

December 30th, 2018
"The Earth is My Footstool"
Isaiah 66

BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN

Dec 23 2 Peter 1-3 Dec 27 Rev 4-8
Dec 24 1 John 1-5 Dec 28 Rev 9-12
Dec 25 2 John – Jude Dec 29 Rev 13-16
Dec 26 Rev 1-3 Dec 30 Rev 17-19

Lesson Introduction: *This is our final lesson in the book of Isaiah. This week we will close out our study of this marvelous book, by considering once again, the grandeur of our God, and His faithfulness to bring new life out of the most difficult of situations. We will spend our time considering the overwhelming grandeur of the LORD, the proper approach in worship, and God's ability to bring joy out of suffering.*

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH OF THE PASSAGE:

- **The LORD is infinitely greater than us, and is worthy of our humble adoration (V. 1-6)**
- **The LORD brings joyous life out of painful circumstances (V. 7-13)**

Isaiah 66:1-13

1 Thus says the Lord:
"Heaven is my throne,
and the earth is my footstool;
what is the house that you would build for me,
and what is the place of my rest?
2 All these things my hand has made,
and so all these things came to be,
declares the Lord.
But this is the one to whom I will look:
he who is humble and contrite in spirit
and trembles at my word.
3 "He who slaughters an ox is like one who kills a man;
he who sacrifices a lamb, like one who breaks a dog's
neck;
he who presents a grain offering, like one who offers
pig's blood;
he who makes a memorial offering of frankincense,
like one who blesses an idol.
These have chosen their own ways,
and their soul delights in their abominations;
4 I also will choose harsh treatment for them
and bring their fears upon them,
because when I called, no one answered,

*when I spoke, they did not listen;
but they did what was evil in my eyes
and chose that in which I did not delight."*

5 Hear the word of the Lord,
you who tremble at his word:
"Your brothers who hate you
and cast you out for my name's sake
have said, 'Let the Lord be glorified,
that we may see your joy';
but it is they who shall be put to shame.

6 "The sound of an uproar from the city!
A sound from the temple!
The sound of the Lord,
rendering recompense to his enemies!

7 "Before she was in labor
she gave birth;

*before her pain came upon her
she delivered a son.*

8 Who has heard such a thing?
Who has seen such things?

Shall a land be born in one day?

Shall a nation be brought forth in one moment?

For as soon as Zion was in labor
she brought forth her children.

9 Shall I bring to the point of birth and not cause to bring
forth?"

says the Lord;

"shall I, who cause to bring forth, shut the womb?"
says your God.

10 "Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her,
all you who love her;

rejoice with her in joy,

all you who mourn over her;

11 that you may nurse and be satisfied
from her consoling breast;

that you may drink deeply with delight
from her glorious abundance."

12 For thus says the Lord:

"Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river,
and the glory of the nations like an overflowing
stream;

and you shall nurse, you shall be carried upon her hip,
and bounced upon her knees.

13 As one whom his mother comforts,
so I will comfort you;

you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.

Discussion Section 1: *The Overwhelming Grandeur of LORD (V. 1-2)*

-What does **V. 1** tell us about God?

-How is it flawed thinking, to believe that we can build God a proper house?

-Why is it important to dwell often on the grandeur of God?

Note: *Verses 1-2* open this passage with a stunning picture of who God really is. We have seen throughout this book, time after time, how God's people consistently turn from Him, and place their faith in other gods, other nations, or in their own self-righteousness. In the final words of the book, God once more reminds His people that He is the only true God, Maker and owner of all things, and that it is by His power alone that they will be saved.

Part of the flaw in Israel's thinking, was that they hoped to earn God's approval by religious acts, and grand temples made for Him. Yet we see in **verses 1-2** that God makes plain that there is nothing that we have to offer God that could appease Him, for indeed all that we have comes from Him, for He posses the entire universe. C.S. Lewis, in his book "Mere Christianity," put it this way: **"Every faculty you have, your power of thinking or of moving your limbs from moment to moment, is given you by God. If you devoted every moment of your whole life exclusively to His service you could not give Him anything that was not in a sense his own already ... It is like a small child going to its father and saying, 'Daddy, give me sixpence to buy you a birthday present.' It is all very nice and proper, but only an idiot would think that the father is sixpence to the good on the transaction."**

Because God owns all things, and rules over all things, we are foolish to think that we can bring Him certain so-called sacrifices, believing that, if we get it just right, He will be pleased, and grant us life. Rather, what we see in this passage is that God calls us to approach Him with a humble and contrite spirit, recognizing that He owns all, and is above all, owing us nothing. We will consider this approach in our next section.

Discussion Section 2: *The Proper Approach in Worship (V. 1-6)*

-In light of God's grandeur, how should we approach Him?

-What is it that makes an act of worship acceptable to God?

-What do these verses tell us about what our response to God's Word should look like?

Note: *We see at the end of verse 2, that what the LORD desires from those who approach Him is not grandstanding statements of righteousness, but rather, a humble recognition of our unworthiness, and a reverence for what He has told us in His word. Verses 3-4 highlight God's complete disgust with empty sacrifices that are not in alignment with a humble and contrite spirit, closing with a statement of how God will deal harshly with such external efforts.*

The only proper response we as a body of believers should have as a result of studying a book like Isaiah is one of humility and contrition. Too often, we are prone to be flippant about the word of God in our personal lives, knowing the truth, but refusing to walk in it. Instead, we go our own way most of the time, and occasionally offer the external sacrifices of church attendance, or tithes and offerings, or perhaps we even go on a mission trip, all in the hopes of satisfying God just enough to get by. While all those things are good and should be practiced by true followers of Christ, in humility, the LORD is not interested in such sacrifices if the heart is far from Him.

Discussion Section 3: *God's Ability to Bring Joy Out of Suffering (V. 7-13)*

-What do these verses show us about how God often chooses to work?

-What are some of the labor pains in your life, which point you to the hope that is to come?

Note: *Our study of Isaiah concludes by looking at verses 7-13. Here, we are once again reminded of God's faithfulness to those who, in humility and contrition, look to Him for their hope. Throughout this book, we have seen time and time again how, in the midst of trial, God graciously works and moves for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). As we close, may we rejoice that the labor pains we currently experience are meant to remind us of the everlasting joy that we will attain upon Christ's second coming!*