

## Study 113: Isaiah, Part 69

### Isaiah 66

“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?

<sup>2</sup>Has not my hand made all these things,  
and so they came into being?”  
declares the Lord.

“**These are the ones I look on with favor:  
those who are humble and contrite in spirit,  
and who tremble at my word.** [cp. the character of Jesus. **Matt 11:29-30; Phil 2:5-8**]

<sup>3</sup>But whoever sacrifices a bull  
is like one who kills a person,  
and whoever offers a lamb  
is like one who breaks a dog’s neck;  
whoever makes a grain offering  
is like one who presents pig’s blood,  
and whoever burns memorial incense  
is like one who worships an idol.  
They have chosen their own ways,  
and they delight in their abominations;  
<sup>4</sup>so I also will choose harsh treatment for them  
and will bring on them what they dread.

For when I called, no one answered,  
when I spoke, no one listened.  
They did evil in my sight  
and chose what displeases me.”

<sup>5</sup>Hear the word of the Lord,  
you who tremble at his word:  
“**Your own people who hate you,**  
and exclude you because of my name, have said,

‘Let the Lord be glorified,  
that we may see your joy!’  
Yet they will be put to shame.

<sup>6</sup>**Hear that uproar from the city,  
hear that noise from the temple!**

**It is the sound of the Lord  
repaying his enemies all they deserve.**

[cp. Josephus’ *Wars of the Jews*, 6:5:3:

Moreover, at that feast which we call **Pentecost**, as the priests were going by night into the inner [court of the temple,] as their custom was, to perform their sacred ministrations, they said that, in the first place, they felt a quaking, and heard a great noise, and after that they heard a sound as of a great multitude, saying, “**Let us remove hence.**”

But, what is still more terrible, there was one Jesus, the son of Ananus, a plebeian and a husbandman, who, four years before the war began [AD 62], and at a time when the city was in very great **peace and prosperity** [cp. **1 Thess 5:3**], came to that feast whereon it is our custom for every one to make tabernacles to God in the temple, began on a sudden to cry aloud, “**A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the holy house, a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides, and a voice against this whole people!**” [cp. **Jer 7:34**] This was his cry, as he went about by day and by night, in all the lanes of the city. However, certain of the most eminent among the populace had great indignation at this dire cry of his, and took up the man, and gave him a great number of severe stripes; yet did not he either say any thing for himself, or any thing peculiar

to those that chastised him, but still went on with the same words which he cried before. Hereupon our rulers, supposing, as the case proved to be, that this was a sort of divine fury in the man, brought him to the Roman procurator, where he was whipped till his bones were laid bare; yet he did not make any supplication for himself, nor shed any tears, but turning his voice to the most lamentable tone possible, at every stroke of the whip his answer was, “**Woe, woe to Jerusalem!**” [cp. **Rev 8:13**] And when Albinus (for he was then our procurator) asked him, who he was, and whence he came, and why he uttered such words, he made no manner of reply to what he said, but still did not leave off...till Albinus took him to be a madman, and dismissed him.

Now, during all the time that passed before the war began, this man...every day uttered these lamentable words, ...“Woe, woe to Jerusalem!” ...indeed no other than a melancholy presage of what was to come. This cry of his was the loudest at the festivals; and he continued this...for seven years and five months, without growing hoarse, or being tired therewith, until the very time that he saw his presage in earnest fulfilled in our siege, when it ceased; for as he was going round upon the wall, he cried out with his utmost force, “Woe, woe to the city again, and to the people, and to the holy house!” And just as he added at the last, “Woe, woe to myself also!” there came a stone out of one of the engines, and smote him, and killed him immediately; and as he was uttering the very same presages he gave up the ghost.

See also: **Rev 22:12**: “Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done.”]

<sup>7</sup>“Before she goes into labor,  
she gives birth;

before the pains come upon her,  
she delivers a son.

<sup>8</sup>Who has ever heard of such things?  
Who has ever seen things like this?

Can a country be born in a day  
or a nation be brought forth in a moment?

Yet no sooner is Zion in labor  
than she gives birth to her children.

<sup>9</sup>Do I bring to the moment of birth  
and not give delivery?” says the Lord.

“Do I close up the womb  
when I bring to delivery?” says your God.

<sup>10</sup>“Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad for her,  
all you who love her;  
rejoice greatly with her,  
all you who mourn over her.

<sup>11</sup>For you will nurse and be satisfied  
at her comforting breasts;

you will drink deeply  
and delight in her overflowing abundance.”

<sup>12</sup>For this is what the Lord says:

“I will extend peace to her like a river,  
and **the wealth of nations** like a flooding stream;

[cp. **Rev 21:24-26**: “The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it.”]

you will nurse and be carried on her arm  
and dandled on her knees.

<sup>13</sup>As a mother comforts her child,  
so will I comfort you;  
and **you will be comforted over Jerusalem.**”

[cp. **Heb 12:18-24**:

<sup>18</sup>You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; <sup>19</sup>to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, <sup>20</sup>because they could not bear what was commanded: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death." [Ex 19:12-13] <sup>21</sup>The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear." [Deut 9:19]

<sup>22</sup>But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in **joyful assembly**, <sup>23</sup>**to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven**. You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, <sup>24</sup>to Jesus the mediator of a **new covenant**, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.]

<sup>14</sup>When you see this, your heart will rejoice  
and you will flourish like grass;  
the hand of the Lord will be made known to his servants,  
but his fury will be shown to his foes.

<sup>15</sup>**See, the Lord is coming with fire,  
and his chariots are like a whirlwind;  
he will bring down his anger with fury,  
and his rebuke with flames of fire.**

<sup>16</sup>**For with fire and with his sword  
the Lord will execute judgment on all people,  
and many will be those slain by the Lord.**

[This is similar in character to Zech 14, in which Jerusalem is being attacked, and its people plundered, yet God is simultaneously delivering His people. The former is happening in the physical realm, the latter in the spiritual. Both actions are the result of a covenant either ending or beginning (Old & New). Those being plundered and killed are not considered God's people.]

[cp. **2 Thess 1:3-10**:

<sup>3</sup>We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love all of you have for one another is increasing. <sup>4</sup>Therefore, among God's churches we boast about **your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring**.

<sup>5</sup>All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result **you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering**. <sup>6</sup>God is just: **He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you** <sup>7</sup>**and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels**. <sup>8</sup>**He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus**. <sup>9</sup>**They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might** <sup>10</sup>**on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people** and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. **This includes you**, because you believed our testimony to you.

The Jewish historian, **Josephus** says:

On the twenty-first of the month Artemisium [The Feast of Tabernacles, autumn of AD 62], there appeared a miraculous phenomenon, passing belief. Indeed, what I am about to relate would, I imagine, have been deemed a fable, were it not for the narratives of eyewitnesses and for the subsequent calamities which deserved to be so signalized. For before sunset throughout all parts of the county [everywhere throughout Judea] **chariots were seen in the air and armed battalions hurtling through the clouds and encompassing the cities**. (*Wars of the Jews*, 5:5:3, Loeb translation 6:298).

The Roman historian, **Tacitus**, confirms this account of Josephus:

Prodigies had occurred, but their expiation by the offering of victims or solemn vows is held to be unlawful by a nation which is the slave of superstition and the enemy of true beliefs. **In the sky appeared a vision of armies in conflict, of glittering armour**. A sudden lightning flash from the clouds lit up the Temple. The doors of the holy place abruptly opened, a superhuman voice was heard to declare that the gods were leaving it, and in the same instant came the rushing tumult of their departure. Few people placed a sinister

interpretation upon this. The majority were convinced that the ancient scriptures of their priests alluded to the present as the very time when the Orient would triumph and from Judaea would go forth men destined to rule the world. (*Histories*, Book 5, v. 13. Written about AD 115).

**Philostratus**, in *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, said:

After Titus had taken Jerusalem, and when the country all round was filled with corpses, the neighboring people offered him a crown; but he disclaimed any such honor to himself, saying that it was not himself that had accomplished this exploit, but that he had merely lent his arms to God, who had so manifested his wrath....

<sup>17</sup> “Those who consecrate and purify themselves to go into the gardens, following one who is among those who eat the flesh of pigs, rats and other unclean things—they will meet their end together with the one they follow,” declares the Lord.

<sup>18</sup> “And I, because of what they have planned and done, am about to come and **gather the people of all nations and languages, and they will come and see my glory.**

[Note: The meaning of the Hebrew for this clause is uncertain. The Berean Study Bible renders it: “For I know their works and thoughts; the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues, and they will come and see My glory.” cp. **Matt 25:31-34, 41, 46:**

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. <sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. <sup>33</sup> He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

<sup>34</sup> “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.

<sup>41</sup> “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

<sup>46</sup> “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”]

<sup>19</sup> “**I will set a sign among them, and I will send some of those who survive to the nations**—to Tarshish, to the Libyans and Lydians (famous as archers), to Tubal and Greece, and to the distant islands that have not heard of my fame or seen my glory. **They will proclaim my glory among the nations.** <sup>20</sup> And they will bring all your people, from all the nations, to my holy mountain in Jerusalem as an offering to the Lord—on horses, in chariots and wagons, and on mules and camels,” says the Lord. “They will bring them, as the Israelites bring their grain offerings, to the temple of the Lord in ceremonially clean vessels. <sup>21</sup> **And I will select some of them also to be priests and Levites,**” says the Lord. [cp. **Ex 19:6; 1 Pet 2:9; Rev. 1:6**]

<sup>22</sup> “As the **new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me,**” declares the Lord, “**so will your name and descendants endure.**” <sup>23</sup> From one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me,” says the Lord. <sup>24</sup> “And they will go out and look on the dead bodies of those who rebelled against me; the worms that eat them will not die, the fire that burns them will not be quenched, and they will be loathsome to all mankind.”

**Charles H. Spurgeon** said: “Did you ever regret the absence of the burnt-offering, or the red heifer, or any one of the sacrifices and rites of the Jews? Did you ever pine for the Feast of tabernacles, or the dedication? No, because, though these were like the **old heavens and earth** to the Jewish believers, they have passed away, and **we now live under the New Heavens and a New Earth**, so far as the dispensation of divine teaching is concerned. The substance is come, and the shadow has gone: and we do not remember it.” (*Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 37, p. 354).