

In Isaiah 64, Isaiah offered up a prayer for mercy. The last verses of that chapter pleaded with God not to let the temple be destroyed in the manner Isaiah had prophetically seen (Isaiah 64:11-12). The final chapter of Isaiah begins with God declaring why the temple will be destroyed and goes on to explain the changes that will take place.

*<sup>1</sup> Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest?"<sup>2a</sup> All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the LORD.* Isaiah 66:1-2a Even though God gave the design for the tabernacle, after which the temple was modeled, we need to understand that God cannot be confined to a building, nor is any human structure sufficiently glorious enough for the God of creation. Solomon acknowledged that when He built the temple (1Kings 8:27). After all, God's real throne is heaven itself, though even the universe cannot contain Him. Now that we know the universe is larger than we can comprehend, that should give us an even greater sense of awe regarding the wonder of God's magnificence (Psalm 19:1).

If the earth itself is only sufficient to be God's footstool, how can we build a house for Him? Everything we have to work with is merely a tiny piece of His creation. The great cathedrals of Europe were made to declare God's glory, and they are inspiring. But in this verse God is saying the works of man falls infinitely short of being glorious enough for Him. We call our church a sanctuary or house of worship, and it is those things, but we must never call the church building God's house. That demeans God. This tiny structure, as nice as we have tried to make it and as blessed as we are to have it, is merely a shelter from the weather so we can focus on corporate worship. One day it will probably become a shop with tourist trinkets.

As a young boy, I worshiped at the corner of Apple and Jordan. That building is now a tourist shop. The members of that church built Crestview Community Church. But one day all these church buildings will be gone (2 Peter 3:10). The Antichrist will see that they become something else or a place to worship him. But that should not alarm us. It won't affect God or our worship of Him.

*<sup>2b</sup> But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.* Isaiah 66:2b Here is the material that God is using to build His church, the humble who are contrite in spirit and tremble at His Word. They are the living stones that Peter wrote about. 1 Peter 2:5 *<sup>5</sup> you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.* Paul described the same thing in Ephesians 2:19-22 *<sup>19</sup> So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, <sup>21</sup> in whom the*

**Commented [PW1]: Isaiah 64:11-12 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> Our holy and beautiful house, where our fathers praised you, has been burned by fire, and all our pleasant places have become ruins.

<sup>12</sup> Will you restrain yourself at these things, O LORD? Will you keep silent, and afflict us so terribly?

**Commented [PW2]: 1 Kings 8:27 (ESV)**

<sup>27</sup> "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built!

**Commented [PW3]: Psalm 19:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

**Commented [PW4]: 2 Peter 3:10 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

*whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup> In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.*

I believe Peter and Paul saw that truth from this passage in Isaiah, and of course, through Jesus' teaching. Jesus said that if we love Him, we will obey His teaching and He will make His home in us (John 14:23). The ones who love Jesus and obey His teaching are the humble and contrite ones. It is pride that keeps us from Jesus. Pride tells us we have no need to repent. Pride says we owe our Creator nothing and don't need to obey anyone (Psalm 10:4). **Everyone will end up one side or the other eventually, humble and contrite or proud and hardened toward God and His Word.**

Are you a living stone that God is using to build His eternal temple? Would those who really know you describe you as humble and contrite? Do you tremble at God's Word? Recently I read a scripture that clarified to me that my mindset on an issue was ungodly. I grabbed hold of that verse and memorized it. When my mind would go back to that former way of thinking I would quote the verse to myself, renewing my mind with the Word (Romans 12:2). I tremble at the Word. We must realize how desperately we need its correction to keep from going astray in thought and action.

<sup>3</sup> *"He who slaughters an ox is like one who kills a man; he who sacrifices a lamb, like one who breaks a dog's neck; he who presents a grain offering, like one who offers pig's blood; he who makes a memorial offering of frankincense, like one who blesses an idol. These have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations;* Isaiah 66:3 The Lord continues with the reason the captivity had to come. Worship in the temple was anything but humble, contrite in spirit, and trembling at God's Word. While the people went through the motions of worship, God saw their hearts. Going through the right motions for the wrong reason is abominable to God (Isaiah 1:11-13). That is because it distorts and misrepresents true worship. Unbelievers see it and say, "If that is what being a Christian is like, I don't want to have anything to do with it." The result is inoculation against the teaching of the Gospel.

**Obedience must come out of a heart of love for God to be acceptable to God.** It is an abomination to God if it comes out of duty, or trying to earn favor with God, or to manipulate God. In the New Testament this is expressed as the battle between grace and works. Paul and Barnabas went out as missionaries to the Gentiles and planted some thriving Gentile churches. When they came back to Antioch they were soon faced with former Pharisees who had become Christians in Jerusalem. These men had come to tell the Gentiles that they had to be circumcised to be saved (Acts 15:1).

Nothing has changed in 2000 years. There will always be someone telling us we aren't saved unless we do something their way, or have a particular gift, or practice a certain ritual, or something else they believe is necessary. **Salvation is faith in the grace of God offered to us through Calvary plus NOTHING!** The love that fills our hearts for God's grace freely given to us will cause us to want live for Him and express the

**Commented [PW5]: John 14:23 (ESV)**

<sup>23</sup> Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

**Commented [PW6]: Psalm 10:4 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> In the pride of his face the wicked does not seek him; all his thoughts are, "There is no God."

**Commented [PW7]: Romans 12:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

**Commented [PW8]: Isaiah 1:11-13 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> "What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the LORD; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats.

<sup>12</sup> "When you come to appear before me, who has required of you this trampling of my courts?

<sup>13</sup> Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations—I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly.

**Commented [PW9]: Acts 15:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."

gifts He gives us, but in no way should we consider our actions as something that satisfies His justice. Only Jesus' death on the cross can do that. That is the conviction of the humble and contrite in spirit who tremble at His Word.

The last part of verse three reminds us of the song, "I did it my way!" Pride puts our own ways above God's ways. Man's way delights in sin to our own destruction and damnation. Our way leads to hell. His way leads to eternal delight in heaven with Him.

*<sup>4</sup> I also will choose harsh treatment for them and bring their fears upon them, because when I called, no one answered, when I spoke, they did not listen; but they did what was evil in my eyes and chose that in which I did not delight.*" Isaiah 66:4 God deals with us harshly to get us to see our sin and turn from our wicked ways. He will bring that which we fear upon us if we do not answer when He calls. This is because He loves us and will act for our eternal good.

The indictment of verse 3 is the same message we saw in chapter one. Isaiah is rounding out the book by saying that even after all his prophecies, nothing has changed. People still refuse to listen. They won't answer God's call to turn from their ways. We see this message to our human weakness again and again. God called them through the prophets (Hebrews 1:1-3). He calls us through preaching of the Word and the voice of the Holy Spirit. Will you answer? That is the most important message God has given, "Hear me!" That is what God said on the Mount of Transfiguration. *"This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him!"* (Matthew 17:5)

Judah as a nation refused to answer or listen. They made deliberate choice to go against God and His ways. They chose that in which God abhorred. We always have this choice before us. Will we be a delight to God, choosing what is good, listening to Him, or will we refuse to listen and go our own way?

*<sup>5</sup> Hear the word of the LORD, you who tremble at his word: "Your brothers who hate you and cast you out for my name's sake have said, 'Let the LORD be glorified, that we may see your joy'; but it is they who shall be put to shame.* Isaiah 66:5 Now to those who do hear, who do tremble at His Word, the Lord has a warning. The sincere, faithful ones are always persecuted by those with a religious spirit. Jesus must have had this verse in mind when He uttered John 16:2-3 *<sup>2</sup>They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. <sup>3</sup> And they will do these things because they have not known the Father, nor me.* Those who are caught up in thinking their works please God will always persecute those who worship in Spirit and in truth, who know it is all by God's grace. The reason for some persecution is that our example convicts, and for others it is because we refuse to conform. The later actually think they are serving God when they slander you. Some Jews believed it was their duty to God to follow Paul from town to town and stir up opposition toward him to the point of even having him stoned (Acts 14:19).

**Commented [PW10]: Hebrews 1:1-3 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,

<sup>2</sup> but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

<sup>3</sup> He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

**Commented [PW11]: Acts 14:19 (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup> But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having persuaded the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead.

<sup>6</sup> *"The sound of an uproar from the city! A sound from the temple! The sound of the LORD, rendering recompense to his enemies!"* Isaiah 66:6 Isaiah prophetically hears what is coming, God judging those in the temple for their hypocrisy and pride. It happened when the Babylonians came, and again in AD 70. The last stronghold was the temple. Those who fled to it for safety had rejected Christ and believed that God would save them if they just came to His house for refuge. But as God declared at the beginning of the chapter, His house wasn't in their hearts or in that building.

<sup>7</sup> *"Before she was in labor she gave birth; before her pain came upon her she delivered a son."* Isaiah 66:7 Now the subject changes to the birth of the church. The 120 were in the upper room crying out for the Promise of the Father. Boom! The mighty rushing wind comes, tongues of fire dance over their heads. They go out to the crowd gathered, and after a short sermon the church is 3120 souls (Acts 2:41)!

<sup>8</sup> *"Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall a land be born in one day? Shall a nation be brought forth in one moment? For as soon as Zion was in labor she brought forth her children."* Isaiah 66:8 This new nation is the family of God, all those who by faith have trusted in God for their salvation. The 120 were on Zion. You could say they were Zion for they had received the Words of Jesus. He called and they answered. He spoke and they listened and believed and the church was born.

Some people interpret this as Israel coming out of captivity in Egypt or the return from captivity in Babylon. Today some apply it to the formation of Israel in 1948. I believe the message is really about the day of Pentecost. That was the solution to Israel's hypocrisy and to the hypocrisy of those with a religious spirit today. They need the Holy Spirit, who convicts us of our pride, causing us to be contrite in spirit, and to tremble at His Word (Isaiah 6:5).

<sup>9</sup> *"Shall I bring to the point of birth and not cause to bring forth?" says the LORD; "shall I, who cause to bring forth, shut the womb?" says your God.* Isaiah 66:9 Did Jesus come and nothing change? Was God going to give mankind the greatest revelation of Himself to no avail? Or was Pentecost the Kingdom of God coming to earth in the hearts of those who received Jesus? We've been reborn to be the habitation of God by His Spirit! Hallelujah?!

<sup>10</sup> *"Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her, all you who love her; rejoice with her in joy, all you who mourn over her;"* Isaiah 66:10 Jerusalem is the city of peace, the people of God. The city will be inhabited by the children of God (John 1:12). Jesus will reign in our midst. All who mourn for what the city has become, and all who rejoice in her rich history and what God has done there will rejoice with her in joy. Finally it will be the city God intends. We will be the people God created us to be.

<sup>11</sup> *that you may nurse and be satisfied from her consoling breast; that you may drink deeply with delight from her glorious abundance."* Isaiah 66:11 During Jesus' millennial

**Commented [PW12]: Acts 2:41 (ESV)**

<sup>41</sup> So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

**Commented [PW13]: Isaiah 6:5 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"

reign, the whole earth will be nourished from the spiritual milk that flows from Jerusalem. The Word will go forth from Jerusalem to an extent we have never seen. Every question we have in Scripture will be answered. Every misinterpretation clarified. There are some very good teachers of God's Word, but we haven't seen anything yet! The rich, deep treasures in God's Word will sparkle with clarity we have yet to see.

*<sup>12</sup> For thus says the LORD: "Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the nations like an overflowing stream; and you shall nurse, you shall be carried upon her hip, and bounced upon her knees.* Isaiah 66:12 We see this description of Jerusalem during the millennium in Zechariah and Revelation as well. The nations of the world will want to honor Jesus. They will want to come like children come to their parent for love and to be spiritually fed.

*<sup>13</sup> As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.* Isaiah 66:13 The world will come for comfort like the comfort of a mother toward her child. All who seek the comfort of the Lord will find it in Jerusalem. We go to the Lord by faith right now and receive very real comfort (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17). But then it won't have to be by faith. It will be a present physical comfort from the Lord Himself.

*<sup>14</sup> You shall see, and your heart shall rejoice; your bones shall flourish like the grass; and the hand of the LORD shall be known to his servants, and he shall show his indignation against his enemies.* Isaiah 66:14 Our faith will be visible. Our hearts will overflow with joy. Bones flourishing refers to being healthy and tranquil (Proverbs 14:6). God's hand is His provision and aid. The servants of the Lord will experience that provision and assistance, while His enemies will know His indignation. Even during the millennium there will be those who refuse to listen and do not tremble at His Word. How accountable they will be in that day when truth is abundantly clear. I trust that you are among the humble and contrite who tremble at His Word. If you are not, turn to Him today. Know the comfort and tranquility that only He can give.

#### Questions

- 1 Why can't we build a house good enough for God?
- 2 With what material is God building His house?
- 3 To whom does God look?
- 4 Why does God hate ritual without heart?
- 5 What do we need to add to Calvary?
- 6 What's wrong with "my way"?
- 7 What is the indictment against Judah?
- 8 What is the choice God gives us?
- 9 How did Jesus use verse 5?
- 10 What was born in a day?
- 11 What is the theme of verses 7-12?

#### Commented [PW14]: 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 (ESV)

<sup>16</sup> Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace,  
<sup>17</sup> comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.

#### Commented [PW15]: Proverbs 14:30 (ESV)

<sup>30</sup> A tranquil heart gives life to the flesh, but envy makes the bones rot.