

# How Shall I Come to God?

Isaiah 66:1-13

*Halifax: 10 July 2011*

## **Introduction**

Today we come to the last chapter in the book of the prophet Isaiah.

- I began preaching from this prophecy about two and a half years ago—
  - February 15, 2009.
- In that very first sermon, I showed you something very troubling:
  - God's people were coming before Him to worship Him—
    - And He declared that it was all an abomination to Him!
  - They were expending themselves to bring sacrifices and burn incense and offer up prayers to Him at the appointed times,
    - And He called it trampling His courts!
    - Despite all their worship, He was utterly displeased with them because they were full of sin and corruption.
    - He was offended, not because of the worship itself, but because of their sin and lack of repentance.
- Right from the very beginning, Isaiah presented the LORD to us as the Holy One of Israel who was highly offended with His people's sins.
  - He told them that they needed to come to God for cleansing—a cleansing that only He could accomplish.
- Now there were two sorts of people who heard this message and they had two very different responses.
  - One group was greatly offended with Isaiah for suggesting that their worship was not acceptable to the LORD.
    - This was by far the larger group—we are told in history that they eventually sawed Isaiah in half to get rid of him.
  - The other group believed the prophet and trembled at his words,
    - but they took great comfort that they could come to God for cleansing and forgiveness and new life.
- These two groups go back to the very beginning of the world—remember Cain and Abel—the sons of Adam and Eve?
  - They both came to God to worship Him.
  - They both presented their offerings to Him.
  - But God had no regard for Cain or for His sacrifice, but accepted Abel.

- We are told that Abel came with faith, trusting in God’s provision, but Cain expected to be received on account of his offering.
- Cain was angry and distraught and too proud to receive correction.
  - He was bitter and jealous that Abel was accepted and he was rejected.
    - And so he arose and killed Abel his brother, just like the people in Isaiah’s day killed Isaiah.
- Jesus spoke about these same two groups in the Sermon on the Mount.
  - They were still around when He came into the world and He told us that both groups would be found in His kingdom—and they have been!
    - He explained that they would come in by two different ways...
      - The one He described as a large group that would enter in by the broad way that leads to destruction...
      - And the other He described as a smaller group that would enter in by the narrow way that leads to life...
  - He was not talking about those who did not come into His kingdom at all.
    - He was talking about two different ways of coming in—and so of being in—His church—the Christian assembly.
      - He was talking about people who come and are baptised and listen to sermons and say their prayers and eat the Lord’s Supper and sing praises.
    - And He said that there would be a large group that would be rejected because they did not come in the right way and smaller group that would be accepted.
      - He said that He would meet them on the day of Judgement and that they would come to Him on very familiar terms—saying “LORD LORD...”
        - In Hebrew, when you repeat someone’s name like that, it means you consider yourself to be on familiar terms with him...
        - So they would come to Him like that—as those who feel that they know Him and done many things in His name...
          - and He would utterly reject them.
- Let’s look at this passage for a minute...
  - It’s in Matthew 7:21. He says...
    - **Matthew 7:21-23: “Not everyone who says to Me [you see that they come to Jesus outwardly], ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”**
  - You see that they were His worshippers!

- They had come to Him, they did things in His name, just as the people in Isaiah's day did,
- but He rejected them because of their sin.

This is very disturbing!

- It ought to be disturbing to you!
- It ought to make you ask the question,
  - "How can I come to this God who rejects His own worshippers?"

And I want to tell you that the LORD tells you right here in Isaiah 66.

- You remember that Isaiah, having declared God's coming salvation that would bless the whole world with forgiveness and new life,
  - began to pray in chapter 63 and 64 that the LORD would rend the heavens and come down!
  - He wanted Him to come and do the saving work that He had promised.
- And in chapter 65, the LORD began to speak about that saving work...
  - And how some of His worshippers would receive it and some would not...
  - And how many who were not His worshippers would also receive it...
    - and He told what a wonderful blessing it would be for all who did receive it and what a dreadful curse would be the portion of all who would not.
    - He spoke of a new heavens and a new earth where sin and death would be eradicated—
      - the rejecters would be cast out but His servants would inherit it forever!
      - Surely you want to be among those who inherit the new heavens and the new earth!
        - But how are you to come to God that you may receive the blessing?
- The counsel is given to you in our text for today—Isaiah 66:1-11!
  - The LORD shows us how we must come to Him if we are going to inherit the new heavens and the new earth.
    - He answers the question,
      - How shall I come to God?

### **I. You must come to Him with fear—with awe—with terror—**

- It is difficult to put in into one word...
  - But essentially we need to see what He truly is and what we truly are before Him.
    - We need to accept what He is and what we are.
    - Look at the text...

- A. First, you need to see that He is high, high, high above us.
- It is always our tendency to reduce Him—
    - We want Him to be smaller than He is.
    - We want to be able to control Him...
1. But in v. 1 He says, **“Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool.”**
    - To us, the earth is huge, but to Him it is only a footstool!
    - He is transcendent!
      - You are on a whole different level than He is.
        - He alone is uncreated—self-existing—totally awesome!
        - He made the world—He made the heavens—all of it.
        - It’s so big to us, but it is nothing but a footstool to Him.
          - Our thoughts of Him are *way* too small!
  2. He looks down from His majesty in the heavens and He says,
    - **v. 1: “Where is the house that you will build for me and where is the place of my rest?”**
      - a. We make a temple of gold—we make a cathedral and it seems so impressive to us...
        - And God looks down and He says,
          - “What is that that you have made for me?”
          - “Where is this house that you built?”
      - b. It’s like an ant that builds a really impressive anthill for you and he wants you to be really impressed!
        - He is crawling around at your feet on the sidewalk and he thinks you will be able to move in to the house he built for you.
          - He thinks that you will be really impressed and owe him something.
            - He thinks he can contain you in that little house...
              - and it’s such a joke!
        - But I tell you, it’s a bigger joke for men to make a great temple or a great cathedral or a colossal image of solid gold and think that he can contain God in it...
          - Or to think that he can come up with a philosophy that contains Him—
            - or worship that will impress Him—
              - the little song you wrote or the music you played or the prayer you made...
            - or that he can do some great work of benevolence that will capture His attention—

- or that he can offer some great sacrifice that will appease Him.
- You are so impressed with it, but He says,
  - “Now where is this house that you built for me?”
  - Stop thinking God is like you!
- Yes, He told His people to build a house for Him—to build a temple and overlay with gold and to offer sacrifices to Him there...
  - But their error was to ever think that God was impressed by these things—
    - that they had done something to contain Him or to obligate Him.
    - The temple and all the sacrifices were not for Him...
      - It was supposed to help them to see how much they needed the Lord—and to see that He was with them as they looked to Him.
      - They made it almost into the opposite—
        - a way of impressing Him and making Him obligated to them.
        - “We built this temple,” they said.
        - “We built this cathedral” people say today...
        - “We did this worship service for you”
        - “We wrote this confession of faith”
    - And He says, “Okay...now what is this you did? What is this you want me to see?”
      - He takes no notice of it.
      - You’ve got to see that He is not impressed with our works when we try to impress Him like that...

B. But He tells us what He will take notice of!

- He tells us what we must be if He is to regard us...
- He takes notice of the one who stops playing games and accepts God as God!
  - God doesn’t want your works and your offerings and your temples and your cathedrals and your wisdom and your music!
    - He is seeking those who worship Him in spirit and truth!
    - Those who will come to Him as He is without denying Him as God the way we do.
- He sums it for us in verse 2 where He says:

- **v. 2: "But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word."**
- Let's look at the three things He says that characterise those He looks upon:
  1. First, you must be poor.
    - That means that you must realise that you don't have anything at all to offer Him.
      - It means that you see that have no resources for Him—no way to impress Him or attract Him or capture Him or obligate Him—
        - You are bankrupt before Him—you have nothing to use to negotiate with Him.
        - You are poor and destitute.
    - There is this stupid theology called liberation theology that says that God is impressed with people who are in poverty or slavery just because they are poor...
      - It's stupid theology because it completely misses the point!
        - The point is not that we must have less of this world's goods if God will accept us.
        - The point is that before God, we are all poor and destitute...
          - Even the richest, most glorious, most powerful king in all the world has nothing before God—
            - nothing He needs, nothing to impress Him with.
      - It is true that people who have less of this world's goods can often grasp that better than those who are blinded by their riches...
        - They can think that by some great offering, God will regard them.
          - But the message is not that God looks at people who have less than others in this world...
          - The message is that He looks upon the one who knows that He has nothing of His own to impress God with.
            - The context is that even the great house that we build for God is nothing to Him.
            - It is a mark of great haughtiness to think that God is impressed with the house we build for Him.

TRANS> So you must be poor in spirit...

- That is the first characteristic of those God looks upon.
- 2. Secondly, you must be contrite...broken because of your sin.
  - If you compare this with being poor,

- Being poor means that you recognise that you have nothing to impress Him with,
  - And being contrite means that you recognise that have many things that offend Him!
    - It means that you are aware that you are vile and corrupted by sin in His sight—
    - Like Isaiah said when he saw His glory, you say—
      - **“Woe is me, for I am undone, a man of unclean lips who dwells in the midst of a people of unclean lips.”**
  - It’s not just that you don’t have anything to offer God—
    - It’s that you are an offence to Him—an abomination before His eyes!
    - He made you in His image and you act like a dog—you defile His image!
      - You are a stench in His nostrils.
      - You deserve nothing but to be cut off and cast into the pit of Hell with the Devil and his angels!
        - He is holy and pure, but you are defiled and unclean!
        - You are not a suitable companion for Him.
    - When you are broken up about this, you are contrite.
      - God wants you to recognise what you are and quit playing games.
      - Your pretences only make you all the more obnoxious to Him.
      - He wants you to worship Him in spirit and truth!
        - in the reality of what He is and what you are!
  - And He adds a third characteristic of the one He looks upon.
3. You must be one trembles at His word!
- This means that when He speaks, you take Him seriously!
    - God spoke through the prophets and apostles—they were His messengers—and now their words are infallibly preserved for us in scripture.
  - What do you do with the word?
    - Most people pay very little attention to what God says.
      - Instead of trembling at His word, they ignore it or they disregard it...
        - or maybe they put it on cute little plagues with a lot of pastel colours and stuff and hang it on the wall...
      - But they don’t tremble at God’s word—

- They don't act as though the God we have been talking about is speaking to them!
  - They act more like it is just some advice from a peer or some quaint counsel from a sweet old grandfather.
- How different they will be on the day of judgement when the LORD speaks His sentence of condemnation upon them!
  - Then they will tremble!
  - Then they will see what fools they were to ignore Him!
- Do you feel at liberty to disregard what God says?
  - Do you feel that you can ignore what He says about sexual purity?
    - about the way you treat your wife?
    - about the way you treat your husband?
    - about the way He wants you to worship?
    - about loving your enemy?
    - about honouring your parents?
- Do you take issue with His word?
  - Do you say that some of the things He says are not true?
    - It's funny to see how atheistic scientists who have all sorts of objections to six day creation and Noah's flood suddenly have all those issues cleared up as soon as they turn to the Lord!
    - That's because once converted, they tremble at His word!
    - They recognise God's voice that thunders above all the puny little voices that scream so loudly in this world.
- That's what happens to you when you deal with God as God...
  - His voice becomes totally dominant in your life and all other voices become small—very small—by comparison.
    - If the emperor commands you to bow to the image he has made, God's voice that commands you not to bow down prevails with you.
    - If you are a kid and your friends want you to go somewhere that your parents do not want you to go, you hear God's voice that says "Honour your father and mother" more than your friend's voice.
    - If your family wants you to break the Sabbath to join them for a family gathering, God's voice that says, "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy" overshadows the chorus of your family.

TRANS> Do you see what the whole point is here—

- The Lord wants you to regard Him as He truly is!



- He wants faith! Faith—as described in Hebrews 11—
  - He wants those who believe that HE IS!
  - And that He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him—
    - not those who dream that they can impress Him—but those who cast themselves on Him as dependent on Him.
- This is how we always ought to have approached Him even before the fall, but how much more now that we are corrupted by sin!
  - The only appropriate way to come to Him is as one who is poor and contrite and who trembles at His word!

## II. God goes on to tell us how displeased He is with worship from those who don't fear Him!

A. He presents this offensive worship in a very interesting way in verse 3...

1. He lists different worship practices—
  - half are worship practices that He has commanded
    - and half are worship practices that He has forbidden, either expressly or by never instituting them.
  - And he puts the commanded rituals right next to forbidden ones—alternating between them.
    - He does this to show us in a very striking way that if we do not fear Him,
      - it makes no difference whether we worship Him according to His commandment or idolatrously.
      - Without the fear of God our worship is *always* offensive!
  - The translators have added something to the original in an effort to highlight the fact that there is no difference—
    - the part they added is in italics—that is what most English versions use to show what has been added...
    - But I think it is more powerful without the addition.
      - So I will read it without the addition...a more literal translation:
        - **v. 3: Killing the bull, slaying a man;  
Sacrificing the lamb, breaking a dog's neck;  
Offering a grain offering, offering swine's blood;  
Burning incense, blessing an idol.**
    - These were all things that were done in worship...
      - The killing of a bull, sacrificing of a lamb, offering of a grain offering, and burning of incense, were all things that God has told them to do...

- The slaying of man as a sacrifice, the breaking of a dog's neck, the offering of swine's blood or the blessing of an idol were all things that He had forbidden in worship.
  - But the one is just as offensive as the other when it is offered by worshippers who are not poor, contrite, and trembling at His word...
    - by those who thought God should be impressed with their offerings...
    - by those who felt that they were righteous...
    - by those who did not really take His word seriously!
2. God goes on to say that in such worship,
- the worshipper has **“chosen His own way”**—
    - Even if he has done what was appointed in the letter, He has not come before God in fear, with a broken and contrite heart—
      - so it is his own way just as much as idol worship or human sacrifice.
  - And not only has such a worshipper chosen his own way,
    - God says that **“his soul delights in his abominations!”**
      - In other words, he thinks that this worship is pleasing to God!
        - Of course he does!
        - He delights in it as if it were a good thing when it is actually an abomination to God—a great offence—that which fills God with wrath and indignation—
          - It makes it all the worse that the worshipper should actually think it is pleasing to God—just because it was done!
3. I hope you can see clearly how this applies to worshippers in the New Testament!
- You can do it all just the way God commands,
    - you can sing psalms, you can read scripture and hear sound preaching, you can come to the Lord's Table, all in form exactly in the way He appointed.
    - you can be very religious—
      - you can devote your whole life to worship...
      - you can spend hours in secret prayer and fasting...
      - you can make great sacrifices in service...
      - you can give huge gifts of all that you possess...
      - you can devote yourself to all the best causes...
      - you can sing ardently before the Lord.
    - but if you do not fear God—
      - if you are not poor, contrite, and trembling at His Word when you come before Him,
        - It is not only unacceptable, it is highly offensive.

- If there is no fear of God, no poverty of spirit, no contrition, no trembling before the word,
  - you might have well have a priest offering the mass or have gone to a Hindu temple to bow before an idol or offered a child sacrifice...
    - You have come according to your own way!
    - You are delighting in your abominations!

B. And you see how God responds to such worshippers in verse 4!

1. He says that He will choose your delusions!

- When you do not fear God, when you are not broken and contrite before Him,
  - you are, whether you admit it or not, deliberately deluding yourself!
- You are not really that stupid about God.
  - No one is really that stupid about God!
    - You are avoiding Him because you don't want to admit what you are before Him.
    - You want to pretend that you can impress Him with your worship!
    - You want to pretend that you can control Him.
- You have deluded yourself, so He will help you along and delude you all the more!
  - He will make you believe things that are manifestly absurd!
    - that sodomy is acceptable in His sight!
    - that human beings evolved from apes!
    - that Hitler has the answer!
    - that your bitterness is justified!
  - If you are going to believe that He is impressed with your offerings and with the house you built for Him,
    - then He will see to it that you believe almost anything.
    - And because you come to believe it, you will not see how foolish it is until the day of judgement.

2. And not only that, but He says that He will bring your fears upon you...

- All the things that you are hoping to avoid through your religious exercises...
  - poverty, enemy invasions, sickness, hell,
  - all of the things you fear will come upon you.
- They will come upon you because, as He goes on to say in verse 4,
  - **when I called, no one answered, When I spoke they did not hear; But they did evil before My eyes, And chose that in which I do not delight."**

- God sent His prophets, He gave you His word,
  - He told you repeatedly that you needed to be cleansed by Him.
  - He told you repeatedly that He had sent Jesus to die on the cross to atone for your sin.
  - He called you to come to Him for complete forgiveness and new life,
    - but instead of coming, you just kept on worshipping...
      - even using all the things that He had appointed to connect you with Jesus—
        - you were baptised, you came to the Lord’s Supper, you heard His word, you sang His songs...
          - all things that are meant to connect poor, needy sinners such as we all are with Jesus...
          - but you used all these things as if these things themselves would please God, just because you were doing them.
- In your pride, you refused to admit your real need before God!
  - You refused to face the fact that you need radical forgiveness and transformation that only Jesus Christ can give!
    - Oh yes, you wanted him to heal your brokenness and to rescue from your troubles and fears...
      - but you refused to come to Him as the Saviour He is who came and died in the place of guilty sinners!
      - who came to bear His peoples’ sin and guilt so they could be forgiven!
  - God provided Him and you acted like you could come to God acceptably without Him!
    - It is an abomination to come before God like that!
    - All your fears will come upon you!

TRANS> But my dear brothers and sisters—you who truly do fear God...

- You who are poor and contrite and who tremble at God’s Word,
  - I will not leave you here...

### **III. The LORD has words of tremendous comfort for you! Tremendous comfort!**

- But understand, this is not for all of you...
  - This is only for those of you who tremble at God’s word.
- You see in verse 5 that God is only addressing you here...
  - He says,
    - **v. 5: “Hear the word of the LORD, you who tremble at His Word.”**

- A. First, He tells you that He will crush those who oppose you.
1. He knows the way they treat you—the way they persecute you...
    - In verse 5 He describes them as:
      - **“Your brethren who hated you, Who cast you out for My name’s sake, said, ‘Let the LORD be glorified, That we may see your joy.’**
    - a. Doesn’t that sound exactly like what happened with the blind man that Jesus healed in John 9?
      - The Jewish leaders kept questioning him and pressing him about how he was healed and he kept telling them that Jesus did it...
        - And they asked his parents and they went on and then they cast the man out the synagogue in the name of the Lord!
    - b. The LORD says that it is your own brothers who cast you out...
      - They are fellow worshippers who are baptised and name the name of Jesus.
        - But they hate you because you tremble before God and they don’t.
          - They are desperately trying to deny their true need of God’s salvation.
          - They are trying to keep up the pretence that they don’t need a Saviour to die on the cross to take away their sins...
            - And there you are believing all that and talking about it!
            - You are a great offence to them!
            - They hate you as much as they hate Christ Himself!
              - Of course I mean the *real* Christ.
                - They have their bobble head Jesus...
                - Their Jesus who strokes them and tells them they are not sinners...
                - Their Jesus who only talks about love and never of judgement... so different than the real Jesus!
          - But they are trying to avoid the real Jesus that you know because He tells them that they are sinners—
            - and they hate him as much as they hate you.
    - c. And so, as verse 5 goes on to say,
      - They cast you out in the name of God!
        - They mock you and say, “you are His worshipper—let Him be glorified in delivering you now—let us see your joy now!”
        - They treat you the very same way they treated Jesus!
          - They do all this in God’s name!

- And now they do it in the name of Jesus Himself, the very one they are rejecting!
- This is a great discouragement to you who fear the LORD and who tremble at His word.
  - Like Jesus, you weep for them!
    - Like Paul, you plead with them to come to the LORD and receive His mercy—
      - but they hate you all the more and cast you out as evil!
    - Jesus told you to rejoice when they do this because they hated Him before they hated you.
      - You are bearing His reproach because you belong to Him and have been rescued by His saving mercy—so rejoice!

TRANS> The Lord sees all this...He sees what they are doing to you...

2. And the LORD goes on to say that will destroy these enemies!
  - Picking up from the last sentence in verse 5, He says:
    - **Isaiah 66:5-6: But they shall be ashamed. The sound of noise from the city! A voice from the temple! The voice of the LORD, Who fully repays His enemies!**
  - This does not need a lot of explanation...
    - God comes into the very city of Jerusalem—the church—to destroy those who do not truly fear Him.
    - The picture is that of raising up a noisy army that comes right into the temple—
      - as God did when He sent Babylon against Jerusalem in Daniel’s day...
      - and as He did again when He sent Greece against them...
      - and as He did again when He raised up the Romans in 70 AD against those who had rejected Jesus.
        - They showed so clearly that they were hanging on to the rituals without the fear of God in that when God’s salvation came,
          - that is, when Jesus came,
            - they rejected Him and trusted in their worship!
            - He came and destroyed the temple that they had come to trust in...
              - The very temple that God had given them to point them to Jesus and their need of Him over all those years!
    - And I tell you that God will do this again at the end of the world...

- He will crush all false Christians who have now attached themselves to Christian worship and who boast of Christ,
  - but who do not know Him—
  - who do not come to Him as a true Saviour...
  - who do not come as poor and contrite sinners, trembling at His word.
    - They too will be crushed by the LORD who,
      - as it says at the end of verse 6,
      - **“fully repays His enemies.”**

TRANS> But that is by no means all that God has to say to you who tremble before Him.

- It is a comfort to know that He will destroy those who oppose us because of Jesus...
    - But if that was the only comfort He had for us, it would be very inadequate!
    - But look!
- B. He goes on to assure you that He Himself will bring forth His king and His kingdom!
1. You have to take this section in the context of Isaiah’s entire prophecy...
    - He has spoken about the covenant people, the city of God, Jerusalem, being almost completely ruined by His chastening hand...
      - He has described them as being reduced to a mere stump...
      - But he has told us repeatedly that out of the ruins of the city of God,
        - **Isaiah 11:1: There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.**
    - He has told us that the LORD will bring forth a Son who will establish a righteous kingdom that will never end!
      - **Isaiah 9:6-7: For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.**
    - He has told us that when He comes, the nations will come to Him for salvation—people who never knew God from all over the world.
      - **Isaiah 11:10: "And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious."**
    - He has told us that when He comes, Jerusalem will be like a barren woman bringing forth a Son that will save all who come to Him, establishing a kingdom of righteousness in this sinful world!

- **Isa 54: 1-3: Sing, O barren, You who have not borne! Break forth into singing, and cry aloud, You who have not labored with child! For more are the children of the desolate Than the children of the married woman," says the LORD. Enlarge the place of your tent, And let them stretch out the curtains of your dwellings; Do not spare; Lengthen your cords, And strengthen your stakes. For you shall expand to the right and to the left, And your descendants will inherit the nations, And make the desolate cities inhabited.**
  - There are so many other passages that we could look at—
    - but this is enough to give you the picture...
      - That Jerusalem, though almost ruined, will bring forth a Saviour who will gather the nations into His righteous kingdom!
2. With that background, you can understand what the LORD is saying in verses 7-9 of our text...
- Isaiah 66:7-9:
    - **Verse 7: "Before she was in labor, she gave birth; Before her pain came, She delivered a male child.**
      - Christ will come forth to the barren city of Jerusalem very suddenly—even miraculously—without any labour on the part of Jerusalem.
        - It will be wholly God's doing.
        - It will be a miracle!
          - Not by human might or human power, but by God's Spirit.
    - A whole kingdom of righteousness will be brought forth in this one child in one day:
      - **Verse 8: Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion was in labor, She gave birth to her children.**
        - The idea is not that the church was all gathered in one day,
          - but the king upon whom the whole nation depended came forth in one day, out of ruins.
          - This one who brings salvation to all the world comes in one day, and the nations begin to flood to Him in the same generation.
    - God assures His people that He will do this great thing even though it would seem so impossible—as they were going into captivity at the time.
      - **V. 9: Shall I bring to the time of birth, and not cause delivery?" says the LORD. "Shall I who cause delivery shut up the womb?" says your God.**
        - He did not call His people forth and promise Christ to them only to have the whole thing fail.



- He will do all that He has promised even though Jerusalem will be nearly destroyed...
  - She, the barren woman, will bring forth a child and His kingdom will be righteousness!
  - The salvation that God promised to Jerusalem will come to Jerusalem.
    - What she could not bring forth, God will bring forth!
      - He will bring the forgiveness of sin through His blood and new life through His Spirit to Jerusalem—

TRANS> God will do this great thing!

- He will bring forth this king and this kingdom as He has promised!

C. And so the LORD calls on everyone to respond to this great thing!

1. He calls you and everyone else to rejoice with Jerusalem!

- Look at verse 10
  - **Isaiah 66:10: "Rejoice with Jerusalem, And be glad with her, all you who love her; Rejoice for joy with her, all you who mourn for her;**
- This is such a tremendous thing...
  - This Son that God has promised so long is finally born!
    - The One who took His people's sins—all of them—and went to the cross for their complete pardon!
    - The One who pours out His Spirit upon them to give them a new heart and a new life—
      - a heart that truly responds to God and a life that follows Him.
- This is something that ought to cause the whole world to break forth in praise!
  - How Jerusalem ought to rejoice!
  - How the whole world ought to rejoice!

2. But why should the rest of the world rejoice in what God has done for Jerusalem?

- Of course there is a sense in which we should be glad when another nation is blessed.
  - Neighbour love should cause us to say, "Good for them" and be glad that they have been blessed.
    - But there is much more reason to rejoice in what God has done for Jerusalem...
- In verse 11, God says to rejoice with Jerusalem...
  - **Isa 66:11: That you may feed and be satisfied With the consolation of her bosom, That you may drink deeply and be delighted With the abundance of her glory."**

- God's provision for Jerusalem is also His provision for the whole world!
  - He is saying that the nations should rejoice with Jerusalem in the coming of Jesus because if they do, they will be able to partake of Him!
    - They will be able to eat and drink of God's salvation for Israel!
      - They will be engrafted in to the tree of salvation with Israel!
    - It will be their salvation too!
      - They too will be forgiven!
      - They too will be given the Holy Spirit—that they may become all that is pleasing to God!
      - They too will be given an eternal inheritance in the new heavens and the new earth.
- And look—this is not just the leftovers!
  - This is no incomplete or partial provision!
    - Not at all!
  - The LORD says that if you rejoice in what God has provided for His people,
    - You will feed and be satisfied!
    - You will be consoled—comforted in God's salvation!
    - You will drink deeply and be delighted with the abundance of her glory!
      - There is plenty to go around!

### **Conclusion**

So how is it with you? Do you fear God or do you trifle with Him?

- Are you poor? Do you see that you have no resources in yourself?
- Are you contrite? Do you see that your whole life has been offensive to God?
- Do you tremble at His word? Do you take what He says with utmost seriousness?

If you suppose that God ought to be pleased with you and with your worship, then you are just deluding yourself.

- As long as you hang on to that lie about what He is and what you are, you can be sure that He will never look upon you...
- But if you come to Him poor, contrite, and trembling at His Word,
  - looking to Him to save you,
    - You will find that He has made abundant provision for you!
    - He has sent His only Son to save you!

Away with your pride then!

- You desperately need this salvation!
  - Humble yourself and start rejoicing in Jesus Christ!
    - Come to God without Him, and you will be rejected...
    - Come to God trusting in Jesus, and you will be gladly received forever.