

**A LOOK AT THE BOOK
ISAIAH
COMFORT FOR GOD'S PEOPLE**

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What book would you choose as the most majestic literature of all Scripture?

Psalms?

Isaiah?

Most people point to Isaiah as the most majestic writing, the greatest theological depiction of God, the most eloquent spokesman for God, and the broadest vocabulary of any biblical writer!

AUTHOR

The book of Isaiah claims to have been written by one author, Isaiah, the son of Amoz.

This claim is supported by Jewish tradition and by the New Testament, including Christ Himself.

While critics have suggested other opinions, the major reason for not accepting the authorship of Isaiah is the fulfillment of specific prophecies.

If God is capable of revealing in advance the detailed prophecy Isaiah records, no different nor additional author is necessary.

The distinctions in style, tone and message of the two parts can be logically explained on the basis of the author's argument.

Apparently Isaiah came from a high class home.

His vocabulary and style demonstrate that he received a good academic preparation for his position.

He preached for about forty years, principally before kings.

As a member of the "diplomatic corps," he was unequalled.

He spoke during one of the most decisive moments in the history of Judah and kings listened to his wise counsel.

DATE

The biographical information given indicates that Isaiah's prophetic ministry to Judah was carried out from 739 to about 700 B.C., during the reigns of kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah.

BACKGROUND

Isaiah's ministry was carried out during the time of the divided kingdom, as the northern kingdom of Israel moved toward, and eventually experienced, destruction.

Judah had been on a negative course, headed toward destruction also.

Only the occasional light of a few good kings, especially Hezekiah, during Isaiah's time, saved the southern kingdom of Judah from destruction along with the northern kingdom.

In general, both kingdoms were characterized by rebellion, unbelief and idolatry.

God sent prophets, such as Isaiah, to warn them of the danger of destruction, but they refused to listen to their warning.

God finally brought Assyria to destroy the northern kingdom of Israel and take them into captivity.

After the destruction of Israel, Assyria continued to move arrogantly against Judah.

Hezekiah had become king of Judah and led the nation in many reforms.

As a result, God spared Jerusalem, though the other cities of Judah had already been defeated.

God judged Assyria for their arrogance and preserved Judah until a much later date.

PURPOSE AND THEME

As a **pre-exilic book**, Isaiah speaks to Judah because of her sin and idolatry, in order to call the people to repentance and obedience to God.

If they will turn to Him, He will fulfill His covenant and bless them.

The message God uses to call His people to repentance is a message of judgment.

God is going to judge Judah, destroy Jerusalem, and send His people into captivity.

Isaiah, in addition to the immediate message of judgment, projects himself into the future and completes the story, revealing the future restoration of God's people as a comfort to those who read the book following the destruction of Jerusalem.

There are two major purposes for this additional revelation:

First, God wants His people to understand His entire program for them.

Therefore, He went beyond the immediate judgment to promise the restoration to follow.

Second, the restoration promises are given together with the promise of judgment in order to give the people a basis for faith in the promises.

When the message was first given, the people did not understand any of it.

They did not believe God was going to judge them.

From the perspective of the captivity, they would never believe that God would restore them to the land.

When God combined the two prophecies in one message, He provided confirmatory evidence that He would restore them.

From captivity, they would be able to see that the same God who promised them judgment had also promised their restoration.

Since He accomplished the first promise, they could also trust Him to fulfill the second.

The two aspects of the judgment and restoration of God were especially significant in the light of the contemporary fall of Israel in 722 B.C.

The book, then, has a double message:

To God's people in sin, it serves as a warning of judgment to call them to repentance.

To God's people in captivity, it's a promise of restoration to encourage them to keep trusting God.

The book encourages God's people to trust God in the dark—when everything's going wrong!

From the pre-exilic perspective, it looks ahead to God's judgment 1-39

-180 year interval between initial fulfillment of events.

From the exilic perspective, it provides comfort, by promising restoration 40-66.

The two parts together speak to people who:

1. Initially didn't believe judgment would ever come against GOD's people.
2. Once judgment comes, they won't believe restoration is possible.

The two parts come together—same God—same author.

If part 1 is true, we can believe part 2 will be fulfilled also!

ORGANIZATION

Isaiah is composed of the **two major sections previously described, tied together by an historical interlude.**

The first major section contains **prophecies of condemnation, warning people to turn from their sin to avoid God's judgment** 1-35

An interlude follows the prophecies of condemnation which presents several **historical demonstrations of God's intervention in and control of history—even over pagan nations** 36-39.

This section explains **why God postponed the judgment at the time of Hezekiah.**

It also demonstrates why **God would bring the Babylonians later to cause their destruction.**

God was never defeated by the Assyrians nor by the Babylonians.

Finally, the last major section **predicts the restoration of God's people in order to comfort and encourage them 40-66.**

The promise of restoration ought **to cause God's people to trust Him and to turn back to Him.**

PROPHECIES OF CONDEMNATION 1-35

CONCERNING JUDAH 1-12

Summary 1

Isaiah gives a brief summary of the book.

Author 1:1

Their condition 1:2-15

Their condition has degenerated to the point where they have rebelled against God, even though they continue to offer sacrifices.

God's invitation 1:16-20

He urges them to repent and return to Him so that He can cleanse them and bless them again.

Illustration of the harlot 1:21-23

Rather than turn back to God, they have continued in their evil ways and become as harlots.

Punishment 1:24-25

Therefore, God is going to send judgment on them to correct them.

Restoration 1:26-31

Once the judgment has passed, He will restore them.

Coming Judgment 2-4

Isaiah spells out in greater detail what's involved in the coming judgment.

God's plan 2:1-4 He describes His original plan—His dream for His people.

His plan was that Jerusalem would be a center where people would come to learn about Him and about justice.

Contrary condition 2:5-9

Rather than serve as an example to the other nations, Israel has become an imitator.

They have adopted the worst traits from all the pagan nations around them.

Resultant judgment 2:10-4:1

Because of the arrogance of the people, God is going to send judgment against them.

Some of the specific things God will accomplish by means of the coming judgment: 2:17-18; 3:1-4

They will become desolate.

Concluding restoration 4:2-6

However, when they get to that point, God will restore them, cleanse them and again become their refuge.

Cause of Judgment 5

Illustration of the vine 5:1-7

The causes of judgment are graphically portrayed by the parable of the vine.

God is the vine dresser (the Gardener); Israel is the vine.

God planted and carefully cared for a vineyard.

In spite of all His care, it produced bad fruit.

He asks Himself why He should continue to hope for good fruit, when all it produces is bad fruit.

Finally, He decides to destroy it.

That is just what Israel is like.

Therefore, He is going to judge them.

Six fatal sins 5:8-23

Six fatal sins are cited as the basis for the coming judgment:

Empire building 5:8-10

Drunkenness and parties 5:11-17

Hypocrisy 5:18-19

Misleading people 5:20

Pride 5:21

Open sin without shame 5:22-23

. . . flaunted with a hardened attitude and without any sense of shame.

Means of judgment 5:24-30

Since these attitudes and actions do exist, God will judge His people.

He will bring a nation from far away to fight and to defeat them.

Call of the Prophet 6

Out of the midst of these sad conditions among God's people, God calls Isaiah to be His spokesman to the nation.

Isaiah was discouraged because of the death of king Uzziah—a good king that he loved.

His vision 6:1-4

God reveals Himself to Isaiah . . .

His confession 6:5

. . . making him aware of his own sin and unworthiness to serve God.

His purification 6:6-7

God uses His angelic messenger to purify Isaiah and to prepare him for his task.

His call 6:8

Now he is prepared to serve as God's spokesman and God calls him.

Isaiah is ready to accept the challenge.

His mission 6:9-13

Its definition 6:9-10

God reveals to him the message which he is to proclaim.

Its limits 6:11-13

He is to proclaim the message God gives him to a people who will not listen nor understand (compare Romans 10-11).

In the end his message will be one of judgment, for that will be its result.

God taught Isaiah two main lessons:

1. We are not worthy to be His servants.
2. We should be willing to serve Him, wherever He sends us.

Plan for the Future 7-12

Having related how God called him to be His spokesman, Isaiah reveals the plan which God designed for the future of Israel.

Ahaz, king of Judah, was concerned about an alliance which had been formed by Israel and Syria, which was threatening to attack Judah.

Comfort for Judah 7:1-16

Comfort is given to Judah by Isaiah's assurance that the alliance will not prevail against them.

It will be destroyed.

A sign is given to Ahaz as proof: 7:14

A virgin would give birth to a son and call him "God is with us."

Before that child knows enough to distinguish right from wrong—before he reaches seven to twelve years old, captivity would come to Israel and Syria.

7:16

Matthew points to a similar sign which was given at Christ's birth: a virgin has a Son Who demonstrates that "*God is with us!*"

Invasion by Assyria 7:17-25

At that time God was going to bring the king of Assyria against all the people in Israel, including Judah.

Captivity of Syria and Israel 8:1-8

Assyria would take Israel and Syria captive.

At the same time, they would continue on to occupy Judah.

Warning to seek God 8:9-22

This should serve as a warning to them to seek God.

If they turn to Him, He will defend them.

Promise of restoration 9-12

The reference to repentance for deliverance motivates Isaiah to look ahead into the future to the time when God will restore His people.

Deliverance from affliction 9:1-7

Ultimately, their final deliverance will come when the people understand God's truth and receive their Messiah.

He will bring deliverance and establish God's kingdom.

Destruction of Israel 9:8-10:4

Before that occurs, however, a time of judgment will come.

The northern kingdom of Israel will be defeated and taken captive by Assyria.

The northern kingdom sets an example for Judah.

Instead of learning from that example, Judah becomes worse.

Destruction of Assyria 10:5-19

Following the defeat of Israel, Assyria's arrogant spirit will cause their defeat also.

They had been God's instrument but they did not defeat Israel on their own.

The king of Assyria died because of God's judgment and the strength of the nation was removed.

Deliverance of a remnant 10:20-34

Although God's judgment against Israel resulted in their defeat, a remnant was preserved.

God sent word to Jerusalem that his anger would soon be removed.

They need not fear the Assyrians.

He would turn and destroy Assyria.

The promise was fulfilled through Hezekiah's reforms.

God turned again and blessed Jerusalem and defeated Assyria.

Description of the kingdom 11-12

God uses the promise of restoration to encourage His people to follow Him.

If they continue to obey, He will fulfill His promises and establish His kingdom.

God describes what He will do for His people in the kingdom:

Coming of Messiah 11:1-5

Messiah will come and rule His people with justice.

Conditions 11:6-9

Peaceful conditions will exist throughout the earth, changing even the behavior patterns of wild beasts.

Gathering of the nation 11:10-12

The people will be regathered from all the nations where they have been scattered.

Unity and victory 11:13-16

The people of Israel will be reunited and all their enemies will be destroyed.

There will be no more internal nor external conflicts.

Praise 12:1-6

As a result, God's people will praise Him for His great salvation and for all the great things He has done.

CONCERNING THE NATIONS 13-23

After describing God's plan for His people in the future, Isaiah describes the judgment of God against the pagan nations.

His judgment of all the surrounding nations is explained.

God judges pagan nations on a different basis than He applies to His people.

Three bases for judgment of pagan nations:

1. Extreme perversity and immorality (Sodom and Gomorrah)
2. Mistreatment of God's people (Assyria, Niniveh, Edom)
3. Encouraging Israel to depend on them rather than on God (Egypt)

Although not all the motives are clearly stated, the primary cause of judgment of these nations is their arrogance and injustice, which has become extreme in each country.

In several instances, one of the causes of judgment is the treatment the nation has given God's people.

Egypt will receive a unique judgment due to its role of encouraging Israel to rely on it, rather than God.

Jerusalem will be judged especially for having turned their back on God.

Judgment against Babylonia 13-14:27

Judgment against Philistia 14:28-32

Judgment against Moab 15-16

Judgment against Damascus 17

Judgment against Cush 18

Judgment against Egypt 19-20

Judgment against the Desert by the Sea 21:1-10

Judgment against Edom 21:11-12

Judgment against Arabia 21:13-17

Judgment against Jerusalem 22

Judgment against Tyre 23

CONCERNING THE DAY OF THE LORD 24-35

The references to God's judgment cause Isaiah to contemplate and proclaim God's plan for "the Day of the Lord"

The term: "the Day of the Lord" is used to describe any period of time when God intervenes in the affairs of His people to accomplish His purposes.

Sometimes the term refers to a period when God intervenes in judgment.

Sometimes it refers to a period when God intervenes to bless them.

Isaiah, like other writers, refers to both types of intervention in this message.

Tribulation 24-25:5

The day of the Lord will begin with judgment.

Judgment on the earth 24:1-6

God will send a severe judgment on the entire world.

Desolation on the earth 24:7-23

His judgment will result in total desolation.

Praise for the justice of God 25:1-5

When those who have witnessed the injustices which have occurred on the earth see what God has done, they will sing praises to Him.

Restoration 25:6-27:13

One result of God's judgment on earth will be the restoration of God's people.

Future promise 25:6-26:19

Promise of restoration 25:6-12

The promise of restoration is proclaimed.

Song of restoration 26:1-19

Judah will sing a song of praise to God because of His restoration of His people.

Present conflict 26:20-27:13

Having stated such a great promise for the future, God's people must be warned that the time has not yet come.

First they must prepare themselves for conflict.

Warning regarding conflict 26:20-21

God warns His people to hide for a little while, until the time of judgment passes.

Punishment of Leviathan 27:1

Leviathan, who represents the enemy of Yahweh who opposes Him, must first be punished and destroyed.

Divine care of His vineyard 27:2-6

In that day, God's people will be seen as a fruitful vineyard and He will care for them.

Process for perfection 27:7-13

Part of the process of making the vineyard has been the pruning.

God has disciplined, and it has hurt, but the results are good.

At last the people are purified, perfected, and ready for their restoration.

Judgment 28-34

After a prophetic description of the plan of God for the two time periods which form the day of the Lord, that of tribulation and restoration, Isaiah deals with the basis of the content of those two periods.

Judgment on God's people 28-33

First he presents the cause of the judgment of the Lord.

God's judgment against His people is revealed by means of six woes pronounced against them.

Against the pride of the drunkards of Ephraim 28

They are living in rebellion against God and proud of their sinful lifestyle.

Against Jerusalem because of insincere religious formalism 29:1-14

Those who live in Jerusalem fulfill all the external rituals, but don't seek God sincerely.

Against those who scheme and try to hide it from God 29:15-24

The third woe is against those who plot evil deeds and think they can hide what they are doing from God.

Against those who stubbornly refuse to consult God 30

They make their own plans and trust those, or trust other nations, but they never consult Him.

Against those who depend on other nations rather than on God 31-32

Against those who betray the God of the covenant and leave their nation destroyed 33

The sixth woe accuses them of treason. They have betrayed the God with whom they made a covenant.

Judgment on the nations 34

If God is going to judge His own people. He will also judge the other nations.

Descriptive announcement 34:1-8

His anger against the nations and judgment of them is motivated by their mistreatment of His people.

Resultant desolation 34:9-15

Preserved remnant 34:16-17

In spite of the severity of God's judgment, He will still preserve a remnant of faithful ones.

Blessing 35

After the judgment of the day of the Lord, blessing will follow at the time of restoration.

The land will be fertile and prosperous.
The weak will be strengthened.
The ill will be healed.
All their needs will be fulfilled.
God's people will be made holy.
They will live in peace, without fear.
In brief, they will rejoice in the Lord.

Though the predominant message of the first half of Isaiah is judgment, the promise of restoration is repeated throughout.

The prophet wants to remind them of the love and mercy of God.

When the judgment is complete, He will again restore and bless His people.

Regardless of their repeated failures, God will be faithful and fulfill His covenant with His people.

*What did God require of Israel?
And of us?*

*What did He promise them?
What does He promise to us?*

DIVINE INTERVENTION IN HISTORY 36-39

The historical interlude between the two main sections of Isaiah demonstrates that God is in control of the great empires of the world.

He has promised protection and restoration.

He demonstrates in history that He is capable of fulfilling what He has promised.

The historical interlude demonstrates that God is able to restore His people but, previous to that restoration, judgment still lies ahead.

The last story explains the relationship between these two facts historically.

INVASION BY SENNACHERIB AND SALVATION BY GOD 36-37

After attacking Israel (N), Sennacherib continues his advance into Judah.

He defeats all the fortified cities of Judah and finally arrives at Jerusalem.

Sennacherib, in his arrogance, has not been aware that his victories were given to him by God.

Following the reform movement of Hezekiah, God is again able to bless His people and defeat the arrogant opponent.

As Hezekiah calls on God and submits to the authority of God's spokesman, God delivers him supernaturally from the arrogant Sennacherib's hands.

Hezekiah spreads the king's letters out for God to see! *"What are you going to do about this?!!"*

God sends an angel during the night, to put to death 185,000 men in the Assyrian camp.

That event frightened Sennacherib sufficiently to get him to break camp and return home.

Back in Assyria, two of Sennacherib's sons conspired to kill him.

As a result of God's supernatural intervention, His people were delivered from certain destruction.

God is able to deliver His people from the great pagan empires.

ILLNESS AND RESTORATION OF HEZEKIAH 38

Following the victory over Assyria, Hezekiah becomes ill and is told that he is about to die.

He turns to God and asks him to heal him and give him a longer life.

God responds to Hezekiah's petition and trust in God.

He restores him and grants an additional fifteen years of life.

The story demonstrates God's power over illness and over death.

Perhaps more important was **the lesson to Israel that God is able to save even from the fate of death, those who turn to Him.**

If Israel will return to Him, He will also restore them.

INDISCRETION OF HEZEKIAH 39

As Hezekiah is recovering, emissaries from Babylon arrive.

The king of Babylon, Merodach-Baladan, sent him letters and a gift.

The stated reason is his illness and recovery.

It may also be that they sought to know how he had managed to escape Assyria, since they had tried and failed.

Hezekiah proudly showed off all his treasures and armory.

He was boasting in his own possessions, rather than in God's gifts.

The occasion is used as an object lesson to prophesy that God would deliver everything into Babylon's hands.

The announcement indicates that the coming judgment on Judah will be accomplished by Babylonia, not by Assyria as expected.

Hezekiah was satisfied that he personally would escape God's judgment.

PROPHECIES OF CONSOLATION 40-66

The second major section of the book presents consolation for Israel, following the judgment predicted in the first section.

Its message is summarized in the introduction (40:1-2): "*Comfort, comfort my people. . . . Proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.*"

God has judged His people and is ready to begin His program of restoration.

This message is prophetic, written from the perspective of those living at the conclusion of the Babylonian captivity.

Since its perspective is the same as the exilic prophets, it's purpose and message is the same also.

The two parts were united in one message so that those living after captivity would see proof of the fulfillment of this prophecy in the captivity promised first and already fulfilled.

This division of the book is divided into three sections of nine chapters each.

The structure is marked by the repeated phrase, found in 48:22 & 57:21: *"There is no peace for the wicked!"*

RESTORATION OF ISRAEL 40-48

The first encouraging message for God's people in captivity declares that God will restore His people.

Introduces the theme of restoration in general.

From beginning to end this is GOD's work–NOT man's!

This section contains the richest descriptions exalting God in Scripture!

Because of God's Strength 40-41

The promise that they are going to be restored, and should therefore get ready, is based on the power of Almighty God Who rules the universe.

He who has all this power is the One Who helps Israel.

He will restore them.

Because of God's Servant 42

The restoration will be accomplished by God's Servant Who, controlled by the Spirit of God, will bring justice to the earth.

He will fulfill God's covenant with His people and reveal God to the nations.

He will judge the nations and use discipline to correct His people.

Because of God's Salvation 43-44

God promises to deliver them from captivity.

He will gather His people.

He will make them His witnesses.

He will take away their sins and give them His Spirit.

Although their idols cannot help them, God promises to redeem them and to free them through Cyrus.

Because of God's Sovereignty 45-48

Finally, the restoration of Israel is based on God's sovereignty, and is a demonstration of it.

God will place Cyrus on the throne to accomplish His purposes and will use him.

God created and controls the universe.

He created and controls Babylon.

He can even control stubborn Israel and use them for His own glory.

REDEMPTION OF ISRAEL 49-57

The first message of consolation for Israel promises, in general terms, the restoration of God's people.

The second message of consolation is more specific.

It promises that God will redeem His people.

His redemption will make possible their entrance into the coming kingdom.

Israel's Purpose 49:1-7

Like His purpose for the prophet, God's purpose for His people was that they might be a testimony to the Gentiles and bring them to Him that they might be saved.

Although they have failed to fulfill this purpose throughout their history, when God restores His people, they will fulfill this purpose and become faithful witnesses.

Israel's Preservation 49:8-26

Although they have not fulfilled God's purpose for them, He has not abandoned them.

He is preserving them.

He will remember them, protect them, and bring them back again, so that they may know Him.

Through them, all people will see what He has done for His people and turn to Him for salvation also.

Israel's Invitation 50

God has not divorced His people.

He has not sent them away.

Rather, He has cared for them.

He is trying to draw them back to Himself.

He wants them to trust Him once again and receive His blessing.

That invitation will always be open.

Israel's Redemption 51-52:12

God always has and always will be standing by, ready to redeem His people, whenever they turn back to Him.

God's faithfulness in the past 51:1-10

He has demonstrated His faithfulness to them in the past.

God's faithfulness in the present 51:11-23

He continues to demonstrate His faithfulness in the present.

God's faithfulness in the future 52:1-12

Therefore, He may be trusted when He promises to demonstrate His faithfulness in the future by redeeming His people.

Israel's Redeemer 52:13-53:12

Having promised to redeem His people, God describes the means which He will use to accomplish their redemption.

His servant will be their Redeemer.

The prophet foretells the death of the Redeemer.

At the time of their restoration, Israel will look back and remember their rejection of Him, and His suffering for them.

The description may represent the prayer of confession which Israel will pray when they recall with grief His death and realize its significance.

This prayer of confession will prepare their hearts for entrance into His kingdom.

Israel's Salvation 54-55

When the prayer of confession has been offered and the people turn back to God, Israel's salvation will come.

Benefit for Israel 54

The principal benefits will be for Israel as God's people.

Benefit extended to all 55

Through Israel's testimony, those benefits will be extended to many Gentiles also.

The invitation is offered to anyone who is thirsty to drink and enjoy the benefits of God's salvation.

Israel's requirements 56-57

The conclusion of the second message of consolation repeats what the entire law stated.

Those who have been redeemed by the blood of God's redeemer, are to demonstrate that fact by their lifestyle.

They are not to be like the pagan nations around them.

God wants His people to trust and love Him, to obey His Word, and to demonstrate justice in their dealings with others.

This kind of lifestyle will glorify Him and distinguish those who belong to Him from others.

Those who live this way will continue to enjoy fellowship with Him.

Those who reject God's way do not belong to Him and will not enjoy the benefits of His salvation. They will not participate in His kingdom.

MESSIANIC REIGN OVER ISRAEL 58-66

The third message of consolation describes the conditions that will exist in the kingdom after their salvation.

Need for Messiah 58-59:18

As a background, Isaiah demonstrates their absolute necessity of the Messiah.

Israel has demonstrated repeatedly their lack of true righteousness.

They have an abundance of ritual, but no reality in their lives.

God demands a genuine demonstration of righteousness from the heart.

Since that is lacking, God provided salvation through His Messiah.

Provision for Messiah 59:19-60:22

God saw Israel's sinful condition and the need for a transformation.

Therefore He sent His Messiah to produce the needed transformation.

His glory reveals God and His way.

Other nations will come to receive its benefits.

He will restore their hearts, remove their enemies, and make them into a great and righteous nation.

Ministry of Messiah 61-62

Isaiah then presents more specific detail concerning the ministry of Messiah.

Salvation of Israel 61:1-3

Through His ministry, Israel will enjoy the benefits of her salvation.

Witness of Israel 61:4-62:12

What God does for His people will be quickly noted by others also.

Israel will witness to the nations concerning all that God has done for them.

Others will be attracted by their testimony.

Judgment against Israel's Enemies 63:1-6

Not only will God bless Israel and cause her to prosper, but He will also destroy her enemies who have sought to destroy her.

This promise moves the author back a bit chronologically from the blessings introduced earlier.

The first part of this third message of consolation dealt with the logical development of the theme

It showed Israel's need, God's provision, and then the appropriation of that provision and the enjoyment of the benefits.

Isaiah now backs up and traces the chronological development.

During the time of the tribulation, the nations persecute God's people.

God judges the nations and destroys her enemies.

Confession of Sin 63:7-64:12

At that time, Israel recognizes what God has been doing and confesses her sin and rebellion.

They ask God to renew His program and bring back Messiah.

They recognize that they are responsible for the delay in God's program and submit themselves to His authority.

They plead with Him to return to them.

Response from God 65

When they turn back to God, and call on Him, He responds.

He tells them how long He has waited for this moment.

He has called continuously but they have not responded to His call.

They have been too proud and rebellious.

They deserve all the judgment they have received.

Since they have turned back to Him, He will restore the remnant that has called.

Those who are still rebellious will be destroyed.

His servants will be blessed and satisfied.

God can now bless them again.

Conclusion 66

In the light of God's plan, they should hear His voice and turn back to Him, in order to receive His blessing.

Rebuke for the rebellious 66:1-4

The rebellious one, who is only observing external rituals, but who refuses to submit to God in his heart, is rebuked and warned that judgment is coming.

Consolation for the faithful 66:5-14

Those who are faithful should be encouraged.

Judgment against the wicked 66:15-17

God will judge the enemies of His people, but those who seek Him will rejoice.

The wicked will be punished for their evil deeds.

Conversion of the nation 66:18-21

In spite of present contrary appearances, God will raise up His people and they will testify of His mighty deeds in their behalf, and He will be glorified.

Contrast of destinies 66:22-24

In the end, those who are faithful to Him will be identified with Him in His victory, while those who rebel will die and will suffer forever.

The concluding message of the book demonstrates that concentrating on immediate circumstances can be deceiving.

We can trust God in the dark!

Israel's suffering because of sin does not indicate that God has abandoned His people.

He uses such judgment to correct His people.

When they return to Him, which they will do eventually, God will fulfill the covenant He made with Abraham and bless His people, while eternally judging their enemies and people who continue to reject Him.

God is faithful.

He will fulfill His covenant.

It pays to trust God and walk with Him, even when you can't understand what He's doing!