

Wednesday, September 25, 2024 • Read Isaiah 66:18–24

Questions from the Scripture text: What does God know (v18)? What will He do to whom? What will they do and see? What will the Lord set among them (v19)? Whom will the Lord send where? Why do these places need someone sent? What will the nations bring (v20)? How does v20 describe their determination to bring this tribute? How does it describe their consecration in bringing this tribute? What will YHWH do with some of these new brethren from the nations (v21)? What will YHWH make (v22)? What will that new heavens and earth do? What two other things will remain? What will happen from month to month and Sabbath to Sabbath (v23)? Who will participate? What will those who are being gathered for this also do on this great day (v24)? To what will these transgressors go?

How do all things end? Isaiah 66:18–24 looks forward to the first serial reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these seven verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **all things end with redeemed believers from all nations enjoying the glory of God in Christ, while remembering that what they actually deserved is an everlasting Hell.**

Beholding God's glory. As the book comes to a conclusion, it focuses upon the conclusion of all things. v18 is so abrupt in the original that it seems like there are words missing. The works and thoughts here are those of the godly who are rejoicing with Jerusalem in v14a–b. Rather than the man-centered worship of God's enemies (cf. v14d, 17), believers have received from God an appetite to behold God's glory (v18).

God raises up not a banner, this time, but a sign (v19) to gather all nations to Himself. Jesus identifies Himself as the sign, Who would be lifted up and draw all peoples to Himself (cf. Jn 12:32)! And, when the Spirit gives us to see Him truly, what we behold is the glory of God Himself (cf. Jn 1:14). v19 describes the great mission enterprise to declare God's glory everywhere that it has not been known. Thus are new "Israelites" from all the nations gathered by any means possible (v20).

A whole new world of worship. A new Israel gather at a new Jerusalem (v20) as a new priesthood (v21) as the beginning of a new creation (v22). This a covenantal creation: YHWH says it remains "before Me." The language in v22c reveals the Servant of 59:21 as the One being addressed. It is Christ, His seed, and His Name, which fills the new creation. Each of these aspects of the eternal blessedness to come centers upon Christ Himself. And the whole of life in this new world is as if it were both New Moon and Sabbath every day (v23)!

A world of grateful remembrance. Next to this new Jerusalem, there is a graveyard of the tormented. Many have this idea that in the new heavens and new earth, we will not be aware that there are people in Hell. Perhaps we forget that God is rightly glorified by it (cf. Rom 9:22; 2Th 1:7–9), and the glorified saints will praise Him for it (cf. Rev 19:3–4). The Lord Jesus also emphasizes that those who remain in the first Adam will suffer an eternal Hell in which their own worm does not die, and their own fire is not quenched (v24, cf. Mk 9:42–48).

And perhaps we forget that the knowledge of what we have been saved from would increase our gratitude for God's grace and our awe at it. As glorified saints are blessed in God's glory forever and ever, they will do so over-against the constant awareness of what they themselves had deserved, and from which God's incomprehensible mercy has spared them!

What time do you take to enjoy God's glory? By what means? How does this prepare you for eternity? By what "sign" do you hope that others will be drawn to Christ? From what have you been saved? What place does meditating upon this have in your life now? To what effect?

Sample prayer: Lord, we thank You for giving us to know and love Your glory already in this life. Forgive us for how infrequently we consider Your glory. And forgive us for how weak are both our desire to know Your glory and our enjoyment of that glory. Christ was raised up as a sign to draw us to Himself, but we too rarely think of the greatness of His cross. Forgive us! And forgive us for being forgetful of the Hell that we have deserved. Grant that we might be mindful of how complete have been Your grace and Your salvation, we ask through Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP98 "O Sing a New Song to the Lord" or TPH76 "God the Lord Is Known in Judah"

"(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)"

Isaiah. 66 verses 18-24. These are God's words. For, I know their works and their thoughts It shall be that I will gather All Nations and tongues and they shall come and see my glory. I will set a sign among them and those among them who Escape I will send to the Nations.

To torches and pull and lid. Who draw the bow and tubal and Japan to the coastlins are far off. Have not heard my Fame nor seen my glory. And they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles. Then they shall bring all your Brethren for an offering to Yahweh out of all Nations.

Horses. And and chariots and in litters, On mules and on camels to my Holy Mountain Jerusalem, says Yahweh. As the children of Israel, bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of Yahweh. And I will also take some of them for priests and Levites says Yahweh. For as the new heavens and the new Earth, which I will make shall remain before me says Yahweh.

So, shall your descendants and your name remain. And then, so come to pass that from one new moon to another And from one Sabbath to another. All Flesh, shall come to worship before me? Says, Yahweh. And this will 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 in abortance. To All Flesh. So far the reading of God's inspired and inerrant word.

Verse 18 is a little bit difficult to translate. The it does not say for. I know. Their works and their thoughts. There's an extra pronoun for I And then there's the words, their works and their thoughts And it's very abrupt. Does not seem to be related to verse 17.

because of the content of the rest of the verse, It's probably referring to those. Who are rejoicing in verse 14? When you see this, your heart shall Rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like grass, the hand of Yahweh, shall be known to his servants. And this of course, was the restoration of Zion.

The restoration of the New Jerusalem of the And her own blessedness. In the last day. So when it returns now and says, for I, their works and their thoughts It shall be that I will gather All Nations and tongues. And they shall come and see my glory. Seems. Best to understand this as God himself.

Being the object of all their works and all their thoughts, As they rejoice. And as they flourish and as they praise, Conclusion to the book of Isaiah is Dwelling upon the conclusion to all things. And the conclusion to all things is redeemed people. Who are obsessed with the glory of God?

And rejoicing over him. And so this is the first great. Theme in our passage. That God himself. As the object of their works and their thoughts. Has Verse 18, concludes. They shall come and see my glory. This missionary campaign. God sets a sign. Among them. And then he gathers.

Them to the sign and sends them on a mission. I will set a sign among them and those among them who Escape I will send to the Nations. Ordinarily that which is would be used. In this case is a banner. I will lift up my banner among them. We've seen that sort of language a few times, even I in Isaiah, but here it's not a banner but a sign.

This seems to be what Jesus is talking about when in John 12:32. He says that he is going to be lifted up and that when he is lifted up, he will draw all peoples to himself. And so when the spirit gives us to see Jesus, truly by faith, not merely as a historical figure nor me as a great teacher.

But as God himself, you remember John talking about how the spirit had given them. Behold his glory. He says in John 1:14. The word became flesh and we beheld, his glory beholding. His glory is not something that they did with their eyeballs. There's something that they perceived by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Glorious have the only begotten of the father full of grace and truth. And so there are going to be those who see this sign when verse 19 says, I will set a sign among them Jesus himself. Is that sign? And when they behold God's glory in the Lord Jesus, they will be eager for those from all the nations.

Who have not seen his glory to see the Lord Jesus Christ. By the same faith. And so that's why he says those among them who escape I will send to the Nations tarshish, pull and blood who draw the bow. it doesn't matter how dangerous the people to whom He is sending them seeing two ball and Javen the coastland's far off.

Well into verse 19. Because those had not yet heard of his Fame of the Lord's Fame. Or seen the Lord's glory. And this is indeed exactly what has happened. when the Lord sent his son into the world, And suddenly, he was announcing his name. And showing his glory in the Lord, Jesus Christ to all the nations and sending those who have beheld, the glory of God in Jesus Christ.

To all the nations to Proclaim him. And so verse 19 concludes and they shall declare my glory. Among the Gentiles. Now, this is what evangelism is, this is what missions is. Those who know the glory of God in Jesus. Men who have been gathered to God in the Lord Jesus going.

Wherever, his Fame has not been heard and his glory has not been seen. And declaring God's glory in Christ. And so beholding and declaring God's glory. Is. Great activity of the last age of the world which is the age that we are in and of course beholding that glory and declaring it in Praise no longer in evangelism admissions to those who have not heard or seen beholding and declaring his glory.

Is the great activity. Of the next age. Then there is this whole new world of worship. The mission in verse 19 is successful. Bring all your brethren. Now, that you're here.

Now, that you're here. Could be new Brethren for Israel. Israelites, or it may well be the Lord Jesus, the servant himself very particularly because in verse 22. When he says, so shall your descendants and your name remain. that's using language from the end of chapter, 59, and chapter 59 verse 21.

when he makes a promise to the servant, to make the promise to the Christ about his descendants. That is forever. So he says my words, which I have put in your mouth shall not depart from your mouth nor from the mouth of your descendants nor from the mouth of your descendants descendants as Yahweh from this time forth and forevermore And so this, putting God.

Word in their mouths. is something that's addressed to Christ about his descendants. Well, it's very likely. That verse 20 when he says. they saw bring all your Brethren. Is referring, at least to Christ and his descendant. It The true Israel but perhaps to the Lord Jesus. Very specifically.

and so there's this new family, this new household With Christ and his Brethren and then There's a new city. And the language of horses and chariots and litters and mules and camels. The idea is God will bring them from any distance necessary in any way necessary. To be part of his new city.

So you have the new household and then you have the new city to my Holy Mountain Jerusalem. Says. And he describes. The bringing in of the nation's has absolutely necessary. When he says as the children of Israel bring. And the word that's translated offering here is actually the word for tribute.

It's the word that is in Leviticus, at least in our English version. Let's translated grain offering although it really doesn't necessarily have anything to do with grain. It's just that grain was the tribute that they were instructed to bring. In Leviticus. And so, he says they will bring all your brethren as the children of Israel.

Bring tribute in a clean vessel into the house of Yahweh. Well what does that mean? Well, they were not to bring. An offering, they were not to come near without also bringing the necessary tribute. With whatever that was. And so, this is talking about the same thing as in Hebrews 11 when it says that Believer.

From the former ages and even our selves and Believers from this age that we will not inherit apart from all of God's elect apart from all of God's children, all of God's heirs. Will come into the fullness of our inheritance. together. And, one of the ways that we can see then Mission work, The retrieving of the rest of the household, the retrieving of the rest of the city.

making sure to retrieve all of those whom God is saving because we will not come into the fullness of our inheritance. Without them. Well, you have not just this new house and this new city but you even have an entirely sorry a new house needs. Any new church verse 21.

I will also take some of them for priests and Levites says Yahweh. Israel even before. you get the Ten Commandments in Exodus 19. The Lord refers to them as a as a holy nation and a kingdom of priests. And so, when he gathers Those whom he is saving from all the nations in, he's Gathering them as priests too.

Have. The new and final and great church. So you have the house and the city and the church. And then, even a new creation. Because remember the Lord, Jesus isn't just the Sun over the house and the King over the city and the great high priest over the church, he is even the last Adam New Humanity and a new creation.

And so, it's to him that verse 22 is addressed for as the new heavens and the new Earth, which I make shall remain before me. Trust that they remain. The remain covenantly before the Lord. And he addresses the Lord Jesus. Now as the last Adam of this new creation, who has been fruitful and multiplied by his Redemption, he has obtained for himself descendants the children whom God has given him.

And he says, social your descendants and your name remain. And this entire new world, This entire new Cosmos is going to be a place of worship. There. Actually, there's not going to be a moon. Huh? And so they're not going to be new moons. there's not going to be son.

And so when it talks about worshiping from one new moon to another from one month to the next worshiping from one Sabbath to another, The idea is that. Just as the whole creation. Ah, all of space is filled with worship all of time in the new world will be filled with worship and so this house will be a house of worship.

And this new city will be a new city of worship. And this new church, of course, praise God with a good Church of worship. This new creation will be. A creation of worship. All Flesh, shall come to worship before me, says, Yahweh, So, the new heavens and the new Earth.

Remain before him. And what they do with all their time. They worship before him. It's a whole new world of worship. Now, one of the things Excuse me. Now, one of the things that Maybe surprising to us. Is that there is an ongoing continual awareness of And the new heavens and the new Earth.

Hell is not part of the new heavens and the new Earth, those who are cast into it. Do not have their part and the new heavens and the new Earth. But we will continually

remember What we had deserved and from what we have been saved? And so the worship in verse 23.

It is paired with in verse 24, going forth, and looking upon the corpses of the men who have transgressed against me. And notice that they are not annihilated, they're not removed, but they are in a state of continual death and continual dying. Their worm does not die. And their fire is not quenched.

Jesus picks up this language to talk about hell. Most prominently in Mark chapter 9 verses 42 through 48. Where he repeats this phrase from from here, three different times. Now it's difficult for us to think about being aware of Hell in heaven. Because we are so. allied with And identify ourselves with Wicked men in our hearts and minds.

And not nearly enough. With. the Glorious and righteous and holy God. And so, we have difficulty with things like Romans not saying, That God. Desires Wills. To make his wrath known to make. Glory known on vessels prepared for Wrath. There's power known on vessels prepared for wrath. We have difficulty combining The Flaming Fury and Vengeance of the Lord in his return.

In second Thessalonians chapter 1 with his Saints. Admiring him for it. In second Thessalonians, chapter 1. We have difficulty imagining and putting ourselves in the place. Of the elders and the Saints who are led by them in the opening verses of Revelation, 19. Who praise God and who praise Christ?

That the smoke? Of. that world city that has raised itself up against Jesus that her smoke goes up forever and ever. Meaning her fire Is not quenched. And so, we have difficulty. With the idea that there will be awareness and remembrance of hell, In heaven. But, When we come to that day, we will not have difficulty.

We will have gratitude. For, we will know that we were Those who had transgressed against him. But that he in order. To take us to be his children. Has caused the stripes that we deserve. To fall upon the Lord Jesus Christ. And I hope that, You have begun to have that gratitude for yourself.

That, you know, That you deserve. For your worm, not to die and your flame. Not to be quenched. For the glory of God to be a horror to you. Rather than a delight to you. Like we read about here. And that if the Lord has brought you to a place, Where his glory, although it makes you tremble.

Gives you Joy. And the thought of being cleansed from all your sin. So that you can enjoy his glory. All the more is that not just a pleasant thought. Praise God. But I sure. If you have come to that place, Than it is because Christ has taken upon himself.

The fullness of the undying worm. And the unquenched flame. Which she of course, has to be God in order to have the fullness of the forever. And to finish it. But we we may and ought even now. To have grateful remembrance to God. For what we deserve. And how it has been taken from us.

And what we have been saved into. This is a big part. Of the blessedness of the forever for the Christian. It's actually the very last verse of the book of Isaiah, the gospel, according to Isaiah, it's the concluding thought. In this section at the last at the end of the book, on beholding, God's glory.

This whole new world of worship. New house, new city, new church, New Creation. And, The Grateful remembrance. Of what we had deserved. that will be maintained. By the awareness of those who are getting rightly and to God's glory. What they deserve? So may the Lord give us to look forward to this by his Spirit.

May he give us to Delight in him and worship him, to remember what we have deserved. To remember what Christ has done? Now, God took it away. And to live in that. Attitude of worship. And Thanksgiving. Let's pray.

Father, these things are hard for us. They're hard in and of themselves. Different situations in our life right now. they may be hard for us to Direct our minds towards or lift our hearts up to embrace. And so we pray for the almighty help of your spirit. To give us to do these hard things.

With our minds and with our hearts, So that we will live in worship. So that we will. Live and desire that others would hear the fame of your name and see your glory in Christ. So that we will. Have that grateful remembrance? Of where we deserve to be and what we deserve to have even now.

But are receiving the opposite of So, please help us by your spirit. So that we will not. Leave your worship. Quickly forget the impressions of you and your truth and your salvation. That you have given us by your word. We ask these things in Christ's name. Amen.