

Judgment and Hope—Isaiah 66:1–24

Open It

1. What are some positive and negative images of the humble person?
2. What, for you, best illustrates fruitfulness and flourishing?

Isaiah 66:1–24 (ESV)

¹Thus says the LORD: “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest?”

²All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the LORD. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.

³“He who slaughters an ox is like one who kills a man; he who sacrifices a lamb, like one who breaks a dog’s neck; he who presents a grain offering, like one who offers pig’s blood; he who makes a memorial offering of frankincense, like one who blesses an idol. These have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations;

⁴I also will choose harsh treatment for them and bring their fears upon them, because when I called, no one answered, when I spoke, they did not listen; but they did what was evil in my eyes and chose that in which I did not delight.”

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

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

⁷“Before she was in labor she gave birth; before her pain came upon her she delivered a son.

⁸Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall a land be born in one day? Shall a nation be brought forth in one moment? For as soon as Zion was in labor she brought forth her children.

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

¹⁰“Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her, all you who love her; rejoice with her in joy, all you who mourn over her;

¹¹that you may nurse and be satisfied from her consoling breast; that you may drink deeply with delight from her glorious abundance.”

¹²For thus says the LORD: “Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the nations like an overflowing stream; and you shall nurse, you shall be carried upon her hip, and bounced upon her knees.

¹³As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.

¹⁴You shall see, and your heart shall rejoice; your bones shall flourish like the grass; and the hand of the LORD shall be known to his servants, and he shall show his indignation against his enemies.

¹⁵“For behold, the LORD will come in fire, and his chariots like the whirlwind, to render his anger in fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.

¹⁶For by fire will the LORD enter into judgment, and by his sword, with all flesh; and those slain by the LORD shall be many.

¹⁷“Those who sanctify and purify themselves to go into the gardens, following one in the midst, eating pig’s flesh and the abomination and mice, shall come to an end together, declares the LORD.

¹⁸“For I know their works and their thoughts, and the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and shall see my glory,

¹⁹and I will set a sign among them. And from them I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, who draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands far away, that have not heard my fame or seen my glory. And they shall declare my glory among the nations.

²⁰And they shall bring all your brothers from all the nations as an offering to the LORD, on horses and in chariots and in litters and on mules and on dromedaries, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, says the LORD, just as the Israelites bring their grain offering in a clean vessel to the house of the LORD.

²¹And some of them also I will take for priests and for Levites, says the LORD.

²²“For as the new heavens and the new earth that I make shall remain before me, says the LORD, so shall your offspring and your name remain.

²³From new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before me, declares the LORD.

²⁴“And they shall go out and look on the dead bodies of the men who have rebelled against me. For their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.”

Explore It

3. Why is humankind presumptuous (arrogant, audacious) to think of building a house for God? (66:1–2)
4. How does God view the sacrifices made by arrogant people who “have chosen their own ways”? (66:3)
5. What will happen to the person who chooses evil and ignores God’s voice? (66:4)
6. What does God have in store for those who exclude the humble worshiper? (66:5–6)
7. What image did God use to make the point that just because they didn’t see the immediate restoration of Jerusalem didn’t mean it wouldn’t happen? (66:7–11)
8. To what does God compare the tender care, nourishment, and comfort He will give His people? (66:12–13)
9. How will the reward of the wicked differ from the reward of the faithful? (66:14–16)
10. What will become of people who worship false gods when God’s glory is revealed? (66:17–18)
11. What inspiring imagery did Isaiah use to predict how the message of God’s glory would spread throughout the earth? (66:19–21)
12. How does this prophecy express the promise of eternal life? (66:22–23)
13. What will become of the unrighteous and disobedient? (66:24)

Get It

14. What does it mean to be humble and contrite in spirit?
15. What is meaningful to you in the parallel Isaiah draws between God and the mother of a young child?

Apply It

16. Who could you encourage with the truth that God’s purposes will be accomplished, no matter how long we feel we have to wait?