



Highlights From the Book of Isaiah

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God Will Accomplish All His Purposes (Isaiah 24-27)

- Today we move into a new major section of the book of Isaiah: chapters 24-27.
- These four chapters together are the *climax* of the whole second part of the book (chapters 13-27).
- Here individual nations (like we saw in the “**The Oracles Against the Nations**” in chapters 13-23) are no longer in view as Isaiah’s focus broadens to encompass the *whole earth* (cf. 24:1).
- A major theme in this section is the *triumph* of God, which is *good news* for God’s people because it means that the reign of sin and death is *over*.
- The kingdom of God has at last come in its fullness!
- This “apocalypse” or “unveiling” of the climax of God’s plan for the ages in many ways anticipates that *better-known* apocalypse, the book of Revelation, which serves as the grand finale of the Bible as a whole.

God Will Accomplish All His Purposes (Isaiah 24-27)

- One of the *major ideas* running throughout these four chapters of Isaiah is a *contrast* between *two* cities:¹
 - The “*Ruined*” City – which is *destroyed* (24:10,12; 25:2-3,12; 27:10)
 - The “*Strong*” City (26: 1, also referred to as “*this mountain*”, i.e. Mount Zion: 25:6,7,10; 27:13) – which is *redeemed* and made *secure*
- A brief description of each of these four chapters that shows the general flow of thought:²
 - **Chapter 24** – God’s Judgment of the World
 - **Chapter 25** – Song of Praise for God’s Judgment
 - **Chapter 26** – Hymn Glorifying the Work God Has Done For His People
 - **Chapter 27** – The Overthrow of the Kingdoms of This World Contrasted With the Prosperity of Mount Zion

¹ Oswalt, John. *Isaiah (The NIV Application Commentary)* (pp. 280-281). Zondervan

² Leupold, H. C. – *Exposition of Isaiah; Volume I: Chapters 1-39* (pp. 43-44)

Song of Praise for God's Judgment (Isaiah 25:1-12)

- **Verses 1-5** – Praise for the Overthrow of the Ungodly
- **Verses 6-8** – The Good Things God Has Prepared for His People
- **Verses 9-12** – The Overthrow of Moab – a Typical Enemy of God's People

Praise for the Overthrow of the Ungodly (Isaiah 25:1-5)

25:1 O LORD, you are my God! I will exalt you in praise, I will extol your fame. For you have done extraordinary things, and executed plans made long ago exactly as you decreed. ² Indeed, you have made the city into a heap of rubble, the fortified town into a heap of ruins; the fortress of foreigners is no longer a city, it will never be rebuilt. ³ So a strong nation will extol you; the towns of powerful nations will fear you. ⁴ For you are a protector for the poor, a protector for the needy in their distress, a shelter from the rainstorm, a shade from the heat. Though the breath of tyrants is like a winter rainstorm, ⁵ like heat in a dry land, you humble the boasting foreigners. Just as the shadow of a cloud causes the heat to subside, so he causes the song of tyrants to cease.

^{25:1} *O LORD, you are my God! I will exalt you in praise, I will extol your fame. For **you have done extraordinary things, and executed plans made long ago exactly as you decreed.***

- The speaker in this song of praise is the nation of Israel.
- There is an *exuberance* in this song of praise as the one singing it piles thought upon thought.
- “*you have done **extraordinary things***” – God’s comprehensive judgment is a marvelous achievement, causing the thoughtful to marvel *endlessly* at the *magnitude* of the achievements involved.
- “*you... executed plans made **long ago***” – as God’s judgment is carried out, a carefully contemplated objective will have been reached.
- “***exactly as you decreed***” – These plans were communicated in advance to his people, and now it can be seen that God has kept *all* of his promises.

25:2 *Indeed, you have made the **city** into a heap of rubble, the **fortified town** into a heap of ruins; the fortress of foreigners is no longer a city, it will never be rebuilt.*

- This verse explains what God's plans were that have now been executed.
- They were to humble all the works of human pride and oppression, here typified as the walled "*city*" and the "*fortified town*".
- No specific city is intended.
- This "*city*" represents all of those arrogant bastions of power that have crushed the righteous throughout the course of human history.
- But the prophet says that their abuse of power will not benefit them in the end.
- **God** will triumph, and he has planned so from the beginning.

25:3 *So a **strong nation** will **extol** you; the towns of powerful nations will **fear** you.*

- When the centers of world power fall into ruins, the nations of the world cannot help but understand what the Lord is doing.
- This verse tells us the **positive** results that grow out of the understanding of judgment that God has brought about.
- The “**strong nation**” is the Gentile nation who sees that the God, who directs the destinies of all nations, has acted and they “**extol**” (i.e. honor) him for it.
- The “**powerful nations**” still standing see the tragic overthrow of centers of wickedness, and they “**fear**” the Lord as a result.
- So, just as **Israel** here praises God for his judgments, so too the **nations** will praise him – insofar as the Lord has granted them the ability to see these things.

25:4 *For you are a protector for the **poor**, a protector for the needy in their distress, a shelter from the **rainstorm**, a shade from the **heat**. Though the **breath of tyrants** is like a [like **a rainstorm battering against a wall.**]*

- When mighty cities fall, the oppression that these cities engaged in comes to an end.
- The “*poor*” that were oppressed get relief.
- Concern for those who suffer social wrongs are often expressed by the Scriptures – it is the teaching of the Old and New Testament that taught men such concern.
- The oppression that had been suffered is described by two terms: “*rainstorm*” and “*heat*”. We still use these same figures in our day.
- We are then told that (in the end) the angry threatening of the ruthless (“*breath of tyrants*”) do as little damage as “*a rainstorm battering against a wall*” – in our day we might use the expression “like water off a duck’s back”

25:5 ...like *heat in a dry land*, you humble *the boasting foreigners*.
Just as the shadow of a cloud causes the *heat* to subside, so he causes
the song of tyrants to cease.

- Next the “*heat*” figure mentioned in the previous verse is explored.
- What before was described as the “angry threatening of the ruthless” is now described as “*heat in a dry land*” or, as “*the boasting foreigners*”.
- Such threatening, like extreme heat, can become very uncomfortable and it usually involves some form of boisterous and noisy demonstration (i.e. “*boasting*”) on the part of those doing the threatening.
- But as relief from the heat can be brought about by “*the shadow of a cloud*”, so the Lord can give relief to those who place their hope in him.
- Likewise, for the “*tyrants*” who once shouted their [triumph] “*song*” with fierce and ungodly glee – when God is done with them, they and their shouting will be quite subdued.

The Good Things God Has Prepared for His People (Isaiah 25:6-9)

⁶ *The LORD of Heaven's Armies will hold a banquet for all the nations on this mountain. At this banquet there will be plenty of meat and aged wine— tender meat and choicest wine. ⁷ On this mountain he will swallow up the shroud that is over all the peoples, the woven covering that is over all the nations; ⁸ he will swallow up death permanently. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from every face, and remove his people's disgrace from all the earth. Indeed, the LORD has announced it! ⁹ At that time they will say, "Look, here is our God! We waited for him, and he delivered us. Here is the LORD! We waited for him. Let's rejoice and celebrate his deliverance!"*

^{25:6} *The LORD of Heaven's Armies will hold a **banquet** for **all the nations on this mountain**. At this banquet there will be **plenty of meat and aged wine— tender meat and choicest wine**.*

- The blessings of that new day are described in terms of a feast or “*banquet*”.
- The guests are “*all the nations*”.
- Apparently they have come to **worship** the LORD, for the feast takes place on “*this mountain*”, which, of course, is Mount Zion – the abode of God.
- All who come to worship are given **rich food** (“*plenty of [tender] meat*” and the “*choicest [aged] wine*”) by the LORD, who is their host.
- In that day, the wall of separation between Israel and the Gentiles is no more.

25:7 *On this mountain* he will swallow up the **shroud** that is over all the peoples, the **woven covering** that is over all the nations;

- The LORD will act to ensure that nothing detracts from the enjoyment of the banquet “*on this mountain*” (Mount Zion).
- The “*shroud*” which the LORD removes is a mourning garment with which those who sorrowed were accustomed to cover their faces in a gesture of grief and despair (cf. 2 Sam 15:30; 19:4; Jer 14:3).
- The “*woven covering*” is a piece of heavy woven cloth which here functions as a shroud over “*all the nations*”, a symbol of the frigid grasp death has on all.
- Our earthly banquets are dampened by awareness of our mortality, for there can be no truly unrestrained happiness while the final enemy (death) still stalks the earth.
- But the LORD will not permit the banquet of the New Jerusalem to be marred by the dark shadow of death.

25:8 *he will swallow up death permanently.* The Sovereign LORD will *wipe away the tears from every face*, and remove his people's disgrace from all the earth. Indeed, the LORD has announced it!

- Isaiah restates the matter in even clearer and bolder terms: “*he will swallow up death permanently*”.
- In the mythology of the surrounding nations, Death was a god with an insatiable appetite.
- In the reversal caused by the LORD’s intervention, the “swallower” will be “*swallow[ed] up*”.
- The LORD will “*wipe away the tears from every face*”. This is a picture of parental compassion and care.
- The LORD knows the *heartache* that sin has brought into his creation and in that final day he will not allow it to continue any longer.

^{25:8} *he will swallow up death permanently. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from every face, and remove **his people's disgrace** from all the earth. Indeed, the LORD has announced it!*

- “*his people's disgrace*” refers to the taunts and insults God's people have endured from others because of their relationship with the LORD.
- In that day, as all the nations turn toward Zion, all the shame, failure, and loss experienced by God's people over the years will be made up for.
- In fact, in that day, it will be known by *all* that the salvation of the world comes through God's people.

25:9 *At that time* they will say, “**Look, here is our God!** We waited for him, and he delivered us. Here is the LORD! We **waited for him**. Let’s rejoice and celebrate his deliverance!”

- Having described the glorious realities to be found and enjoyed in the coming kingdom, Isaiah introduces a song of thanksgiving from the lips of those who experienced deliverance “*at that time*”.
- They will triumphantly proclaim: “*Look, here is our God!*”
- They will testify that they did not put their faith in God in vain.
- Though the LORD’s response had not been *immediate*, they were *confident* in his timing and ability, and so they “*waited for him*” to arise and scatter all the hostile forces that marred his creation.
- Now that their faith had been *fully vindicated*, they are heard engaging in mutual exhortation to praise God – a response that should stimulate the faith of those to whom Isaiah spoke while they too still wait.

The Overthrow of Moab – An Enemy of God’s People (Isaiah 25:10-12)

¹⁰ *For the LORD’s power will make this mountain secure. Moab will be trampled down where it stands, as a heap of straw is trampled down in a manure pile.* ¹¹ *Moab will spread out its hands in the middle of it, just as a swimmer spreads his hands to swim; the Lord will bring down Moab’s pride as it spreads its hands.* ¹² *The fortified city (along with the very tops of your walls) he will knock down, he will bring it down, he will throw it down to the dusty ground.*

25:10 **For** the LORD's power will make this mountain **secure**. Moab will be trampled down where it stands, as a heap of straw is trampled down in a manure pile.

- “**For**” introduces the next three verses as a further explanation of the changes that will occur on the final day of divine intervention.
- There are two sides to the situation.
- On one hand, the LORD will make Mount Zion “**secure**” for **his people**.
- However there is another **sobering** side to the final establishment of God's kingdom.
- The fact that all nations are represented among the guests at the heavenly banquet does **not** mean that **everyone** has responded to the invitation that was extended.
- Those who have refused to come must now face the reality of **divine judgement**.

25:10 *For the LORD's power will make this mountain secure. **Moab** will be trampled down where it stands, as a heap of straw is trampled down in a manure pile.*

- At first it may seem puzzling as to why the LORD singles out “*Moab*” as an example of the lost.
- Especially since, in the previous section (“*The Oracles Against the Nations*”), Isaiah considered that nation with a measure of *sympathy*:
 - *My heart cries out because of Moab's plight* (Isaiah 15:5)
 - *Please let the Moabite fugitives live among you. Hide them from the destroyer!*” (Isaiah 16:4)
 - *So my heart constantly sighs for Moab, like the strumming of a harp* (Isaiah 16:11)

25:10 *For the LORD's power will make this mountain secure. **Moab** will be trampled down **where it stands**, as a heap of **straw** is trampled down in a **manure pile**.*

- Perhaps the clue is that, instead of being at Zion, Moab remained “*where it stands*”, and so represents, not the *extreme* of those who exhibit hatred against the LORD and his people, but those who, though they had the truth presented to them, have failed to respond as they should and come to Zion.
- In the final judgment an irrevocable separation will be made for Moab as much as for Babylon.
- In the very place where Moab chose to remain, it will be “*trampled*” under the foot of God, and left to rot like trodden “*straw*” in a “*manure pile*”.

25:11 *Moab will spread out its hands in the middle of it, just as a swimmer spreads his hands to swim; **the Lord will bring down Moab's pride** as it spreads its hands.*

- Moab will try to stay alive in the middle of the dung pit by spreading out his arms as though to swim, but all his efforts will be ineffective.
- Those who do not accept the royal invitation to the LORD's banquet will experience his judgement against them.
- *“the Lord will bring down Moab's pride”*
- The haughty presumption of those who set themselves against the LORD and figured they could do things their own way will be exposed for what it really is.
- All of the efforts that the Moabites make to sustain themselves through their own efforts will count for nothing.

25:12 *The fortified city (along with the very tops of your walls) he will knock down, he will bring it down, he will throw it down to the dusty ground.*

- Isaiah turns to address Moab and declares that, no matter how high and well fortified their cities were, they would prove no match for the LORD.
- Their destruction is certain.
- Nothing will be left standing before the might of the LORD.

New Testament
Usage of
Isaiah 25:8

Isaiah 25:8 **He will swallow up death forever**; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. (ESV)

1Cor 15:54 *When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "**Death is swallowed up in victory.**"* (ESV)

- The Apostle Paul cites **Isaiah 25:8** in **1 Cor 15:54** as a part of his argument for the resurrection.
- As we have already seen, Isaiah 25:8 is in a section of the book of Isaiah that prophesies God's salvation of "**all nations**" (25:6-7) and the ultimate destruction of the power of death.

Isaiah 25:8 **He will swallow up death forever;** and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. (ESV)

1Cor 15:54 *When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "**Death is swallowed up in victory.**"* (ESV)

- In Paul's mind, the final destruction of death requires that there be a resurrection of the dead.
- In citing Isaiah's eschatological vision, Paul ties God's triumph over death to the resurrection of the body.
- Paul explains that resurrection is the necessary outcome of what God has done in Christ and what he intends to do for his people.

Isaiah 25:8 **He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. (ESV)**

1Cor 15:54 *When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "**Death is swallowed up in victory.**" (ESV)*

- Paul's portrays death, **not** as the inevitable and natural fate of all human beings, but as nothing less than a **tragedy**.
- Death is **utterly alien** to what we as human beings made in the image of God were created to be.
- In the words of Isaiah 25:7, death is "**shroud that is over all the peoples, the woven covering that is over all the nations.**"
- Death, Paul tells us, is a power that casts its ominous shadow over us all, and it must be not just **removed**, but utterly **defeated**.

Next Time

I plan to begin looking at **Isaiah 28:1-29** where Isaiah warns of God's judgement on Ephraim and Judah.

Class Discussion Time



Class Discussion Time

- When we pray “*Your kingdom come*” (Mat 6:10) we often forget that there are two sides to the final establishment of the kingdom.
- There is the fullness of joy in the presence of God for those who are his, but there is also the solemn reality of those who are told to depart from his presence eternally.
- That separation is all the more dire when we remember that there will be those “*not far from the kingdom of God*” (Mark 12:34).
- However “*not far*” is still not “*on this mountain*”.
- Today if you hear his voice do not harden your hearts! (Psalm 95:7-8)