

QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP STUDY IN THE BOOK OF ISAIAH – CONCLUSION

The last few chapters describe how the Bridegroom and His bride come together.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE BRIDEGROOM

Having been introduced to the bride, Israel and later the Christian church, in chapter 60, and the Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ, in the next chapter, we are waiting now for the Bridegroom's meeting with the bride. Chapter 62 anticipates Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem to crown her as His. (I Thess.2:19) Matthew 21:5 quotes 62:11 to explain the significance of the Lord entering the city on a donkey. Zech.9:9 fills in some more detail of how it would happen. Isaiah anticipates the change which will take place to create the new Jerusalem of Rev.21, and the church on earth now, as we are meant to be. (62:1-9) Never again do we need to be spiritually alone and hungry. First the Bridegroom would need to redeem His bride so that she could be 'a holy nation'. (I Pet.2:9) Then the whole world will be attracted by what they see in us. (62:10-12)

THE BRIDE HAS SECOND THOUGHTS

When the King arrived to claim His city and found it unfaithful and rebellious, His first response would be to act in judgement. Blood would have to flow. (63:1-6) Eventually if we despise His solution, judgement will be carried out on those who persist in their rebellion. (Rev.14:19,20; 19:11-16) This King was different because at first it would be His own blood which would be poured out as He accepted that judgement on Himself on the cross. (63:7-9) Again and again throughout Israel's history they would rebel and grieve the Holy Spirit as we do by our rebellion. (63:10; Eph.4:30; Acts 7:51) Because He convicts us we remember again how good He has been to us. (63:11-14) Yet still we struggle between trusting Him and going our own way. But He does not give up on His bride. (63:15-19)

SHE THINKS SHE KNOWS BEST

Chapter 64 continues to explore how we struggle with sin. The heart of the problem is our reliance on our own wisdom instead of seeking the wisdom of God. (I Cor.2:9) We think man will only appreciate God if He intervenes in this world by dramatic acts as He did at Mt. Sinai. (Exod.19:16-35) We forget how simple it is just to listen to Him with an open heart. We need to recognize that even our best efforts are like filthy clothes, or dead Autumn leaves. We wonder why we do not seem to be able to see and hear God. (64:1-7) Then gently He reminds us of the image that has several times already in this book been used to describe His work in our lives as being like the potter working on a lump of clay. (29:16; 45:9,10) Paul takes up this picture in the New Testament to explain predestination and free will, an issue which has so often divided the Christian church. (Rom.9:19-23) Salvation is entirely God's work as the moulding of a lump of clay is done only by the potter. But the clay must soften in the hands of the potter. The end result is based on mercy not merit. Adversity will often cause us to stop and reflect on how we have left the Potter out. (64:8-12)

THE BRIDEGROOM DOES NOT GIVE UP

The Lord continues to reach out to His church as He did in the Garden of Eden when He went looking for Adam who was hiding from Him. More than anything what grieves Him is our unfaithfulness with other gods.(65:1-7) Still He patiently perseveres waiting for the day when we will seek Him.(Matt.7:7) But we cannot keep Him waiting for ever.(65:8-16) When the Bridegroom and the bride finally come together they will have a new place to live, the new heaven and new earth.(II Pet.3:7-13; Rev.21:1) Suffering and sorrow will be gone for ever.(Rev.7:17) They will live in a world of peace and love.(65:17-25)

THE MARRIAGE IS FRUITFUL

The Bridegroom looks for only one thing in His bride, a humility which makes her teachable.(Lk.18:34) Where will they live? No longer in a temple building.(Jn.4:20,21; Acts 7:48-50) Idolatry is based on pride and must be judged. Idolaters will persecute us.(Matt.5:10-12; Lk.13:17; Jn.9:34; 15:18-20) But God will keep us.(66:1-6) The Bridegroom and the bride will produce children who must be nursed and fed.(Gal.4:19; Rev.12:1-6; I Pet.2:2) God will comfort us so that we can comfort the spiritual children who are born through our witness.(II Cor.1:3-7) But He will fiercely protect those who threaten them.(66:7-17) Those same children will be God's means of taking the message of the Saviour to the remotest parts of the earth,(Matt.28:19,20; Mk.16:15; Lk.24:47; Acts 1:8) so that in the final celebration in the new heaven and the new earth,(II Pet.3:13; Rev.21:1) there will be those from every tribe and nation.(Rev.5:9; 7:9) The whole earth must in the end acknowledge Christ.(Phil.2:10,11; Mk.9:48; Matt.3:12) But will we do so willingly or unwillingly?(66:18-24)