

# THE LAST DAYS OF HUMAN HISTORY

## ISAIAH 66:01–24

### ***Introduction***

This chapter is the climax to the great book of Isaiah. Through the power of God's Spirit, Isaiah has been able to look through the portal of time to see the events of the future. As has been seen, the behaviour of the human race repeats itself generation after generation. For this reason, the discipline of God and His hand of judgment have repeatedly fallen on the wicked people and nations of this earth. God is very patient, suffering a long time with the sinful person. But eventually the day comes when His hand of discipline and judgment must fall. However, as Isaiah looked into the corridor of the future, he saw not only the judgments of God but also saw the salvation of God, even the sufferings of the Messiah Himself. As he now closes the great prophecies given him by the LORD, he is able to see the glorious consummation of human history. He actually sees the events of the end time, the last days of the human race on earth. This is the exciting subject that closes the great book of Isaiah, *The Last Days of Human History (Part 2)*, Isaiah 66:1-24.

- I. The true temple of God (vv. 1-6).
- II. The restored Jerusalem: the restoration of the city and of the Jews, 54:1-17 (vv. 7-14).
- III. The Day of the LORD, His terrifying judgment (vv. 15-18).
- IV. The proclamation of God's glory worldwide (vv. 19-21).
- V. The gift of eternal life in the new heavens and earth (vv. 22-23).
- VI. The sad fate of the unrepentant (v. 24).

### ***I. Isaiah 66:01–06 The True Temple of God***

In the last days of human history, the true temple of God will take centre stage. These six verses show that very significant issues are involved when people worship the LORD.

- 1. The true temple of God is identified (vv. 1-2). Contrary to what many people think, God does not dwell in buildings. God is Spirit, and He is omnipresent. Omnipresent means that His presence is everywhere, even expanding out beyond the far reaches of the universe. Although the starry sky demonstrates the glory of God, it is nothing more than a throne for God. And the earth in all of its beauty and glory is nothing more than a footstool for Him. God dwells in another dimension of being, the spiritual dimension, which is the permanent world. The physical, material world in which we live is corruptible, deteriorating and wasting away. But the spiritual dimension of being is permanent and eternal. God lives in the *spiritual dimension* or *spiritual world*. That world supercedes this world enormously. The vast expanse of God's person and presence is infinite — far, far beyond human comprehension. Note how the LORD stresses this fact: Is it not His hand that has created the universe, brought all things into being? The point is that God supercedes, is out beyond this physical, material
-

universe. Even the universe itself cannot contain God's presence. How then can people expect the temple or any other building to be a house for His presence?

Down through the centuries of human history, the LORD did manifest His presence at various worship sites, such as the altars built by the patriarchs, the Tabernacle, the Temple built by Solomon, and succeeding temples built by others. The LORD had said that the Temple would be the place where His Name would dwell (1 Kng 8:29). And the LORD had appointed Solomon to build a House for His Name (2 Sam 7:13; 1 Kng 5:5; 8:18-19; 1 Chr 22:10). Within these and all other worship centres that are truly set apart for the worship of the LORD, God does manifest His presence through people's praise and worship. He does not ignore the Temple or any other worship centre that is truly sanctified, set apart to His Name.

However, the Temple is not the focus of God's attention. Just because a temple has been constructed does not mean that God will manifest His presence in the building. He will grant a special sense of His presence only if the hearts of the worshippers belong to Him. It is not the building that pleases God. It is the heart of the worshipper. This is exactly what God says.

God dwells with the person who is submissive and who trembles at His Word (v. 2). A submissive person is humbled and contrite before the LORD, which means that the person bows before the LORD, acknowledging the greatness of God as well as his own unworthiness and sin. Bowing before the LORD, the individual confesses and repents of his sins. After arising from his knees, the true worshipper goes about his daily affairs *trembling at God's Word*. This means that the person respects God's Word so much that he continually seeks to obey it. He shudders, quakes, even fears lest he disobey God's commandments. This is the worshipper God accepts. When this worshipper and others of like mind enter the temple, God manifests His presence among them. He grants a very special sense of His presence to such worshippers. In the last days of human history, the body of the true worshipper actually becomes the true temple of God. Amazingly, God's very own Spirit dwells within the true believer. The true temple of God is the believer who is submissive to God and who trembles at God's Word.

**1 Cor 3:16** *Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?*

**1 Cor 6:19-20** *Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own. You were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.*

**Heb 8:10** *This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.*

**Jer 31:33** “*This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,*” declares the LORD. “*I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.*”

**Jer 32:40** *I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them, and I will inspire them to fear me, so that they will never turn away from me.*

2. Some worshippers are rejected by God (vv. 3-6). Who? Any person who goes through the motions of worship but is not submissive to the LORD. Those who live as they wish instead of obeying God’s Word will be rejected by God. If a person ignores or disobeys God’s commandments, his worship is unacceptable (v. 3). No matter how often he enters a temple (church) or approaches God in personal daily worship, his worship is unacceptable to God (v. 3). In fact, what God says is shocking and unsettling. The worship of a person who approaches the LORD with an impure, disobedient heart...

- is as unacceptable as the worship of a murderer
- is as unacceptable as the worship of a person who offers a dog or pig to God
- is as unacceptable as the worship of a person who idolizes false gods

These comparisons are graphic, but they emphasize strikingly the importance of true worship. A person must approach God with a humble, contrite spirit, *trembling at His Word*. Only the worshipper who is obedient, keeping God’s commandments and living a righteous life is acceptable to God. The worship of a person who fails to be submissive to God, who fails to tremble at His Word is an abomination to God. It is utterly detestable.

Thus, a harsh judgment is pronounced against those whose worship is rejected or unacceptable (vv. 4-5). Three reasons are given for the severity of the judgment:

- ⇒ They did not respond to God’s call for repentance.
- ⇒ They deliberately engaged in false worship, committing evil before God’s very eyes, even while God was calling upon them to repent.
- ⇒ They persecuted true worshippers, those who did tremble at God’s Word (v. 5). As a result of the false worshippers’ terrible sin, the hand of God’s judgment will fall upon them (vv. 5-6). They will be utterly shamed, suffering God’s vengeance. Suddenly and without warning an uproar will arise from the city of Jerusalem and from the temple itself. All the commotion and turmoil will come from the sound of the battle when God destroys His enemies, the false worshippers.

Note how this prophecy is applicable to every generation. It was certainly fulfilled in the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians (586 B.C.) and to the Romans (A.D. 70). But it will also be fulfilled when the LORD returns at His second coming. In that day, all the false worshippers and wicked of this earth will suffer the hand of God’s judgment.

**2 Th 1:7-8** *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. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.*

**Mat 23:34-35** *“Therefore I am sending you prophets and sages and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town. And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.”*

**Rom 1:18-25** *The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness. Since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator — who is forever praised. Amen.*

**1 Cor 6:9-10** *Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.*

**Eph 5:3-6** *But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person — such a man is an idolater — has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God’s wrath comes on those who are disobedient.*

**Heb 10:30** *For we know him who said, “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” and again, “The Lord will judge his people.”*

**Exo 20:3-5** *“You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me.*

**Isa 65:6-7** “See, it stands written before me: I will not keep silent but will pay back in full; I will pay it back into their laps — both your sins and the sins of your ancestors,” says the LORD. “Because they burned sacrifices on the mountains and defied me on the hills, I will measure into their laps the full payment for their former deeds.”

**Oba 1:15** The day of the LORD is near for all nations. As you have done, it will be done to you; your deeds will return upon your own head.

**Thought 1.** Mathew Henry gives an excellent discussion on the true temple of God (vv. 1-2) that is well worth quoting in its entirety:

*The temple is slighted in comparison with a gracious soul, v. 1, 2. The Jews in the prophet’s time, and afterwards in Christ’s time, gloried much in the temple and promised themselves great things from it. To humble them therefore, and to shake their vain confidence, both the prophets and Christ foretold the ruin of the temple, that God would leave it and then it would soon be desolate. After it was destroyed by the [Babylonians] it soon recovered itself and the ceremonial services were revived with it. But by the Romans it was made a perpetual desolation, and the ceremonial law was abolished with it. That the world might be prepared for this, they were often told, as here, of what little account the temple was with God.*

1. *That he did not need it. Heaven is the throne of his glory and government; there he sits, infinitely exalted in the highest dignity and dominion, above all blessing and praise. The earth is his footstool, on which he stands, overruling all the affairs of it according to his will. If God has so bright a throne, so large a footstool, where then is the house they can build unto God, that can be the residence of his glory, or where is the place of his rest? What satisfaction can the Eternal Mind take in a house made with men’s hands? What occasion has he, as we have, for a house to repose himself in, who faints not neither is weary, who neither slumbers nor sleeps? Or, if he had occasion, he would not tell us (Psa 1, 12), for all these things were made by his hand, heaven and all its courts, earth and all its borders, and all the hosts of both. All these things have been, have had their beginning, by the power of God, who was happy from eternity before they were, and therefore could not be benefited by them. All these things are (so some read it); they still continue, upheld by the same power that made them; so that our goodness extends not to him. If he required a house for himself to dwell in, he would have made one himself when he made the world; and, if he had made one, it would have continued to this day...[but] he had no need of a temple made with hands.*
2. *That he would not heed it as he would a humble, penitent, gracious heart. He has a heaven and earth of his own making, and a temple of man’s making. But he overlooks them all, that he may look with favour to him that is poor in spirit, humble and serious, self-abasing and self-denying, whose heart is truly contrite for sin, penitent for it, and in pain to get it pardoned, and who trembles at God’s*



*word, not as Felix did, with a transient qualm that was over when the sermon was done, but with an habitual awe of God's majesty and purity and an habitual dread of his justice and wrath. Such a heart is a living temple for God; he dwells there, and it is the place of his rest; it is like heaven and earth, his throne and his footstool. (Mathew Henry. Mathew Henry's Commentary, Vol. 4. pp. 388-389).*

## **II. *Isaiah 66:07–14 The Restored Jerusalem: The Restoration of the City and of the Jews***

During the last days of human history, both the city of Jerusalem and the Jews will be restored to their nation, Israel. The nation will be reborn quickly, suddenly — within a day — more quickly than a mother who gives birth even before her labour pains begin (vv. 7-8). God Himself guarantees the rebirth (v. 9). And because He is the source and the giver of life, He will not fail to deliver Israel. The nation and its capital will both be restored (49:18-21; 54:1-3).

In that day, all Jerusalem will be a cause for great rejoicing among God's people (vv. 10-14). All who love the LORD — including the righteous believers down through the centuries who had mourned the city's sufferings and destruction — will rejoice over Jerusalem. Five reasons are given for the overwhelming joy of God's people:

1. People will rejoice because Jerusalem will nourish, comfort, and satisfy those who love her (v. 11). When Christ returns, He will rule from Jerusalem. And all the world will receive what it needs from Him. Looking to Him who reigns in Jerusalem, believers will have every need in life met by Christ.
2. People will rejoice because God will overflow Jerusalem with peace and prosperity (v. 12). This peace will allow all nations to become economically prosperous with Jerusalem as the capital of the world, the seat of government where Christ rules. Jerusalem will become the financial centre of the world, the centre into which the wealth of all nations will flow.
3. People will rejoice because Jerusalem's children will be provided and cared for (v. 12b). Obviously the children of Jerusalem will be the true believers and worshippers who enter the Messiah's kingdom when He returns to earth. Naturally, the LORD will take care of all His people, all the citizens of His kingdom.
4. People will rejoice because Jerusalem will comfort her children (v. 13). Comfort will flow from the heart of the LORD, reaching out to all His people. Although Christ will be ruling from Jerusalem, His Spirit will move throughout the world and comfort all His people.
5. People will rejoice over Jerusalem because the city itself will stir joy and bring vigorous health to the population. The very lives of people — their mental and physical health — will flourish like grass, for the hand of the LORD will rest upon His people.

**Thought 1.** Jerusalem and the Jews will be restored to their nation, permanently restored. When Christ returns to set up His kingdom on earth, He will set up His seat of government in Jerusalem. The Holy City will be reborn, restored as though it had been given a new birth. Old Jerusalem will become a brand new city, completely rebuilt. And all Jews who have truly trusted the LORD will be returned to their nation, becoming citizens of God's kingdom on earth. Listen to this wonderful promise of God given to all Jewish believers:

**Isa 1:26** *"I will restore your judges as in days of old, your counsellors as at the beginning. Afterward you will be called the City of Righteousness, the Faithful City."*

**Isa 11:12** *He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; he will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth.*

**Isa 49:22** *This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "See, I will beckon to the Gentiles, I will lift up my banner to the peoples; they will bring your sons in their arms and carry your daughters on their shoulders.*

**Isa 60:10** *Foreigners will rebuild your walls, and their kings will serve you. Though in anger I struck you, in favour I will show you compassion.*

**Ezek 20:40** *For on my holy mountain, the high mountain of Israel, declares the Sovereign LORD, there in the land the entire house of Israel will serve me, and there I will accept them. There I will require your offerings and your choice gifts, along with all your holy sacrifices.*

**Zec 1:17** *"Proclaim further: This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'My towns will again overflow with prosperity, and the LORD will again comfort Zion and choose Jerusalem.'"*

**Zec 10:6** *"I will strengthen the house of Judah and save the house of Joseph. I will restore them because I have compassion on them. They will be as though I had not rejected them, for I am the LORD their God and I will answer them."*

**Zec 14:11** *It will be inhabited; never again will it be destroyed. Jerusalem will be secure.*

**Mal 3:4** *And the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years.*

### **III. Isaiah 66: 15–18 The Day of the LORD, His Terrifying Judgment**

The last days of human history will bring forth the Day of the LORD, the hour of His terrifying judgment. The LORD is coming in a storm of blazing fire. His chariots, His army of angels, will accompany Him with the destructive force of a violent tornado. The LORD is coming to punish the wicked with the full force of His anger and the flaming fire of His rebuke (v. 15). When He comes, it will be to execute judgment upon all the wicked of the earth. They will all be punished with fire and with the sword of His mouth (vv. 16–18). Only the righteous will enter the Messiah's kingdom. When Jesus Christ returns to earth, two classes of people will face His wrath and His judgment:

1. All who have followed the abominable practices of idolatry and false worship will suffer the terrifying judgment of God (v. 17). These will meet a terrible end, because they engaged in the detestable practices of sorcery and the occult world.
2. All who are guilty of evil works and thoughts will also suffer the terrifying judgment of God (v. 18). These allowed their thoughts and imaginations to dwell on the immoral, the lawless and the violent instead of focusing their minds on things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, good, virtuous and praiseworthy (Phil 4:8). By allowing their thoughts to linger on the forbidden, they eventually began participating in immoral and wicked deeds.

When Christ returns to earth, the sinners of this world will appear before the LORD to give an account for their behaviour. They will see His glory and suffer the hand of His judgment.

**Mat 16:27** *“For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.”*

**Mat 25:31-33, 41** *“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. 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. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.... 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.’”*

**Acts 17:31** *For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.*

**2 Th 1:7-8** *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. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.*

**2 Tim 4:1** *In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom.*

**Jude 1:14-15** *Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: “See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”*

**Rev 1:7** *Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen.*

**Rev 22:12** *“Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done.”*

**Psa 96:13** *Let all creation rejoice before the Lord, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his faithfulness.*



#### **IV. Isaiah 66:19–21 The Worldwide Proclamation of God's Glory**

When Christ returns, there will be a great proclamation of God's glory throughout the world. Note the reference to God's revealing a sign for the whole world to witness. Most likely this is the blazing appearance of Christ in the clouds at His Second Coming (Mat 24:30). When Christ returns, all the earth will clearly see His coming and acknowledge Him to be the Son of Man. The blazing light of His holiness — the great splendour and brightness of His glory — will be easily manifested throughout the entire universe at that time (see note, Mat 24:30).

Once Christ has returned, a number of Jews will become ministers to share the message of God's glory with the world (vv. 19-20). Isaiah naturally mentions several major countries of the known world at that time, but note also his reference to "the distant islands," This term, *distant islands*, refers to the outer reaches of the world. In other words, these Jewish ministers will blanket the earth with the message of God's glory. Their purpose will be to bring the Gentile believers, their spiritual brothers, to worship in Jerusalem (v. 20). Their missionary efforts will reap such a vast harvest of worshippers that every means of transportation available will have to be used. Isaiah mentioned the method of transportation in His day, but whatever forms of transportation will be in use when Christ returns will be used. The picture being painted is that people from all nations of the earth will make periodic journeys to worship the LORD in Jerusalem. Stationed throughout the world in various locations will be Jewish ministers or representatives giving strong witness to God's glory and to His wonderful works performed in behalf of Israel. In addition to these representatives, there will be Gentile believers appointed as His ministers (v. 21). Thus the LORD will have both Jewish and Gentile ministers scattered all over the world during the Messiah's kingdom on earth. Apparently their task will be to lead the people in worshipping the LORD and in giving strong testimony to His wonderful works in their lives.

Whatever the case, it appears that life during the Messiah's kingdom will be just what the term *eternal life* suggests. That is, eternal life will be life involving all the good activities of this present world, with two exceptions: life in the Messiah's kingdom will be both perfect and eternal. As people carry out their daily activities, they will be in constant communion with the LORD. And when they meet for joint worship with others, the LORD will have appointed ministers to lead them in worship, praising His glory and the wonderful works He has done in their behalf.

**Rom 15:5-6** *May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus. So that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

**1 Cor 6:19-20** *Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own. You were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.*

**Col 1:12** *Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.*

**Heb 13:15** *Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise the fruit of lips that confess his name.*

**1 Pet 2:9** *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

**Psa 9:11** *Sing praises to the LORD, enthroned in Zion; proclaim among the nations what he has done.*

**Psa 33:2** *Praise the LORD with the harp; make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre.*

**Psa 67:3** *May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you.*

**Psa 100:4** *Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.*

**Psa 107:22** *Let them sacrifice thank offerings and tell of his works with songs of joy.*

**Isa 42:12** *Let them give glory to the LORD, and proclaim his praise in the islands.*

## **V. Isaiah 66:22–23 The Gift of Eternal Life in the New Heavens and Earth**

The last days of human history will usher in the wonderful gift of eternal life. At this point, the LORD's true followers will be the only members of the human race left. In this climactic end of history, God will create a new heavens and earth. And the new heavens and earth will be permanent, will never pass away. Neither will those who have truly trusted Christ and obeyed His commandments, living righteously. They will inherit eternal life and always be God's people. Their names and their descendants who have also trusted Christ will never disappear from God's presence. All the descendants of Abraham — all who have truly followed in his footsteps of faith — will live eternally before the LORD. They will live forever. From one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, they will all worship the LORD on a regular basis. Worshipping Him both "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24), they will bow before the LORD in praise and thanksgiving for all He has done for them.

**Luke 18:28-30** *Peter said to him, "We have left all we had to follow you!" "I tell you the truth," Jesus said to them, "no one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will fail to receive many times as much in this age and, in the age to come, eternal life."*

**John 3:14-16** *"Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up. That everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

**John 3:36** *"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."*

**John 4:35-36** *Do you not say, ‘Four months more and then the harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together.”*

**John 10:28** *“I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.”*

**John 12:25** *“The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.”*

**John 17:3** *“Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”*

**Rom 2:7** *To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honour and immortality, he will give eternal life.*

**Rom 6:22** *But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.*

**Gal 6:8** *The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.*

**1 Tim 6:19** *In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.*

**Titus 1:2** *A faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time.*

**1 John 2:25** *And this is what he promised us — even eternal life.*

**Jude 1:21** *Keep yourselves in God’s love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.*

**Dan 12:2** *Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.*

## **VI. Isaiah 66:24 The Tragic Fate of the Unrepentant**

In the last days of human history, the unrepentant will face a tragic and horribly fate. They will suffer *eternal death* and torment. Remember, *death* means to be separated. It does not mean to cease to exist. Physical death simply means that the soul is separated from the human body. Eternal death means that the soul is *eternally separated* from God’s presence. Thus the sinners of the earth who fail to repent are doomed to be *eternally separated* from God. Note that they will suffer throughout all eternity: the worms that devour their dead bodies will never die, which suggests that their souls will suffer eternally. And the fire that burns them will never be quenched. What a frightening, graphic picture of hell! The unrepentant will leave behind a disgusting, repulsive legacy. The picture being painted here is that of the Valley of Hinnom that was located on the outskirts of Jerusalem. It was the garbage dump for the city, where the bodies of diseased

or unclean corpses were sometimes burned. Christ used this picture to describe the sufferings of hell (Mark 9:43-48. Also see *Hell Fire*, Mat 5:22; *Paradise and Hell*, Luke 16:23; *Hell, Torment*, Luke 16:24.)

**Thought 1.** Eternal death means that the soul is *separated eternally* from God.

**Gen 2:17** *“But you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”*

**Ezek 18:20** *The soul who sins is the one who will die. The son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous man will be credited to him, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against him.*

**Rom 6:23** *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

**Rom 8:6** *The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.*

**James 1:14-15** *But each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.*

**James 5:20** *Remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.*

**Rev 21:8** *But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars — their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur. This is the second death.*

**Thought 2.** The person who turns to the LORD, obeying His commandments and living a righteous life, will not face eternal death. But the unrepentant who refuses to turn away from his sins will suffer the just punishment for his or her evil behaviour.

**Mat 25:46** *“Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”*

**2 Th 1:7-9** *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. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power.*

**2 Pet 2:9** *If this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.*

**Thought 3.** The ungodly and unrighteous of this earth will spend eternity in a place Jesus Christ called hell.

**Mat 5:22** *“But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.”*

**Mat 5:28-29** *“But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.”*

**Mat 10:28** *“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”*

**Mat 18:8-9** *“If your hand or your foot causes you to sin cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.”*

**Mat 23:33** *“You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?”*

**Luke 12:5** *“But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.”*

**Thought 4.** Many other Scriptures teach that the ungodly and unrighteous will be doomed to hell.

**Mat 13:41-42** *“The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

**Luke 16:22-24** *“The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’”*

**2 Pet 2:4-5, 9** *For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them in chains of darkness to be held for judgment; If he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others....If this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.*

**2 Pet 3:7** *By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.*

**Rev 20:15** *If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*



**Rev 14:11** *And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name.*

**Rev 21:8** *But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars — their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur. This is the second death.*

**Thought 5.** Several commentators close the great book of Isaiah with statements that are well worth quoting:

(1) *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says this:

*This awesome way in which the majestic book of Isaiah concludes points to the need for unrepentant people to turn to the LORD, the only God, the Holy One of Israel. (John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, Editors. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old Testament*, p. 1121).*

(2) In closing his comments on vv. 22-24, H.C. Leupold says this:

*Peace eternal and death eternal! On this note the book of Isaiah comes to a close. (H.C. Leupold. *Exposition of Isaiah*, Vol. 2, p. 379).*

(3) In his commentary *The Book of Isaiah*, John N. Oswalt says this:

*Thus Isaiah's great book comes to its end in ways not unlike those in which it began, with a reaffirmation of the great choice that lies before the human race: judgment or hope. But there is one great difference. The hope that the final chapters affirm is on the other side of judgment. Indeed, what they tell us is that since the Holy One of Israel is the Creator and the only God, even judgment can be turned to hope if we will let Him do it for us. No tragedy, no disaster, no fate that has befallen us because of our stubborn self-worship need be the final word for us while we yet breathe. This is the great good news of Isa 52:13-53:12: God has entered into our judgment and taken it on Himself, and because of that he can declare that finally nothing can keep us from his love — except our own determination to persist in rebellion. This cosmos will be remade, and to all eternity it will ring with the praises of those who, though "walking in darkness have seen a great light" (9:1 [Eng2]), of those who live in that holy mountain where none will hurt or destroy (11:9; 65:25), of those from whom the shroud has been torn away forever (25:7). (John N.Oswalt. *The Book of Isaiah*, Chapters 40-66. "The New International Commentary on the Old Testament." Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998, p. 693).*

(4) In *The Preacher's Commentary on Isaiah*, David McKenna says this:

*Once Isaiah saw God's vision for the future, he never looked back. The progression of his prophecy from the current events of his lifetime, to the new*

*exodus from Babylonian exile, followed by the coming of the Messiah and the redemption of all nations gives us our marching orders. Sounding again the double imperative for Israel and the redeemed of all generations to come, Isaiah urges us to leave the comfort and the splendour of our Jerusalems to become His servants in the world.*

*Depart! Depart! Go out from there,  
Touch no unclean thing;  
Go out from the midst of her,  
Be clean,  
You who bear the vessels of the LORD.*

*For you shall not go out with haste,  
Nor go by flight;  
For the LORD will go before you  
And the God of Israel will be your rear guard. (Isa 52:11-12). (David McKenna. Isaiah 40-66. The Preacher's Commentary on Isaiah. Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 1994, 2003, pp. 665-666).*

(5) The excellent commentator Mathew Henry says this:

*Let the redeemed of the LORD with all humility, and not without a holy trembling, sing their triumphant songs. (Mathew Henry. Mathew Henry's Commentary, Vol. 4, p. 397). ■*