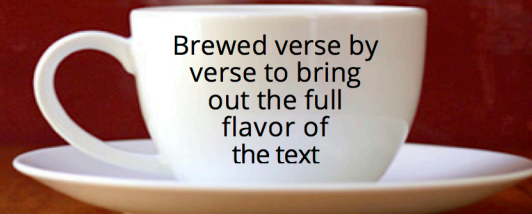


CuppaJ Cafe

Daily devotions
from God's Word...



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The Grind

Savor the taste of our previous brew



Since everything in the Bible leads into and prepares the way for what comes after it, refresh yesterday's Brew to let the previous passage get you ready for today's verses. Though you should have already explored the passage, personally with Jesus, here is the heart of what we saw, together.

In the previous passage, verses 18-21, the LORD lays the groundwork for salvation based on righteousness by faith to balance the threat of judgment in the previous passage.

18 Although the NLT omits it, this verse begins with the linking word **"and,"** to attach it to v.17 as an explanation or justification for destroying all the idol worshipers on earth. The word, **"I,"** is emphatic, ironically setting God apart from those who pervert His instructions to set themselves apart for false gods. The text literally says, **"And I, their thoughts and their deeds, am coming,"** inviting various translations. The NLT correctly translates the expression, **"their thoughts and their deeds,"** as **"what they are doing, and...what they are thinking,"** to recapture the entire treasonous personalities of the idolaters from v.17. In spite of emphasizing, **"I,"** the sentence is incomplete, failing to supply a verb for it. Near the end of his book, Isaiah may have rushed to finish his prophecy, just as Paul often left out words or jumbled thoughts when he got excited, a phenomenon called, **"anacoluthon"**. In Gal. 6:1, for instance, Paul switches from the plural to the singular, saying: **"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself** (when he should have said, **"yourselves"), lest thou** (that should be, **"ye"** as in the first part of the verse) **also be tempted."** Since the verse attempts to defend the destruction of the spiritual traitors in v.17, the word **"and,"** introduces v.18 as the cause of v.17, its inescapable result. So, we translated it, **"for."** Staying with the thought, the NLT adds the verbs, **"see,"** and **"know,"** to show God's complete awareness of the traitors' treachery down to their innermost thoughts and desires (cf. Heb. 4:12).

The original includes the verb **"coming,"** that naturally takes a subject like **"the time."** As E.J. Young suggests, the thought would then be, **"inasmuch as I know their thoughts and deeds, the time is coming that I will gather..."** If we slightly modify the verb so the first subject **"I"** continues to speak, then we come up with, **"for I see what they are doing and I know what they are thinking, [and, or] so, I am coming [because of their actions and thoughts] to gather..."** Recalling what he said in 2:2-4 in an ironic way, Isaiah announces that, while the LORD sees every sacrilege of the idolaters, everyone, **"all nations and peoples,"** will see the glory, or splendor of the God they deserted for their idols. When God called him to prophesy, Isaiah saw God's glory at the Temple and it changed his life. Now, all those who spurned the opportunity to serve Him will get to see that glory, and it will end their lives. The word **"together"** reminds us of Daniel 2:35 where God smashes all those who have ever opposed Him, at the same time. Condemnation of the disobedient nation points to the final judgment of the world. In place of His unfaithful people, the LORD will raise-up and spare a new, true Israel of Jews and Gentiles that have left the world and everything in it, for Him.

[For] Because

"I can see what they are doing, I, the Eternal One have been watching what they do

and plus

I know what they are thinking. I, the Eternal One am fully aware of what goes on in their minds

So Therefore

I will gather all nations and peoples together, I, the Eternal One will unite everyone on earth into a single group (Eph. 2:11ff)

and plus

they will see my glory. This group will witness my splendor firsthand

19 This verse explains how all of planet earth will see God's glory: He **"will perform a sign among them."** Instead of restricting His audience to Israel, God will expand His miraculous activity to the whole world. This global display of His glory will cost some of its witnesses their lives, but those who survive, Messiah's remnant, will spread the message of what they have seen to the rest of the world (cf. 1Jn. 1:1-4). This points forward to Christ, described by Simeon as "a sign from God," who would condemn many in Israel at the same time He also saves many others. Based on God's promise to "bless those who bless you, and to curse those who curse you" (Gen. 12:2, 3), those who survive this judgment will become God's ambassadors (2Cor. 5:19), sent throughout the world to share the Gospel of God's glory (2Cor. 4:4; 1Tim. 1:11). Ultimately, this prophecy includes both the first and second coming when "every eye shall see Him" (Rev. 1:7) after God's messengers preach the Gospel throughout the whole world, so all the nations will hear it (Mt. 24:14).

Isaiah mentions certain nations, from **"Tarshish, the Libyans and Lydians, Tubal and Greece, to all the lands beyond the sea."** In this way, Jesus fulfills God's promise to send a light to the Gentiles (Isa. 49:6), and bring salvation to the farthest corners of the earth (cf. Ac. 13:47). Though located throughout the world, these nations share one characteristic: they **"have not heard of my fame or seen my glory."** Ironically, God will send some who had turned to idolatry in spite of hearing the history of His exploits and seeing His power at work, to open the eyes of others blinded by the darkness of paganism and error. **Tarshish** was a mining colony along the southern coast of Spain, at the other end of the then known world on the edge of the Mediterranean Sea. Called **"Put and Lud"** in the Hebrew text, referring to sons of Ham in Gen. 10:6 and Shem in Gen. 10:22, Libya represents north Africa and Lydia, western Asia Minor. Renowned archers, they must have been warlike, in need of an overhaul since, **"Blessed are those who work for peace, for they will be called God's children"** (Matt. 5:9).

Next, He mentions two of Japheth's sons, **Tubal** (see, Gen. 10:2) in northeastern Asia Minor and **Javan** (that is, Greece, as in Zech. 9:13), along with **"all the lands beyond the sea."** The line of travel to these nations runs from west to east along the southern boundary of the Sea, then east to west along the northern, to parts unknown, beyond the Sea—covering the entire world—to illustrate the universal scope of this mission (cf. the Great Commission in Matt. 28:18-20). As they spread Christ's glory, God will make those who oppose His Son, Christ's footstool, bringing the whole world under Messiah's rule (cf. Ps. 110). Jesus alluded to this when He told His disciples to **"be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth"** (Ac. 1:8).

So, God will commission Messiah's remnant, the repentant descendants of Shem to expose Noah's other two wayward sons to God's light, and to spread the light to parts unknown, "beyond" the Mediterranean. In this way, Christ's disciples will fulfill their primary task to restore the LORD'S reputation and fill the earth with true knowledge of Him. Evangelism, the spread of the Gospel, is about Him rather than converts. When adding members to the church outweighs telling the full truth about Him, we water down the Gospel and deprive ourselves of its most rewarding blessings.

I will perform a sign I, the Eternal One will do something miraculous and illuminating

among them. in the midst of the whole world (no longer restricting my activity to a Jewish audience)

And plus

I will send those who survive I, the Eternal One will commission those who accept it
to be messengers to the nations to take the glorious news about Me to everyone on earth
—to Tarshish, — to the farthest reaches of the known world
to the Libyans and Lydians (who are famous as archers), to the warlike descendants of Ham and Shem
to Tubal and Greece, to the descendants of Japheth
and plus
to all the lands beyond the sea to the uttermost parts of the earth
that have not heard of my fame unaware of what I have already done
or
seen my glory. Witnessed my splendor
There they will declare my glory Wherever they go the survivors will announce face-to-face my splendor
to the nations. To everyone on earth

20 In the absence of a linking word, Isaiah uses context to link this verse to v.19. A continuation of what began in the previous verse, it explains what will happen when the survivors of v.19 declare God's glory. As a result of sharing God's splendor, they will bring an offering to Him—"the remnant of your people back from every nation... as an (non-bloody) offering to the LORD." This probably refers to the sacrifice of the Suffering Servant as the Lamb of God who creates a new and living way to God by His substitutionary death (see, Heb. 10:19-20). Pointing forward to the church—God's Israel—the LORD describes how spreading the Gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth as priests who serve under Christ the High Priest will reconcile converts from all the families of earth to their Creator. The word "every" emphasizes that not one of God's true people, whether Jew or Gentile will be left behind. Though it is possible to take the references in the last line as means of transportation used by the survivors to spread the Gospel, the double mention of "bring the remnant of your people," and "bring them" probably describes how the converts will get to His holy mountain. To magnify the worldwide scope of their return, the LORD mentions a wide variety of vehicles. This projection of Israel fulfilling its mission to the world from Gen. 12:3, reminds us of chapter 60 where God's children return in caravans, laden with spoils from their oppressors, just like the refugees from Egypt. The LORD adds His personal guarantee.

They The survivors I, the Eternal One commissioned to take the glorious message to the nations
will bring the remnant of your people will return the few faithful from your ranks
back from every nation. From all the families of the earth

They The survivors
will bring them will lead, or guide the faithful few
to my holy mountain in Jerusalem to my special place in the new Jerusalem (Heb. 12:22-24)
as like

an offering to the LORD. a (bloodless) sacrifice to the Eternal One

They will ride The survivor/messengers, or the faithful few who return,
on horses, on all available means of transportation, including horses, formerly used for battle and in idolatrous processions (2 Kg. 23:11)
in chariots (chariots used to return to God possibly symbolize the conversion of Ham's and Shem's warlike sons)

and wagons, (riding wagons to return to God symbolizes change of heart, leaving the world and their past behind them)

and on mules and camels,” (mules [pack animals] and camels [ideal for long-distance travel in the wilderness] remind us of the ships and caravans in Isa. 60 that carry the remnant and/or their gold back home and symbolizes returning to God like Abraham from Egypt and the refugees with their spoils no matter how far away)

says the LORD. The Eternal One personally guarantees this (the ultimate picture of redeeming sinners, formerly unable to enter the gate, now serving the LORD in His holiest presence)

21 God promises to appoint some of the converts to the highest offices of ministry in His kingdom. Unlike the Old Covenant that only permitted one tribe to serve in these capacities, the New Covenant elevates every believer, whether Jew or Gentile, to the rank of priest. Rather than two offices, “**priests and Levites**” represent a literary device for completeness, working together to express a single idea: access to God in His holiest presence. The expression, “**some of them**,” does not mean God will withhold this honor from the rest, bestowing it on a privileged few. It simply singles out Gentile converts as special beneficiaries of God’s grace, as Paul explained to the Ephesians: “**Don’t forget that you Gentiles used to be outsiders. You were called “uncircumcised heathens” by the Jews, who were proud of their circumcision, even though it affected only their bodies and not their hearts. In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope**” (Eph. 2:11, 12).

Describing how Jesus, as the firstborn of God’s Israel resumed and succeeded in fulfilling national Israel’s failed mission of assembling an Israel for God from all the families of the earth, the apostle to the Gentiles went on to say: “**But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ**” (Eph. 2:13). Commenting on the same phenomenon, Peter adds: “**You are coming to Christ, who is the living cornerstone of God’s temple. He was rejected by people, but he was chosen by God for great honor. And you are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple. What’s more, you are his holy priests. Through the mediation of Jesus Christ, you offer spiritual sacrifices that please God**” (1Pet. 2:4-5). Starting on earth as ministers of the Gospel, they will train all their spiritual lives to serve God day and night in His heavenly Temple, a greater honor than Aaron or any of his descendants ever enjoyed under the Old Covenant. Once again, the LORD adds His personal guarantee; only this time the past tense, “**have spoken**” intensifies His pronouncement, underscoring the absolute certainty of its success.

“And Plus, or on top of that

I will appoint some of them I, the Eternal One will accept former disqualified aliens

to be my priests and Levites. to serve in my holiest presence [as priests and Levites] (Isa. 56:7)

I, the LORD, have spoken! I, the Eternal One, guarantee this as if it has already happened.



The Brew

Let us pour you a fresh cup, ground verse-by-verse from today’s passage

In today’s passage, verses 22-24, the LORD addresses the entire new Israel of God mentioned in the preceding verses. So, please open your Bibles to Isaiah Chapter 66, and let me pour you a hot CuppaJesus from today’s brew, starting with v.22.



WHAT TO LOOK FOR TODAY

Here are the main items in the text that will lead you to its understanding.

	Verse 22	Verse 23	Verse 24
Links	As surely as, and, so	And	And as, for, and
Persons	My 2x, the LORD, you, people (the remnant from vv.20, 21)	All (humanity)	They 2x, those who, them 3x (the rebels), All who (remnant)
Places	New (heavens)/(Earth)		
Things	Heavens, earth, a name that	Humanity, week to week, month to month	The dead bodies of, the worms that, the fire that, utter horror
Words	Will remain, will always be with, will never disappear, says	Will come to worship from (2x)	Go out, will see, have rebelled against, devour, will never die, burns, will never be extinguished, pass by will view with

Pay careful attention to every item as you follow today's devotional in your study Bible. We have already grouped them by colors in "Today's Text," so you can follow the writer's flow of thought for yourself. Capture and grasp what he is trying to tell you with matching color pencils to draw lines connecting items to others in the same color-family, and a black pencil to cross-link items from different color-families that still have something to do with one another. Use circles, boxes, triangles, etc. to identify topics and themes (triangles, for instance, might represent the Trinity). Also mark with asterisks, etc., the ones you need to look up later for more information or greater details.

TODAY'S TEXT

22 "As surely as my new heavens and earth will remain*, so will you always* be my people, with a name* that will never disappear*," says the LORD.

23 "All humanity* will come* to worship* me from week to week* and from month to month*.

24 And as they go out*, they will see* the dead bodies* of those who have rebelled* against me. For the worms* that devour* them will never die*, and the fire* that burns* them will never be extinguished*. All who pass by* will view* them with utter horror*."

TODAY'S DEVOTIONAL

22 This verse shares the basis for what was said in v.21. Though the NLT relies on the context, Isaiah actually begins v.22 with the word, "for," to offer an explanation. "Seed," or "people" refers to the generations of the church, descended from the original people of God who turned to the Suffering Servant as their only hope of salvation. God assures them they will last forever, a people for God from now on. "Name," refers to their reputation as a means of perpetual glory for God as in Ephesians 3:21 where Paul says, "Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen." The LORD did promise truly converted eunuchs incapable of reproducing themselves that, "I will give them—within the walls of my house—a memorial and a name far greater than sons and daughters could give. For the name I give them is an everlasting one. It will never disappear" (56:4-5). In other words, the world will recognize the church as the people God has chosen for Himself.

To assure them of this, the LORD compares them to the new heavens and the new earth. As God created the original heavens and earth and sustained it, so He will create new ones and maintain them forever as the final version, of His cosmic will (cf. Isa. 48:19; 53:2). The old, national Israel will pass away, but from it will spring a remnant that has survived judgment, together with the Gentiles—an Israel from all the families of the earth. Then, "Both Gentiles and Jews who believe the Good News share equally in the riches inherited by God's children. Both are part of the same body, and both enjoy the promise of blessings because they belong to Christ Jesus...[so that]... God's purpose in all this was to use the church to display his wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places" (Eph. 3:6, 10). God guarantees with the words, "says the LORD," that always produce what He wants regardless of where He sends them (Isa.

55:11), that He will preserve them as the final edition of His people just as He will perpetuate the new heavens and the new earth. His eternal plan will be fulfilled and never come to an end.

"As surely as With the same certainty

my new heavens the Eternal One's latest and final edition of the cosmos

and earth plus the creation

will remain*, will stand eternally

so in the same way

will you always* be my people, will you who join forces with me like Jacob remain my personal family

with a name* that will never disappear*," with an ID that will last forever

says the LORD. the Eternal One personally guarantees it.

23 Though the NLT omits it, this verse begins with the expression, **"And it shall come to pass,"** to introduce another feature of the promised future: **"All humanity"**, actually "all the families of the earth [that will inhabit the new earth] **will come* to worship* me.**" Everyone in the redeemed world will finally acknowledge God and adore Him, as they should. Reclaimed from their idolatrous past, they will redirect all their homage to Him alone, and based on the promise to make them **"priests and Levites,"** serve in His holiest presence.

Speaking as a prophet of the Old Testament, Isaiah employed typological language—using words and images that reached into the remote future of the last days and beyond—to anticipate a grander, more glorious future than Israel had ever known. Consequently, the references to **"new moon"** and **"Sabbath,"** meant to exemplify true worship, seek more than literal satisfaction to fit the Kingdom in the new earth. In a literal sense, **"new moon"** refers to the invisible, unilluminated first phase of the moon. The LORD commanded special offerings on each new moon, and even used it as an occasion for state banquets (1Sam. 20:5-24). The first day of the lunar, or biblical month and a mainstay of the biblical calendar, the Jews observed it as a holy day, 12 times a year, just like the weekly Sabbath. The moonless sky signaled suspension of all work (Amos 8:5), as priests opened the temple for public worship (Ezekiel 46:3). Rather than occasions for worship both **"new moon"** and **"Sabbath"** are time markers that point to seasons, as the NET translates verse 23: **"from one month to the next and from one Sabbath to the next,"** or as the NLT puts it: **"from week to week and from month to month."**

Now, unlike the current sun and moon that rise and set on alternating days and nights, in the new earth under a new heavens, Isaiah promised: **"Your sun will never set; your moon will not go down."** Then, as he did in v.19, the prophet supports his claim, arguing again: **"For the LORD will be your everlasting light."** In fact, the apostle John went so far as to say that, **"there will be no night there [in the new Jerusalem]—no need for lamps or sun—for the Lord God will shine on them..."** {Rev. 22:5}. As one commentary observes about verse 5: *"This verse draws a word picture emphasizing the insignificance of created luminaries in the presence of God. These will pale into nothingness in the presence of the glory of the divine Person."* So, in a world without days or nights, where God will outshine everything in the heavens, the literal **"new moon"** and **"Sabbath,"** lose their relevance, but still retain their typological significance. So, Isaiah prophesies that everyone in the new heavens and the new earth will worship God regularly, faithfully, and legitimately—in accordance with the symbolic rituals and seasons of the OT—when they reach fulfillment in the world to come.

"All humanity* Everyone left, who inhabits the New Earth

will come* to worship* me will approach my very presence instead of staying at a distance to lay on the ground, face down in order to adore and show their respect to me

from week to week* (every seven days) = regularly, faithfully, compliant with God's requirements

and as well as

from month to month*. (Every 30 days) = eliminating both manmade ideas and idols from worship

24 The linking word **"and,"** adds to and continues what began in v.23. Its first expression, **"as they go out,"** sets the stage for **"they will see"** and **"all who pass by will view"** — what true believers who inhabit the New Jerusalem will witness firsthand as they return home from worship. The LORD returns to the issue of rebellion, the first thing Isaiah mentions in Chapter One, placing the same subject at the beginning and end of his prophecy to underscore the seriousness of this problem and to highlight the remedy sandwiched between. The book begins with God describing the way He had worked with Israel in the past. First, He prospered them, but they didn't serve Him (1:3). Then, He warned them what would happen, but they refused to listen (1:4). Finally, He let them suffer the consequences of their sins (1:5-7). Here, at the end of the book, He describes the horrible fate awaiting those who rebel to the end, illustrated by repulsive images of dead bodies, devoured by immortal worms, burned with inextinguishable fire. In between, the LORD breaks the self-destructive cycle by offering a new remedy for sin, a substitute who will die in Israel's place to heal them from the harm they have done to themselves. So, the rebels at the end of the book are those who fail to accept God's offer and go to their destruction.

Consistent with the rest of the book, the language here is symbolic, pointing to something greater than a literal interpretation of its terms. First of all, why would God grant immortality to worms that consume human flesh? And, verses like Mal. 4:3 that describe the wicked as **"ashes under the feet of the righteous,"** strongly suggest the fire meant to destroy the ungodly will finish its job and go out. In fact, Jude 6-7 referring to this same end time fire, declares: **"And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."** As a student in one of our study groups once observed: "I always thought that eternal meant, 'forever and ever'; but the fire that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah burned itself out long ago." As I explained to him: "Verse 7 doesn't teach that **'eternal fire,'** goes on and on without end. Instead, it pictures flames that accomplish their purpose with irreversible, or eternal results. Jude reinforces this sense of the text by using 'everlasting' to describe the chains that reserve fallen angels for the judgment of the great end time day in v.6. If the chains only last until the judgment, then 'everlasting' doesn't mean forever without end, either. Instead, it describes shackles that do their job until they are no longer needed. Jude draws a comparison between the 'everlasting chains' and 'eternal fire' with the words, 'even as.' In other words, the fire in v.7 burned Sodom and Gomorrah and their suburbs until they were destroyed, in the same way that the chains in v.6 hold the fallen angels until the time comes for God to judge them. Just as nothing will prevent the detained angels from suffering judgment, so nothing can reverse the effect of the fire on the decimated twin cities. The Bible uses the fire that burned Jerusalem's rubbish in the repulsive Valley of Hinnom, or Gehenna south of the city, as a metaphor for **'eternal fire.'** Corpses denied burial were also sent there for cremation or decomposition. So long as there was trash or bodies to fuel it, the fire burned. As soon as the people stopped feeding it, the fire went out."

Truth is, the LORD uses highly symbolic terms at the climax of Isaiah's book to stretch the meaning of literal pictures into nightmarish portrayals of end time judgment—to underscore the severe consequences rebels will face if they refuse to accept God's gift of righteousness by faith. To say that the remnant in the New Earth can see the dead burning in agony all around them is just as absurd as thinking that the redeemed can see the agonies of the condemned from Abraham's Bosom, or heaven in the Parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man. Lifeless bodies that perpetually rot, immortal parasites that feed endlessly on decaying matter, and fire that cannot be stopped are Isaiah's way of reaching into the remote future, to the age of the Messiah with symbols that point beyond themselves to terrifying, irreversible outcomes for those who rebel to the end. Since the worms will never die, nothing can stop them from feasting on the corpses. Since the fire cannot be put out, nothing can stop it from incinerating corpses. Both images point to unavoidable and permanent damage. All the time the redeemed come to fellowship with God and worship Him, those who reject the suffering servant will remain deserted and separated from God. Their fate will serve as a constant reminder of both God's grace to the redeemed and the tragedy of those who refused to put their trust in the Savior.

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