

ISAIAH LESSON 61

Genesis 1 Revisited^a
(Isaiah 65:1-25)

Isaiah 65:1-25 Revised Standard Version (RSV)

The Righteousness of God's Judgment^b

65 I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me;

I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me.

I said, "Here am I, here am I,"

to a nation that did not call on my name.^c

² I spread out my hands all the day

to a rebellious people,

who walk in a way that is not good,

following their own devices;^d

³ a people who provoke me

to my face continually,

sacrificing in gardens

and burning incense upon bricks;^e

⁴ who sit in tombs,

and spend the night in secret places;

who eat swine's flesh,

and broth of abominable things is in their vessels;^f

⁵ who say, "Keep to yourself,

do not come near me, for I am set apart from you."

These are a smoke in my nostrils,

a fire that burns all the day.^g

⁶ Behold, it is written before me:

"I will not keep silent, but I will repay,

yea, I will repay into their bosom^h

⁷ their iniquities and their fathers' iniquities together,

says the Lordⁱ;

because they burned incense upon the mountains

and reviled me upon the hills,

I will measure into their bosom

payment for their former doings."^j

⁸ Thus says the Lord:

"As the wine is found in the cluster,

and they say, 'Do not destroy it,

for there is a blessing in it,'

so I will do for my servants' sake,

and not destroy them all.^k

⁹ I will bring forth descendants from Jacob,

and from Judah inheritors of my mountains;

my chosen shall inherit it,

and my servants shall dwell there.^l

¹⁰ Sharon shall become a pasture for flocks,

and the Valley of Achor a place for herds to lie down,
for my people who have sought me.^m

¹¹ But you who forsake the Lord,
who forget my holy mountain,
who set a table for Fortune
and fill cups of mixed wine for Destiny;ⁿ

¹² I will destine you to the sword,
and all of you shall bow down to the slaughter;
because, when I called, you did not answer,
when I spoke, you did not listen,
but you did what was evil in my eyes,
and chose what I did not delight in.”^o

¹³ Therefore thus says the Lord God^p:
“Behold, my servants shall eat,
but you shall be hungry;
behold, my servants shall drink,
but you shall be thirsty;
behold, my servants shall rejoice,
but you shall be put to shame;^q

¹⁴ behold, my servants shall sing for gladness of heart,
but you shall cry out for pain of heart,
and shall wail for anguish of spirit.^r

¹⁵ You shall leave your name to my chosen for a curse,
and the Lord God will slay you;
but his servants he will call by a different name.^s

¹⁶ So that he who blesses himself in the land
shall bless himself by the God of truth,
and he who takes an oath in the land
shall swear by the God of truth;
because the former troubles are forgotten
and are hid from my eyes.^t

The Glorious New Creation^u

¹⁷ “For behold, I create new heavens
and a new earth;
and the former things shall not be remembered
or come into mind.^v

¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice for ever
in that which I create;
for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing,
and her people a joy.^w

¹⁹ I will rejoice in Jerusalem,
and be glad in my people;
no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping
and the cry of distress.^x

²⁰ No more shall there be in it
an infant that lives but a few days,
or an old man who does not fill out his days,

for the child shall die a hundred years old,
 and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed.^y
²¹ They shall build houses and inhabit them;
 they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.^z
²² They shall not build and another inhabit;
 they shall not plant and another eat;
 for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,
 and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.^{aa}
²³ They shall not labor in vain,
 or bear children for calamity;
 for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the Lord,
 and their children with them.^{bb}
²⁴ Before they call I will answer,
 while they are yet speaking I will hear.^{cc}
²⁵ The wolf and the lamb shall feed together,
 the lion shall eat straw like the ox;
 and dust shall be the serpent's food.
 They shall not hurt or destroy
 in all my holy mountain,
 says the Lord."^{dd}

Revised Standard Version (RSV)

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STUDY QUESTIONS:

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^a **Genesis 1 Revisited.**

^b **The Righteousness of God's Judgment.** The Lord answers the prayers of the watchmen in Chapters 63-64 by explaining why He has not intervened, and why His judgments were just.

^c (1) Is 2:2-3, 11:10, 18:7, 19:19, 19:25, 40:9, 41:27, 43:1, 45:22, 55:5, 58:9, 63:19; Ex 3:14; Ps 22:27; Hos 1:10; Zec 2:11, 8:22-23, 14:16; Jn 1:29; Rm 9:24-30, 10:20-21; Eph 2:12-13; Jas 2:7; 1Pt 2:10
 The Apostle Paul interprets this verse as referring to the gentiles, those who did not ask for God (Rm 10:20), while in the following verse, the "rebellious people" refers to the Jews (Rm 10:21). Nevertheless, in the first chapter of Romans (Rm 1:18-32) it is clear that both Jew and Gentile are in rebellion against God (Rm 2:5-16).

^d (2) Is 1:2, 1:23, 30:1, 30:9, 55:7, 59:7-8, 63:10, 66:18; Gn 6:5; Nu 15:39; Dt 9:7, 21:18, 29:19, 31:27; Ps 36:4, 81:11-12; Pr 1:24, 16:29; Jr 3:17, 4:14, 5:23, 7:24; Ezk 2:3-7; Mt 12:33-34, 15:19, 23:37; Lk 13:34, 19:41-42; Ac 7:51-52; Rm 2:5, 10:20-21; 1Th 2:15-16; Jas 1:14-15
 Among Orthodox Christians the phrase "I stretched (or spread) out my hands" points to the "salvific Passion on the Cross on which [the Messiah] extended His hands.

^e (3) Is 1:29-30, 3:8, 57:3-6, 66:3, 66:17; Ex 20:24-25, 30:1-10; Lv 17:5; Dt 32:16-21; 2Ki 17:14-17, 22:17; Jb 1:11, 2:5; Ps 78:40, 78:58; Jr 3:6, 32:30-35; Ezk 8:17-18, 20:28; Mt 23:32-36
 The rebellious people are guilty of idolatry (vs. 3, 7; Ex 20:1-6), consulting with the dead (v. 4; Lv 19:31) and eating violating their dietary laws by eating pork (v. 4; Lv 11:7). Many of these idolatrous practices carried out in the dark including various

forms of sexual immorality (Is 57:3-13) and the invoking of nature spirits (___). Not only did they do these perverse and unlawful things, they still believed themselves to be more righteous than others (v. 5) making them also hypocrites (Mt 23:13-36).

^f (4) Is 29:4, 57:6-9, 66:3, 66:17; Ex 23:19, 34:26; Lv 11:7; Nu 19:11,16-20; Dt 14:3, 14:8, 14:21, 18:11; Ezk 4:14; Mt 8:28; Mk 5:2-5; Lk 8:27

There is a hint that these idolatrous practices included the sacrifice of swine (Is 66:3).

^g (5) Is 1:31, 9:18; Dt 29:20, 32:20-22; Pr 6:16-17, 10:26, 16:5; Mt 9:11; Lk 5:30, 7:39, 15:2, 15:28-30, 18:9-12; Ac 22:21-22; Rm 2:17-29; Jas 4:6; 1Pt 5:5; Jude 1:19

The command “keep to yourself” may have been an insolent response to the Lord’s invitation for the people to approach (Is 57:3, 65:1) perhaps with reference to their ritual separation (Is 66:17).

^h (6) Is 42:14, 64:12; Ex 17:14; Dt 32:34; Ps 7:12, 50:3, 50:21, 56:8, 79:12; Jr 2:22, 16:18, 17:1, 32:18; Ezk 11:21, 22:31; Jl 3:4; Mal 3:16; Rv 20:12

The folds of one’s cloak often served as a food bag or storage pocket (Ruth 3:15; 2Ki 4:39; Lk 6:38). This expression recurs at the end of the next verse.

ⁱ **Lord - Yahweh, or Jehovah** (יהוה, YHWH), written without vowel markings, unpronounced by Jews and referred to as the Tetragrammaton. See Note in the Introduction to this Study. **YHWH** appears here and in verses 8, 11, 23 and 25.

^j (7) Is 13:11, 22:14, 26:21, 30:13-14, 57:7, 65:6; Ex 20:5; Lv 26:39; Nu 32:14; 1Ki 22:43; 2Ki 12:3, 14:4, 15:35, 16:4; Ps 106:6-7; Jr 5:9, 5:29, 7:19-20, 13:25; Ezk 18:6, 20:27-28; Dn 9:8; Hos 2:13, 9:10; Zec 8:14; Mal 3:7; Mt 23:31-36; 1Th 2:16

^k (8) Is 1:9, 2:21, 4:3, 6:13, 10:21-22, 17:6, 33:9, 48:9; Jr 30:11; Jl 2:14; Am 9:8-9; Mt 24:22; Mk 13:20; Rm 9:27-29, 11:5-6, 11:24-26

While the people have violated the Law deliberately and continually, and therefore deserve God’s anger and judgment (v. 5), yet because some are left righteous, God will not destroy them all (___). God will always preserve a remnant of His people (Mt 13:36-43). The LXX refers to “the sake of the one serving me” which the Orthodox take to be a reference to the Messiah rather than to the righteous remnant of Israel.

^l (9) Is 10:20-22, 11:11-16, 27:6, 32:18, 37:31, 41:8, 45:19, 45:25, 49:8, 57:13, 60:21, 65:15, 65:22; Jr 31:36-40, 33:17-26; Ezk 36:8-15, 36:24, 37:21-28, 39:25-29; Am 9:11-15; Ob 1:17-21; Zep 3:20; Zec 10:6-12; Mt 24:22; Rm 11:5-7, 11:28

^m (10) Is 33:9, 35:2, 51:1, 55:6; Jsh 7:24-26; Ezk 34:13-14; Hos 2:15

Sharon is a plain in western Israel (). The Valley of Achor (____, ____, trouble; Hos 2:15) was the place of Achan’s execution (Jsh 7:24-26) located east of Jerusalem, near Jericho. Achan was executed for stealing the devoted goods of battle (Jsh 7:10-23).

ⁿ (11) Is 1:4, 1:28, 2:2-3, 11:9, 56:7, 57:5-10, 57:13, 65:25, 66:20; Dt 29:24-25, 32:17; Jsh 24:20; 1Ch 28:9; Ps 132:13; Jr 2:28, 17:13; Ezk 23:41-42; Jl 3:17; 1Co 10:20-21; Heb 12:22; Rv 21:2-3

The Hebrew references Gad, the Aramaean god of luck or fortune. The word translated destiny is Meni, possibly another god of fate or destiny. The Septuagint use of “demon” here does not apply to a wicked spirit but is the designation for a “deity.”

^o (12) Is 1:16, 3:25, 10:4, 27:1, 34:5-6, 41:28, 50:2, 63:56, 65:3, 66:3-4, 66:16; Lv 26:25; Dt 32:25; 2Ch 36:15-16; Pr 1:24-33; Jr 7:13, 16:17, 18:21, 34:17; Ezk 14:17-21; Zep 1:4-6; Zec 7:7-13; Mt 21:34-43, 22:3, 22:7; Jn 1:11

^p **Lord God - Adonai** (אֲדֹנָי) **Yahweh, or Jehovah**, (יהוה, YHWH) combines the plural form of lord or master with the Tetragrammaton. See note on the Names of God in the introduction to this Study. Appears here and in verse 15.

^q (13) Is 1:19, 5:13, 8:21, 41:17-18, 42:17, 44:9-11, 49:10, 55:1, 61:7, 66:5, 66:14; Ps 22:26, 34:10, 37:19-20; Dn 12:2; Mal 3:18; Lk 6:20-26, 14:23-24, 16:24-25

There will be an eschatological reversal so that God’s servants will prosper and His enemies will suffer. The theme becomes one of the Messiah’s important teachings (Mt 5:3-12, 25:31-46; Lk 6:20-26).

^r (14) Is 13:6, 24:14, 51:11, 52:8-9; Jb 29:13; Ps 5:11, 66:4; Jr 31:7; Mt 8:12, 13:42, 22:13; Lk 13:28; Jas 5:1, 5:13

^s (15) Is 1:26, 11:6-9, 56:5, 62:2, 66:15; Gn 32:28; Dt 28:37; Pr 10:7; Jr 24:9, 25:18, 29:22; Zec 8:13; Mt 21:41, 22:7; Ac 11:26; Rm 9:26; 1Th 2:16; 1Pt 2:9-10; 2Pt 3:13; Rv 21:1

The name of the unrighteous will serve as curses, like the names Ahab and Zedekiah, putative prophets delivering false messages who were delivered to the King of the Babylonians to be executed (Jr 29:21-23). The giving of new name often accompanies and signifies a change of status (Is 43:1, 43:7, 44:1-5, 62:2).

^l (16) Is 11:16, 12:1, 19:18, 35:10, 43:18-19, 45:23-25, 48:1, 54:4, 62:2, 65:19; Gn 12:1-3; Ex 34:6; Dt 6:13, 10:20, 32:4; Ps 31:5, 63:11, 72:17, 86:15; Jr 4:2, 10:10, 12:16, 31:12; Ezk 36:25-27; Dn 12:1, 12:11; Zep 1:5, 3:14-20; Jn 1:14-17, 14:6; Rm 14:11; 2Co 1:20; Php 2:11; Heb 6:17-18; Rv 2:17, 3:7, 3:12-14, 20:4
God is a faithful God, a sure God or a God of Truth, the equivalent Hebrew being Amen ().

^u **The Glorious New Creation.**

^v (17) Is 43:18, 51:6, 51:16, 66:22-23; Jr 3:16; 2Pt 3:13; Rv 21:1-5

The prophecy of verses 17-25 is partially fulfilled in this age as believers are themselves a “new creation” (2Co 5:17), but will be fulfilled completely in the age to come when the Messiah returns, this world passes away and a new heaven and new earth come into being (Rv 21:1-5). Some Christians believe a partial fulfillment will come in the Millennial Kingdom characterized by Jerusalem being filled by joy rather than lamentation (v. 18; Zec 12:2-3), long-life but not yet the complete abolition of death (v. 20), the punishment of sin (v. 20), peace and security (vs. 21-23), and reconciliation, including reconciliation of the natural world (v. 25; Is 11:7-9).

^w (18) Is 1:26, 12:1-6, 25:9, 35:10, 41:16, 42:10-12, 44:23, 49:13, 51:3, 51:11, 52:7-10, 60:14, 61:10, 66:10-14; Ps 67:3-5, 96:10-13, 98:1-9; Jr 31:7; Zep 3:14; Zec 9:9; 1Th 5:16; Rv 11:15-18, 19:1-6

^x (19) Is 25:6-10, 30:19, 35:10, 51:3, 51:11, 60:20, 62:4-9, 66:10; Song 3:11; Jb 14:7-9; Ps 92:12-15; Jr 17:8, 31:12, 32:41; Zep 3:17; Lk 15:3-5; Rv 7:17, 21:4

^y (20)

Is 3:11, 22:14; Dt 4:40; Jb 5:26, 14:7-9; Ps 34:12, 92:12-15; Pr 3:2; Ec 8:12-13; Jr 17:8; Zec 8:4; Rm 2:5-9

^z (21) Is 30:23, 32:18, 37:30, 62:8-9; Lv 26:16; Dt 28:30-33; Jsh 24:13; Jdg 6:1-6; Jr 29:5, 29:28, 31:4-5; Am 9:14; Ezk 28:26; Zph 1:13

^{aa} (22) Is 62:8, 65:9, 65:15; Gn 5:5, 5:27; Lv 26:16; Dt 28:30; Ps 21:4, 91:6, 92:12-14; Ezk 28:26; Rv 20:3-5

^{bb} (23) Is 49:4, 55:2, 61:9; Gn 12:2,17:7; Lv 26:3-10, 26:20-22, 26:29; Dt 28:3-12, 28:38-42; Ps 115:12-15; Jr 32:38-39; Hos 9:11-14; Hag 1:6, 2:19; Zec 10:8-9; Mal 3:10; Ac 2:39, 3:25-26; Rm 4:16, 9:7-8; 1Co 15:58; Gal 3:29

^{cc} (24) Is 20:19, 55:6, 58:9; Ps 32:5, 50:15, 91:15; Dn 9:20-23, 10:12; Mt 6:8; Mk 11:24; Lk 15:18-20; Ac 4:31, 10:30-32, 12:5-16; 1Jn 5:14-15

^{dd} (25) Is 2:4, 9:1-7, 11:6-9, 27:13, 35:9, 56:7, 65:11, 65:25; Gn 1:29-30, 3:14-15; Ezk 43:11; Mi 4:3, 7:17; Zec 8:3, 14:20-21; Ac 9:1, 9:19-21; Rm 16:20; 1Co 6:9-11; Ti 3:3-7; Rv 12:7-9, 14:1, 20:2-3

This prophecy of the Eschaton combines a return to the Garden, and of an entirely new Creation.