

Jerusalem: The Capital City of the New Earth (Isa. 65-66)

I. JERUSALEM'S SIGNIFICANCE

- A. Jesus is zealous for Zion (Jerusalem). Jesus will return to Jerusalem to live there forever and make it the capital of the earth in the age to come. It will be the spiritual, political, financial and educational center for the whole earth. I want to be zealous for whatever He is zealous for. We study Jerusalem to cultivate love for it. The Lord will all prosper all who love Jerusalem.

⁶Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: “May they prosper who love you...” (Ps. 122:6)

²“I am zealous for Zion with great zeal; with great fervor I am zealous for her.” ³Thus says the LORD, “I will return to Zion, and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, the Mountain of the LORD of hosts, the Holy Mountain.” (Zech. 8:2-3)

¹⁷At that time Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the LORD, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem. (Jer. 3:17)

- B. Jesus spoke of His “throne of glory” in millennial Jerusalem as where He will judge all nations.

³¹When the Son of Man comes in His glory [to Jerusalem]...then He will sit on the throne of His glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before Him... (Mt. 25:31-32)

- C. The Lord will reign forever on Zion during the Millennium and on the new earth. Jerusalem will continue forever (Ps. 37:29; 78:68-69; 104:5; 105:10-11; 125:1-2; 1 Kgs. 8:13; 9:1-3; 2 Kgs. 21:7; 1 Chr. 15:2; 23:25; 28:8; 2 Chr. 7:16; 20:7; 30:8; 33:4, 7; Isa. 60:20-21; Ezek. 37:25)

¹⁰The LORD shall reign forever--Your God, O Zion, to all generations. (Ps. 146:10)

- D. Isaiah had much to say about the restoration of Jerusalem (Isa. 2; 45; 49; 54; 60-62; 65-66). This theme comes to a head in Isaiah 65-66. This passage provides the conclusion to the whole book of Isaiah and to its final section (Isaiah 56-66).

- E. Also in Isaiah 65-66, the Lord answers the lament of Israel as seen in Isaiah 63:7-64:12. The lament claimed that God had "hidden his face" (64:7). The Lord's answer is He is always responsive to the humble who will receive salvation, but the rebellious will be judged. He said that He called them, but they did not answer Him (65:12; 66:4) and that He was not silent (62:1; 64:12; 65:6, 24). The problem was that Israel was rebellious and idolatrous (65:2-5; 66:3).

- F. An overview of Israel 65-66:

The Lord will judge those who ignore Him and engage in idolatry (65:1-7).

The Lord will greatly bless His servants but He will judge those who forsake Him (65:8-16).

The Lord is determined to create a new heaven and earth (65:17-25).

The Lord will honor the humble, but judge all pagan practices (66:1-4).

The Lord will supernaturally enable Zion to give birth to many children (66:5-14).

The Lord will bring people from all nations into His kingdom (66:15-24).

II. ISAIAH 65: GOD'S RESPONSE TO ISRAEL'S LAMENT IN ISAIAH 63-64

- A. God gives the reasons why His relationship with Israel was hindered. He had repeatedly called to and answered them (65:1, 12, 24), but they were unresponsive (64:12). He is so gracious that He let the Gentiles call on Him. (Paul explained this as referring to Gentiles; Rom. 10:20). The Lord does not hide His face from anyone but opens His heart to any who will respond.

¹I was sought by those who did not ask for Me; I was found by those [Gentiles] who did not seek Me. I said, 'Here I am, here I am,' to a nation [Gentiles] that was not called by My name. ²I have stretched out My hands all day long to a rebellious people [Israel]... (Isa. 65:1-2)

- B. The Lord is so committed to His people and His glorious plans for them (1 Cor. 2:9). His plan is to transform this world by creating a new heaven and earth (65:17-25). Most of this section describes God's renovation of creation during the Millennium. The reference to the new heavens and earth forms an inclusio (65:17; 66:22). God will be faithful in spite of Israel's unfaithfulness.

¹⁷I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered... (Isa. 65:17)

⁹Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. (1 Cor. 2:9)

- C. The new heavens and earth occurs in two stages—first, in the Millennium (Rev. 20:4-6), and then in the eternal state (2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1). Isaiah emphasized the Millennium and John the eternal state. John saw much more than Isaiah about the new heavens and new earth.

- D. Many Old Testament prophecies have a double fulfillment or two stages of fulfillment. For example, the coming of the *messiah* (Jesus' first and second comings), the outpouring of the *Spirit* at Pentecost and at the end of the age, the return of *Elijah* in the ministry of John the Baptist and then at the end of the age, the "*day of the Lord*" *judgments* came on Israel by the Assyrians (721 BC) and the Babylonians (586 BC) and in the tribulation, Jerusalem *surrounded by the nations* occurred in 70 AD and then again in the tribulation (Lk. 21:24; Zech. 14:1-3), the *Gog and Magog* battle occurs before Jesus returns (Ezek. 38-39) and again at the end of the Millennium (Rev. 20:8), *fire will fall on the earth* during the tribulation (Rev. 8:9) and again after the Millennium (2 Pet. 3:10), the *little horn* came forth in Antiochus Epiphanes (175-163 BC) and then again in the Antichrist (Dan. 7:7, 20, 24), the *descent of the New Jerusalem will occur* when Jesus returns (Rev. 21:10) and then again after the Millennium (Rev. 21:2), etc.

- E. God's people are to rejoice in what God does in Jerusalem (v. 18). God has great pleasure in Jerusalem and His people (v. 19). He rejoices for the good of His people (Deut. 30:9; Jer. 31:41; Zeph. 3:17). There will be no more tears (v. 19; Rev. 7:17; 21:4; Isa. 25:8; 30:19; 61:2-3; 65:19).

¹⁸But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, and her people a joy. ¹⁹I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people; the voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying. (Isa. 65:18-19)

- F. The Lord will create everything new including the heavens (atmosphere, weather) and every part of the earth (vegetation and animals) and all the nations. People will live for hundreds of years.
²⁰No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; for the child shall die one hundred years old, but the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed. ²¹They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. ²²They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people...²⁵The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox... (Isa. 65:20-25)
- G. There will be no hostility in the relationship between wild and domesticated animals and people.
⁶The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion...and a little child shall lead them...⁸The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole...⁹The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD... (Isa. 11:6-9)
- H. Jerusalem will be like the garden of Eden (Isa. 35:1-8; 51:3; Ezek. 34:29; 36:35; 47:6-12).
³The Lord will comfort Zion [Jerusalem]...will make her wilderness like Eden... (Isa. 51:3)

III. ISAIAH 66: THE LORD WILL FULLY RESTORE JERUSALEM

- A. The Lord spoke to the humble to encourage them to believe in the promises of Isaiah 65:17-25. Was it too difficult for God to make a new earth or is it too far-fetched or will God lose interest in Israel because of her sin? God's answer is that His heavenly throne on earth is central to His purpose (Rev. 21:3). Therefore, it is sure to come to pass, but only the humble will enter into it.
¹Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest? ²For all those things My hand has made...On this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word. (Isa. 66:1-2)
- B. The Lord asks, "What kind of house could you build for Me?" and "Where do you think My resting place is?" God already created the New Jerusalem as the place where He lives. The place of God's rest on earth starts in millennial Jerusalem with the New Jerusalem connected to it. What does God require for this to occur? He wants humble people who live in deep relationship with Him (v. 1-2). Jesus told Ezekiel about His throne as "the place of the soles of My feet."
⁵A dwelling place for the Mighty One...⁸Arise, O LORD, to Your resting place. (Ps. 132:5, 8)
⁴The glory of the LORD came into the temple [millennial temple]...⁶I heard Him [Jesus] speak to me from the temple...⁷He said, "Son of man, this is the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell [live] in the midst of...Israel forever." (Ezek. 43:4-7)
¹³The place of My sanctuary; and I will make the place of My feet glorious. (Isa. 60:13)
- C. Jerusalem will be the eternal dwelling place, or final resting place, for God's glory (Ps. 132:5, 8). Jesus' one throne will be expressed in both Jerusalems. The contact point or *place of dynamic convergence* between the heavenly and early realms is the union of the two Jerusalems.

- D. The Lord assures the godly that He sees those persecuting them (v. 5). The humble were waiting for the coming of the kingdom as set forth in Isaiah 65:17-25). The wicked sarcastically said “Let the Lord be glorified” to mock the godly for believing such far fetched things.
- ⁵Hear the word of the LORD, you who tremble at His word: "Your brethren who hated you, who cast you out for My name's sake, said, 'Let the LORD be glorified, that we may see your joy.' But they shall be ashamed! (Isa. 66:5)*
- E. God promises to bless Zion by giving her children (v. 7-9). This passage is speaking of having labor and giving birth. God promises a supernatural birthing without any pain or effort. *Before she was in labor or in pain* describes the very unusual situation of a lady giving birth to a son before she went into labor (v. 7). The answer is that God was supernaturally helping her.
- ⁷Before she was in labor, she gave birth; before her pain came, she delivered a male child. ⁸Who has heard such a thing?...Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion was in labor, she gave birth to her [end-time] children. ⁹Shall I bring to the time of birth, and not cause delivery? (Isa. 66:7-9)*
- F. The Great Tribulation is described by the prophets as birth pains coming on Zion. Israel expected the coming of the messiah in glory “after” a time of birth pains (Jer. 30:6-7; Mic. 5:3; Mt. 24:8). Isaiah is also stating a principle—that the birthing described in verse 8-9 is supernatural. Zion will give birth in a supernatural way bringing Israel to a national and spiritual rebirthing (v. 9).
- G. God promises to bless the godly by comforting and restoring Jerusalem (v. 10-14). The Lord exhorts the Gentiles to rejoice with Jerusalem and not be disengaged, critical, or envious (v. 10). Rejoicing or engaging with Jerusalem is essential to participating with her blessings (v. 11).
- ¹⁰Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all you who love her; rejoice for joy with her, all you who mourn for her; ¹¹that you may feed and be satisfied with the consolation of her bosom...and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. (Isa. 66:10-11)*
- H. The Lord will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to see His manifest glory (v. 18; 60:1-3). The Lord will send survivors of the Great Tribulation among the nations to proclaim His glory.
- ¹⁸I will gather all nations [Gentiles] and tongues; and they shall come and see My glory. ¹⁹I will set a sign among them [Gentiles]; and those among them who escape [survived the tribulation] I will send to the nations: to Tarshish and Pul and Lud...to the coastlands afar off who have not heard My fame nor seen My glory. And they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles. ²⁰Then they [Gentiles] shall bring all your brethren for an offering to the LORD out of all nations, on horses...on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem," says the LORD" ...²²For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me," says the LORD, "So shall your descendants and your name remain. (Isa. 66:18-22)*
- I. All those who survive the tribulation will worship Jesus in the New Jerusalem (Isa. 25-26; Zech. 14:16-21). The godly will see the corpses of the ungodly who will be killed by God’s judgment.
- ²³“From one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the LORD. ²⁴And they shall 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... (Isa. 66:23-24)*