

Arise

Arise Part 7 - Everything New

Isaiah prophesies to the people of Israel to come home to Jerusalem out of the captivity they are in, come home to a place where God's Kingdom will break in, and all the nations will see God's glory.

It was these words of hope that speak through the ages not just of a time in history or to a people group, but Isaiah prophesied about a new king who would establish a new kingdom. We have seen that Isaiah spoke of the hope that we have found in Jesus, our suffering servant king who took upon Himself the sins of the world and ushered in the reign of a new kingdom – the kingdom of heaven brought to earth. And in our passages today Isaiah looks way into the future even from our perspective and prophesies a word of hope for all people who find themselves a part of God's Kingdom.

Heaven and Hell – Isaiah 65:11-14

Isaiah starts to direct us towards the ultimate end point, to finality, an eternity either with or without God. A day of judgement with only two eternities possible – Heaven or Hell.

What's Heaven like? It's like eating and drinking, rejoicing and singing from hearts full and overflowing with joy in God's presence. But the picture of Hell is the opposite – it's like hunger and thirst, shame and crying out in pain and despair forever.

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth it was perfect. We were deceived into thinking that we would be better off taking things into our own hands. It was at that moment God did two things – He judged us in mercy, and He gave us a promise that through Jesus, He would reverse all the damage that sin was about to do down through the generations.

In Jesus' obedience to God the Father, He entered our broken and messed up world to live a perfect sinless life to then die and rise again in order to forgive us our sin and bring us into perfect union with God our loving Father.

Every sin and sinner will be brought to account under the judgement of God. You will either pay the price of your sin and spend an eternity in Hell, or you can call on the name of Jesus to save you (Romans 3:23; 6:23).

The love God has for us is that Christ gave Himself as our substitute – He endured Hell on the cross so that we might enjoy heaven with Him forever! (Romans 5:8; 10:9-10)

God is inviting you to a better future – the choice is ours. If we confess our sin and recognise our need to be saved from ourselves and the sin that so easily entangles us and call on the name of Jesus we have a bright and beautiful future that starts now and goes on for all eternity.

What is your response to God's invitation?

New Heaven and Earth – Isaiah 65:17-18

How big is your hope?

God's plan is both to give you a hope now for a life of meaning and purpose in personal intimacy with God, and for a future eternity full of joy and complete peace in a renewed world of peace and righteousness. It's not just one or the other – God has a plan for you and for the whole world.

A complete restoration of God's creation. Not destroying the Earth as we know it but restoring it to its original glory where sin and all its years of brokenness have been stripped away to allow God to dwell with His people.

God's re-creation starts in you now! (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Don't get bogged down in the brokenness of the current world's dilemmas, we aren't living just for a better weekend but for The End. (1 Corinthians 2:9)

A Taste of Heaven – Isaiah 66:1-2

The very last chapter of Isaiah gives us a clue as to how, as true worshippers, we become a prophetic presence in a dying world, a living invitation to all to join us in the delights of God that will last forever.

God blesses a trembling heart, a humble and contrite spirit. (Psalm 51:17)

This is our entry into revival – true worship is leaning into God with listening ears longing to hear, a desire to believe and an intention to obey.

Why does God care so passionately about the authenticity of our worship? (Isaiah 66:5-6) Because every church service is an opportunity for heaven to invade earth. It is where human hearts are deciding whether their Christianity will become the future God has promised – a joy filled overflow of God's presence amongst His people. God is calling us not to be a religious people but a God-fearing people.

One day we will celebrate in true and endless worship of God in the new heaven and earth (Isaiah 66:22). This will be the only adequate place for the endless glory of God to be revered.

Conclusion

God's ultimate invitation that Isaiah is proclaiming is that we have opportunity to turn to God through Jesus Christ and enjoy a life of worshiping Him. Not only a life here and now but forever. God's great desire is that we would hold on to the hope of an eternity with Him that starts now. To return from our days of exile and slavery and be united with Him in such a way that the nations of the world would see His glory.

This becomes our light to the world – our joy we find in Him. It's time for us to humble ourselves, seek Him, actively engage with God and the plans He has for this world and for you.

Discussion Questions

1. Read Isaiah 65:8-15. Discuss the difference between those who seek God and those who choose to go their own way.
2. Every sin and sinner will be brought to account under the judgement of God. You will either pay the price of your sin and spend an eternity in Hell, or you can call on the name of Jesus to save you (Romans 3:23; 6:23). Share your testimony of when this truth became your reality.
3. Read Isaiah 65:17-19 and Revelation 21:1-4. What hope do these images place in you? How does that affect your everyday living for God?
4. If God blesses a trembling heart, a humble and contrite spirit, (Isaiah 66:2; Psalm 51:17), what is our responsibility when we come to worship together? What are the barriers you are responsible for removing when you come to worship God? What simple practices could help you come to worship with a contrite heart?
5. Discuss the following statement. "If we long for revival we are going to have to sacrifice our religious culture for the sake of the new creation."