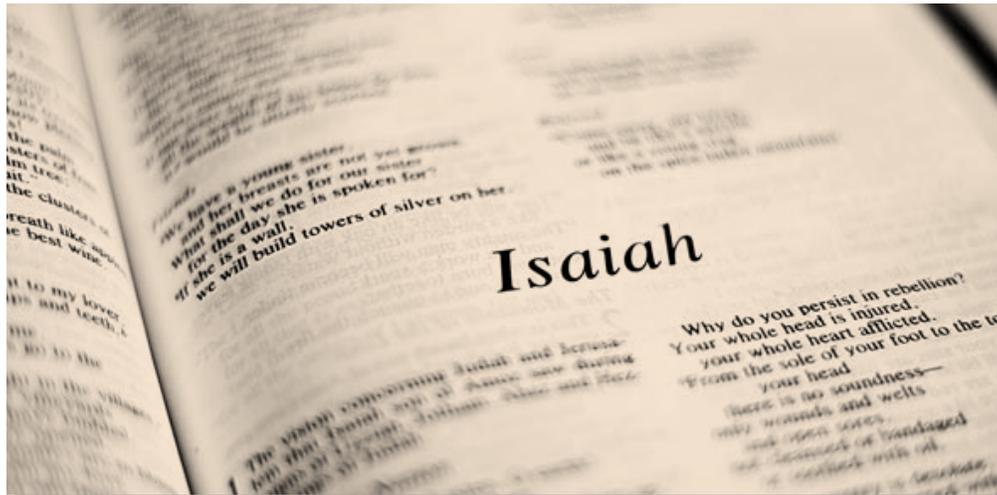


THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

ALL THINGS NEW: ISAIAH



T. M. Moore

A Scriptorium Study

The Fellowship of Ailbe

All Things New: Isaiah 65
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Susie Moore, Editing and Finishing
The Fellowship of Ailbe
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Introduction to *Isaiah 65*

God Himself comes to declare His intention of making a new creation in which the salvation He grants to His people abounds unto righteousness, peace, and joy.

Those whose religion is not truly of the heart, but merely an outward veneer, have no part in this glorious new creation.

God Himself is coming to shepherd His flock, bringing with Him the abundance and joy that all will know who look to Him in repentance, faith, and obedience.

If you find these studies helpful, please drop me a line at tmmoore@ailb.org and let me know. We welcome suggestions and stories about how the Lord is using our resources to help you grow in your walk with and work for the Lord.

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1 The True Seeker

Pray Psalm 106.1-3.

Praise the LORD!

Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good!

For His mercy endures forever.

Who can utter the mighty acts of the LORD?

Who can declare all His praise?

Blessed are those who keep justice,

And he who does righteousness at all times!

Read Isaiah 65.1.

Reflect.

1. Does this verse seem strange to you? To whom does God make Himself known?

2. What do we learn about people from this verse? About God?

Meditate.

This verse goes against the overall attitude in many churches today, which seem to think that a large population of “seekers” is out there, hoping someone will show them the way to the Lord. Paul denies that this is the case: “There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God” (Rom. 3.10, 11). In doing so, he was quoting Psalm 14.1 (53.1), which would have been familiar to everyone in Isaiah’s day.

We are mistaken if we think that people are seeking God. They are not. As God Himself testifies in Isaiah 65.1, people are not asking for Him, they are not seeking Him, and they have no previous identity with Him. We misconstrue the mission God has assigned to us if we set up our churches to accommodate “seekers”, for no such beings exist.

Yet, God points out, people who did not previously ask about Him, seek Him, or have any identity with Him end up finding Him and resorting in Him (the Hebrew, *דָּרַשׁ*, *darash*, in verse 1 – *sought* – is better translated here, *resorted to*). How does that happen?

Because *God* is the true *Seeker*. He comes to those who are not seeking Him. He calls to them and says, “Here I am! Here I am!” Like Jesus, God seeks the lost to save them (Lk. 19.11), which is why Jesus has sent us to the world as seekers of the lost, just as He was sent (Jn. 20.21).

God will be active in our churches as our churches commit to His mission, that of saying to the lost world, “Here He is! Look to Him! See His glory and suffering! Hear His call to repentance and faith!”

God does not command the lost world to go to church. He commands the Church, His Body and Bride, to go to the world.

Reflect.

1. Reflect on your own experience of coming to the Lord. How can you see that the Lord was seeking you and calling to you, even before you knew Him?

2. What does it mean to be “called” by the Name of God? What does it mean to be a *Christian*?

3. How should this verse, which shows God as the only true Seeker, affect your work in your Personal Mission Field?

But what is said in Hebrew, namely, that “they will seek me who previously did not inquire about me,” means that those who once had no knowledge of God later sought the Lord and came to know him by means of revelation. Jerome (347-420 AD), Commentary on Isaiah 18.2

Lord, I understand You intend to seek the lost through me. Help me today to be more...

Pray Psalm 106.

This is a longer psalm, but it is full of grace and mercy. This psalm provides an overview of God’s history with Israel, but it also shows the nature of grace, even as that grace was shown to us. Give thanks to God for all the times He didn’t give up on you, though you turned your back on Him.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 106 (*Trust in Jesus: ‘Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus’*)

Praise the Lord! Give thanks and praise Him! He is good, His love endures!
More His works than can be spoken; let His praise be ever sure!

Refrain v. 48

Blessèd be our God and Savior, evermore His praise proclaim!
Let all those who know Your favor praise Your holy, glorious Name!

Lord, when You Your people favor, help me, O, remember me,
That I may Your blessings savor and in joy and glory be!

Refrain

We have sinned, just like our fathers; we have done iniquity.
Just like them, our hearts have wandered; we have acted wickedly.

Refrain

For Your love we have forgotten; we rebelled against Your grace.
Yet You save us by Your power, make us stand before Your face.

Refrain

Though Your works we’re oft forgetting, and Your counsels we despise,
though we often try and test You, yet You hear our plaintive cries!

Refrain

Look upon us, Lord, with favor, see us in our sore distress!
Hear our cries, with love surround us – turn again to heal and bless!

Refrain

Save us, Lord, from every nation; gather us from all our ways.
And we to Your Name will offer glorious thanks and endless praise!

Refrain

2 Unholy Incense

Pray Psalm 141.1, 2.

LORD, I cry out to You;

Make haste to me!

Give ear to my voice when I cry out to You.

Let my prayer be set before You *as* incense,

The lifting up of my hands *as* the evening sacrifice.

Read Isaiah 65.2-5.

Reflect.

1. How many different ways does God indict His people in these verses? What does He have against them?
2. What kind of “incense” were these people to the Lord?

Meditate.

In these verses we note many references to religious practices. The people made sacrifices (v. 3). They burned incense (v. 3), spent whole nights in solitude (v. 4), and touted their “holiness” (v. 5).

It was all a sham, as we recall from Isaiah 1. No amount of dutiful observance of religious practices can cover the stench of a life lived in rebellion against God (v. 2). God’s people were rebellious (v. 2). They resisted the many attempts He made, through His prophets, to stretch out His hands to save them (v. 2). They rejected His ways and walked in their own, according to their “own thoughts” about what was best for them (v. 2). Because of this, all their devotions only made God angry (v. 3), because they presumed to worship Him while in their daily lives they provoked Him by transgressing His Law. They boasted in their supposed holiness, but there is nothing holy about dutiful religious worship and other spiritual practices when your life is totally out of sync with the Lord.

They burned incense to Him, but the sweet smell of that offering was lost in the stench of their filthy lives (Is. 64.6). They were not a sweet smelling offering, as Psalm 141 indicates our prayers and lives can be, but “smoke” in the nostrils of God. Smoke stings, makes you flinch and draw back; and when a people’s lives burn like this “all the day”, what should we expect from the Lord, but anger and judgment?

True religion does not consist in religious activities, but in lives wholly devoted to God, living sacrifices that are sweet incense to Him all day long (Rom. 12.1, 2). Jesus stretched out His hands on the cross, so that we could apply our hands – and all our lives – to seeking His Kingdom and righteousness. Is this what He sees in us each day?

Prepare.

1. Which aspects of your daily life are a sweet incense to the Lord? Which are not?
2. Meditate on Romans 12.1, 2. What can we do to help make every aspect and detail of our lives a “living sacrifice” and sweet-smelling offering to the Lord?
3. How can believers encourage one another to greater consistency and worship in their daily lives?

The phrase “all day long I have held out my hands” refers to the care for them that he gave for all that time, but the saving suffering of the cross in which he stretched out his hands is also alluded to here. Theodoret of Cyr (393-466 AD), Commentary on Isaiah 20.65.2

I want to be a sweet-smelling offering to You, O Lord, in all my ways. Help me today to...

Pray Psalm 141.

This psalm encourages us to fortify ourselves against evil of all kinds, so that our lives and prayers will be like incense to the Lord. Lift your eyes to the Lord, and let the Spirit guide you by these words to commit yourself afresh to Him.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 141 (*Truro: Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns!*)

O Lord, we call to You in prayer! To us come quickly; hear our cry!
Receive our prayer as incense sweet, our lifted hands as a sacrifice!

Lord, set a guard upon my mouth; let not my heart to evil bend,
Nor let me work iniquity in company with wicked men.

Lord, let a righteous man rebuke – a kindness this shall surely be.
Like healing oil upon my head, Your sweet rebuke shall be to me.

When to the judgment wicked men by God are cast, our words shall tell:
Like broken sod or fresh plowed ground, so shall their bones be cast to hell!

We lift our eyes to You, O Lord, and refuge seek; Lord, save our soul!
From every trap and snare redeem; deliver us and make us whole.

3 Examine Yourself

Pray Psalm 102.1, 2.

Hear my prayer, O LORD,
And let my cry come to You.
Do not hide Your face from me in the day of my trouble;
Incline Your ear to me;
In the day that I call, answer me speedily.

Read Isaiah 65.6-10.

Reflect.

1. What do these verses teach us about God's attitude toward His people?
2. What does He promise them here?

Meditate.

The sins of God's people were many. They "blasphemed" Him in their worship (v. 7), and this led them to lives of great "iniquities" (v. 6). We may be tempted to think that God is so loving, He will simply overlook our sins. Since they're no big deal to us, maybe they're no big deal to Him.

This is the mistake of thinking that God is like us, rather than that we should be like God (Ps. 50.21). But when God's people compromise His worship, and follow that with lives that do not reflect His holiness, righteousness, justice, and love, God will act against them, and "measure their former work into their bosom" (v. 7; cf. Heb. 12.3-11).

God must act justly against sin. But acting justly does not cancel out His mercy. There is "new wine" to be realized in the "cluster" of Israel (v. 9). He wanted His people to know that He will direct His grace toward a remnant ("not destroy them all", v. 8), so that they may know Him and His blessings, and through them He may "bring forth descendants" to populate His covenant and enjoy His promises (v. 9).

And who is this remnant? The "elect" (v. 9) of God – those He chooses to save. They will dwell within His promises; they will be His flock; they will know His peace (vv. 9, 10); they will partake of His new wine (v. 8). And how may we know if we are among those chosen ones? Do we seek Him earnestly (v. 10)? Do we cling to and rest in His promises (vv. 9, 10)? Are we turning away from every iniquity, and living according to the ways of the Lord?

These verses were a call to the people of Isaiah's day to examine themselves. He wants us to do the same (2 Cor. 13.5). Justice and mercy meet in Jesus, and those who have come to know Him will seek Him diligently and follow Him faithfully.

Prepare.

1. Jesus picked up on this reference to "new wine" in Matthew 9.16, 17. How does He teach us to interpret God's Word in Isaiah 65.8?
2. What does it mean for God's chosen people to be His "flocks"? Who is our Shepherd? Where is He leading us?
3. How would you counsel a new believer to make his "call and election sure" (2 Pet. 1.10)? What does that involve for you?

*Once again the richness of the loving nature of God is shown clearly in this simile. For just as mature wine is found on the vine for whose sake the whole is saved, spared and is not cut off by anyone, so too [God says], "If I find anyone serving me, I will spare them all, just as I swore to Abraham." Theodore of Heraclea (d. ca. 355 AD), *Fragments of Isaiah**

I want my call and election to be sure, Lord – not just to me, but to all who know me; so today, help me to...

Pray Psalm 102.

This psalm leads us to consider our need for the new wine of the Lord – to be renewed in Him and His Word. Let the psalm guide you into confession and repentance, in seeking the mercy of the Lord, and in claiming His promise of reviving grace.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 102 (*Leominster: Not What My Hands Have Done*)

Lord, hear my prayer and cry; hide not Your face from me!
In my distress and tears I sigh – Lord, hear my earnest plea!
My days like smoke blow past; my bones are scorched with sin.
My heart, like wilted, withered grass bends low to earth again.

With loudest groans and cries, and leanness in my soul,
no shel'ring place arrests my eyes, no rest to make me whole.
My enemies grow strong; I weep with bitter tears;
My days are like a shadow, long; God's face is no more near.

But You, O Lord, abide forever in Your place.
Arise and stand on Zion's side and lavish us with grace!
Revive Your Church, O Lord! Let all her dust and stones
Be strengthened by Your mighty Word, and compact be as one.

Then let the nations fear the glory of the Lord!
For He shall in His Church appear to heed our sighing words.
Then let our children learn to praise the Lord above.
He hears their groans and knows they yearn to dwell within His love.

Yet let us tell God's Name and praise His glorious grace;
let all as one His love proclaim together in this place.
Though now our strength is low; though shortened grow our days,
Our God will not forsake us so, but keep us in His ways!

Of old You made the earth and heavens by Your hand.
Though they shall perish You endure; forever shall You stand.
They change, yet You remain the same, without an end.
Our children shall Your favor gain, and theirs shall be Your friend.

4 Be Careful What You Worship

Pray Psalm 135:1-4.

Praise the LORD!

Praise the name of the LORD;

Praise *Him*, O you servants of the LORD!

You who stand in the house of the LORD,

In the courts of the house of our God,

Praise the LORD, for the LORD *is* good;

Sing praises to His name, for *it is* pleasant.

For the LORD has chosen Jacob for Himself,

Israel for His special treasure.

Read Isaiah 65:11-16.

Reflect.

1. What does God promise His servants?

2. Why did God reject His people?

Meditate.

This passage is about those who “forsake the LORD” (v. 11). Who are these people? What becomes of them? And what does God promise those who faithfully worship and serve Him?

Those who forsake God worship other gods. It’s not that they are not religious. Indeed, they can be very religious, and look, for all appearances, as though they are in fact true believers. They even think so themselves. But in the depths of their hearts, they worship things other than God (v. 11). They worship Gad – a pagan deity associated with good fortune, or happiness. They also worship Meni – a false deity associated with numbers and numbering. People who, in the guise of worshipping God, are really worshipping happiness and good numbers are those who have forsaken the Lord.

What they can expect is not to be happy or to be sustained by their numbers, but to know the judgment of God, because they did not seek *Him* (v. 12), but pursued things that were not pleasing to Him, because they were worshipped *instead* of Him.

The true worshipers (servants, vv. 13-16) of God may expect abundant blessings from Him, not because they seek the blessings, but because they seek and serve Him. All their needs will be met. They will be filled with joy and will sing to the Lord. God’s true servants bless themselves by His Word, and rely only on His truth. The false worshippers will hunger and thirst, but not be filled. Their false gods cannot provide what can only be found in the Lord. Those who forsake the Lord will be ashamed and sad, because God will withhold Himself from them. Those who truly worship God will rest in Him, and all their troubles and fears will be behind them (v. 16). They will even have a new name – Christian.

God spoke through Isaiah to tell His people how they may expect to prosper during their captivity and into the days of promise. He told them to be careful what they worshipped.

He says the same to us.

Prepare.

1. How can you tell what someone *really* worships?
2. Do Christians sometimes seem to worship God only for happiness and big numbers? Why *should* we worship God?
3. If we truly worship God, He will give us everything we want or need. Explain.

He has already mentioned this name. It is new and not old. For after the appearance of Christ the master, those who believed were called Christians. They bore this in place of all approving words. When one wished to praise, they were accustomed to add after many kind words, "He is a true Christian." And when on another occasion exhorting someone, they were accustomed to say, "Act as a Christian, do what befits a Christian." So this name is full of eulogy and blessing. Theodoret of Cyr (393-466 AD), Commentary on Isaiah 20.65.15-16

Thank You for the new name You have given me, Lord. Help me to do what befits a Christian today as I...

Pray Psalm 135

Linger over the various sections of this psalm, as you follow its lead in praising the Lord, and in making sure you are serving Him and Him only.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 135 (*St. Gertrude: Onward, Christian Soldiers*)

Praise the Savior, praise Him, for His Name is good.

Sing, for it is pleasant, to our glorious God!

All whom He has chosen and redeemed by grace,

praise His Name together, praise Him in this holy place!

Refrain v. 1

Praise the Name of Jesus, you who serve His Word!

Raise your voice and praise our good and glorious Lord!

Great and sovereign, Jesus rules o'er all above,

doing as He pleases, sovereign in His love.

Clouds and seas obey Him, lightning, too, and rain;

He the winds brings forth in pow'r and sends them back again.

Refrain

Egypt's firstborn fell to God's redeeming pow'r.

Kings and nations crumbled in redemption's hour.

He the land of promise to His people gave.

Thus His Kingdom Jesus gives to all He's pleased to save.

Refrain

Evermore Your Name, O Savior, shall endure!

Your renown throughout all ages is secure.

For You have compassion, vindicating all

those who serve Your Name and on Your saving mercy call.

Refrain

Vain the nations serve the idols of their hands;

mouths and ears they have but cannot understand.

Every idol vain is, lacking life or breath;

all who serve them, like them, shall be lost to lasting death.

Refrain

Bless the Lord you people, all who love the Lord!
Bless Him, you who trust His sovereign, holy Word!
Bless the Lord from Zion, Him Who in it dwells;
praise Him! Lift your voices, all His grace and glory tell!

Refrain

5 The New Creation

Pray Psalm 33.1-5.

Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous!
For praise from the upright is beautiful.
Praise the LORD with the harp;
Make melody to Him with an instrument of ten strings.
Sing to Him a new song;
Play skillfully with a shout of joy.
For the word of the LORD *is* right,
And all His work *is done* in truth.
He loves righteousness and justice;
The earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.

Read Isaiah 65.17-19

Reflect.

1. What does God promise to create? How will we feel about that?
2. What does Jerusalem represent here?

Meditate.

This passage is very carefully phrased by God Himself, speaking through His prophet. I want to make sure we capture the meaning and importance of it, so be prepared for a bit of grammatical nuancing in what follows.

Isaiah pulls the prophetic spyglass out to its full length. As God leads, he points us down the corridors of history to a new creation – one that is actually beginning in his own day, but which will not come to full realization until “the former” creation is a thing of the past. So we’re looking *in* history as we know it and *beyond* history at the same time.

Right away we note that God says, “I am creating” and not “I will create” (v. 17). He uses a participle, בּוֹרֵא, *voreah*, “I am creating”, rather than the imperfect (future) tense, to describe an activity that *is already under way*, even as Isaiah records these words. This verb is unique to God; only God can *create* according to what this verb intends. He is already doing this work. The sending of His people into captivity in Babylon is part of the new creation of heaven and earth that God is beginning. He wanted His people to see that, even as they were coming under judgment, they were part of something entirely new which was already in process.

So great will this new work of God be that His people won’t “remember” “the former” heavens and earth, and their hearts will not be troubled by having lost what was (NKJV *mind* is more accurately *heart* in v. 17).

God is creating Jerusalem as a City of rejoicing (v. 18). Here joy and rejoicing are the *consequence* of participating in the new City, where, as we have previously seen, *righteousness* obtains and *peace* is the overall condition of existence (cf. Rom. 14.17, 18). This is a place of continuous celebration because of the saving grace of God. When God says, “I will rejoice in Jerusalem” (v. 19), I take the Hebrew preposition, בִּי, *vee*, in a locative rather than instrumental sense. He does not rejoice *because* of His new City, but *within it!* He is the “with-us-always” God, and it is *His* rejoicing *in Himself* that ignites ours, and empowers us to leave all weeping and crying behind.

God is making all things new, and that making begins with judgment, leads to deliverance, and culminates in

His coming into the midst of His people for joy and rejoicing.

Reflect.

1. God is doing this great work even now. Are you part of it? How can you know?
2. God does not need us to be completely and perfectly joyful. But we need Him, and His joy, to know any joy at all. Explain.
3. God calls us to rejoice in what He is creating. What does this mean? How can we make sure that such rejoicing is our daily experience?

These words point to the church, referring to the heavenly and spiritual gifts that have been granted to it. Indeed, if the Lord took care of the Israelites for the earthly things promised to them, how much more will he provide for the church, thanks to the joy that peoples have experienced in their conversion to it. Therefore, he also calls new heavens and new earth the new and spiritual life granted to the church by the advent of Christ. Ephrem the Syrian (306-373 AD), Commentary on Isaiah 65.17

Lord, You Who are making all things new, work for newness in me today, so that I...

Pray Psalm 33.

Both the Word and the works of God reveal His greatness and love. Let this psalm lead you to reflect on each of these, and to contemplate the new creation that is yet to come.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 33 (*Truro: Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns*)

Sing with rejoicing in the Lord, for praise becomes His righteous ones!
With harps and songs raise grateful words, and let new songs of praise be sung!

Joyfully shout! His Word is true; He does His work in faithfulness.
His love prevails the whole world through; the Lord loves truth and righteousness.

God spoke and heaven came to be, and all its hosts His Spirit wrought.
He heaps the waters of the sea; the deeps their dwelling place are taught.

Let all below now fear the Lord; let all in awe of Him abide!
The worlds exist by Jesus' Word; let all on earth in Him confide.

He nullifies the nations' plans; forever stands His sov'reign Word.
All they are blessed who with Him stand – the chosen people of the Lord.

God from His throne looks down on men; He knows our works and made our hearts.
Let not Your Church, let none depend on strength or skill or human arts.

God watches those who fear His Name, who hope upon His grace and love;
He keeps their souls from death and shame who trust in Him Who reigns above.

God is our Helper and our Shield; upon us let Your grace descend!
We hope in You; to You we yield; we trust in Jesus to the end.

6 Life, Fruitfulness, Peace

Pray Psalm 92.1-4.

*It is good to give thanks to the LORD,
And to sing praises to Your name, O Most High;
To declare Your lovingkindness in the morning,
And Your faithfulness every night,
On an instrument of ten strings,
On the lute,
And on the harp,
With harmonious sound.
For You, LORD, have made me glad through Your work;
I will triumph in the works of Your hands.*

Read Isaiah 65.20-25

Reflect.

1. What general impressions do these verses make on you? How do they make you feel?
2. Compare this passage with Jeremiah 29.4-13, which was written a bit later than today's verses. In what ways are they similar?

Meditate.

To understand these verses we have to remember three things: First, Isaiah was writing to people who were soon to go into captivity, and who needed a vision *beyond* their time of captivity to keep them from despairing. Second, God was speaking through Isaiah to cast that vision of hope, and to do so in lively images that would have enduring value. Third, God was speaking about a work that He was beginning *in those days*, but that would only be brought to its fullness in the new creation.

So we should expect some overlap of images to speak for the immediate present, the interim of time and history, and the time of the new creation.

Verses 20-22 encourage us to think in terms of long life. What God holds out for His people is the promise of full, abundant, and extended life. Life like a tree.

But not an idle life – lolling about on clouds strumming harps and whatnot. No, there are cities to build, farms and orchards to tend, fruit to be harvested, culture to pursue, work to be done, and children to raise and bless (vv. 21-23). The promised life to come is *human* life, after all, and human beings were made for work and culture in a wide variety of callings. That will be true in the new creation as well.

Finally, God wanted to assure His people that He would be among them, attentive to their needs, and caring for them like a Good Shepherd (vv. 24, 25). The natural hostilities that plague life in this fallen world will be over (v. 25), as the peace of God comes to His creation, and pain and destruction are no more.

Remember, God was beginning this new creation work at the very moment He spoke these words through Isaiah. Jeremiah, in his generation, would restate this same image, but with a more immediate focus than Isaiah does here (Jer. 29.4-11). So we should expect to see these markers – life, fruitfulness, and peace – flourishing among those who inhabit God's holy mountain, and increasing *in* time, to be perfected at last in the new creation.

Hold on to that vision, and you will never fall into despair.

Prepare.

1. Life, fruitfulness, peace: In what ways do these markers characterize your walk with and work for the Lord?
2. The new creation will be much like the present creation, minus all the blight and effects of sin. Explain.
3. Why is it important that believers nurture and live toward a vision like this for their daily lives? How can we do that?

It is usual for the prophets thus to mingle metaphorical and literal expressions. Yet, anyone with serious purpose and a little useful and salutary effort can discern the prophet's spiritual sense; it is only a lazy and worldly person or one who is ignorant or uneducated who will rest content with the literal and superficial sense and refuse to penetrate the deeper meaning. Augustine (354-430 AD), City of God 20.21

Fill me with Your life, Lord; help me to bear Your fruit; and grant me Your peace today as I...

Pray Psalm 92.

Let this psalm lead you into an extended season of praising and thanking God for all His great works.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 92 (*Sweet Hour: Sweet Hour of Prayer*)

How good it is to thank the Lord and praise to God Most High accord;
By day to let His kindness ring, His faithfulness by night to sing.
With ten-stringed lute, resounding lyre, and sweetest harp we'll lift You higher.
For You have made our souls rejoice; we sing Your praise with blended voice!

How sweet Your works, Your thoughts how deep: The fool cannot such knowledge keep.
Like grass the wicked rise each day; in judgment they are swept away.
But You, O Lord, abide on high; Your enemies shall fall and die.
All those who sin shall scattered be, but, Lord, You have exalted me!

My eye my vanquished foe shall see; my ears hear those who threaten me.
Yet in God's house, where he belongs, the righteous like a tree grows strong.
Then let us green and fruitful be and flourish like a mighty tree,
To tell God's righteousness abroad: He is our Rock, our sovereign God!

7 He Is Making All Things New

Pray Psalm 98.1.

Oh, sing to the LORD a new song!
For He has done marvelous things;
His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory.

Review Isaiah chapter 65.

Reflect.

1. What does God condemn in this chapter?
2. Who are the servants of God? What does He promise them?

Meditate.

With great promises come great warnings. The promise here is of a new creation, which God was already beginning to put in place in the time that Isaiah wrote these words. That begins with wiping away the first creation, including the temple in Jerusalem, so that a new foundation can be laid for God's work. The new creation extends from the captivity of Babylon, down the long corridor of human history, and into the age to come.

God is at work, and what God is doing is glorious, and abounding in righteousness, peace, and joy. You won't want to miss it.

But those who persist in their shallow religion and sinful ways will miss everything God is doing. And they will abide not with Him in His glory and joy, but under His wrath and curse.

A new creation of abundance and joy is coming, because God Himself is coming to dwell with and shepherd His people. All creation is being transformed, as God is making all things new, in the new covenant of life His Servant will accomplish for His people.

All who desire this new creation will repent of their sinful ways, and bring the hope of the new creation to bear in and through all their relationships, roles, and responsibilities.

Prepare.

1. God was rejecting His people, at the same time He was bringing His new creation into being for them. Explain.
2. The salvation God brings to those who believe embraces all aspects of their lives. How can you see that in this chapter?
3. What's your primary takeaway from Isaiah 65?

The earth will freely give its produce, and all evil will be removed, just as Isaiah said ... for God has refashioned such a world in his kingdom just as it had been made in the beginning before the first-made human being ruined it, who after he had disobeyed the word of God all things were spoiled and ruined and cursed by God's word: "the earth will be cursed in your works." The former shape of this world will become the kingdom of the saints and the liberation of the creatures. Gregory of Elvira (fl. 359-385 AD), Origen's Tractates on the Books of Holy Scripture 5.36

All Things New: Isaiah 65

Lord Jesus, bring Your salvation into every area of my life, with ever-increasing newness, starting with...

Pray Psalm 98.

This psalm celebrates the great salvation of our Lord. Let it lead you to praise God for all the ways He is making all things new in your life.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 98 (*Duke Street: Come, Let Us Sing unto the Lord*)

Come, let us sing unto the Lord new songs of praise with one accord!
Wonderful things our God has done: Jesus has our salvation won!

Now is God's saving mercy known; His glory to the world is shown.
Faithful and kind is God our Lord; earth has the Name of Jesus heard.

Raise to the Lord your loudest voice! Break forth and sing! Rejoice! Rejoice!
Praise, praise to You our God and King, with all our hearts and strength we bring!

Now let the whole creation 'round burst into song with joyous sound!
Jesus will come to judge the earth; let all proclaim His matchless worth!

All Things New: Isaiah 65

Questions for reflection or discussion

1. Why was God bringing His wrath to bear against His people? How can we know if our own religion begins to become empty and vain? What should we do then?
2. How much of life does the new creation of God affect? How do you see this in your own life?
3. The new creation of God began at the Babylonian captivity and extends from there throughout all of human history, into the new heavens and new earth? What does this imply about how we should live, we who are part of this new creation?
4. From where does the joy of our salvation come? How can we tap into that joy?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from Isaiah 65? How are you putting that lesson to work in your life?

For prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

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Thank you.