

Lamar E. Cooper, Sr.
Interim President
Criswell College

The Servant of Righteous Judgment

Isaiah 65:1-16

Part 1

Introduction

The last two chapters of Isaiah are exciting! The background of this chapter is Isaiah 64:1-12. It presents four incontrovertible truths: First, God created the heavens and the earth; Second, God created human life in His image; Third, death came on the human family through sin and no one will escape it; Fourth, human beings have a moral sensitivity and moral choices; Fifth, God alone can rescue us from wrong choices. These ideas are a prelude to what is presented in John's Revelation. In Isaiah, chapters 65-66 form a dramatic and amazing climax to his prophecy. Chapter 65 is a sad but glorious chapter that answers two questions. First, what is God's final plan for Israel? Second, what will happen to unbelieving Israel? Some suggest verse 1 is about the Gentiles and verse 2 the Jews. One writer, quoting Paul in Rom 10:20-21, says that the opening two verses of Isaiah 65 are addressed to or about the Gentiles and 65: 3-7 to or about Israel. If you look at Romans you will discover that verses 14-21 are about the Jews' rejection of the Gospel. So I must insist that the first seven verses of Isaiah 65 are addressed to Israel. Verses 1-16 present the Seventh Servant Song.

I. God's invitation and Israel's Rebellious Response, 65:1-7

1. You didn't choose Me, I chose you, but you rebelled, vv. 1-2a; see also John 15:16, God called, and the disciples responded. Not all who are called respond as with the Rich Young Ruler, Matt 19:16-22.
2. Seven "Who Dat's," of disobedience, vv. 2b-5. There is some debate over who is the recipient of this barrage of questions. These verses describe a rebellious people whose walk was not with God.
 - Who will walk in a way that is "no good," 2a; Prov 14:12
 - Who walks according to "own [selfish] thoughts?" 2b; Isa 55:7-8
 - Who provoke the Lord to anger continually? 3a; Ps 106:28-29.
 - Who will sacrifice to idols? (gardens, incense, bricks), 3b, Jer 44:17
 - Who will consult the dead? 4a (necromancy, consulting the dead) Deut 18:10-12; Lev 19:31; 20:27; see 1 Sam 28:3-25.
 - Who will disregard dietary laws, pork and other unclean meats? 4b; Lev 11: 1-47.
 - Who will claim personal holiness without God? 5a; Lev 10:1-7; Heb 12:14.
3. Those that do these things are like smoke in My nostrils [of Yahweh], and a fire that burns all day and provides a continual supply of smoke.

These are those whose iniquities, idolatries, and blasphemies will be punished, vv.5b-7; cf. Rev 21:8; 22:15.

II. **God's plan and Israel's Fatalism, 65:8-12**

1. God created Israel for a blessing to all (Gen 12:1-3). He will bring judgment on the nation, but not eliminate all of them. This is the doctrine of a remnant for Israel, v. 8
2. God will honor His promises to Jacob and Judah, and return them permanently in the land and to inherit it and be today's remnant, v. 9.
3. God will reward those of the remnant who honor Him, with flocks and herds in Sharon, and the Valley of Achor, "trouble" [formerly a place of judgment, Josh 7:24-26 Achan], to be a door of hope [Hos 2:15], v. 10.
4. God will judge those who prepare a table for Gad [Baal Gad, Joshua 11:17, a Babylonian, Canaanite, Syrian god Gad,, Josh 11:17, the god of fortune or "good luck,"] and a drink offering for Meni [god of fate or destiny]. Because they gamble their future by trusting "fortune" and "destiny," to be their provider, v. 11 [this is just one of the problem's with gambling].
5. God will bring an untimely end to all who fail to listen to Him, v. 12, v. 2.

III. **God's Eightfold Blessing only for the Obedient, 65:13-16**

The "therefore" that opens verse 13 refers to opening of verse 11, "those who forsake the Lord." Verses 13-16 contrasts the eightfold blessings of the obedient and the loss of blessings of the disobedient.

1. My servants shall eat - but the disobedient will hunger
2. My servants shall drink - but the disobedient will thirst
3. My servants shall rejoice - but the disobedient will be ashamed
4. My servants shall sing for joy of heart - but disobedient shall cry for sorrow of heart and wail from a broken spirit
5. My [servants] chosen ones shall consider your name a curse - God will slay you and call his servants by another name, Rev 2:17
6. [My servants], those who bless themselves in the earth, will bless themselves in the God of truth, Rev 3:14 [implied - or be judged eternally]
7. [My servants], those who swear in earth, shall swear by God of truth [or be judged eternally by the absence of truth]
8. [My servants], are forgiven, former troubles are forgotten and are hidden from My eyes, [those who rebel will be held accountable, Rev 20:11-15 = Great White Throne]

Conclusion

This is a wonderful example of the double truth that on the one hand, disobedience produces chastening, Prov 3:11-12; Heb 12:3-11, but on the other hand God's blessing follows our obedience to Him, 65:13-16.

The Servant's Song of the Coming Kingdom

Isaiah 65:17-25

Part 2

Introduction

This passage contains the ninth Servant Song that is the prelude to Zechariah 8:1-23; Revelation 21:1 - 22:21. Both Isaiah and John received a revelation or unveiling of the elements of the final form of the final Kingdom of eternity. The following are twelve wonderful elements of the coming Kingdom:

9. A creation of "new heavens," and "new earth," is language repeated in Revelation 21:1 - 22:21. All we know about it is described here in this passage and in John's Revelation, Isa 65:17a.; Zech 8
10. The former creation will not even survive in memory [literally come upon the heart or will], 17b, see also 2 Pet 3:10-13. it does not rule out mental recall but it affirms no one will want to go back to the former creation.
11. The "new creation" will be a joy-filled creation, 65:2, Rev 21:4
12. There will be a new Jerusalem where God will dwell with His people, 65:19a; Zech 8:3; Rev 21:1-3.
13. There will be no weeping, crying, sorrow, etc, 65:19b; Rev 21:1 - 22:21
14. There will be no limitation to the length of life, 65:20, Zech 8:4-5
15. There shall be houses and vineyards for all, 65:21-22; Zech 8:8, 12
16. There labor shall be a joy and they and their children shall be descendents of Yahweh, 65:23.
17. Prayers of the populous shall be answered before they are spoken, 65:24, cf. 58:9.
18. Enmity of all the created order will be gone. The wolf and the lamb shall be friends, 65:25a-b, cf. 11: 6-9.
19. Dust shall be the serpents' food, 65:25c.
20. None shall be harmed or destroyed in God's Holy Mountain says, Yahweh, 65:25d.