

Isa 66:22-24
Sep 25, 2022

Isa 66:22-24 "For just as the new heavens and the new earth Which I make will endure before Me," declares the LORD, "So your offspring and your name will endure. 23 "And it shall be from new moon to new moon And from sabbath to sabbath, All mankind will come to bow down before Me," says the LORD. 24 "Then they will go forth and look On the corpses of the men Who have transgressed against Me. For their worm will not die And their fire will not be quenched; And they will be an abhorrence to all mankind."

The promise of a new heaven and new earth Isa 66:22

2Pt 3:12-13 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! 13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

Rev 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.

Isaiah ends with a picture of hell Isa 66:24

"their worm does not die and their fire will not be quenched"

Jesus quotes this verse three times (Mk 9:44, 46, 48).

43 "If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life crippled, than, having your two hands, to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire, 44 where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED. 45 "If your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame, than, having your two feet, to be cast into hell, 46 where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED. 47 "If your eye causes you to stumble, throw it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell, 48 where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.

(See also Mt 25:41; Rev 14:10-11; 20:10)

Commentaries:

"shall not be quenched" This final verse in Isaiah echoes the sentiment of Isa 1:27-31, the closing verses of the first chapter. These literary connections tie the book of Isaiah together as a unified composition. Just as v. 24 declares the fire will not be quenched, so 1:27-31 announces that those who rebel against Yahweh will be consumed and burn with no one to quench them. The warning in 1:27-31 indicated that repentance was still possible. This closing verse may also serve as a warning that when Yahweh's final judgment comes, there will be no more time for repentance. (Faith Life Study Bible)

"worm ... not die" Image of hell, from bodies left unburied in the valley of Hinnom (whence comes Gehenna, or "hell"), south of Jerusalem, where a perpetual fire was kept to consume the refuse thrown there (Is 30:33) (Jamieson, Fausset, & Brown)

Image of hell, from bodies left unburied in the valley of Hinnom (whence comes Gehenna, or "hell"), south of Jerusalem, where a perpetual fire was kept to consume the refuse thrown there (Is 30:33) (Jamieson, Fausset, & Brown)

Other places that ends with failure.

Ps 119:176 I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek Your servant, For I do not forget Your commandments.

Mal 4:6 "He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse."

Gal 3:10-14 For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM." 11 Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." 12 However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, "HE WHO PRACTICES THEM SHALL LIVE BY THEM." 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"— 14 in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Six things the Law could not do

1. Justify you - Rom 3:20 by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified (Rom 3:28)
2. Take away sin - 1Cor 15:56 the power of sin is the law;
3. Could not make us walk in the requirements of God's law (Rom 8:3-4).
4. Make us righteous (Gal 2:21).
5. Impart life (Gal 3:21).
6. Make perfect - Heb 7:19 for the Law made nothing perfect (Heb 10:1).

Ten purposes of the Law:

1. To close every mouth (Rom 3:19).
2. To make the world accountable to God (Rom 3:19).
3. To bring the knowledge of sin (Rom 3:20; 7:7).
4. To bring about wrath (Rom 4:15).
5. To increase sin (Rom 5:20).
6. To make sin alive (Rom 7:9).
7. To give sin power (1Cor 15:56).
8. To make men unjust (Gal 2:16; 3:11 Rom 3:20).
9. To put mankind under a curse (Gal 3:10).
10. To make you imperfect (Heb 7:19; 10:1).

Commentaries:

Smart (History and Theology) finds these verses “a most unsatisfactory conclusion to the chapter and to the book,” perhaps because he expected a different message. Schramm (Opponents) notes that “the final two verses reinforce the message with which the book began, that those who ‘rebel’ against YHWH will perish.” That YHWH will act against his enemies has been a consistent theme through the book, but so has the continuing role of “the servants of YHWH” in his temple. (Word Biblical Commentary)

shall not be quenched This final verse in Isaiah echoes the sentiment of Isa 1:27–31, the closing verses of the first chapter. These literary connections tie the book of Isaiah together as a unified composition. Just as v. 24 declares the fire will not be quenched, so 1:27–31 announces that those who rebel against Yahweh will be consumed and burn with no one to quench them. The warning in 1:27–31 indicated that repentance was still possible. This closing verse may also serve as a warning that when Yahweh’s final judgment comes, there will be no more time for repentance. (Faith Life Study Bible)

Isaiah leaves us suspended in the tension of the prophetic paradox. After raising our expectations for the mission and ministry of the New Zion, he concludes with the most vivid picture of a burning, literal hell where the “worm does not die” and the “fire is not quenched” (v. 24b). The scene is so disturbing that scholars consider the final verse tacked on to the text, and Jewish congregations find it so negative that they bring Isaiah to a close on the affirmation of the Lord, “All flesh shall come to worship before Me” (v. 23b). However, neither the nature of the text nor the reality of human nature will let us off so easily. Although the primary mission of the Church of the New Zion is world redemption, Isaiah never wavered from the truth that God’s presence divided servants and apostates, true worshipers from idolaters, saints from sinners, and the faithful from the rebellious. To end on the grace note of world redemption would have made the prophecy come out right in our human terms, but realism tells us that sin is rebellion against God’s love, not vice versa. If so, Isaiah had to be true to God’s vision as he saw it. Not even the New Zion will be free of sinful opposition, and as long as humans continue to exist with freedom of will, sinful rebellion against God and His Church will remain a live option. Understandably, then, as the New Zion shall remain forever before the Lord (v. 22), it will be witness to both eternal life and eternal death. The prophetic paradox is resolved when we realize that Isaiah’s final word is the assurance of God’s presence to redeem the world at the risk of human rebellion exercised by free will. (The Preacher’s Commentary Series, Vol. 18)

The awesome closing of this marvelous book of prophecy is a reminder to every believer of our responsibility to personal witnessing and soul-winning. There is a real hell to be avoided, and all those who do not receive Jesus Christ as their personal Savior shall go there. Of these awesome words, S. C. Thexton, said “They remind us that from the gate of Heaven there is a road to Hell, and that before every man there lies the choice between the way of life and the way of death.”

Thus, the book of Isaiah ends much as it began, with a message of both impending doom and potential deliverance. In this greatest of the Old Testament prophets we see one recurring theme: Jesus Christ, the Virgin’s son, Immanuel, the Branch of the Lord, the Mighty God, the Prince of Peace, the coming Messiah, the Suffering Servant, the glorious King! “To him give all the prophets witness ...” (Acts 10:43). (KJV Bible Commentary)