

# God's Goodness & Severity

Isaiah 66:12-24

Halifax: 17 July 2011

## Introduction

Today we come to the conclusion of the prophecy of Isaiah.

- It is a very fitting conclusion for the prophet who had to expose the hypocrisy of Israel that would lead to their rejection.
- All along the way Isaiah has told of Judah's failure, but also of the coming of the Saviour, Jesus Christ, to them in their desperate condition.
  - All along, He has also told us of a believing remnant that will be blessed because they yearn for the Son God has promised...
  - And here, in this final chapter, the LORD, speaking through Isaiah,
    - declares to us just how blessed those from Israel will be who receive Him
      - and how cursed those will be who reject Him!
    - And He also declares how the Gentiles will come flooding into the church in place of those who have rejected Him.
    - And how His blessing and His curse will be brought to a complete and eternal climax, His goodness and His severity will be fully revealed.

You need to see that that is where all things are headed...

- As God's plan for the world unfolds,
  - it involves a more and more complete revelation of His goodness upon the vessels of His mercy who receive His salvation,
  - And of His severity upon the vessels of wrath who reject His salvation.
    - The great extremes of His glory are filled out with a greater and greater fullness.

It is a tremendous comfort to you who are in Christ and a dreadful warning to you who are not!

- *Last week*, we saw how the LORD distinguished between the characteristics of those who are in Him and those who are not...
  - And *this week* we see the radical difference in what becomes of each group—
    - For one there is marvellous blessing...
    - For the other there is dreadful destruction.
- Before we begin to look at this distinction, let me remind you what we learned last week about the distinction between those who truly come to God and those who do not.
  - We saw that those whom God receives are poor and contrite, and tremble at God's Word.

- They realise that they don't have anything to offer to God, but rather have much in them that offends Him—and they truly believe what He says in His Word.
  - They know that their own works and worship are worthless before the living God.
- And then we saw that because they have given up on themselves,
  - they greatly rejoice in God's Son who comes to establish a kingdom of righteousness.
  - They delight in Him as the One who bears their sin and who has the Holy Spirit to give to them.
    - He has everything they need!
    - He has what they lack—and so they rejoice in Him and gladly receive Him!
- Remember how His coming was presented to us in verses 7-11?
  - That God was going to work a miracle so that Israel, pitiful barren Israel,
    - would bring forth a male child who would be the beginning of the kingdom of righteousness that would fill the earth?
  - Remember how in verse 10 and 11, the Lord called you to rejoice with Jerusalem about this marvellous provision,
    - and told you that if you do, you will be able to partake of Him with joy, to feed upon this provision and to drink deeply of it and be filled?
      - Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of God!
      - Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted!
      - Blessed are the meek who tremble at God's Word, for they shall inherit the earth!
      - Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled!
- Now I very much hope that all of you are among those who are poor and contrite and who tremble at God's Word and so find the good news that Jesus has come to save sinners to be the very best news ever!
  - And I hope that you have come to Him and embraced Him as your Saviour, giving up on acceptance through your own works and rejoicing in Him alone!
    - If you have, then today I am going to show you how blessed you will be in distinction from those who have not embraced Him.
      - It is a radical, eternal distinction that is ever widening.
        - Those who rejoice in Christ will experience the fullness of God's goodness...

- And those who do not receive Him, no matter how religious they may be, will experience the fullness of God's severity!
- Let us turn now to look at the goodness and severity of God as He Himself describes them for us in verses 12-24.

**I. First, the Lord tells you of His goodness in uniting the Gentiles with the remnant of Israel in Jesus Christ.**

A. He tells you that He brings peace like river to all of you who rejoice in Christ.

- verse 12 begins:
  - **Isa 66:12: For thus says the LORD: "Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river!"**
- 1. The river in view here is that of a wadi—one of those seasonal rivers that was completely dry until the rainy season and then became a rushing torrent!
  - Only this is a river torrent of water but of peace!
    - Isaiah had spoken of the Assyrians coming in like a river to practically drown Judah under judgement...
    - But in Christ God floods His people with a torrent of peace!
- 2. This is *shalom*, that Hebrew word that is even richer and fuller than our word *peace*...
  - Not only does it speak of *peace* in the sense of an absence of conflict and disharmony, but it also speaks of the fullness of *enriching friendship*.
    - It is one thing to stop fighting, say with another nation,
      - but it is quite another when both nations start doing all they can for the enrichment and betterment of the other!
      - That is *shalom*!
    - And the LORD is not talking about just a trickle of *shalom*!
      - He is talking about a river—a never ending torrent that flows and flows and flows!
      - Its source is in the very Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us!
- 3. As Jesus was preparing to go to the cross, He told us that this peace was His gift to us!
  - In John 14:27, He said:
    - **Joh 14:27 "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.**
    - What do we lack when the Son of God gives us His *shalom*?

- This means that He, whose enemies we once were, is not only reconciled to us, but is now a friend that enriches us!
- How far does the blessing go when He, the eternal God, is committed to blessing us!
- His grace is endless!
- And to think that we were destined for Hell!

B. And look, with this river peace also comes the Gentiles...

- The LORD goes on to say in verse 12 that He will bring:
    - **v. 12: “the Gentiles like a flowing stream.”**
1. The Gentiles are the nations outside of Israel.
    - They did not know God because their forefathers had drifted away from Him and He had not called them or kept them, but left them to go their own way.
    - They were in desperate darkness for so long,
      - but now they will come flooding in to God’s kingdom along with peace!
    - What a remarkable thing for Jerusalem!
      - When Jesus comes to her, the nations take note and come to God!
        - They will come to receive the peace that He brings!
  2. This reminds me of what the Apostle Paul said about peace to the Ephesians!
    - a. They were Gentiles, and Paul sought to stir them up to rejoice in the peace that Jesus had brought both to them and to the Jews together...
      - In Eph 2:14-18, he says:
        - **Eph 2:14-19: For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two [Jew and Gentile], thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,**
        - The Gentiles have been brought right into the house of God to receive the marvellous blessing of His shalom, brought to us in Christ.
    - b. How you ought to rejoice about this!
      - We are Gentiles and we were complete cut off...

- but now we have been brought near by the blood of Christ and forever incorporated into the people of God.

C. Now the Lord goes on to speak of the great blessing that will be enjoyed when the Gentiles are brought into the city of God.

- In the remainder of Isaiah 66:12 and on into verse 14, it says:
  - **Isa 66:12-14: Then you shall feed; On her sides shall you be carried, And be dandled on her knees. As one whom his mother comforts, So I will comfort you; And you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.**
- 1. The blessing is obvious—that at the time when peace and the Gentiles come into the true city of God, the city of God will be greatly blessed!
  - a. She will feed—on the bread that comes down from heaven and gives eternal life.
    - We had bread that could not give us eternal life—bread that could not satisfy the need of our souls...
      - But in Christ we have a feast that gives us new life that endures forever!
      - What a provision we have in Him!

TRANS> And not only is Jerusalem fed...

- b. She will be carried and dandled as a baby is in the warm embrace of its mother.
  - What security is ours in the everlasting arms!
    - No enemy can molest us or snatch us out of His hands!
    - We are kept by the power of God through faith for eternal life.

TRANS> And not only is Jerusalem fed and carried in her Lord's arms...

- c. She will be comforted by the LORD in the way a mother comforts even her grown son—the phrase “as one whom his mother comforts,” is literally, “as a man whom his mother comforts...”
  - What a tremendous thing to have God portrayed to you like this!
  - He Himself assures you of His love and of His promises and commitment to you.
    - What assurance we have when He Himself comforts us and tells us that we are His.
    - If He comforts us, we will be comforted indeed!
2. What great rejoicing it brings to have all of this from the LORD through our dear Lord Jesus!

- Peace like a river—nations coming into the city—abundance of food and care and comfort!
  - Verse 14 says:
    - **Isa 66:14: When you see this, your heart shall rejoice, And your bones shall flourish like grass;**
      - This speaks of joy that goes right to very core—to the heart and bones...
    - Before your bones were dried up like the grass in Palestine that turns brown in the dry season,
      - but now they are green and flourishing as watered by the gentle shower of the Lord and the blessing of His Spirit.
3. But I say, who is it that is being addressed in verse 12-14?
- Is it the remnant of the Jews who rejoiced when Jesus came, or is it the Gentiles who are brought into the city?
    - Surely it is the Jew and the Gentile together!
    - They are united together in the peace that Jesus establishes between them!
  - And the result is that in Christ, they become a tremendous blessing to each other.
    - That is one of the greatest things about being in Christ!
      - He changes you so that you become a blessing to others!
      - Instead of being shrivelled up in yourself, you have something good to share with others...
        - The Jews become a blessing to the Gentiles and the Gentiles to the Jews.
          - The war that was ended between God and His redeemed is also ended between the redeemed Jew and the redeemed Gentiles.
          - Christ's peace inundates everything and brings enemies together to use their gifts and resources to bless each other.

TRANS> And so it is that, as verse 14 says,

- **Isa 66:14: The hand of the LORD shall be known to His servants!**
  - What great things He has done for them!
    - His hand of blessing is evident in their lives,
      - but just the opposite for His enemies...
    - Verse 14 says:
      - **And His indignation to His enemies...**
      - The whole sentence is:
        - **Isa 66:14: The hand of the LORD shall be known to His servants, And His indignation to His enemies.**

- Indignation is the portion of those who have no room for Christ...
  - Of those who see Him as a threat to their own righteousness instead of their provision for righteousness...
    - They cannot rejoice in the coming of Christ because they are trying to establish their own righteousness.
    - For them, there is severity.

## II. So now the Lord shows us His severity in judging all who reject Christ.

A. He comes as fire, chariot, whirlwind and sword to destroy them.

- **Isa 66:15-16: For behold, the LORD will come with fire And with His chariots, like a whirlwind, To render His anger with fury, And His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword the LORD will judge all flesh...**
  - Verse 12 began with the word **behold**—to see God’s goodness...
  - And verse 15 begins with the word **behold**—to see God’s indignation!
- 1. This is the unleashing of His anger upon those in Jerusalem, who, though Christ was sent to them, could not rejoice in Him.
  - They could not rejoice because they were not poor and contrite and did not tremble at God’s word!
    - Instead they were full of self-righteousness, superiority, and pride!
    - Christ, as God’s provision of righteousness, made them angry!
      - They did not need righteousness from the Messiah!
        - Only deliverance from those pesky Romans!
  - This is the Pharisees and the scribes and the chief priests and the Sanhedrin who, instead of rejoicing in the Messiah as their righteousness,
    - took pleasure in finding fault with Him...
      - until at last they were so deceived that they delivered Him up to the Romans to be crucified!
        - the very one who was full of the righteousness they so desperately needed they rejected as unfit to live!
        - These were neither poor nor contrite—how far from it!
          - Nor did they tremble at the Word.
          - They would have none of God’s salvation!
  - And there are so many like this today!
    - Christ is just what they need, but instead of immediately rejoicing in Him,
      - they find fault with Him...
      - they find fault with His word and doubt what He says...
      - It wickedness in the extreme.

2. And so the judgement upon them is very complete—
  - a. It is God's anger unleashed upon them with fury!
    - What a terrifying, dreadful thing it is to fall under the wrath of the Almighty as those who have rejected His precious Son.
  - b. Every metaphor is used to describe His judgement...
    - There is fire—by which God envelops His enemies in His wrath...
    - There is God's chariot—by which He pursues them and overtakes them... His judgements always overtake His enemies.
    - There is the whirlwind—which sweeps away everything they have with violence.
    - And there is the sword—which strikes each person individually.

B. All of this falls on the rejecters of Christ progressively:

1. First, there was the exile to Babylon—when God's wrath flattened Jerusalem and took them all away for rejecting Christ promised...
  - Yet, at this judgement the separation between the righteous and the unrighteous was not so clear...
    - All went into exile...
2. But when Christ came, a much fuller distinction was made between the righteous and the wicked...
  - There were those who rejected their messiah and those who received Him...
    - And then in 70 AD the judgement He told them He would bring fell hard upon the rejecters, but those who believed in Jesus escaped.
  - In this judgement, a clear distinction was made between the righteous and the unrighteous...
    - Truly, what John the Baptist declared was fulfilled,
      - **Lu 3:17 "His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire."**
      - It was indeed a thorough cleaning!
3. But there is yet a greater, more complete judgement that will come upon the whole earth and upon all who in all ages have refused the Messiah.
  - This judgement will not come until after the gospel has been proclaimed to all flesh...and probably not until after most of those then on the earth are saved.
  - Then, all the living will be gathered to Christ and the dead will be raised...



- And then He will separate the sheep from the goats with the sheep on the right and the goats on the left.
  - It will a very clear, decisive, and permanent separation...
- And then the rejecters of Christ
  - **Matt 25:46: “will go away into everlasting punishment, but he righteous into eternal life.”**
- Understand that each progressive judgement is more thorough, more decisive, and more terrible than the one before.
  - God reveals both His goodness and His severity progressively.

TRANS> Our text in Isaiah goes on to show us that:

C. None shall escape...

1. Even though there are many, they will **all** be slain.
  - Rebellious people, in their pride, often take comfort when their number is great.
    - They dream that God will not judge so many people—how could so many be wrong?
    - Yet, verse 16 assures us that God will judge them all:
      - **v. 16: For by fire and by His sword The LORD will judge all flesh; And the slain of the LORD shall be many.**
  - Our glorious Father can just as easily judge a billion as one.
    - His standard of righteousness does not change based upon a majority vote.
  - Do not dream that you can hide in a crowd of sinners or escape by comparing yourself with those who are worse than you.
    - Christ crucified is the only place you can hide from the wrath of God!
2. And do not suppose that you can hide behind religion...
  - The folly of such a notion was already fully exposed in verse 3 which we looked at last week...
    - The LORD showed that even if His worshippers follow His directives to a tee, but come to Him without humility and faith,
      - they might as well be offering pig’s blood.
    - If they think that God will accept them and that they have no need of Christ, their worship is an abomination.
      - They dare to draw near to God in their self-righteous pride!

- And so verse 17 tells us that they will not escape from God’s wrath for all their religion:
  - **Isa 66:17: “Those who sanctify themselves and purify themselves, to go to the gardens after an idol in the midst, eating swine’s flesh and the abomination and the mouse, shall be consumed together,” says the LORD.**
  - No doubt, this language is used to mock the hypocritical Jewish worship that characterised the Jewish leaders when Jesus came—
    - whose worship was esteemed by God as no better than pagan worship because they rejected Christ...
  - And in our day this language can be used to refer to the Christian worship of those who also reject Him as their Lord and Saviour.
    - They draw near with their lips, but their heart is far from Him.
    - They refuse to come to Him as those in desperate need of forgiveness...
      - They come as self-righteous Christians—
      - What an oxymoron that is—“self-righteous Christians!”
        - But such are legion.
          - They suppose that they have their righteousness in their religion...
          - And if not that, in their good works...
          - And if not that, in their church or their nation...
          - And if not that, in their sincerity.
- The penetrating eye of the Lord sees through all the façade and through all the layers of hypocrisy.
  - He says, (v. 18)
    - **“For I know their works and their thoughts.”**
    - As Jesus told us, what is highly esteemed in the eyes men is an abomination in the sight of God.
      - You must humble yourself and come to Christ if you want to be saved.
      - That is the one whom God looks upon.

TRANS> All who hide in the crowd or in religion will be consumed together.

- This is what happened to the Jews when Jesus came...at the destruction of Jerusalem...

3. And the Gentiles were brought in to take their place!

- The LORD tells us that He will replace these hypocrites with peoples from every tongue and nation... Verse 18 says...

- **v. 18: For I know their works and their thoughts** [that of the Jews]. **It shall be that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see My glory.**
- Seeing God's glory is the same as saying that they will see His salvation that was revealed to the Jews and rejected by them.
  - It is the glory as of the only begotten of the Father that they see!
  - It is the One who was full of grace and truth who came with salvation for His people's sins, to all who would receive Him.
  - The Gentiles will see His glory and come to Him—as we have already seen!

TRANS> The coming of the Gentiles in place of the Jews is such a remarkable thing for Isaiah to declare!

- It is so remarkable that the Lord explains how it will be done...

### **III. The LORD explains how the Gentiles will be brought in to His kingdom.**

A. In v. 19, He says that He will **“set a sign among them.”**

1. What is this sign?

- Surely it is the sign that we saw in back in Isaiah 11—
  - the banner that is lifted up in the sight of the nations that they come to...
    - even Christ lifted up, as He said in John 12:32:
      - **John 12:32: “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.”**
      - And then John adds:
        - **John 12:33: This He said, signifying by what death He would die.**
- This is the sign of Jonah which is the only sign that Jesus told the Jews would be given to them...
  - **Matthew 12:39-40: But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”**
    - This refers, of course, to His death, burial, and resurrection.
      - He went to the grave with the curse for our sins upon Him, and rose again on the third day with an imperishable life!

2. What was in this sign for the nations?

- Jesus resurrected is the firstfruits of the new heaven and the new earth!
  - In His resurrection is the promise of life without death...
  - In His resurrection is the promise of holiness without sin!
  - In His resurrection is the beginning of a glorious kingdom of everlasting righteousness and glory.

- It is impossible for us to even understand how all this can be...
  - For us, sin and death seem impossible to banish...
    - We can hardly even fathom how there could be good without evil...
      - But that only proves how far we are fallen from God.
    - In Jesus resurrected, we have the beginning of such a world—a new heavens and new earth where righteousness dwells...
      - where there is not death or sickness...
      - no sorrow and no tear...
      - no selfishness and no pride...
        - but where all together live for the glory of God, giving all for Him and so for each other in an endless exchange of love.
    - This is the sign of the crucified, resurrected Christ!
      - A banner lifted up to draw all nations to Himself!
      - In Him is complete forgiveness, complete healing, complete reconciliation, perfect peace, eternal joy.

B. With this sign, “those who escape” will go to the Gentiles.

- Verse 19 says:
  - **Isa 66:19: "I will set a sign among them; and those among them who escape I will send to the nations: to Tarshish and Pul and Lud, who draw the bow, and Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands afar off who have not heard My fame nor seen My glory. And they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles.**

1. Who are “those who escape?”

- It is the Jews who escape from the terrible judgement that falls on Jerusalem!
  - They escape and they carry the gospel to the Gentiles!
  - We know some of them by name...
    - It is Peter, James, John, and Paul...
    - They go into the world with the message of a crucified risen Saviour calling all men everywhere to repent and believe...
      - beseeching them to be reconciled to God through Jesus...
        - to enter into the life that He already possesses for us...
          - a life without death...
          - holiness without sin!

2. We are told that these who escape go in every direction to proclaim God’s glory to the peoples who have never heard...

- They go to those who have been in the darkness, without God in the world, but who are now brought near by the blood of Christ.

- Specific places are mentioned as examples—Tarshish, Pul, Lud, Tubal, and Javan...
    - Real people in every direction...
    - Real people with real characteristics—those who were known for archery are mentioned...just to make it clear that real people are in view...
      - And reaching to the coastlands afar off—to England, to Spain, to the Americas!
      - And here we are, in this very room, worshipping God through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord and Saviour who abolished death for us and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel!
        - We have seen His glory and we worship Him!
3. The LORD declares that the Gentiles will come to worship with the escaped Jews as their fully incorporated brethren.
- Look at verse 20...
    - a. You see that the Gentiles are called the **brethren** of the escaped Jews which the escaped Jews round up and bring to God as an offering...
      - **Isaiah 66:20: Then they shall bring all your brethren for an offering to the LORD out of all nations,**
    - b. You see that they come in great number to the city of God by every means of conveyance...
      - **on horses and in chariots and in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem,"**
        - Of course this speaks of the New Jerusalem that is above—they come in spirit and in truth to worship God through Christ crucified.
        - Jerusalem is no longer centred in Palestine—the temple has been destroyed—but it is now at the right hand of God where Jesus is.
          - That is where all our worship is directed!
            - That is where we gather when we come into the Christian assembly—we are before the throne of God.
    - c. It is clear that there is a new order of things because God declares that:
      - v. 21: He will even take some of them and make them priests and Levites!
        - If you know anything about the priesthood in the Old Testament, you know that only persons from the tribe of Levi could be priests!
          - But under Christ, Gentiles are made into ministers of the New Covenant.
          - We know some of them by name—
            - There is Luke and Timothy and Epaphras.
          - The Old Covenant priesthood is replaced by the preaching of the gospel...
            - and Gentiles are among the preachers!

- There is no better way to express how fully the Gentiles are incorporated in the city of God than this!
  - In Christ, the middle wall that separated the Jews and Gentiles is broken down and all are brought near by the blood of Jesus!
  - The Gentiles are gathered in by the Jews,
    - And then they join with the Jewish missionaries to carry out the work shoulder to shoulder!

TRANS> So our LORD shows us how the nations are brought into the glorious kingdom of Christ to enjoy the blessing of salvation with the Jews!

- The LORD gathers them to the sign of Jesus Christ, Christ crucified and risen with eternal life.
  - It is that glorious gospel that attracts them!
    - It is not our music or our skits or our personality, but it is Jesus Christ who must be lifted up among the nations.
    - When He is lifted up, He will draw the nations to Himself!
      - This is how we are brought into His kingdom—
        - And what a kingdom it is!
        - What a different destiny is prepared for those who come and for those who refuse God’s call!

#### **IV. The LORD makes it clear that both His goodness and His severity will be eternal.**

A. Those who come to Christ will be blessed forever!

1. They are brought in to the new heavens and the new earth that Jesus brought into being, and it is a kingdom that will never perish...
  - So in verse 22, the LORD says:
    - **Isa 66:22: “For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me,” says the LORD, “so shall your descendants and your name remain.”**
  - It is a kingdom of life without death, of happiness without sorrow, or righteousness without sin...
    - And it is forever!
    - It has begun with Christ, and it has begun in you if you are in Him...
      - The promise is that you and your descendents who enter this kingdom and keep this covenant will remain in it forever and ever,
        - joined together with each other and with all His people as one.
2. And what do we do in this kingdom?
  - a. We worship God—as verse 23 says,

- **Isa 66:23: And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the LORD.**
- Is this now, or this in eternity?
  - It is both—
    - We enter His kingdom in this world and we become His worshippers who gather each Lord's Day to give thanks to the Father for accepting Jesus' offering for our sins.
    - And our praise grows stronger and stronger, and our rejoicing in Christ becomes greater and greater until the day of His return,
      - And then it will be greater than ever and it will never cease!
        - It grows into such a completeness, such a perfection!

b. And those who truly worship God become like Him!

- They become gracious and just and wise and holy by His grace...
- And then more and more they lay down their lives for each other so that they dwell in mutual love—
  - with each eager to bless His neighbour with the power and glory of His new life in Christ!
  - It begins now, brothers and sisters— in Christ—
    - It begins in your home and in your church and it grows to glorious perfection...
    - And it endures forever and ever!
    - It is the eternal Kingdom that Christ established and it cannot end.
    - In it, you are blessed forever.

B. But those who do not come to Christ will be cursed forever!

1. A dreadful thought!

- We have seen the fury of the Lord described already as fire, a chariot, a whirlwind, and a sword,
- It too is very complete, very thorough...
  - but perhaps worst of all—
    - we see now that it is also eternal!

2. Verse 24 tells us that the gathered saints will see the ones who refused Christ in their torment:

- **Isa 66:24: "And they [the redeemed ones] shall go forth and look Upon the corpses of the men Who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, And their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh."**

- You see that the punishment of the wicked is as lasting as the blessing of the righteous.
    - “Their worm does not die and their fire is not quenched”
    - Both the blessing and curse grow progressively through the ages until both reach completion...
      - And then both endure forever—the one as long as the other.
  - In the New Testament, John 3:36 affirms that this will be so.
    - **John 3:36: He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.**
      - You see that the wrath of God is said to **abide** or **remain** on those who do not believe.
        - They do not enter into the resurrected life that Jesus began, but must remain under judgement forever.
3. But why does the LORD tell us in Isaiah that we will look upon them in their suffering?
- a. It is for the honour and vindication of our dear Saviour Jesus whom they rejected.
    - We do not yet see just how honourable and glorious He is and what an awful thing it is to reject Him!
      - But when we are in glory we will see and we will praise God for the judgement that He has brought on them...
        - and it will honour Him for us to look upon those He has judged.
  - b. We will not gloat, nor will we have remorse, but we will rejoice in King Jesus who has brought His judgement to completion—
    - 1) We will rejoice as Israel rejoiced when Pharaoh and his armies were drowned in the sea, still in pursuit of Israel to destroy them!
      - Exodus 15 says:
        - **Ex 15:1-7: Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the LORD, and spoke, saying: "I will sing to the LORD, For He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea! The LORD is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation; He is my God, and I will praise Him; My father's God, and I will exalt Him. The LORD is a man of war; The LORD is His name. Pharaoh's chariots and his army He has cast into the sea; His chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea. The depths have covered them; They sank to the bottom like a stone. "Your right hand, O LORD, has become glorious in power; Your right hand, O LORD, has dashed the enemy in pieces. And in the greatness of Your excellence You have overthrown those who rose against You; You sent forth Your wrath; It consumed them like stubble.**



- 2) How much more will we join in the Hallelujah chorus at the end of the age when the city of man that opposed King Jesus is overthrown!
- In Revelation, this is the response to the overthrow of Babylon, the city of man, that opposes the city of God:
    - **Rev 19:1-6: After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God! For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her." Again they said, "Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!" And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, "Amen! Alleluia!" Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!" And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!**
- 3) This is part of our worship for all eternity as God's people
- It began when Pharaoh was brought down and it will continue into eternity.
    - We will praise our God for His victory over those who opposed the glorious kingdom that He has established.
      - We will praise God that they are in a place where they can no longer rise up against Him.
    - They are real people who opposed Him—we will know many of them...
      - As long as we are in this world, we plead for them to come to Christ and enter into His kingdom,
        - but once they have been shown to be His inveterate enemies,
          - there will be nothing else to do but to rejoice in their destruction.
      - They will be an abhorrence to us for opposing King Jesus.
        - But brothers and sisters, we are only saved by free grace!
        - But for the grace of God, we would be in opposition to Him too.
          - How awful it would be to be left as His enemies!
          - How awful it will be when our eyes are fully opened and we see just how abhorrent it is to reject such a glorious Saviour!

TRANS> The distinction between the city of man and the true city of God is not so great as it will be when everything is brought to a conclusion... Then...

C. The distinction between the two will be most absolute and most complete.

- God's severity to them and God's goodness to His elect will reach to its highest pitch.
1. Let this be a warning—you will spend eternity under wrath or under mercy.
    - Both will be brought to a completeness and a perfection, and both will remain forever and ever.
      - Be sure that you are not on the pathway to death and misery.
      - Be sure that you are among those who rejoice in Jesus Christ, the crucified One who rose with the power of an endless life for Himself and for all who give up on themselves and come to Him.
  2. Let this also be a comfort for you who are in Christ—
    - in eternity, there will, for us, be good without evil and life without death or anything associated with it—
      - A complete and final separation will be made to the One Isaiah has consistently called “the Holy One of Israel.”
      - He will bring you all the way from the ruin where you began to the perfection in glory that He has prepared for you in Christ.
        - And all the glory will go to Him!