

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Isaiah: Jahweh Is Salvation

Part LXXVII: God's Fulfillment Of His Future Promises

A. God's Rebuke Of Religious Hypocrisy And Honor Of Humble Obedience (Isaiah 66:1-6)

I. Introduction

- A. The time will finally come when the Lord institutes the Millennial Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ!
- B. Isaiah 66:1-6 presents God's teaching on the heart that is required for those who will participate in that era:

II. God's Rebuke Of Religious Hypocrisy And Honor Of Humble Obedience, Isaiah 66:1-6.

- A. The people of Israel in Isaiah's day, typical of many throughout the generations of human history, were engrossed in heartless, external religiosity. Accordingly, they gloried in the great Jerusalem temple that Solomon had built instead of truly following God in their hearts.
- B. To this group, God asked that since the heavens were His throne and the earth was His footstool, of what significance was the temple they would build for Him as the place of His rest. (Isaiah 66:1; Edward J. Young, The Book of Isaiah, 1974, Volume III, p. 518)
- C. Actually, since the entire universe of the heavens and the earth was a temple of sorts for the Lord, God said that He had made it all, that they thus were or existed, recalling the often repeated phrase in Genesis 1 "and they were" following God's command to call the various parts of the universe into existence, Isa. 66:2a; Ibid.
- D. However, in contrast to the external temple man could build for Him, what God really "paid attention to, showed regard for" (*nabat*, B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 613) was the "poor, afflicted, humble" ('*ani*, Ibid., p. 776-777) man, the "smitten, stricken, contrite" (*nakeh*, Ibid., p. 646) in spirit in Israel who "trembled in awe and reverence" (*harad*, Ibid., p. 353) at the Word of God, Isaiah 66:2b.
- E. Regarding Israel's heartless ritualistic worship, God critiqued it in Isaiah 66:3 (as follows):
 1. To God, one practicing heartless ritualistic worship without a humble, contrite heart that revered His Word was as if he were murdering a man instead of killing a sacrificial ox, Isaiah 66:3a; Ibid., Young.
 2. To God, one practicing heartless ritualistic worship without a humble, contrite heart that revered His Word was as if he were breaking the neck of an unclean dog to sacrifice it versus sacrificing a lamb, 66:3b; Ibid.
 3. To God, one practicing heartless ritualistic worship without a humble, contrite heart that revered His Word was as if he were offering an unclean pig's blood versus offering a grain offering, 66:3c ESV, NIV; Ibid.
 4. To God, one practicing heartless ritualistic worship without a humble, contrite heart that revered His Word was as if he were worshiping an idol instead of burning an offering of incense, Isa. 66:3d NIV, ESV; Ibid.
 5. Even worse, those who worshiped God in this abominable way did not do so in ignorance of what was right, but they had willfully chosen this way of worship, delighting their souls in it, Isaiah 66:3e; Ibid.
- F. For this reason, God promised to choose harsh treatment for them and bring what they feared upon them, for when He had called for repentance, no one had answered, when He had spoken to them by His prophets, they had not listened, but did what was evil in God's eyes and chosen that in which He did not delight, Isaiah 66:4.
- G. To those who trembled (*harad* again, cf. v. 2b above) at His Word, God said He knew their countrymen hated them and excommunicated them for the sake of His name, mockingly saying, "We are casting you out; but you worship Yahweh, so let Him be honored that we may see your rejoicing for His sake," mocking "the sufferings of the righteous," what was "the very depth of wickedness itself," Isaiah 66:5a; Ibid., p. 523.
- H. Yet, these mocking persecutors were the ones who would be shamed in the end by God's judgment, Isa. 63:5b. Indeed, Isaiah 63:6 anticipates the voice of uproar in Jerusalem in a time of war, the voice coming even from the temple itself, the voice of the Lord rendering just recompence to His enemies in the city, Ibid., p. 521, 523.

Lesson: In preparation for the Messianic Kingdom, God will render great, disciplining judgment to those in Israel who rebelliously resist worshiping God in humility and reverence, opting instead for heartless religious ritualism that is repugnant to the Lord. To the contrary, He will render just recompence to the upright who are persecuted by those involved in dead ritualism while paying attention to and showing regard for those who are humble and contrite in heart who also tremble in awe and reverence at the Word of the Lord!

Application: May we worship God with humble, contrite hearts that tremble in awe and reverence at the Word of God as opposed to practicing heartless, ritualistic worship that is repugnant to the Lord. May we also not persecute the upright whom God will greatly recompence and defend, but treat others with humility and grace!