
ISAIAH 56-66

Lesson 28, Old Testament, Adult Religion Class, Tuesday, 20 March 2012

Study Guide

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INTRODUCTION

As we conclude our study of Isaiah, we see writings that are vast in nature and scope, Messianically focused, and looking toward the latter-days—and

beyond. Isaiah has brought us this far in his book, and now he casts our thoughts forward to God's final triumph, to give us hope and direction.

OUTLINE

Isaiah can be broken into eight sections:

1. Judgment on Judah and Jerusalem (1-12)
2. Judgment on Other Nations (13-23)
3. Redemption of Israel (24-27)
4. Trust in God, Not Nations (28-35)
5. Historical Recitation (36-39)
6. The Return from Captivity (40-47)
7. The Suffering Servant (48-55)
8. Future Blessings (56-66)

This is an outline for chapters 56-66:

1. God's Redemption (56-57)
2. Two Elements of Worship (58)
3. Transforming Israel (59-60)
4. Future Blessedness of Zion (61)
5. Zion's Deliverance (62:1 – 63:6)
6. Prayer for Deliverance (63:7 – 64:12)
7. The Lord Answers Israel's Prayer (65-66)

GOD'S REDEMPTION (56-57)

THE GENTILES ARE WELCOMED TO THE COVENANT (56:1-8)

To an ancient Israelite, Gentiles were the enemy because they attacked and enslaved the people. So for Isaiah to say that Gentiles would become part of the covenant, worship in the temple, and be part of the family of Israel would have sounded outrageous to the people of Isaiah's day.

Isaiah said what Gentile converts (which includes most members of the Church in our day) should do in verse 4, then gave a promise in verse 5.

56:1 **judgment . . . justice.** The Hebrew word usually translated "judgment" in the KJV is used here, *mišpāṭ*. It is a legal term referring to the presentation of a

case and the determination of the proper outcome; it is usually better translated 'justice.' On the other hand, the word here translated "justice" is *šēdāqāh*, meaning 'righteousness,' a word we are familiar with through a name: Melchizedek, king of righteousness. Thus the better translation of the phrase is 'guard justice and do righteousness.' The following parallel phrase in the verse then equates 'salvation' (*yēšū'î*) with justice, and righteousness is the same word (*šēdāqāh*). All of this ties back to Isaiah 51:3-8 where "righteousness" and "salvation" are mentioned multiple times.

56:2 **Blessed.** Really means 'happy,' and is the same word used by Jesus in the Beatitudes (there also translated "blessed"; see Matthew 5:1-11). And what

is the source of this happiness? Keeping the Sabbath and refraining from doing evil.

56:3 **utterly separated me.** People should not say that God is distant or that blessings are being denied. Verses 5-7 shows what—and where—these blessings will be.

56:5 **a place and a name.** Two things of note with this phrase. First, there should really be some punctuation after “place,” separating it from the next phrase about a name; the person is blessed with a ‘place’ in the house, then receives a new name, “better than of sons or daughters.” Second, the first noun also has the meaning of ‘a hand,’ which symbolism is readily recognized by those who have been to the temple. The universality of temple admittance here represents a huge difference from temple worship in Isaiah’s day, where Gentiles were not allowed into the temple at all and even most Jews were just permitted in the courtyard. Only priests on certain days and under certain circumstances could enter the building itself, and only the high priest could go into the most holy part. But now all people who “take hold of my covenant” (56:4) will come into the Lord’s house and receive his greatest blessings.

56:6 **keepeth the Sabbath.** Sabbath day observance was a benchmark in their society, something that marked them as different from all their neighbors. How are doing with that benchmark today? Are we known as Sabbath observers?

56:7 **accepted upon mine altar.** Continuing the thought from verse 5, the Lord proclaims that even an offering made by a Gentile will be accepted, because the temple will be a “house of prayer for all people.”

56:7 **a house of prayer.** Jesus quoted this verse when he cleansed the temple (Luke 19:46).

ISRAEL’S WICKED LEADERS (56:9-57:2)

56:9 **All ye beasts.** This is symbolic call to the enemies of Israel to come and devour her. The reason is explained in the next few verses.

56:11 **greedy dogs.** The wickedness of the leaders is made clear through many metaphors in verses 9-12—blind, dumb dogs, loving to slumber, greedy dogs, and shepherds without understanding. They spend their time getting drunk and indulging in life’s pleasures. This may remind us of some people who live for the weekend where they can party, play, gamble, etc. “How was your weekend?” for them means talking about their great adventures and entertainment, whereas for many Latter-day Saints it is often a time of much service.

57:1 **no man layeth it to heart.** 57:1-2 are the conclusion to the previous chapter. In 1a, the voice declares the attitudes of the wicked leaders—the righteous perish and these wicked leaders just don’t care. But in the end (verses 1b-2), the righteous are removed from the evil to a place of peace.

ISRAEL’S GROSS WICKEDNESS (57:3-13A)

These verses are the Lord’s response to the wicked described in 56:9 – 57:1a.

57:4 **make a wide mouth.** Open their mouths to speak ill.

57:5 **Enflaming yourselves with idols.** These verses speak of the idolatrous practices of many in that day, including Israelites.

57:6 **smooth stones of the stream.** This phrase refers to idol worship, the stones being used to represent the gods or places for the idols to sit (like altars).

57:7 **set thy bed.** Temple prostitution and fertility rights were common among ancient people and a great sin that kept Israel from her God.

57:8 **thou hast discovered thyself.** See the footnotes for insight into the meaning of verses 8-10.

57:12 **I will declare.** The Lord was speaking sarcastically. The ‘righteousness’ and ‘works’ are their efforts to worship false gods.

57:13 **vanity shall take them.** The break should be after this phrase as it transitions from the Lord’s words to the wicked to those directed at the righteous.

BLESSINGS FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS (57:13B-21)

In contrast to the previous section which discusses the wickedness of many of the people, this one outlines the great blessings given to the faithful, those that trust in God.

57:14 **Cast ye up, cast ye up.** The Dead Sea Scrolls add “the road,” which matches the parallel phrase in the second half of this verse. This hearkens back to 40:3-4 where the messenger goes before the king to prepare the way, but in this case, the road is being cleared for the righteous people.

57:15 **I dwell in the high and holy place.** God dwells in temples which are holy places on earth, and in the celestial temple in heaven (Revelation 4). With him dwell those “of a contrite and humble spirit.”

57:18 **heal him.** The faithful are promised healing and peace, with the Lord leading them and repaying their efforts with comfort.

57:20 **the wicked are like the troubled sea.** The wicked are only promised turmoil, like a wave that churns up the dirt and not clean water.

57:21 **no peace.** See Isaiah 48:22.

How does the universality of the gospel message today change the way we perceive our covenants and obligations today?

TWO ELEMENTS OF WORSHIP (58)

THE TRUE LAW OF THE FAST (58:1-12)

This section is really in three parts, with the Lord saying: what we’re doing wrong (1-5), what we need to do right (6-7), and what we can expect when we do that (8-12). Its focus is on the fast and it is probably the single best teaching on that topic in all of scripture. A fast in Isaiah’s day was not just a time to go without food. Fast days were national Sabbaths, such as *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement) or Passover, usually followed by feast days or celebrations. That pattern is described here.

58:1 **lift up thy voice like a trumpet.** Isaiah was commanded to cry out to Israel and declare both her sins and her potential blessings if she changes her ways.

58:2 **the ordinance of their God.** “Ordinance” here (used twice) can also mean justice or laws. In the second instance, it could be translated ‘the laws of righteousness.’

58:3 **ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours.** Instead of focusing on the purpose of the fast, they instead did pleasurable things or made others work in their behalf.

58:4 **ye fast for strife and debate.** The purpose of their fast was not to soften their own hearts and plead for God’s mercy, but rather to make themselves look better than others, even to the point of wicked blows in their contention. That kind of fast cannot be expected to lead to an answer to prayer.

58:5 **wilt thou call this a fast.** Fasting that is done just to make the person look sincere, with bowed head and sackcloth and ashes, is not “an acceptable day to the Lord.”

58:6 **to loose the bands.** The verbs here all are related—loose, undo, let, break. These are things that we should do for others and that God in turn does for us as a blessing when we fast properly.

58:7 **deal thy bread to the hungry.** This is also what we are to do when fasting: take care of the needy, poor, and naked.

58:8 **thy light.** We are commanded to be the light of the world, but also the light we hold up to the world is Jesus himself.

58:9 **thou shalt cry, and he shall say.** Fasting appropriately opens the heavens and the channels of personal revelation as we give something up for something infinitely better.

58:9 **putting forth of the finger.** An ancient as well as a modern custom of giving insult.

58:10 **then shall thy light rise in obscurity.** As a light coming out of the darkness, so is someone whose fasting is pure and done for the right reasons.

58:11 **guide thee continually.** A great blessing of fasting is an increase of the Spirit.

58:11 **make fat thy bones.** ‘Fat bones’ refer to strong and healthy bones, as opposed to thin and brittle ones. The other blessings listed in the verse are similar in nature—blessings of prosperity and God’s care.

58:12 **The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths.** The final blessing of fasting is to be able to take a place that is wasted and restore it to its former glory.

BLESSINGS OF THE SABBATH (58:13-14)

Fasting and Sabbath worship often go together, as they do in this chapter. Both are distinguishing characteristics of the covenant people.

58:13 **call the sabbath a delight.** The word “delight” can also mean ‘exquisite pleasantness.’ To welcome the Sabbath as the great day of the week is a sign of someone committed to the covenant.

58:13 **not doing thine own ways.** This day above all is not about doing our will, but God’s.

58:14 **delight thyself in the Lord.** The blessings of faithful fasting and Sabbath worship are a greater relationship with the Lord as well as temporal success.

Do we thrill when we are fasting or when Sunday comes along, or is it a burden? Do we delight in those days or just survive until we can get back to our normal routine?

TRANSFORMING ISRAEL (59-60)

Chapters 59-60 take Israel through the transformation the Lord has in mind. First, she is sinning (59:1-8), then repenting (59:9-15a), then delivered (59:15b-21), gathered (60:1-9), rebuilt (60:10-13), enjoying posterity (60:14-18), and is finally in the Lord’s presence (60:19-22).

CONDEMNATION OF SIN (59:1-8)

59:2 **your iniquities have separated between you and your God.** The Lord has not changed, is not less powerful, is not deaf to pleas; instead, it is we that separate ourselves from God by our sinful acts.

59:5 **hatch cockatrice’ eggs.** A cockatrice is an adder or poisonous snake, with powerful venom right from the time they are hatched. So instead of avoiding these or even smashing them, they hatch them or eat them. They are playing with fire.

59:8 **The way of peace they know not.** The wicked do not know the path that leads to peace, but instead are stuck in “crooked paths” that have no justice.

REPENTANCE (59:9-15A)

59:9 **we wait for the light, but behold obscurity.** As Israel recognizes their iniquities, they are waiting for

light to come into their lives, but instead are groping in the dark like blind men. They roar like bears in pain, and mourn quietly like doves cooing (59:11).

59:12 ***our sins testify against us***. Moving on from recognition of sin, Israel feels sorrow and acknowledges that the sins have caused truth to be “fallen in the street” like a wounded soldier.

DELIVERANCE (59:15B-21)

59:16 At first, the Lord finds “no intercessor” for sinful Israel. But then he brings “salvation” (*yeshua*) to them, whose righteousness sustains him.

59:17 ***righteousness as a breastplate***. We usually give Paul credit for the metaphor of the armor of God, but Paul got it from Isaiah! In this case, the “intercessor” (59:16) puts on the armor of God in order to defend himself and do battle with the wicked and even the sins of the covenant people.

59:20 ***the Redeemer shall come to Zion***. The Savior will visit the repentant in Zion, the New Jerusalem. This is one of the scriptures Moroni quoted to Joseph Smith when he appeared to him (Parry, *Understanding*, 527).

59:21 ***thy seed’s seed***. God will give his word to his repentant people and it will be with them for generations (think of the Nephites after Christ’s appearances to them).

THE GLORY OF NEW JERUSALEM (60:1-22)

One of the key themes of the last chapters of Isaiah is that the Gentiles will be part of the covenant people in the last days. In D&C 109:60-65, Joseph Smith defines ‘Gentiles’ as the early members of the Church in this dispensation, and calls for blessings to come to the scattered remnants of Israel. Isaiah would call us Gentiles, yet many of us are part of scattered Israel or at least some Israelite blood. In other words, a Gentile in Isaiah’s day is someone not of the house of Israel; in our day, it is anyone who has not entered into the covenants of the Lord.

This chapter outlines the responsibilities and the blessings of the Gentile converts in the latter days. It

is addressed to the city of New Jerusalem; compare D&C 45:65-71 and Ether 13:4-10. Victor Ludlow provided a table that shows scriptures related to this chapter in other books, such as Zechariah, Ezekiel, Revelation, D&C, and more (Ludlow, 499-500; replicated in Parry, *Understanding*, 531).

GATHERED (60:1-9)

60:2 ***the darkness . . . gross darkness***. Verses 1-3 are a chiasmic (multi-level parallel) structure, with the center point being the darkness phrases in verse 2.

60:3 ***Gentiles shall come to the thy light***. After Israel has repented and been saved by the Intercessor, the whole world will see the difference and her leadership as a light to gather to.

60:5 ***thou shalt see, and flow together***. Israel and Gentile alike shall come together and see eye to eye.

60:9 ***bring thy sons from far***. Scattered Israel and Gentiles from the world over will join the house of Israel, bringing their treasures and wealth to build up Zion.

REBUILT (60:10-13)

60:11 ***thy gates shall be open continually***. With the Lord’s protection, there will be no need to close the gates at night (see also Revelation 21:25). Taking advantage of the peace, the work will go on day and night—the gathering and the building up of the kingdom.

60:13 ***make the place of my feet glorious***. The place of the Lord’s feet is Jerusalem and specifically his hold temple there.

ENJOYING POSTERITY (60:14-18)

60:14 ***shall come bending unto thee***. Israel’s former enemies will come in humility, bowing down out of respect.

60:17 ***for wood brass***. Redeemed Israel will bring their meager offerings and the Lord will upgrade each one—gold for brass, silver for iron, brass for wood, and iron for stones.

60:18 **call thy walls Salvation**. KJV translators understood the reference here and capitalized it. Salvation is *yeshua*, the mortal name of the Savior.

60:18 **and thy gates Praise**. This is the same name as the Psalms, songs of praise and devotion.

60:19 **The sun shall be no more they light**. The Lord is my Light!

60:20 **thy mourning shall be ended**. Mourning for her sins, Israel has suffered for many years, bringing great sadness upon her. The Lord promises that it will end as his light comes into their lives.

IN THE LORD'S PRESENCE (60:19-22)

FUTURE BLESSEDNESS OF ZION (61)

THE MISSION OF THE MESSIAH (61:1-3)

61:1 **the Lord hath anointed me**. These verses are best known as those quoted by Jesus in Nazareth (see Luke 4:16-22). The setting was near the beginning of Jesus' ministry. He returned to his home town of Nazareth and was invited to read in the synagogue. He chose (or had handed to him) the Isaiah scroll, and in Hebrew he read what we call Isaiah 61:1-2a. Then he sat down to teach and told them the scripture was fulfilled in himself. He taught much more (see their reaction in Luke 4:22—if that was all he said, they wouldn't have been impressed at his gracious words), and as they understood what he was claiming, they deemed it blasphemous and tried to stone him, but he miraculously passed through them and escaped, never to return to Nazareth again. Notice where Jesus stopped the quotation—he didn't mention the vengeance and mourning part, nor verse 3 about the blessing of Zion in the last days, because those are things that belong to the Millennial Messiah.

BLESSINGS TO RESTORED ISRAEL (61:4-9)

61:4 **build the old places**. When the Messiah comes, the former cities of Israel that are lying waste will be rebuilt and repaired, even those that have sat empty for generations.

61:5 **strangers**. Back to the theme of the Gentiles, here they are not only builders (60:10) but shepherds and farmers—in essence, they fill every productive part of society.

61:6 **Priests . . . Ministers**. Unlike Isaiah's day, many will hold the priesthood in the latter days.

61:7 **ye shall have double**. Israel shall have a double inheritance, making up for what was lost in previous generations.

61:9 **their seed shall be known**. The entire world will recognize Israel as the chosen of the Lord, the people "the Lord hath blessed."

A PSALM OF REJOICING (61:10-11)

61:10 **clothed me with the garments of salvation**. This is Zion or Israel speaking of what the Lord will do. The clothing relates to the temple but also picks up again the metaphor of the wedding; the words "salvation" and "righteousness" again are present, a constant theme in these chapters.

61:11 **righteousness and praise**. Look back at 60:18; the words are written on the walls and gates but also in the very earth and garden.

ZION'S DELIVERANCE (62:1 – 63:6)

BLESSINGS FOR ZION (62:1-12)

This chapter begins and ends with the personification of Jerusalem. It focuses on the gathering of the last days, which leads right into the discussion of the Second Coming in chapter 63.

62:2 **new name**. This name signifies a new level of commitment or new relationship with God. Examples abound in scripture—Abraham, Jacob, Simon bar Jonah, just to name three. Verse 4 gives two of the new names (replacing the old ones listed) and verse 12 then returns to this theme, telling us what some of the names are—The Holy People; The Redeemed of the Lord; Sought Out; The City not Forsaken.

62:4 **Hephzi-bah . . . Buelah**. See the footnotes for the meaning; the JST changes these to “Delightful” and “Union.” This is again the marriage covenant, the Lord taking Israel as a bride.

62:6 **watchmen upon they walls**. ‘I have given prophets and inspired men to warn and guide you.’

62:8 **sworn by his right hand**. The hand of covenant verifies his words—he will protect and bless Israel forever more.

62:10 **prepare ye the way**. Referring back to 57:14, the people are told to leave the city, built up the

road, remove the rocks, and lift up the ensign to call all who will come join them in worshipping the Lord.

62:11 **thy salvation cometh**. This is another allusion to Jesus who brings his reward with him and sees the results of his work before him.

THE LORD’S VENGEANCE IN THE SECOND COMING (63:1-6)

63:1 **from Edom, with dyed garments**. See D&C 133:46-48. “Edom” means ‘red’ and “Bozrah” means ‘fortress’ or ‘sheepfold.’ Both represent nations to the east. Christ will come to Israel from the east, with glorious, red garments, with power and greatness, being “mighty to save.”

63:3 **I have trodden the winepress alone**. Crushing grapes to make wine was a community affair because it was a tremendous amount of work. But the Savior has done it alone, both symbolizing his Atonement and that he alone has the power to save Israel from sin and punishment.

63:3 **their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments**. In Gethsemane and the first coming, the blood on his garments was his own. Now in the Second Coming, the blood is that of his enemies, the wicked.

PRAYER FOR DELIVERANCE (63:7 – 64:12)

PSALM OF MERCY (63:7-14)

63:7 **the lovingkindnesses of the Lord**. After a section on vengeance and judgment, this beautiful section is a praise of God’s mercy.

63:9 **In all their affliction he was afflicted**. The Savior took on our sins and afflictions in our behalf; this language is reminiscent of 53:4-6.

63:10 **But they rebelled**. The rest of this section harkens back to the Exodus when the children of Israel were rescued by the Lord but still rebelled against him. Three times the verses mention the Lord saving them from the sea, the water, and the

deep—symbolic of how sinful they were. Still he let his Spirit rest on them, thus glorifying his own name.

ISAIAH’S INTERCESSORY PRAYER (63:15-64:12)

This great prayer of Isaiah becomes the prayer of all Israel (see 64 chapter heading) and is echoed in the language of D&C 133:40-45.

63:17 **hast thou made us to err**. The JST changes this (see the footnote), like so many others verses, to show that the Lord doesn’t do these things, we do.

63:18 **but a little while**. Israel only possessed their land of inheritance for a relatively short time—a few hundred years.

63:19 **they were not called by thy name**. Israel's enemies did not make covenants with the Lord and thus did not take upon themselves his name (see Mosiah 5:10).

64:1 **rend the heavens**. The prophet calls upon the Lord to redeem Israel from her enemies, to show himself in power and might. To “rend the heavens” means to open it to the view of all the world, that they might see his holy habitation. Then when he comes down, his glory will be so powerful that it will even melt mountains.

64:4 **what he hath prepared for him that waiteth**. Paul quoted this in 1 Corinthians 2:9, though from the Greek Septuagint version (so compare the differences).

64:6 **our righteousnesses are as filthy rags**. The JST clarifies at the beginning of this verse, “But **we have sinned**, we are all as an unclean thing. . .” “Filthy rags” is better translated ‘bloody menstrual clothes,’ which were unclean under the Law of Moses. The sense of this verse is similar to Mosiah 3:19, saying that “the natural man is an enemy to God.”

64:8 **we are the clay**. We often think that Jeremiah used this imagery first (see Jeremiah 18:1-10), but here it is in Isaiah first.

64:11 **our beautiful house . . . is burned up**. Isaiah/Israel remembers the destruction of the temple (yet future in Isaiah's day but very real to the seer) and prays it will not happen again.

THE LORD ANSWERS ISRAEL'S PRAYER (65-66)

The final two chapters are the Lord's response to Isaiah's prayer (chapter 64). He starts by reminding Israel of their former iniquity but soon shifts into great promises of redemption and forgiveness.

THE INIQUITY OF ISRAEL (65:1-7)

65:1-2 These verses are changed extensively in the JST, though not shown in our footnotes:

1 I am ~~sought~~ **found** of them **who seek after me; I give unto all them that asked ask not for of me; I am not found of them that sought me not or that enquireth not after me: I said unto my servant, Behold me, behold look upon me, I will send you** unto a nation ~~that was~~ **are** not called by my name. 2 **For** I have spread out my hands all the day ~~unto to~~ a ~~rebellious~~ people, ~~which who~~ **walketh not in a way that was my ways and their works are evil and** not good, **and they walk** after their own thoughts;

The KJV message is that the Lord keeps trying to reach out to Israel even though they are rebellious. The JST turns the first verse into a positive message that those that seek the Lord will find him and be blessed by him, while verse 2 retains the sense of the Lord reaching out to a rebellious people, but the message is stronger and emphasizes the evil in their works.

65:5 **holier than thou**. It is from this verse in Isaiah that we get this phrase. The prophet speaks of those who act in hypocrisy, wanting to demonstrate their personal holiness but show the opposite by the very words.

65:7 **burned incense . . . blasphemed me**. Condemning both Isaiah's generation and their fathers, the Lord calls out their worship of other gods and the immorality of those practices.

BLESSINGS FOR THE RIGHTEOUS, CURSES FOR THE SINFUL (65:8-16)

The blessings are in verses 8-10 and the curses in verses 11-12. The two are then compared/contrasted in verses 13-16.

65:8 ***new wine is found in the cluster***. Isaiah returns to the metaphor of Israel as the vineyard (see Isaiah 5 and Jacob 5). In this case, the few good grapes will save the whole vineyard—“Destroy it not.”

65:9 ***a seed out of Jacob***. The remnant who will return to start Israel again.

65:10 ***Sharon . . . Achor***. Sharon is on the west edge of the land and Achor is on the east. This means that the entire land is safe.

65:11 ***that forget my holy mountain***. Several sins are listed, including promoting idolatry, but turning away from the temple and doing other things instead is a poignant one.

65:12 ***when I called, ye did not answer***. The Lord continues to call us to repentance, to come to him, to enjoy the blessings of salvation. Our sin is to allow that call to go unheeded.

65:14 ***my servants shall sing for joy***. Verses 13-16 contrast the blessings that will be enjoyed by the true servants of God compared to the misery of those who do not walk in the paths of righteousness—fed or hungry, rejoicing or ashamed, joy or sorrow, a good name or a cursed one.

THE MILLENNIAL EARTH (65:17-25)

See also D&C 101:23-31 and Revelation 19-21.

65:17 ***new heavens and a new earth***. John picked up this language in Revelation 21:1-2, 4, in discussing the change that will come upon God’s creations after the Second Coming.

65:19 ***I will rejoice in Jerusalem***. The city that had so often rebelled against the Lord in the past will now become his joy.

65:20 ***no more thence an infant of days***. Children shall not die at birth or in childhood (a source of great sadness then as it is today) but shall live to be a hundred years old—blessed if they are righteous, cursed if that longevity never leads them to repent.

65:22 ***long enjoy the work of their hands***. With peace filling the earth, no one will come and take their homes or farms, they will live long, and have abundant blessings from their own efforts (notice that even though God reigns he doesn’t just hand out the food or housing).

65:24 ***before they call, I will answer***. The Lord’s response to prayer will be even before the request is made, since he knows our hearts even before we express it.

65:25 ***the lion shall eat straw***. Perhaps everyone will be a vegetarian in the Millennium? The point is that tension even between animals will cease.

THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL BE JUSTIFIED, THE WICKED PUNISHED (66:1-6)

66:2 ***poor and of a contrite spirit***. What I really want from my people, says God, is humility, and an acknowledgement that the Lord has made all things.

66:3 **as if he slew a man**. The Lord castigates false worship. Sacrifice was required in Isaiah's day but it did not good to kill an animal if it was done with a false heart or without remembering the real reason for the sacrifice—to point to the future Messiah and Savior.

66:4 **choose their delusions**. "I also will choose harsh treatment for them" (NIV).

66:5 **they shall be ashamed**. The Lord assures the patient righteous that their efforts will be justified one day and the wicked that hate them will be ashamed of their own actions.

BLESSINGS TO ZION (66:7-14A)

66:7 **Before she travailed, she brought forth**. Zion will come forth so suddenly and miraculously in the last days that it will be like a woman who had a baby but didn't go through labor. Compare to Revelation 12:1-7, especially the JST changes.

66:12 **peace to her like a river**. Returning to the language of 48:18, the prophet compares the peace and glory of the last days to flowing rivers and streams.

THE LORD SHALL RETURN IN POWER AND GLORY (66:14B-18A)

66:15 **the Lord will come with fire**. Fire is the key word in these verses, representing the anger and judgment of the Lord at his coming.

GATHERING FROM ALL NATIONS (66:18B-21)

66:18 **I will gather all nations and tongues**. Missionary work will gather the righteous from all nations, as missionaries go out to the farthest reaches of the earth.

66:20 **an offerings unto the Lord out of all nations**. Even Gentiles will hold the priesthood and participate in the temple ordinances.

BLESSINGS OF THE MILLENNIAL DAY (66:22-24)

66:22 **shall remain before me**. The ultimate triumph of God, as represented by a new heaven and earth, will be permanently installed and always in his eyes.

66:23 **all flesh come to worship before me**. All flesh will worship God and acknowledge his power and victory over the wicked.

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