

2. Now some may wonder what can be done regarding this issue. We once again don't have to come to our own conclusions, the Lord tells us. When He calls you need to answer. When He speaks you need to listen. It is that simple and yet, many still want to do it their own way and in the end, they will lose.

VERSES 5-6

1. Isn't it interesting how religious people, not Christians, mock those whose faith is genuine and believe that the Word of God is the Word of God? Why is that? Because they don't have the truth and they try to put down those that do.

Look at Saul before he got saved. He was a very religious man, steeped in Judaism and he was there when Stephen was stoned to death by his fellow religious leaders for his faith in Jesus. And the problem for Saul is that as much as he tried, he never had what Stephen had, a true relationship with God through Jesus Christ. And that ate at Saul so much that he began to persecute Christians, put them to death!

That was until the Lord got a hold of his heart and changed the religious activity into a relationship that was founded in Christ! And in the end, as Paul, his name changed from Saul, looked back over his life he was ashamed at what he had done but he could not change it. So he pressed on towards that upward calling of God that is in Christ!

You see, empty religion will never triumph; they will be ashamed as they hear the voice of the Lord and stand before Him one day in their own righteousness, which is like filthy rags! They will be *ASHAMED!*

2. Let me say this also. It is not the time to be lackadaisical or lazy or complacent in our Christian walk. We need to be on fire for the Lord, we need to shine brightly even if the unsaved are coming against us. The problem is that we have become secret agent Christians and we are not impacting anyone, not even ourselves.

There is nothing wrong with being a fanatic about our faith. Spurgeon, in his day saw this problem of being complacent and we see the same thing today. He wrote, "Very seldom are believers nowadays charged with being fanatical, nor even with being too enthusiastic; and this is a sign that we are below the right heat. When the world calls us fanatics we are nearing that point of ardor [passion] which is our Lord's due." May we live what we say we believe!

VERSES 7-11

1. God has birthed the nation of Israel, the Jewish people and what He has started He will complete. And through their sorted history God has been with His people. We see God bring them back from their captivity in Babylon. We see that God has returned them back into the land of Israel after being gone as a nation. Keep in mind that there were always Jews in the land of Israel. But from 70 A. D. when the Romans threw them out until May 14, 1948 they were out of the land, but now Israel has become a nation once again.

But ultimately, we look ahead to the end of the Tribulation Period where the Lord will regather the nation of Israel back into the land from the four corners of the world! Israel will be a place of blessing; today it is a cup of trembling!

VERSES 12-17

1. When the Messiah returns in glory and triumph, the peace of Jerusalem will be like a gentle, powerful river that is never disturbed. What about the Gentiles? Don't fret, we are told that this peace will also flow to the Gentiles! Again, this is looking at the Kingdom Age!

2. Now prior to the establishment of His Kingdom here on the earth the Lord returns to pour out His wrath and execute His justice upon a Christ rejecting world. Revelation chapter 19 speaks of this time. You can read that chapter on your own but Revelation 19:15 tells us regarding the return of Christ, "**Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.**"

We also read of this period of time in Psalm 2, besides many other passages of Scripture. In Psalm 2 we see the nations of the world gathering together to fight against God and what God thinks of all of this, **“Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, ‘Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us.’ He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the LORD shall hold them in derision. Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure: ‘Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion.’ I will declare the decree: the LORD has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; you shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.’ Now therefore, be wise, O kings; be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.”** Psalm 2.

The Second Coming of Jesus Christ is not only to put down the rebellion of man but to bring the Jewish people back to their Messiah, to Jesus! And make no mistake about it, judgment is coming and God will remove all the unclean things on this earth. And when the Messiah returns in glory and triumph He will see through those who practice empty religion and we are told that they, **“... ‘shall be consumed together,’ says the Lord.”**

VERSES 18-21

1. This seems to be speaking of the Tribulation Period and how those who have come to know the Lord will bring forth that good news, the Gospel message to the people of this world.

Revelation tells us that there are 144,000 Jewish evangelists besides Gentiles that have been touched by God. Also keep in mind that many Christians will be martyred for their faith in the Tribulation Period.

And in the end, the Jews will be brought back into the land of Israel, all the land that God had promised them. Keep in mind that in verse 20 this is not speaking of a literal sacrifice, but those that God will use for His work is a sacrifice to Him.

It is as Paul said in Romans 12:1-2, **“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”**

2. One writer summed it up like this,

He knows **their works and their thoughts** and when He rains down judgment on them, **they will see His glory**. He will give them some supernatural **sign**, which we cannot identify at present. Those **who escape** will go to the ends of the earth with the news of the Lord’s power and **fame**. Then the Gentiles will mobilize their transportation facilities to carry dispersed Israelites back to the land, as if they were bringing **an offering** to Jehovah. God will reinstitute the priesthood and the Levitical order for service in the millennial temple.

- William MacDonald, Believer’s Bible Commentary, p. 990

VERSES 22-24

1. The book of Isaiah closes with God's ultimate triumph. Yes we have seen throughout the book of Isaiah God's judgment upon the nations and even upon Israel, but in the end, we see people gathered to worship the Lord in the Kingdom Age and ultimately in the New Heavens and the New Earth!

It is as we are told in Revelation 5:9-10, "**And they sang a new song, saying: 'You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.'**"

God continues to reach out to the people of this world, the nations with the free gift of life that is found in Jesus Christ. And one day we will see the ultimate fulfillment of that work of God as Revelation shows us!

2. Now as some read this book, they see this book ending on a downer, "**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.**" Isaiah 66:24.

I don't see it that way. I see God giving to man a choice to make. That you can come to worship before Him or you can be separated from Him in the Lake of Fire for eternity. The choice is yours.

You see, God is gathering some from every tribe and tongue, from people from all over the world and some will have a destiny of ultimate triumph; some also will have the destiny - freely chosen - of ultimate tragedy. And we see Isaiah use the imagery of eternal damnation as he says that *“their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched.”* What Isaiah is doing is describing the fate of those who reject God - even if they had the veneer of empty religion, apart from a relationship with God through Jesus Christ, they will die in their sins!

Poole put it like this and it is not pretty nor is it meant to be. “After this life, and at the Day of Judgment, they shall go into eternal torments; where they will feel a work of conscience that shall never die, and a fiery wrath of God upon their souls and bodies that shall never go out.”

But the heart of God is for man to be saved but God will not force anyone to come to Him. In Ezekiel 18:31-32 we are told, **“Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel? ‘For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies,’ says the Lord GOD. ‘Therefore turn and live!’”** That is the heart of God for sinful man!

3. I want to leave you this evening, and close the book of Isaiah with these thoughts from W. E. Vine. He wrote,

All this brings home the folly, futility and sinfulness of pursuing our own way, carrying out our own designs and turning after that in which God cannot take pleasure, instead of waiting upon Him, listening to His voice and delighting in the fulfilment of His will. Through our walking with God He fulfils, and will fulfil, all the promises of His Word. He responds to delighted confidence in Him, by adding an Amen to His assurance. The peace of an obedient heart and a trusting spirit is that which enjoys the sunshine of His countenance and the calmness of Holy Communion with Him.

- W. E. Vine, Isaiah, pp. 214-215

Jesus Christ, God Almighty became flesh and dwelt among us to save us from our sins. Our sins condemned us and separated us from God but Jesus has paid in full the penalty for our sins and our relationship with God has been restored. Today is the day of salvation if you have not come to Him, don't pass it up because as we have seen, the book of Isaiah closes with a sobering contrast, revealing the ultimate, eternal *importance* of this present life. Each life can choose its destiny: *worship or the worm*. Which is it for you?