

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Bible Study Notes: Isaiah Chapter 65 - 66

7/2/14

Chapter 65 Study Notes

Judgment and Salvation

1 "I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me; I was found by those who did not seek me. To a nation that did not call on my name, I said, 'Here am I, here am I.' **2** All day long I have held out my hands to an obstinate people, who walk in ways not good, pursuing their own imaginations-- **3** a people who continually provoke me to my very face, offering sacrifices in gardens and burning incense on altars of brick; **4** who sit among the graves and spend their nights keeping secret vigil; who eat the flesh of pigs, and whose pots hold broth of unclean meat; **5** who say, 'Keep away; don't come near me, for I am too sacred for you!' Such people are smoke in my nostrils, a fire that keeps burning all day. **6** "See, it stands written before me: I will not keep silent but will pay back in full; I will pay it back into their laps-- **7** both your sins and the sins of your fathers," says the LORD. "Because they burned sacrifices on the mountains and defied me on the hills, I will measure into their laps the full payment for their former deeds." **8** This is what the LORD says: "As when juice is still found in a cluster of grapes and men say, 'Don't destroy it, there is yet some good in it,' so will I do in behalf of my servants; I will not destroy them all. **9** I will bring forth descendants from Jacob, and from Judah those who will possess my mountains; my chosen people will inherit them, and there will my servants live. **10** Sharon will become a pasture for flocks, and the Valley of Achor a resting place for herds, for my people who seek me. **11** "But as for you who forsake the LORD and forget my holy mountain, who spread a table for Fortune and fill bowls of mixed wine for Destiny, **12** I will destine you for the sword, and you will all bend down for the slaughter; for I called but you did not answer, I spoke but you did not listen. You did evil in my sight and chose what displeases me." **13** Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: "My servants will eat, but you will go hungry; my servants will drink, but you will go thirsty; my servants will rejoice, but you will be put to shame. **14** My servants will sing out of the joy of their hearts, but you will cry out from anguish of heart and wail in brokenness of spirit. **15** You will leave your name to my chosen ones as a curse; the Sovereign LORD will put you to death, but to his servants he will give another name. **16** Whoever invokes a blessing in the land will do so by the God of truth; he who takes an oath in the land will swear by the God of truth. For the past troubles will be forgotten and hidden from my eyes.

65:1 Israel considered itself to be the only people of God, but the time would come when other nations would seek him. Paul mentions Isaiah's statement in Romans 10:20 and points out that these other nations were the Gentiles. God's people today are those who accept Jesus as Savior and Lord, whether they are Jews or Gentiles. The gospel is for every person. Do not ignore or reject anyone when you share the gospel. You may be surprised at how many are sincerely searching for God.

65:3-5 God said these people directly disobeyed his laws when they worshiped and sacrificed to idols (Exodus 20:1-6), consulted the dead and evil spirits (Leviticus 19:31), and ate forbidden foods (Leviticus 11). But they were so perverse that they still thought they were spiritually superior to others. Jesus called such people hypocrites (Matthew 23:13-36). **65:6** God said he would pay back the people for their sins. Judgment is not our job but God's because he alone is just. Who else knows our hearts and minds? Who else knows what is a completely fair reward or punishment? Leave judgment of others up to God. If he gave us what we deserve, he might wipe us out. Instead, pray for his mercy. **65:8-9** God will always preserve a faithful remnant of his people. No matter how bad the world is, there are always a few who remain loyal to him. Jesus made this point in Matthew 13:36-43.

65:10 Sharon is a plain in the western part of Israel. The Valley of Achor is in the east, near Jericho. The Valley of Achor was also called the Valley of Trouble because Achan was executed there for hiding goods he had taken during battle, which had been set apart for the Lord (Joshua 7:10-26). Even in this troubled valley there will be peace: The coming restoration will be complete.

New Heavens and a New Earth

17 "Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. **18** But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. **19** I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more. **20** "Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed. **21** They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. **22** No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands. **23** They will not toil in vain or bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the LORD, they and their descendants with them. **24** Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear. **25** The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust will be the serpent's food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain," says the LORD.

65:17-25 In 65:17-19 we have a pictorial description of the new heavens and the new earth. They are eternal, and in them safety, peace, and plenty will be available to all (see also 66:22-23; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1). Verses 20-25 may refer to the reign of Christ on earth because sin and death have not yet been finally destroyed.

Chapter 66 Study Notes

Judgment and Hope

1 This is what the LORD says: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be? 2 Has not my hand made all

these things, and so they came into being?" declares the LORD. "This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word. 3 But whoever sacrifices a bull is like one who kills a man, and whoever offers a lamb, like one who breaks a dog's neck; whoever makes a grain offering is like one who presents pig's blood, and whoever burns memorial incense, like one who worships an idol. They have chosen their own ways, and their souls delight in their abominations; 4 so I also will choose harsh treatment for them and will bring upon them what they dread. For when I called, no one answered, when I spoke, no one listened. They did evil in my sight and chose what displeases me." 5 Hear the word of the LORD, you who tremble at his word: "Your brothers who hate you, and exclude you because of my name, have said, 'Let the LORD be glorified, that we may see your joy!' Yet they will be put to shame. 6 Hear that uproar from the city, hear that noise from the temple! It is the sound of the LORD repaying his enemies all they deserve. 7 "Before she goes into labor, she gives birth; before the pains come upon her, she delivers a son. 8 Who has ever heard of such a thing? Who has ever seen such things? Can a country be born in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment? Yet no sooner is Zion in labor than she gives birth to her children. 9 Do I bring to the moment of birth and not give delivery?" says the LORD. "Do I close up the womb when I bring to delivery?" says your God. 10 "Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad for her, all you who love her; rejoice greatly with her, all you who mourn over her. 11 For you will nurse and be satisfied at her comforting breasts; you will drink deeply and delight in her overflowing abundance." 12 For this is what the LORD says: "I will extend peace to her like a river, and the wealth of nations like a flooding stream; you will nurse and be carried on her arm and dandled on her knees. 13 As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you; and you will be comforted over Jerusalem." 14 When you see this, your heart will rejoice and you will flourish like grass; the hand of the LORD will be made known to his servants, but his fury will be shown to his foes. 15 See, the LORD is coming with fire, and his chariots are like a whirlwind; he will bring down his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. 16 For with fire and with his sword the LORD will execute judgment upon all men, and many will be those slain by the LORD. 17 "Those who consecrate and purify themselves to go into the gardens, following the one in the midst of those who eat the flesh of pigs and rats and other abominable things--they will meet their end together," declares the LORD. 18 "And I, because of their actions and their imaginations, am about to come and gather all nations and tongues, and they will come and see my glory. 19 "I will set a sign among them, and I will send some of those who survive to the nations--to Tarshish, to the Libyans and Lydians (famous as archers), to Tubal and Greece, and to the distant islands that have not heard of my fame or seen my glory. They will proclaim my glory among the nations. 20 And they will bring all your brothers, from all the nations, to my holy mountain in Jerusalem as an offering to the LORD--on horses, in chariots and wagons, and on mules and camels," says the LORD. "They will bring them, as the Israelites bring their grain offerings, to the temple of the LORD in ceremonially clean vessels. 21 And I will select some of them also to be priests and Levites," says the LORD. 22 "As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me," declares the LORD, "so will your name and descendants endure. 23 From one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me," says the LORD. 24 "And they will go out and look upon the dead bodies of those who rebelled against me; their worm will not die, nor will their fire be quenched, and they will be loathsome to all mankind."

66:1 Even the beautiful temple in Jerusalem was woefully inadequate for a God who is present everywhere. God cannot be confined to any human structure (see 2 Chronicles 6:18; Acts 7:49-50). This chapter is a fitting climax to the book. God will lift up the humble, judge all people, destroy the wicked, bring all believers together, and establish the new heavens and the new earth. Let this hope encourage you each day.

66:2-3 These key verses summarize Isaiah's message. He contrasted two ways of living: that of humble persons who have a profound reverence for God's messages and their application to life, and that of those who choose their own way. The sacrifices of the arrogant were only external compliance. In their hearts they were murderers, perverts, and idolaters. God shows mercy to the humble, but he curses the proud and self-sufficient (see Luke 1:51-53). Our society urges us to be assertive and to affirm ourselves. Don't let your freedom and right to choose lead you away from God's pathway to eternal life.

66:7-9 God will not leave his work of national restoration unfinished. In this image of birth, God shows that he will accomplish what he has promised. It is as unstoppable as the birth of a baby. When all the pain is over, the joy begins.

66:15-17 This is a vivid picture of the great judgment that will occur at Christ's second coming (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). 66:19 God's people will go out as missionaries to all parts of the earth—to Tarshish (Spain), to the Libyans in northern Africa, to the Lydians in western Asia Minor, to northeastern Asia Minor (Tubal), and to Greece.

66:22-24 Isaiah brings his book to a close with great drama. For the faithless there is a sobering portrayal of judgment. For the faithful, there is a glorious picture of rich reward: "so will your name and descendants endure." The contrast is so striking that it would seem that everyone would want to be God's follower. But we are often just as rebellious, foolish, and reluctant to change as the Israelites. We are just as negligent in feeding the hungry, working for justice, obeying God's Word, and taking up his causes. Make sure you are among those who will be richly blessed.