

God's Deliverance and Judgment (65:1–16)

Following the pattern of the first “Cycle of Redemption” (58:1–63:6), Israel’s confession is followed by God’s intervention to provide forgiveness and deliverance to the righteous remnant. In this section the focus alternates between judgment on those who have rejected God and deliverance for those who turn to Him.

Judgment and Deliverance

- 65:1–7 God will judge idolators.
- 65:8–10 God will deliver the righteous remnant.
- 65:11–12 God will judge idolators.
- 65:13–16 Summary: The righteous “servants” will be blessed, while the unrighteous will be judged.

God will judge those who worship idols (65:1–7). God had “held out [His] hands to an obstinate people,” but they provoked Him with their idolatrous practices (65:3–5). God said their offense against Him was like smoke in His nostrils. Because they chose to serve idols rather than God, He would require of them “full payment” for their sins.

God will bless the righteous remnant (65:8–10). A righteous remnant still remained in Israel. Like those who would

spare a cluster of grapes because a bit of juice still remained, so God will spare His righteous “servants.” This remnant will possess the land God promised to His people. From Sharon on the west to the Valley of Achor on the east, those who seek God will possess the land.

God will judge those who worship idols (65:11–12). Returning to those who choose to “forsake” the Lord to serve the gods of “Fortune” and “Destiny,” God vowed to “destine” them for judgment because they ignored His appeals and chose instead to do “evil.”

God will bless His righteous “servants” and curse the wicked (65:13–16). This section concludes with a series of contrasts between the righteous and the wicked. The righteous servants will eat and drink, while the wicked will go hungry. The righteous will rejoice and sing, but the wicked will be ashamed and cry out in anguish. The righteous will have a name associated with blessing, but the name of the wicked will be like a curse.

Appearance of God's Glory and Blessing (65:17–66:24)

As in the first “Cycle of Redemption” (58:1–63:6), God’s intervention will be followed by the appearance of His glory and blessing. After announcing God’s new creation, Isaiah gave a broad outline of events that will transpire at

Christ's second coming. Though Isaiah recorded the message as one glorious event, later revelation provides greater details on the specific fulfillment of the individual parts of this prophecy.

God's new creation for His people (65:17–25). God promised to “create new heavens and a new earth.” This prophecy ultimately looked beyond the millennial kingdom to the Lord's new creation (Rev. 20:4–6; 21:1). However, Isaiah stated it first because he wanted to focus on the “new” things that will come to pass (as in Isa. 41:22–23; 42:9; 48:6). Some of these “new” things will be prosperity, longevity, and peace. The messianic promises of peace in 11:6–9 (“wolf/lamb,” “lion will eat straw,” “neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain”) are repeated here.

God's “New Things” for Jerusalem

- Joy will replace weeping and crying (65:18–19).
- Longevity will replace sorrow and death (65:20–23).
- Answered prayer will replace God's previous silence (65:24).
- Universal peace will replace violence (65:25).

God's judgment on wicked worshipers (66:1–4). God's awesome majesty exceeds heaven and earth, and His presence can-

not be confined to a mere “house” built by humans. God will reward those who are “humble and contrite in spirit,” but He will judge those whose view of Him is so small that they believe they can manipulate Him with mere sacrifices (see also 1:11–14). God will regard their sacrifices as if they were killing someone or sacrificing a dog or a pig—sacrifices considered an abomination by the Lord.

God's promise to His righteous remnant (66:5–6). God has a special “word” for those who trust in Him in spite of opposition. This righteous remnant will experience the hatred of those who discriminate against them and mock them. But the remnant's tormentors “will be put to shame.” God will come to Jerusalem to repay His enemies.

God's “rebirth” of Israel and Jerusalem (66:7–17). Using the analogy of childbirth, God asked if anyone had ever heard of a woman delivering a baby “before the pains come upon her.” God's point is that the process of birth is usually long and difficult, but it will not be so for Israel. It will be a country “born in a day.” God will allow Jerusalem to “give birth to her children” in the sense that the righteous remnant will experience joy, comfort, and peace.

God's glory extended to the nations (66:18–21). God's coming will affect not only Israel. He also will “gather all nations” who will come to Jerusalem to “see [His] glory.” Even distant nations

who had not previously heard of Him will hear the message and travel to Jerusalem with Israel's remnant. God will choose some of them to be priests and Levites. This could refer to God's allowing Gentiles to serve as priests in His temple or, more likely, it refers to God's selecting as priests some of Israel's remnant whom the Gentiles are bringing back.

God's final destiny for the righteous and the wicked (66:22–24). The Book of Isaiah ends with reference to two destinies. Those who put their trust in God will experience His redemption and glory and will endure just as “the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure.” But those who reject the Lord and oppose His plans will experience enduring judgment: “their worm will not die, nor will their fire be quenched.” The apostle John pictured the same two destinies in [Revelation 20:4–6, 11–15](#).

Perhaps the most enduring lessons from the Book of Isaiah are the reminders that (a) there is a God, (b) He is coming back, and (c) our eternal destiny is determined by our response to Him in this life.