

Isaiah 1-5 Introduction How can one be spared judgement and live happily ever after?	Isaiah 6-39 New Creation God will rule over a new, perfect and eternal creation	Isaiah 40-55 New relationship God will restore his people from exile to a permanent relationship	Isaiah 56-66 Who God will choose the humble and reject the proud
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Isaiah 66:1-24 (NIVUK)

Sunday 17 May 2026

66 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?
²Has not my hand made all these things,
and so they came into being?’ declares the LORD.

‘These are the ones I look on with favour:
those who are humble and contrite in spirit,
and who tremble at my word.

³But 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;
⁴so 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.’

⁵Hear 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.

⁶Hear that uproar from the city,
hear that noise from the temple!
It is the sound of the LORD
repaying his enemies all they deserve.

1. YHWH will judge those who are not humble and contrite (66:1-6)

a. ‘I am the creator...’

‘...and I want people who are humble and crippled in spirit!’

b. ‘for the performatively religious...’

‘...harsh judgement is coming!’

c. ‘for pretenders who mock my true tremblers...’

‘...my judgement will come!’



Isaiah 56-66	<u>56:1-8</u>	<u>56:9-57:21</u>	<u>58:1-14</u>	<u>59:1-21</u>	<u>60:1-22</u>	<u>61:1-11</u>	<u>62:1-12</u>
Who gets in?	Any humble 'outsider'	The lowly and contrite, even if extremely wicked	The selfless, not the selfish	Jews who acknowledge their many sins	In wealth, comfort and luxury	With no more sadness	In a secure relationship with God
Where do they end up?							

2. YHWH promises instant joy and peace (66:7-14)

a. salvation will come quickly

b. salvation is certain

c. loads of joy and peace!

⁷ 'Before she goes into labour,
she gives birth;
before the pains come upon her,
she delivers a son.

⁸ 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 labour
than she gives birth to her children.

⁹ '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.

¹⁰ 'Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad for her,
all you who love her;
rejoice greatly with her,
all you who mourn over her.

¹¹ For you will feed and be satisfied
at her comforting breasts;
you will drink deeply
and delight in her overflowing abundance.'

¹² 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;
you will feed and be carried on her arm
and dandled on her knees.

¹³ As a mother comforts her child,
so will I comfort you;
and you will be comforted over Jerusalem.'

¹⁴ 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.

Unique angle

When it comes to eternal life imagery, diversity is Isaiah's greatest strength. What distinct themes or ideas shine through 66:7-14 that we don't see elsewhere?

<u>63:1-6</u> On YHWH's side, after he executes his enemies	<u>63:7-64:12</u> Those who pray like Isaiah's model humble prayer	<u>65:1-16</u> The humble, not the proud	<u>65:17-25</u> In a wonderful New Creation (compilation!)	<u>66:1-6</u> Those with humility, not external religion	<u>66:7-14</u> In YHWH's peace and flourishing	<u>66:15-24</u> On the right side of YHWH's judgement day
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¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ For with fire and with his sword
the LORD will execute judgment on all people,
and many will be those slain by the LORD.

¹⁷ '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.

¹⁸ 'And I, because of what they have planned and done,
am about to come^a
and gather the people of all nations and languages,
and they will come and see my glory.

¹⁹ 'I will set a sign among them,
and I will send some of those who survive to the nations
– to Tarshish, to the Libyans^b 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.

²⁰ 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.

²¹ And I will select some of them also to be priests and Levites,'
says the LORD.

3. YHWH's judgement day (66:15-24)

a. brutal judgement day for rebels

b. a global gathering of God's faithful

Tarshish, Pul, Lydia, Tubal & Greece
After God's 'reset' with Noah and the flood, in **Genesis 10** we see many hostile and divided nations being formed.
But in **Isaiah 66:19**, we see a reversal of that as God's people are gathered in and united together from faraway nations.

^a The meaning of the Hebrew for this clause is uncertain.

^b Some Septuagint manuscripts *Put* (Libyans); Hebrew *Pul*

²² ‘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.

²³ From one New Moon to another
and from one Sabbath to another,
all mankind will come and bow down before me,’
says the LORD.

²⁴ ‘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.’

Final verse

Isaiah could have finished his book in a
more cuddly, joyful way, e.g. 65:25

‘They will neither harm nor destroy on
all my holy mountain,’ says the LORD.

Why do you think Isaiah ends instead with a
more stark, haunting approach?

For reflection on Isaiah 66

- 66:1-6 1. What particular imagery did you find striking? Why?
 2. How easy would it be to act *performatively* as a member of ABC?
 3. How does the passage persuade you personally away from *performative* or *pretend* faith,
 and towards a *humble* attitude towards God?
- 66:7-14 4. To what extent do you consider Jesus’ return as quick (66:7-8) and certain (66:9)?
 5. How do you feel about the imagery in 66:10-14?
 6. What current world problem(s) does 66:7-14 help solve? (cf. no more _____)
- 66:15-24 7. Suppose you were to memorise 66:15-17 for your own edification. What obstacles would
 you experience?
 8. What do you appreciate about the way Isaiah writes about God’s global gathering of his
 people in 66:18-23? What do you need help to appreciate?
 9. How do you feel about the way Isaiah ends with 66:24? How does it help you with the
 attitude of *humility*?
- Prayer 10. Where do you need to repent or pray?
 11. How might your church family help you?
 12. Having finished studying Isaiah on Sundays at ABC, how do you plan to re-read and
 reflect on it in the coming months ahead?

Mark 9:47-49

And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with
one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, ⁴⁸ where “the worms that eat them do not die, and
the fire is not quenched.”^c ⁴⁹ Everyone will be salted with fire.

^c Isaiah 66:24

Next Sunday (24 May):

- New 5-week series *Gospel Logic*
- Isaiah 40:12-26
- No car parking restrictions