

FPFWC Christian Development



The Prophets Proclaim God's Power

June 2023

Summer Quarter

June 10, 2023

God's Kingdom of Peace

SCRIPTURE TEXT – Isaiah 65:17-25

ICE BREAKER –

1. What does God inspire in us when He helps us?
2. What promise can encourage you the next time you feel that you've worked or labored in vain?

Key Verse: “The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.”—Isaiah 65:25

LESSON BACKGROUND

Isaiah 63–66 is identifiable as a unit of thought. These chapters echo the problem of human failings addressed in chapters 56–59, but they don't stop there. They go on to add elements of hope because of the power of God. In so doing, chapters 63–66 contrast human inability to *be* righteous with God's divine ability to *produce* righteousness.

The backdrop is again that of what the people in Babylonian captivity—several decades in the future from the time Isaiah prophesied—would need as hopeful assurances of better days (see lesson 1). When we speak of that exile, we take care to distinguish it from the Assyrian exile of the 10 tribes of northern Israel in 722 BC (2 Kings 17:6). The two tribes of southern Israel, collectively known as Judah, came under Babylonian dominance in about 609 BC (24:1–7). The Babylonians (also known as the Chaldeans) tightened the screws in 597 BC when Jerusalem surrendered after a siege and suffered a partial exile (24:8–20). The final straw was the wholesale deportation (exile) to Babylon in 586 BC.

The impact of that exile can be seen by piecing together the texts, among others, of 2 Kings 25; 2 Chronicles 36:15–21; Nehemiah 1:1–3; Psalm 137; Jeremiah 52; Lamentations; Ezekiel 4:1–24:14; Daniel 1:1–2; and 9:1–19. In particular, the last of these passages notes that (1) Jerusalem's desolation would last 70 years, (2) the people of Judah and Jerusalem had brought the destruction on themselves by refusing to obey God, (3) the curses poured out on the Judeans were exactly what had been predicted in the Law of Moses, and (4) God had kept His promise to inflict such punishment. The predictions of punishment via exile are found in Leviticus 26:27–33; Deuteronomy 4:25–28; and 28:64–68 (compare Nehemiah 1:8; Jeremiah 9:13–16; 15:1–2, 14; Ezekiel 12:15; 20:23–24; Zechariah 7:13–14).

LESSON COMMENTARY

65:17–25. At the outset, *God's glory descends with a new creation for His people*, a reference to what He does at the conclusion of the millennial kingdom

and the start of the eternal state. God announces that there will be a final judgment that will destroy all that was and remake the heavens and the earth into a place of peace, harmony, and order. Jerusalem will be remade so that it becomes God's delight (vv. 19–20). Although it is possible for people to **die** in the messianic age (the millennial kingdom), people will live much longer and premature death will be banished (v. 20). This is possible because at the return of Jesus the Messiah, when He judges the nations, compared to separating sheep and goats, the redeemed nations will enter the kingdom without yet having been glorified (Mt 25:34). In the same way, when Israel calls for the Lord Jesus to save them at the end of the future tribulation, they will be redeemed and enter the kingdom without glorified or resurrected bodies (cf. Zch 12:10; Rm 11:25–27). Thus, these peoples will all be able to reproduce and, as Is 65:20 indicates, even **die**. Even so, they will live much longer in kingdom conditions.

At that time, the land will be secure from enemies, free from fears of having **another inhabit** or bearing **children for calamity** (vv. 21–23). The people will experience the closeness of God who **will answer** and **will hear** (v. 24), and all creation will exhibit an unprecedented peace, free from **evil or harm** (v. 25). Even the animal kingdom will change, removing the curse on it, so that predators will become herbivores. One aspect of the animal world will remain—serpents will still eat **dust**. This will be a perpetual reminder of the curse on the serpent (Gn 3:14), fulfilling the promise that the serpent would be “more cursed” than the rest of the animal kingdom. The picture of the new creation is a powerful statement of the restoration of God's order. In the first creation, God made an idyllic environment in which the entire world worked together to achieve harmony in accordance with God's wisdom and will. The second creation represents a return to this state that will allow all God's people to glorify Him forever.

LESSON NUGGET – The Regeneration – That is what Jesus called the kingdom God has prepared for His people (Matthew 19:28). The blessings named are in contrast to the judgments listed in Deuteronomy 28:15ff. It will be a time of joy and fulfillment when the blessing of the Lord flows without interference from man.

Sources: Moody Bible Commentary, Standard Lesson Commentary, and The Essential Everyday Bible Commentary