

God Worshipped in All the Earth

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[0:00] Isaiah 66. And we're going to begin reading in verse 7 and read through the end of the chapter and the end of the book.

! Isaiah 66, verse 7. Before she goes into labor, she gives birth. Before the pains come upon her, she delivers a son.

Who has ever heard of such a thing? Who has ever seen such things? Can a country be born in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment? Yet no sooner is Zion in labor that she gives birth to her children.

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? Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad for her, all you who love her.

Rejoice greatly with her, all you who mourn over her. For you will nurse and be satisfied at her comforting breasts. You will drink deeply and delight in her overflowing abundance.

[1:08] 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 nurse and be carried on her arm and dandled on her knees.

As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you. And you will be comforted over Jerusalem.

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. 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 the flames of fire. For with fire and with his sword, the Lord will execute judgment upon all men.

And many will be those slain by the Lord. Those who consecrate and purify themselves to go into the gardens, following the one in the midst of those who eat the flesh of pigs and rats and other abominable things, they will meet their end together, declares the Lord.

[2:22] And I, because of their actions and their imaginations, am about to come and gather all nations and tongues, and they will come and see my glory.

I will set a sign among them. And I will send some of those who survive to the nations, to Tarshish, to the Libyans 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. And they will bring all your brothers from all the nations to my holy mountain in Jerusalem, as an offering to the Lord.

On horses and 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 and ceremonially clean vessels. And I will select some of them also to be priests and Levites, says the Lord. 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.

[3:37] From one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me, says the Lord.

And they will go out and look upon the dead bodies of those who rebelled against me. Their worm will not die, nor will the fire be quenched, and they will be loathsome to all mankind.

Well, this God that meets us in the scriptures, the one we've been singing about, the one that we have been praying to and that we have just heard from, as his word was read, is a glorious being. He deserves to be worshipped by all mankind. And the sad reality is, is that he is not being worshipped in every place and in every heart today.

And that's wrong. That's rebellion. And further than that, not all worship that is even being brought to him today is acceptable to him.

[4:43] We saw that last week, didn't we? When we saw that people who did not tremble at his word and did not obey it, who nevertheless continued to bring about their outward worship to God, God rejected all such worship as detestable in his sight because that too is rebellion against him.

Their false worship was God's charge against Israel in the very first chapter of this book that we have studied. They rebelled against God and his commands, yet kept up their outward worship of him.

And we've seen that pattern addressed all the way through the book, and we meet it again, full force, in the last chapter this morning. God deserves the worship of all mankind, and he's very jealous to have it.

And in this last chapter, we see just how devoted God is to having true worshippers who give themselves up entirely to him, to fear him, to love him, to trust him, to obey him, to serve him. God's last words through Isaiah tell us that false worship that had predominated the scene in Israel is to be judged by God, but that true worship will be restored in Israel and spread throughout the world until it fills the entire new heavens and new earth with God's glory and the joy of the redeemed.

[6:19] So, having heard of the judgment that's to fall upon Jerusalem for their false worship, as we saw in verse 6, as we ended last week, hear the uproar from the city, hear that noise from the temple.

You see, judgment falls on the false worship going on right there in the temple in Jerusalem. Now, this morning, God speaks of staggering blessings that are in store for Jerusalem.

We've seen this in many different chapters, the before and the after picture of Jerusalem. Before the makeover, after the makeover.

In the old covenant, in the new covenant, before Christ's coming, after Christ's coming. And that's what we have again before us this morning.

Jerusalem's staggering blessings when the Lord Jesus shall come. Her Messiah shall come.

Indeed, we're speaking of Israel under the new covenant, the church of Jesus Christ.

[7:25] And the first lesson is that many children will be supernaturally born in Jerusalem and to Jerusalem. supernatural births to Jerusalem.

Now here, Jerusalem is seen as a pregnant woman about or giving birth. But mothers, it's a birth unlike any you have ever experienced. For we're told before she goes into labor, she gives birth. Before the pains come upon her, she delivers a son. So dads, there's no reason to take a long reading material for a long wait at the hospital. There's no reason to have a stopwatch to measure the contractions.

No need for an epidural. No need to induce labor. For before she goes into labor, she gives birth. Who's ever heard of such a thing?

Who's ever seen such a thing? is the question. Well, the answer is no one. This is beyond our experience. It never happens like that ever since the curse fell upon this earth and her pains in childbirth were multiplied and added to her.

[8:40] In other words, this is a supernatural birth. It's not the natural order. It's a supernatural thing that's happening here. And not just one child being born to Jerusalem, but a whole nation of children.

Verse 8 says, Can a country be born in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment? Yet no sooner is Zion in labor than she gives birth to her children.

A whole new people brought into being by the supernatural birth of God in a day. That's what he's speaking of. How can this ever happen?

This desolate Zion who, when the Babylonians would come upon them, would be so ravished and burnt and destroyed and her people slaughtered and taken away.

How can this devastating Jerusalem be this Jerusalem with many children born in a day?

[9:39] Well, it's because God is the one who undertakes to do it. And what is impossible with men is possible with him. 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? This is his work. And he doesn't begin a work and forsake it. He finishes what he starts and his plan for Jerusalem will be accomplished.

He'll see to it. Now, ten times in our passage we read words like says the Lord, declares the Lord, says your God.

In other words, God's saying I'm giving you my word on this one. I'm ready to put my name on the dotted line to getting this job done. And he's more than able to bring a new nation into being in a day by supernatural birth.

Remember, Jesus told Nicodemus that you must be born again. Supernatural birth from the Spirit of God must happen to you or you can never see or enter the kingdom of God.

[10:50] And so it's Acts 2. It's the day of Pentecost, 50 days after Jesus' resurrection. Jesus has died to purchase a people for himself. He's risen from the dead.

He's ascended into heaven and now he pours out his Holy Spirit and 3,000 are born in Jerusalem in a day.

Next, Jerusalem is seen not as a pregnant woman giving birth but now as a nursing mother to her children. And the second lesson is that Jerusalem's children will have abundant provision.

They'll have comfort, peace, and joy. Now those would all be missing when God's judgment fell upon Israel. When he brought the Babylonians and when he brought later the Romans.

Yes, there would be great devastation in Jerusalem and this would be very hard to believe that this would be Jerusalem's experience.

[11:55] In fact, under the Babylonians, food would be so scarce that people would be eating each other. You can read it in the book of Lamentations and yes, this is Jerusalem without anything devastated.

And now the promise, you will have abundant provision, comfort, peace, and joy. Now is there a more vivid picture of those blessings than a baby nursing at its mother's breast?

First of all, abundant provision is promised. Verse 11, for you will nurse and be satisfied at her comforting breasts. You will drink deeply and delight in her overflowing abundance.

There's a full satisfaction in what God will provide for Jerusalem. All that they need and far more. An overflowing abundance, which is further explained in verse 12, is the wealth of the nations pouring into Jerusalem like a flooding stream.

And so the nations, instead of pillaging and destroying and leaving Jerusalem desolate, they will bring their wealth into Jerusalem and greatly enrich the nation so that the children will have an abundant provision.

[13:21] But they'll also have comfort, for you know mothers that nursing is more than just nourishment. There is also comfort going on between you and your child. And verse 11, for you will nurse and be satisfied at her comforting breasts.

Verse 13, as a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you and you will be comforted over Jerusalem. Yes, comfort was the thing they needed.

Remember back in chapter 40, God's word to the prophet was comfort. Comfort my people, says your God. Now here's this promised comfort. It would come to Jerusalem and to all its inhabitants. And not just comfort, but peace, for this is what the Lord says in verse 12, I will extend peace to her like a river. river. How will peace be like a river?

Because have you ever stood by a river and seen its waters coming at you? Maybe the Niagara River and you stand there at the falls and you're looking upstream and you see all this water coming at you, some 700,000 gallons every second pouring over the falls and there's another 700,000 gallons the next second.

[14:44] And as you stand there, that water just keeps coming at you. That's how their peace would be. This nation that had known so much turmoil and war, this nation that had known war against God, would come to know not only peace with God, peace with man, peace within, peace like a river that never would end, but just keep coming to them.

And then there would be joy. Verse 11, you will delight in her overflowing abundance. And when you see these provisions for every need, and you see this continual peace and comfort, you will be glad.

Verse 14, when you see this, your heart will rejoice. But not all the joy is to wait for that day when you see it. Notice the call for present joy, even before these blessings arrive in Jerusalem.

Right now, in the midst of her great trials and sorrows and her exile and her devastation, she's called to rejoice. Verse 10, rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad for her, all you who love her.

Rejoice greatly with her, all you who mourn over her. Isaiah's hearers were many hundreds of years away from the fulfillment of these blessings in the days when Messiah would come the first time and the second time.

[16:09] Nevertheless, they're to enter into Jerusalem's joy right now in the midst of their troubles. Do you know how to suck joy out of future blessings?

How in the midst of your trouble to suck joy out of future blessings that are coming? This is the secret to rejoicing in the midst of great trials.

It is by faith in what God has promised. He will do. When we were children, we were often told that if we got our chores done in the morning that we would be swimming in the afternoon.

And that promise of afternoon swimming kept us going through the chores in the morning. It was in the heat and humidity. The gnats would swell around our face and the deer flies would bite us.

Keep working, guys. We'll be swimming soon. The promise then was to be affecting the present reality in the difficulty.

[17:14] And that's what Isaiah is telling the people right now, Jerusalem. Whatever's happening to you, rejoice in what God will do then for his people.

You see, even God's promises make us glad. They're so certain. They're so amazing. And this is the believer's treasury of joy, that book of promises.

They enable us to rejoice now in the hope of the coming glory. But notice who is called to rejoice with Jerusalem and to be glad over her. It's all you who love her and all you who mourn over her. Isn't that interesting? All you who love her and you who mourn over her. I wonder if that describes you. Do you love the people of God?

Do you love the church of our Savior? Do you treasure her king, her laws, her gospel, her meetings with God, her ordinances of baptism in the Lord's Supper, her fellowship, her Bible?

[18:23] Have you so identified yourself with God's people in the church, thrown in your lot with them, committed yourself to them and to the whole life of the church where you can say these are my people.

These are my people. I'm one with them to the point that the church's joys are my joys and the church's sorrows are my sorrows. And so you rejoice in their victories.

You rejoice to see conversions in the church. You rejoice at her advances, her missions, her holiness, and you rejoice in her future glories that are to come.

And not just in this church, but wherever the church of Jesus Christ is. You rejoice to see her prosper because you love her.

But you're also one of those who mourn over her. And so you grieve over her sins. And you grieve over her lack of holiness.

[19:32] And you grieve over her ignorance of the truth. And you grieve over the lack of preaching of the word of God and of a clear gospel call. And you grieve over the heresies that are destroying her and the heirs that are confounding her.

And you grieve over the petty divisions that are separating her and the worldly spirit. and you grieve to see that it's open hunting season on Christians in Syria and Iran and Pakistan and Nigeria.

You see, all of this grieves you because you love the church and you mourn over her and you rejoice over her. It's to you that this word comes.

Rejoice. Right now. Rejoice with Jerusalem. Be glad for her for the good things that are coming for her. That are coming for you.

You who are children of Zion. Some of those joys have already begun. Some of them will await his Christ return the second time.

[20:40] But don't leave all the joy for the future. Rejoice now for what she will be. And Isaiah tears. 700 years before he came we're being told right now in the midst of whatever your situation is.

Rejoice for what Jerusalem will be when the promises are fulfilled. Well, not all will share in the coming glory of Zion. This is the reality and God does not hide it from us.

Those blessings are only for the Lord's servants who tremble at his word and worship him in truth. But as for his enemies, we see the third lesson is that the Lord is coming in wrath to judge his enemies.

Notice the contrast that meets us at the end of verse 14. The hand of the Lord will be made known to his servants, that hand of blessing that we've just talked about.

But his fury will be shown to his foes. See, the Lord is coming with fire. His chariots are like a whirlwind. He'll bring down his anger with fury, his rebukes with flames of fire.

[21:45] For with fire and with the sword, the Lord will execute judgments upon all men and many will be those slain by the Lord. And verse 17 explains some of the false worship being carried on even in Israel.

Just a couple of things about this judgment of his enemies. It shows us how serious God is about true worship. This is what happens to those who do not fear him.

Do not tremble at his word. Do not offer him the worship he deserves. And his judgments of rebels in Israel is a forewarning of his judgment to all men.

Verse 16. He's going to execute judgment upon all men. All men's false worship and rebellion will be punished forever. And his judgment is compared to a fire that devours and a whirlwind, a tornado that destroys.

And we've seen both, haven't we? We've seen fires out west and how they consume everything in their path. And we've seen killer tornadoes leaving mile-wide swaths of ground just for mile after mile.

[22:56] Nothing survives. And that's the picture that is used of God's judgment. And those who never trembled at his word will tremble when his judgment falls.

And it's not just that the Lord is sending his judgments. He himself is coming to judge. You see that in verse 15. He himself, see the Lord is coming with fire. He's coming down to judge with fury.

And that's what the New Testament tells us in 2 Thessalonians 1. 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.

He is coming to judge. And it's a great mercy to be forewarned while there is still opportunity to repent. Well, that's the judgment that's coming upon rebellious false worship.

But the fourth lesson is that saved Gentiles from all nations will be included as full members of Jerusalem. This blessing that's to come to Jerusalem will not just be for the descendants of Abraham, but the physical descendants of Abraham, but saved Gentiles will be received as full members of Jerusalem.

[24:20] Notice verse 18. I am about to come and gather all nations and tongues and they will come and see my glory. Now, how is this worldwide gathering of Gentiles unto Jerusalem to happen?

Well, he tells us in verse 19, I'll send some of those who survive to the nations. These are the survivors of God's judgment that is about to fall. The survivors are the remnant of Israelite believers that he spares, those that did not reject Messiah.

For Jesus' sake, he will spare them that believe. They would not be cut off from God's people, but spared through the merits of Jesus and he'll send some of those to the nations, to the remotest places on the earth, to nations and peoples that have not heard of my fame or seen my glory.

And they will proclaim my glory among the nations to those very people that don't know about my glory. They'll proclaim it. And so 700 years after Isaiah, Jewish apostles who had been spared from God's judgment that fell upon the nation were sent all over the world to nations who hadn't seen or heard of God's glory.

Why hadn't they seen or heard of God's glory? Because as Paul tells us in Acts 14, 16, in the past, God let all nations go their own way.

[25:51] In the Old Testament, God gave the nations over to their own way. And when he let them go their own way, where did they go? Did they come to Jerusalem to worship the true and living God?

No. They went their own way with their backs to God and they worshipped everything but the true God. They exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and beasts and creeping things.

And they became darkened in their understandings, not knowing God and even suppressing the truth that they did have about God from the creation that was screaming everywhere, I am God, worship me.

And they suppressed that truth and worshipped and served created things instead of the creator who is blessed forever. That's what happens. Man left to himself turns to false worship, self-worship, thing worship, creator worship, God-diminishing worship.

And in the past, God let all nations go their own way straight straight to hell for centuries and centuries.

[27:02] The hell they deserved for choosing not to worship the true God but to worship created things rather than the creator.

But now, that was in the past, but now in Jesus Christ the time for gathering these nations and tongues has come. God has thrown open his arms to the whole world.

He has opened the door of faith to the Gentiles, the book of Acts tells us. And he sends his ambassadors to proclaim his glory among the nations that hadn't known it. And so Jesus says, go and make disciples of all the nations.

Go and preach the gospel to every creature in all the world. And that saving message has found its way to this Gentile nation of the United States, into this Gentile state of Indiana, and this Gentile place in Bremen, with Gentile you and Gentile me, the message of the glory of God has come and made worshipers out of us.

I wonder if we appreciate the inestimable privilege of living in a time when the gospel is coming to the Gentiles. Do you know if you would have lived your little 30 year life or 60 or 80, however old you are, if you'd have lived your whole little life in the Old Testament, you'd have lived in darkness, going your own way and going to the hell that you deserved.

[28:34] But no, no, God had you live in this age when the gospel is being preached to Gentiles like you and me, when we are being invited to come into Jerusalem and join the people of God by faith in Jesus Christ.

What a privilege is ours to live now in the gospel age that Isaiah is talking about. But it's a double edged sword, isn't it? Because if you trust in the Messiah for the forgiveness of your sins, you will have eternal life.

But if you reject him and go on worshipping created things, you will be damned and in the day of judgment. Those Gentiles that were left to go their own way in the Old Testament, people from Sodom and Gomorrah will rise up in the day of judgment and condemn you because you had the gospel light brought to you and you rejected it.

You see, it's a double edged sword privilege to live now in gospel preaching invitations to Jesus people. tremendous responsibility.

Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts. Well, notice that the gospel is a message about the glory of God. What do the messengers sent to the nations proclaim?

[30:03] They proclaim the glory of God. Well, where is God's glory most clearly seen? Well, in the face of Jesus, the God-man, his person and his work, that the eternal Son of God became man and perfectly obeyed the law for his people and then went and died the death that his people deserved to die, that he took the damnation that we deserved and died under God's wrath that we would have felt forever and ever.

Who has ever heard of such a thing? Who's ever heard of such love for God to give up his own Son and damn him instead of those who rebelled against him?

Who's ever heard of such holiness that nothing else could remove the offense of our sin than that the Son of God himself be crushed? Who's ever heard of such humility that he would stoop so low to lift us so high?

He who was rich would become poor to make us beggars rich. Who has ever heard of such a thing? This is the glory, you see, the glory of God revealed in the gospel.

And that's why Paul, that great preacher to the nations, wherever he went, he says, I've got one message to give. Well, Isaiah says, you're going to preach the glory of God. And he says, yes, that's what I'll preach.

[31:27] Christ and him crucified. Because there like no other place does glory, the glory of God, stream forth. The gospel of Jesus is the message about God's glory.

And that's what the nations are blinded to. And what a privilege then it is to know it, to believe it, and to proclaim it. And that's the magnet that will draw us back here tonight to remember again the glory of God that streamed forth from the middle cross at Golgotha as our Lord gave himself up to the curse, the wrath of God for us.

That's the message preached among the nations, Jesus and him crucified. And that's the message that is gathering people from all nations and tongues and making them worshipers of the true and living God.

And when they come, notice what they are. Verse 20, they will bring all your brothers from the nations to my holy mountain in Jerusalem as an offering to the Lord.

All your brothers. Notice God speaks of believing Gentiles from all the nations as brothers of believing Jews. You didn't know you had so many brothers.

[32 : 56] Jewish believers. There's all sorts of them all over out there. And these who under the old covenant were aliens and strangers and foreigners have in Christ all become brothers of believing Israelites brought into the same family of God, not as stepchildren, but full fledged brothers, equal sharers in what used to be the unique privilege of Israel to be sons of God, the people of God.

Now Gentiles equally the children of God. And the middle wall of partition that used to separate Jew and Gentile has been pulled down in Jesus Christ, making the two one new humanity.

Gentiles, no less the people of God than believing Jews, that is believing Gentiles, grafted into the same olive tree, no longer foreigners and aliens, fellow citizens with God's people, members of God's household in Christ, both have access to the same father through the one spirit.

Heirs together, members together with Israel and shares together in their promises. So there is no Jew or Greek anymore in Jerusalem, the people of God.

You are all one in Christ Jesus, and if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. Now this was all promised by God through Isaiah in his prophecy, not just chapter 66.

[34 : 40] This was all promised in Isaiah. And the rest of the New Testament declares this is what's being accomplished right now today through the preaching of the gospel.

And Jesus Christ himself proclaimed that this is what he would be doing until he returns again. John chapter 10, I lay down my life for the sheep.

Well, what sheep, Jesus? Well, I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. The sheep pen of Israel. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen.

I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. Gentiles and Jews in one fold of Jesus.

Can you see all the one things? One flock, one shepherd, one family, one olive tree, one new humanity, one people of God. All believers in Jesus.

[35 : 43] Now that's the gathering that's happening right now all around the world as the message of the cross of Christ is going out. It's what's happening right here. You have been gathered.

Many, most of you have been gathered to the worship of God through this message. And I think sometimes the reason Christians yawn when they read, the reason they yawn when they read the Old Testament is that they think that it's all about a nation of Israel that has nothing to do with us, the church.

It's like viewing home videos. Consider, first of all, viewing home videos of your family. You just can't get enough of it, can you? Look at her.

Look at him. Look at me. Oh, it's already been an hour. Oh, it went so fast. This is great. Bring the popcorn and drinks and let's have an... And you sit another hour or two.

But, if you get invited over to somebody else's house and after supper, they bring out the home videos of their family, you smile and laugh for a while and after about 15 minutes, you've had all you can take and honey, I think it's time for us to go.

[37 : 03] Now, what made the difference? It's home videos, family pictures. Or was it your family or a family that you had nothing to do with?

Or... And so, when you read Genesis and Exodus and Numbers and Isaiah and Jeremiah, you are reading your history, dear Christian.

You are reading your family tree. You are reading about your God, your Savior, your people.

You are reading about the way, the plan of God to save you. It's not something about somebody else over in Palestine. No, it's about you. And that makes all the difference in the way we read our Old Testaments.

This is not plan B that God has shuffled into because the Jews rejected Jesus. This is plan A from the beginning. The very reason God chose Abraham and his descendants and blessed them was in order to bring salvation blessings to the whole world.

[38 : 18] Genesis 12, 1 to 3. We're not an afterthought in God's mind. We're not a parenthesis in history between all the great things God's doing in some nation of Israel.

No, this is his plan. It was always his plan to bless the seed of Abraham in order that from that seed he might bring forth a Messiah who would bring salvation blessings to all the nations.

And so, he let the other nations go their own way to hell. But not this nation of Israel.

No, he set them apart from the nations and he gave them his law and he gave them his gospel and he sent them his prophets and he sent them his word and his spirit and he maintained true religion in that one Old Testament nation of Israel.

And even when most in Israel went the way of the other nations and worshipped other gods, yet within that nation of Israel he preserved a faithful remnant chosen by grace that kept alive the true religion and worship of God so that from that nation a Savior might be born as to his earthly seed and bring salvation blessings to the ends of the earth to us Gentiles.

[39 : 44] That's the family tree and its roots go all the way back to the electing councils of God in eternity. Listen to the people of Israel praying in Psalm 67.

May God be gracious to us and bless us so that your ways may be known on earth your salvation to the ends of the world among all nations.

God will bless us and all the ends of the earth will fear him will worship him. So save Gentiles from all the nations are included as full members of Jerusalem and then lastly God's goal for gospel proclamation is to make true worshippers of himself.

Verse 20 And they will bring all your brothers from all the nations where? To my holy mountain in Jerusalem as an offering to the Lord. Now that's the language of worship isn't it?

And Isaiah is conveying spiritual truths about the future using the language of the Old Testament worship that they were familiar with. During their day there was one place where they were to worship God and that was up to Jerusalem.

[40 : 59] The mountain of the Lord his holy mountain in Jerusalem where the temple was and where the offerings were made and sacrifices were brought and ceremonially clean vessels carried by horses chariots wagons mules and camels.

That's the way they worship the one true God in the Old Covenant and what he is saying is that God will bring these Gentiles and they will come to him and worship the one true God.

Can you imagine it? Gentiles who couldn't even get past the court of the Gentiles and get into the inner temple where the other Jews could go. Now they are accepted as acceptable offerings of God.

Living sacrifices. Paul speaks of that in Romans 15 and Romans 12. Who would have thought Gentiles who in the Old Covenant couldn't even be allowed into the temple past the courtyard of the Gentiles that they would actually become priests in the worship of God as verse 21 says.

And 1 Peter 2.5 says to the church you who come to Christ have come to a living stone and in so doing you have become living stones being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood.

[42 : 18] You a holy priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Christ. Yes the gospel makes us true worshipers with worship accepted though we are Gentiles accepted by God through Jesus Christ.

Notice the gospel saves us from all the false worship of this vain world and brings us to gladly worship God alone. That's the goal that's the aim of proclaiming the glory of God in Christ and Him crucified.

It's to make true worshipers to save us from worshiping all the vain things that we worshiped instead. His goal is not simply to save sinners from sin and hell but to make us true worshipers of Himself.

So it's high noon outside the city of Sychar and Jesus is sitting on a well and He's tired and He's thirsty. and there's a woman who is tired and weary of a life of sin and who is thirsty for something more and she's had five men and she's living with a man not her husband and she comes for a drink of water and she meets Him who has living water of eternal life to give.

You remember the conversation and Jesus starts honing in on her sin that must leave Oh I see you're a prophet Oh if you're a prophet I got a question for you Our fathers worshipped on this mountain We Samaritans worshipped here on Mount Gerizim But you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem on Mount Zion Now which is it?

[44 : 08] And Jesus answered her Believe me woman A time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem A time is coming and has now come with the coming of Christ and the blood of the new covenant comes a new covenant and you will not worship on this mountain or in Jerusalem But true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks Notice the Father is seeking worshippers even from Samaritans even from Gentiles And that is the goal of this evangelistic encounter of Jesus with this immoral Samaritan woman It's not just to get a decision out of her It is

to save her from her worship her idolatrous desire that she's satisfying with men and to make her a true worshipper of God alone

That's the goal of evangelism to make worshippers She must quit replacing God with all her idols and come and worship Him alone That's why the gospel is going out this morning around the world to Gentile nations And there is in the heart of God a determination to have worshippers That's why He sent His Son That's why Jesus died That's why He sends missionaries to the ends of the earth Let me read it for you in the last book of the Old Testament Malachi 1.11 This is God saying My name And He's saying this to Israel who was dishonoring Him with their false worship My name will be great among the nations From the rising to the setting of the sun in every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to my name for I will be great among the nations

You see His determination In every place pure worship will come to me And Isaiah 66 is saying this is the God with whom we have to do He's out to judge all false worship and to create true worshippers by His saving grace in Jesus Christ until the new heavens and the new earth are filled with only the true descendants of Israel and the whole new world becomes a temple in which only the righteous dwell with God and where only true worship is continually offered to Him in every place forever and ever That's what He's saying in verses 22 and 23 that as long as the new heavens and new earth endure and as long as the true people of God the seed endures all mankind will come and bow down before Him He says the Lord There's the prophecy of it It's coming John the apostle is given to see a vision of it and he sees the new heavens and the new earth and the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God As he looks closely at the new Jerusalem something is missing There's no temple No temple That's what made Jerusalem significant It was the place of the temple where God met with men Now there is no temple in the new heavens and the new earth because the whole universe is now the temple where God dwells with His people where no one and nothing unclean can ever enter in and forever true worship will rise from this new created world from a new humanity to this God who deserves worship And so the book of Isaiah begins where?

With Israel's rebellion and false worship being rebuked You can go back and read chapter 1 And where does it end? With the false worship judged and true worship restored in Israel But not only in Israel That would be too small a thing for Messiah to accomplish But rather true worship that will spread throughout the world encompassing the nations until it fills the new heavens and the new earth that Jesus returned with the glory of God and with the joys the everlasting joys of the redeemed and all to the praise of Him who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb who once was slain that Isaiah tells us all about in His letter Now that's where all history is headed Will you be there?

[49:10] Will you be there? Not all will be there Look at the last verse of the book And they will go out and look upon the dead bodies of those who rebelled against me Their worm will not die nor will their fire be quenched and they will be loathsome despicable to all mankind You know few today would have ended Isaiah's book as Isaiah did I think I'd have ended it at verse 23 The whole universe with a new humanity worshipping God in His presence forever Even today the church has chosen not to speak about the eternal punishments of hell for all who are outside of Christ But that note is given the last word by the God who inspired Isaiah to speak and to write

A holy and just God must punish sin and He would not have any reader leave this book without knowing that this is where all rebels with their false worship will end up unending torments where the worm will not die but continually feed upon their flesh and nor will the fire be quenched but continually torment them in full consciousness and those are the words that our blessed Savior quoted in Mark chapter 9 and verse 48 when He would warn us of the eternal punishments of hell for all who do not forsake their sins the very words quoted by our Savior why does Jesus do that why does Isaiah close this book with such a somber finish I wonder if you can't see something of the heart of God in that if the glories of God's grace in Jesus Christ that have been set before us in Isaiah's chapter 53 and all the rest of the chapters if the glories of Christ will not draw us in maybe the horrific end of rebels will cause your heart to tremble and cause you to seek mercy with the Lord while there is yet time four times in this last chapter he speaks of the consuming fire of God's judgment does it again here at the last verse and the only reason this will not be the fate of us believers is because of what the servant of the Lord in chapter 53 revealed there has done for us he was wounded for our transgressions he was crushed for our iniquities and the punishment that brought us peace was upon him and by his stripes we are healed and God would have us know for

all eternity that is what makes the difference between us and them the wonderful grace of Jesus fire is already burning the fire of God's wrath is coming be prepared

I've told you the story before but I think it fits the closing of this book because he speaks of fire so often in it the American Indians taught our early settlers how to survive a prairie fire and when they would see the fire coming their way in the distance they would go out and they would start a fire a controlled fire and they would let it burn off a large plot of ground a circle of earth and everything consumable all the stubble and bushes would be consumed and they'd put out the fire and then they'd get all their belongings and their precious family and they would go and stand in the middle of that burnt out circle and as the fires raged toward them they would stand in the middle of the circle and as the fire hit the front edge of the circle it started to go around them why?

you say because everything consumable had already been burnt here the fire had already fallen on this spot of ground there was nothing there to burn and I trust you see what Isaiah has been trying to tell us that we all like sheep have gone astray we have turned everyone to our own way and we worship created things instead of the creator and we rebel against him and because of it we are headed to damnation but this God who is so holy and just is also loving and merciful and he sent his own son to take the fires of his judgment upon himself to be consumed himself with God's wrath and fury and flame and now the message is going out into all the world get into Christ come into Christ it's the place where judgment has already fallen it's the one safe place for sinners to be in the whole universe it's where the fires of God's judgment have fallen fully and been satisfied it's Jesus will you come to him today you're safe in him from such a deserved fate that will be the lot of all without him let's pray and thank him for his grace

Lord we have we have read of your large plan to save a people in such a way that would glorify you and cause your love and your holiness your righteousness and mercy to shine out and it causes us to tremble to think that for centuries upon centuries you let sinners gentile nations go their own way to hell you surely didn't we didn't deserve anything else from you so thank you for giving us to live in gospel days when Messiah has come and is sending the invitation to the Gentiles and it's reached us and thank you for the faith to believe in this supernatural birth by which we are made the children of God and for the wonderful blood of

[56 : 03] Jesus the one who took judgment that we might live thank you for these things thank you for what we've seen of these truths in Isaiah change us by them don't let us go on unchanged but make this truth to save us and to sanctify us and we would offer ourselves up again as glad worshipers of the Lord Jesus of you our Father and of the Holy Spirit and we pray in Jesus name Amen