

ISAIAH: GOD'S DIRECTIVES TO THOSE TROUBLED AT GOVERNMENTAL APOSTASY
Part LI: God's Salvation Of The Meek From Religious Bullies
(Isaiah 66:1-24)

I. Introduction

- A. God calls the believer to respect Him and to heed His Word.
- B. Yet, those who do not respect God often take selfish, abusive advantage of meek, godly believers due to their lack of a sense of being accountable to God and practice their own form of religion, Matt. 23:2-5, 13.
- C. One may then wonder why he should humbly heed the Lord if he is going to be thus abused by hypocrites.
- D. Isaiah 66:1-24 addresses this concern as follows:

II. God's Salvation Of The Meek From Religious Bullies, Isaiah 66:1-24.

- A. God introduces Isaiah 66 by declaring He is sovereign God and will judge those who oppose Him, 66:1-2:
 - 1. The Lord introduces Himself as the Creator in all His power and majesty over man in Isaiah 66:1a.
 - 2. In this context, God addresses two groups of people -- (a) those who do not respect and obey Him and thus abuse the godly, and (b) those who meekly heed Him and obey His Word, Isaiah 66:1b-2:
 - a. God ridicules those who try to impress God with false, externalized ritual religious temple sacrifices, Isaiah 66:1b-2a.
 - b. God then offers salvation and blessing to those who meekly respect and heed His Word, Isa. 66:2b.
- B. This theme is expanded in Isaiah 66:3-24, and there God responds to these contrasting groups as follows:
 - 1. God announces specific judgments upon religious hypocrites in Isaiah 66:3-4:
 - a. The Lord reveals hypocrites who bully the meek offer sacrifices that are abominable to him due to their sin: (1) when they sacrifice an ox, it is like murdering a man; (2) when they sacrifice a lamb, it is like killing an unclean dog; (3) when they offer a grain offering, it is like unclean swine's blood; (4) when they make a memorial offering of frankincense, it is like blessing an idol, Isaiah 66:3 ESV.
 - b. Because of their sin, God will judge these wicked folk with what they fear and detest most, 66:4a.
 - c. What upsets God about these folk is their exchange of submission to Scripture by performing their own ideas in disrespect to the Lord and His sovereignty, Isaiah 66:4b with Isaiah 66:1a.
 - 2. Then, God pronounces blessing on the meek who respect Him and heed and His Word:
 - a. God will "even the score" between the false religious hypocrites who abuse the meek who heed His Word, and that by blessing the meek with what the hypocritically religious bullies want, Isaiah 66:5.
 - b. Where these abusers exalt themselves in God's temple, they will be destroyed in judgment, 66:6.
 - c. Following the fall of these abusers, God promises blessing for the meek, Isaiah 66:7-9, 10-14b.
 - 3. Returning to speak about the abusive, God describes His judgments for them, Isaiah 66:14c-18a:
 - a. God's judgment on these abusers is pictured as coming like a ruinous fire and whirlwind, 66:14c-15.
 - b. His wrath is seen coming like objects that kill them like the sword in battle kills, Isaiah 66:16-18a.
 - 4. Opposite this fate, God predicts His future blessings for the meek who heed His Word, 66:18b-24:
 - a. The godly meek will gather quickly from all the world's nations to witness God's glory, Isa. 66:18b.
 - b. Heralds who describe God's glory will be sent into the world to make these announcements, 66:19.
 - c. In grace, **Gentiles** that the abusive would despise will bring great offerings to God (66:20), and God will appoint many of **them** as **priests** and **Levites**, 66:21. So sure is this promise that, as God backed up His covenant to Israel with the existence of the sun and moon, He will back up this pledge with the lasting existence of the new heavens and new earth, Isa. 66:22; Jeremiah 33:25-26.
 - d. The nations of the meek will worship the Lord continually, Isaiah 66:23.
 - e. These righteous who respect God will go out and look upon the carcasses of the deceased, judged godless abusers who had afflicted them, Isaiah 66:24.

Lesson: *God who wants us to respect Him and meekly obey His Word versus doing our own works and taking abusive advantage of the meek is Almighty God who WILL ETERNALLY punish sin and reward obedience. It is thus WORTH meekly heeding God NOW though we suffer temporal persecution for it.*

Application: *May we sense our accountability to God and MEEKLY respect Him and heed His Word for ETERNAL reward versus disrespecting Him and disobeying His Word for TEMPORAL advantage!*