

## **God's Judgment and Deliverance will be Sudden!**

### **Isaiah 66:1-9 (vv. 5-9)**

Facilitator: Rev.. Vera Rhyne

#### **I. Historical Background and Biblical Context**

We are now in the final chapter of Isaiah. A book of 66 chapters. Isaiah is writing to the Israelites who were in possession of both the temple and torah. Because they had forgotten what God truly desires of His people, those who are called by His name for His divine purpose, they became distracted in their walk before the Lord, their religious culture, and their spiritual activities. Chapter 66 concludes as the prophecy begins with a warning of judgment but also a promise of God's continued goodness and a great hope for the future. The prophet Isaiah's ministry expand the exile of the Israelites to Assyria, and he in many ways is holding out to them the need for repentance so that they would inherit the promises of the new heavens and the new earth. Isaiah gives hope to the people that some of them are going to inherit the coming glory, the new heavens and the new earth. However, he warned the people that there will be some of them who continue in their unrepentant deeds and idol worshipping who would not inherit the coming glory.

#### **II. The Lesson: God's Judgment and Deliverance will be Sudden**

God's judgment of the unrepentant wicked and deliverance of the faithful should not take His people by surprise. **Through the Word of God from Genesis to Revelation we have been given the warning of judgment and the hope of deliverance.** *God's judgment is a central theme throughout the Bible beginning in the Old Testament. His judgment is a response to sin and a means of upholding His righteousness and justice.* In Genesis, the first act of divine judgment occurs when Adam and Eve disobey God, resulting them being expelled from the Garden of Eden. (Genesis 3:23-24, "So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life." The flood in Genesis 6-8 further illustrates God's judgment against widespread human wickedness and God regretted that He had made human beings on earth. Yet even in judgment, God provides deliverance for Noah and his family demonstrating His mercy and covenant faithfulness. Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 18-19 exemplifies God's judgment against sin. Despite Abraham's intercession, the cities are destroyed due to their unrepentant wickedness but Lot and his family are delivered. This reflects God's ability to rescue the righteous from judgment. In the New Testament, God's

judgment is further revealed through the personal work of Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, Savior and Light of the world. Jesus often spoke in His teachings the coming judgment, warning of the separation of the righteous from the wicked (Matt 25:31-46).

Jesus emphasized the necessity of faith for deliverance from judgment (Mark 1:15). The crucifixion of Jesus is the ultimate expression of God's judgment and deliverance. On the cross, Jesus bears the judgment of sin and offer deliverance to all who believe in Him. As Paul writes, "For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess 5:9). The book of Revelation provides a clear description of the final judgment and deliverance. It describes the ultimate defeat of evil and the establishment of God's eternal kingdom. The righteous are delivered into the New Jerusalem (rev 21:1-8). Judgment serves as a warning against sin and a call to repentance, while deliverance offers hope and redemption. Remember God's judgment is always in accordance with His holiness and justice. His deliverance is a testament to His love and grace, providing a way for humanity to be reconciled to Him through faith in Jesus Christ. Isaiah spoke of God's judgment against Israel and Judah, yet also promises deliverance and restoration.

### **1. vv. 1-2.**

"This is what the Lord says; "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be? Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?" declares the Lord. This is what the Lord says. In the 70's and 80's there was a tv commercial that featured a slogan from one of the largest wall street brokerage firms called E F Hutton, "When E. F. Hutton talks, people listen." When the person in the commercial revealed what their broker, E. F. Hutton, had to say about a financial strategy, the surrounding crowd would suddenly stop mid-sentence, go completely silent, and lean in to overhear the advice. This is mere man speaking but when the Almighty, Sovereign, Majestic, Holy, Righteous God and Creator speak everyone and all nature should listen and lean in to hear what thus says the Lord. Habakkuk 2:20 reads, "The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth be silent before Him." Ezekiel 12:25, "But I the Lord will speak what I will, and it shall be fulfilled without delay. For in your days, you rebellious people, I will fulfill whatever I say, declares the Sovereign Lord."

God is greater than the heavens themselves. He is not communicating where He sits or what He does with His feet. He is communicating Who He is and What He is looking for. Israelites were proud of their temple. They were proud of their accomplishments that were not possible without God. Where is the house built for God? Where is His resting place? There is nothing that exist that God has not created. Man may build but it is only from what God has created. Paul on Mars Hill preached to the people of Athens, "The God who made the world and

everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And He is not served by human hands, as if He needed anything. Rather, He Himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else.” (Acts 17:24-25)

He is the God who does not need a temple or any manmade structure or building to reside or occupy. The heaven is His throne, and the earth is His footstool. This passage makes it clear that there is no house or place that man can confine God. Even Solomon’s temple in which the glory of God dwelt as a representation of His presence with Israel, can only be referred to as the dwelling place of God in a symbolic sense. There is no need for a temple in eternity. John in Revelation 21:22, “I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.” The temple is a good thing and blessed it but by Isaiah’s day many of the Israelites had their confidence in the temple, its formalities and rituals and not in God. God was not impressed of their fancy temple. Rather than to listen to God, the people seek to build a house for God, a place of rest for Him but it is God who has made all things.

Isaiah 6:1-4, provide us with a vivid picture what he saw as the temple of God, “In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above Him were seraphim, each with six wings: with two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of His glory.” Praise God, John gives reflections of what is to come in Revelation 21:1-3, “Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth, “for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and He will dwell with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God.” Heaven and the highest heavens cannot contain God, and yet He will dwell with us.

What is God looking for? What is the desire of the Lord?

Answer is found in the latter part of verse 2 “These are the ones I look on with favor: those who are humble and contrite in spirit, and who tremble at my word.” This is the opposite of being self-righteous, puffed up and boastful. We are not just to do religious stuff but to listen and act upon God’s Word. We are supposed to be humble, meek, and broken. Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Three things God says, be humble, contrite in spirit, and trembles at His word. To be humble is to be poor and afflicted.

To be contrite in spirit literally means lamed in spirit. We are not able on our own to be the being spiritual being we need to be without God’s transformative power. The result of true humility is being in awe of the Word of God. We do not have a God fear for the Word of God. It is not respected and reverence as it should be. God is not looking at all we can do for Him. He is looking for us to recognize and admit

that we can't do anything without Him – we are spiritually broken and lame in spirit. Whether than dwell in what man has made, God wants to dwell in what He has made. We are supposed to be the temple of the only true and living God. But He will dwell in an unclean temple. This is what the Lord says in Isaiah 55:15, “For this is what the high and exalted One says, he who lives forever, whose name is holy, ‘I live in a high and holy place, but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.’” God seek those who are hearts are turned to Him who recognizes true repentance and what grace is. In Psalm 51:10 & 17, “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.’ “My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.” The way to God is down. Psalm 147:6, “The Lord sustains the humble but casts the wicked to the ground.” 1 Peter 5:5b & 6, “god opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble,;” “humble yourselves, therefore under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time,”

## **2. vv. 3-4.**

God indicted them for doing what were evil in His eyes and what was not pleasing to Him.

Were the offerings wrong? No, but God is not looking for our empty religious rituals that just satisfies us and not giving to please Him. God desires our actions and acts out of our love for Him – for Who He is and all He has done for us.

This is how rituals looked to God:

Slaughter a bull – like killing a man

Sacrifice a lamb – breaking a dog’s neck

Presents grain offering – offering pig’s blood

Burn memorial incense (frankincense) – worshipping an idol

Their offerings were not wrong because these are things they were to do in the temple. To do them were acts of obedience – offering sacrifices, presenting grain offerings, and memorial offerings of incense; however, they were not doing them to honor God but to please themselves. They were proud of their accomplishments but they were not pleasing to God. They have chosen their own ways and their soul delights in their abominations. While they continue their outward forms of religious piety of sacrifices and offerings, God indicted them for having done what was evil in His eyes. Instead of answering the call of God to personal repentance and faith, they chose evil. We can be faithful in our giving and serving but are we faithful to God in our daily living?

## **3. vv. 5-9.**

Verse is meant to be encouraging to the faithful remnant of God. It for those who tremble at His Word. The word encourages us to know that will be those who will

hate on us for being sold out to the Lord. There were who tremble at the words of the Lord. They were being persecuted by fellow Israelites. Just there are not just outer conflicts and criticism but sometimes it comes from within. There will be those who persecute you, talk about you, just because you are trying to live for God wholeheartedly. Matthew 5:11-12, "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you." These verses give us a glorious picture of what awaits us – what is soon to come – the fulfillment of our hope – the reward of our faithfulness to the Faithful God.

God will finish what He has started. He is a covenant keeping God. All that He has said will come to pass. He will fulfill His promises. The restoration of Israel will be as sudden as the birth of a baby. We see the picture of the salvation that God's people have been waiting on. It is given through the analogy of a woman bringing a child before labor. The prophet asked the question, "Who has heard ever heard of such things?" "Who has ever seen things like this?" Labor pains are indicators that birth is about to take place. Israel is about to be born anew – a restored nation. God's people are going through now but we are about to come out. It has been so long. It appears some time like we are long overdue but remember God's timing is perfect. Like a woman about to give birth, have your bags packed and be ready to go. Deliverance is on its way. 1 Thess 4:16-18, "For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words."

### **III. Conclusion**

Stay humble. Be a true worshipper of God so our religion is pure and undefiled before Him. Stay in the Word of God and reverence it through a repentant heart. As David in Psalm 51:10, "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." We will receive eternal blessings in the new heavens and earth depend our response to God's Word. Always choose to do His will by His way.