

## ISAIAH 66

## THE COMFORT OF A MOTHER!

The theme of this chapter is much the same as that of the foregoing one. It prophetically describes the different state of the righteous and the wicked among the Jews when they returned out of captivity; but it also spiritually represents the rejection of the Jews in the days of the Messiah, the conversion of the Gentiles, and the setting up of the Gospel-Kingdom in the world.

The Jews gloried much in their grand Temple which King Solomon had built. But how can the Eternal One dwell in a house that is made with mortal men's hands? God has a heaven and an earth of His own making, and there are also the temples of man's making. But He overlooks both of these, so that He may look with favor upon the person who is poor in spirit, self-abasing, and self-denying, and whose heart truly sorrows for sin (verses 1-2). Such a heart is a living temple for Jehovah! What unheard of, unexplored, and unknown mercies must be contained in the heart of this astonishing declaration of the Lord! Although the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, yet He condescends to the contrite heart, and even dwells therein.

The sacrifice of the wicked is not only unacceptable, but it is also a great offence to God (verses 3-4). And the person who now offers an animal sacrifice in our modern times, after the custom of the Levitical law, is actually setting aside Christ's perfect sacrifice as if it were insufficient to atone for sin! He who now slays an ox as an offering for sin is just as guilty as the murderer of a human being; for such a person is essentially slaying the Man Christ Jesus, and crucifying the Savior all over again. Here we see the danger of mingling anything of our own with the perfect Sacrifice of the body of Jesus, which was offered once and for all to pay the price for our sins. Anything that obstinate people put in the place of the priesthood, atonement, and intercession of Christ will be found hateful to God.

In verses 5-14, the prophet turns to those persons who trembled at God's words, and endeavors to comfort and encourage them. The Lord Himself promises to appear for the joy of the humble believer, and for the confusion of hypocrites and persecutors. He promises to set up a Church for Himself in the world, which would be abundantly filled with spiritual sons and daughters in a very little time (verses 7-9). One instance of this was when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Day of Pentecost and multitudes were converted in a short time (Acts 2). The Lord also gives the assurance that His Word, His promises, and His ordinances are the consolations of His Church. Wherever the Gospel is

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ The Lord's dwelling-place: the poor and contrite heart – verses 1-2
- ❖ The abomination of any offering except Christ's perfect Sacrifice – verses 3-4
- ❖ Comforting promises are given to Christ's Church – verses 5-14
- ❖ The establishment of Christ's Kingdom and the ruin of the wicked – verses 15-24

received, it brings a river of peace (verse 12) that will carry us to the ocean of boundless and endless bliss! When Divine comforts reach the inward heart, the joy of the Lord becomes the strength of the believer. Therein, God's mercy and justice shall be manifested and forever magnified!

Beginning in verse 15, a prophetic declaration is given of the Lord's vengeance upon all enemies of His Church, who are defiled with all spiritual abominations. Then, in verses 19 and 20, He sets forth the abundance of means that He uses for the conversion of sinners. These expressions are figurative, and stand as pictures of the plentiful and gracious helps that are used in order to bring God's children home to Jesus. Each one of them shall be welcome, and nothing shall be lacking for their assistance and encouragement. A Gospel-ministry (verse 21) shall be set up in the Church; and they shall have solemn worship before the Lord from Sabbath to Sabbath, in preparation for the eternal Sabbath in heaven. All the old things shall have passed away in this new heavens and new earth; and the Kingdom of Christ shall be maintained forever, in a holy succession, from one generation to another (verse 22).

The thankfulness of the Lord's people for the distinguishing favor that He has thus shown them shall be very greatly increased by the consideration of the fearful doom and destruction of those who rebelliously persist in their unbelief and impiety. That is what is represented in the last few verses – namely, the nature of the punishment of sinners in the world to come. It is then that all the righteous and the wicked shall be ultimately separated, finally and forever. Our Savior alludes to this passage when He speaks in Mark 9:44 of the everlasting misery and torment of impenitent sinners. Their worm dies not, and their fire is not quenched; for their souls are immortal, and God's wrath is eternal. Those who worship the Lord are called to behold this dreadful spectacle; in order to stir up their own hearts with even greater love for their Redeemer, when they see what misery they have been redeemed from.

As we conclude our study of this last chapter of Isaiah's beautiful Book of prophecy, let us find blessedness in the Lord's assurance, in verse 13, that He will comfort us with the same kind of comfort that a mother gives her child! Ah, this is tenderness itself! How she enters into her child's grief! How she presses him to her heart, and tries to take all his sorrow into her own heart! He can tell her all, and she will sympathize as nobody else can. Of all comforters, the child best loves his mother. Does Jehovah condescend to act the mother's part to us? This is goodness indeed! Let us tell Him our troubles, even though our sobs and sighs may become our readiest utterance. He will not despise us for our tears, just as our mother did not. He will consider our weakness as she did, and He will put away our faults – but in a surer way than our mother could ever do.

*Lord, thank You for giving us the Person of Your dear Son to be our once-for-all offering to atone for our sins! Amen.*

