

Session 8 The Forerunner Message in Isaiah 26-27

I. REVIEW

²¹It shall come to pass in that day that the Lord will punish on high the host of exalted ones, and on the earth the kings of the earth. ²²They will be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and will be shut up in the prison; after many days they will be punished. ²³Then the moon will be disgraced and the sun ashamed; for the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem and before His elders, gloriously. (Isa. 24:21-23)

- A. Isaiah 24-27 is a panorama of the global end-time landscape. Isaiah describes God's end-time judgment and triumph over the darkness of Israel and the nations. The prophet declares God's divine deliverance and restoration of Israel as he brings the nations to the Mountain of the Lord.
- B. Jesus and the prophets describe the Great Tribulation in perilous ways. The sin, its consequences, and judgments are severe in their intensity and comprehensive in their scope.
³⁵For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. (Lk. 21:35)
- C. The apocalypse unveils the secret of God's divine strategy and is designed to give hope in dark times. Isaiah 24-27 shows God's ultimate triumph over darkness and bringing the nations to the mountain of the Lord (Isa. 2:3; 25:6; 56:7). The cross is God's ultimate apocalyptic weapon that ensured victory over evil. Through the cross, He also reconciled heaven and earth (Col. 1:19-20).
- D. The gospel perspective (the mystery) is critical to understanding the OT prophets. The end-time declarations were concerning things post the glorious event of the crucifixion of Christ. The prophets had no way of knowing or anticipating that YHWH would become a Man and die for Israel and the Gentiles. The work of the cross and the resurrection of Jesus brought end-times realities into the fullness of light. This was the orientation of Paul, Peter, and the other apostles.
- E. The judgments of God are designed to create an environment of faith for justification. He confronts the core issue in Israel and the nations: self-reliance—the flesh (Isa. 2:10-12, 17). God's judgments are in the hopes of turning the nations to the saving knowledge of Christ through the cross (Isa. 26:9; Matt. 16:24; Acts 17:26-27; Rev. 9:21; 16:11).
- F. We see in Isaiah how God can effortlessly confront Israel's misplaced trust in the nations and the self-reliance of the nations. However, we also see God's deliverance establish Israel and bring the nations, her former enemies, to the Mountain of the Lord as He promised Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3).
- G. The severe end-time shaking described in Isaiah 24 is followed by three chapters where singing is prevalent. This is significant because it sends the message that the subject of God's judgment is to produce hope.

¹⁷Though the fig tree may not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines; though the labor of the olive may fail, and the fields yield no food; though the flock may be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls. ¹⁸Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. (Hab. 3:17-18)

II. THE MESSAGE OF HOPE IN THE COMING JUDGMENT

O Lord, You are my God. I will exalt You. I will praise Your name, for You have done wonderful things; Your counsels of old are faithfulness and truth. For You have made a city a ruin, a fortified city a ruin... (Isa. 25:1-2)

- A. There are several places in the prophets where the message of judgment or the manifestation of His judgment results in joy filling the heart of the believer who gives themselves to agree with Him.

¹After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God! ²For true and righteous are His judgments ..." (Rev. 19:1-2)

- B. The message of Isaiah 24-27 in the future as well as the present causes us to assess where our confidence is and realigns our hope to God's glory filling the earth as promised to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3. Judgment confronts false confidences and gives opportunity for faith to be established. One of the questions Jesus will ask is regarding the issue of faith. Faith, or confidence in Him, is of the essence.

⁸"I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" (Lk. 18:8)

⁶And he [Abraham] believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness. (Gen. 15:6)

²⁹Jesus answered... "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent." (Jn. 6:29)

- C. A remarkable dynamic seen in Isaiah 24-27 is the diminishing joy of the unbelieving world, which despairs in unbelief (Isa. 16:10; 24:8-9, 11; 25:5), and the rise of faith-filled joy through song in the redeemed (Isa 24:16; 25:1; 26:1, 19; 27:2). This reality is seen in other parts of scripture as well.

⁶Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 15:6)

- D. The confidence of the redeemed is rooted in their faith in the beauty and majesty of God's promised plan which Isaiah calls in 25:2, "wonderful things, His counsels of old which are faithful and truth."

³...Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints! ⁴Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, for Your judgments have been manifested. (Rev. 15:3-4)

- E. Proper understanding of God's character, His covenantal plan, and His power help us see His beauty in the midst of His judgment. As we reflect on His judgment, the revelation of His beauty awaits us.

¹⁷Your eyes will see the King in His beauty... ¹⁸Your heart will meditate on terror... (Isa. 33:17-18)

¹⁰You blew with Your wind ... they [Pharoah's army] sank like lead in the mighty waters. ¹¹Who is like You, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? (Ex. 15:10-11)

III. ISAIAH 26: JUDAH'S SONG OF THE REDEEMED

- A. The end-time judgment will produce understanding in the hearts of the redeemed in Judah. It is difficult to ascertain the timing of 26:1, as Isaiah presents a panoramic picture of the eschatological landscape.
- B. There are two possible options based on the language. First, the song of Judah is sung after the Lord's return (26:1, 2, 4-6, 13-16). Second, the song of Judah is sung by the redeemed in Judah who are believing for the deliverance of Jerusalem during the siege of Jerusalem during the Armageddon Campaign which climaxes with the battle of Jerusalem (26:3, 7-12, 17-19, 20-21).

²***Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem.*** ³***And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it.*** (Zech. 12:2-3)

²***But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months.*** (Rev. 11:2)

- C. A military campaign is a large-scale military operation of a longer duration as part of a broader war. Armageddon is a campaign in the context of a 3.5-year global war that climaxes with the battle of Jerusalem at the Second Coming when Jesus comes to establish His Throne over all nations.

¹¹***Behold, a white horse. He [Jesus] who sat on him...judges and makes war...*** ¹⁵***Out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron...*** ¹⁶***He has...a name written: KING OF KINGS...*** (Rev. 19:11, 15-16)

- D. Armageddon is the place God chose to gather all the nations for the war so that He might judge them. Isaiah spoke of this theme often (Isa. 2:4; 9:1-6; 11:4-5; 13:4-13; 27:12; 29:5-8; 30:25-26; 31:4-9; 33:2-13; 34:1-7; 42:13-15; 59:16-21; 62:1-2, 13-15; 63:1-6).
- E. In Isaiah 1-12, Judah is in crisis, and they are refusing to put their trust in the Lord. Isaiah 13-23 shows us God's dealing with the nations. The Lord shows Isaiah that there will be a generation who will believe the "Isaiah 7:14 sign" and who will wait on the Lord in the land. This sign is further elaborated on in the New Testament:
1. Jesus is God with Israel (Matt 1:23).
 2. Jesus is the Child born (Rev. 12:4).
 3. Jesus is the Child who rules the nations (Rev 12:5).
 4. Jesus is the Child caught up to God and His throne (Rev. 12:5).
- F. Matthew 1:23 and Revelation 12 point to the reality that the Isaiah 7:14 promised sign and the Isaiah 9:1-7 Son are about the deliverance of Israel from the Isaiah 10:24 eschatological oppressor, the Assyrian.

⁴***For You have broken the yoke of his burden ... the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian.*** ⁵***For every warrior's sandal from the noisy battle, and garments rolled in blood, will be used for burning and fuel of fire.*** ⁶***For unto us a Child is born ... a Son is given ... the government will be upon His shoulder ... His name will be ... Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*** ⁷***Of the increase of His government ... there will be no end ... the throne of David ... His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.*** (Isa. 9:4-7)

IV. ISAIAH 26:1-19: JUDAH'S SONG OF HOPE

- A. **Song of Hope** (26:1-6): It is likely that this song is sung by the redeemed in Judah during Jacob's trouble. Their song shows the faith of Abraham (Heb. 11:9-10). They await the deliverance of Jerusalem and the coming of the strong city into which the righteous will enter. The song also addresses the fall of the high and lofty city, which refers to the antichrist governmental city.

¹In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: "We have a strong city [Rev 21-22:5]; God will appoint salvation for walls and bulwarks. ²Open the gates, that the righteous nation which keeps the truth may enter in. ³You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. ⁴Trust in the LORD forever, for in YAH, the LORD, is everlasting strength. ⁵For He brings down those who dwell on high, the lofty city [Rev 18-19:1-3] ..." (Isa. 26:1-5)

- B. **Song of Yearning** (26:7-11): The people of God will wait faithfully on the Lord. They are also contrasted to the end-time Babel in that their concern is God's name and the remembrance of Him and not them (Gen 11:4). This is in contrast to the historical context of Israel in Isaiah 7-8 and the self-reliance of the nations. The redeemed earnestly devoted themselves to the first commandment.

⁸Yes, in the way of Your judgments, O Lord, we have waited for You; the desire of our soul is for Your name and for the remembrance of You. ⁹With my soul I have desired You in the night, Yes, by my spirit within me I will seek You early ..." (Isa. 26:8-9)

- C. God's judgments allow for the gospel—the instruction of righteousness that comes from faith—to advance. God seeks to tenderly (vs. 10) engage the Gentiles before He intervenes with judgment (vs. 9). End-time messengers will proclaim both the outpouring of His tender mercy (flute) and the fierceness of His judgments (dirge). God intervenes with judgment when His wooing is resisted and the wicked continue in the way. However, there will be a harvest in the midst of His judgment.

⁹... for when Your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. ¹⁰Let grace be shown to the wicked, yet he will not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness he will deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord. ¹¹... Yes, the fire of Your enemies shall devour them." Isa. 26:9-11

- D. **Song of Deliverance** (26:12-19): God will deliver Israel. Her oppressors throughout history and at the end of the age are those who sought their own greatness (Gen. 11:5; Isa. 24:10) However, the Lord has cut off their renown (24:3-14) and fulfills His promise to Abraham to make his name great and Israel a blessing to world. The song points back to Genesis 11:5-12:3. He will destroy Babylon, establish Israel and expand her borders (Gen. 15:18-21, Isa. 19:23-25), and establish His name.

¹²Lord, You will establish peace for us, for You have also done all our works in us. ¹³O Lord our God, masters besides You have had dominion over us; but by You only we make mention of Your name. ¹⁴They are dead, they will not live; they are deceased, they will not rise... made all their memory to perish. ¹⁵You have increased the nation ... You are glorified; You have expanded all the borders of the land. (Isa. 26:12-15)

V. ISAIAH 26:20-27:13: JUDAH'S SONG CONTINUES

- A. Judah expresses their anguish by bringing their lament to the Lord. They liken their anguish to a woman who is in labor. However, in the midst of their anguish, they despair and wonder whether there is any purpose to their suffering. They liken it to giving birth to the wind and say that the Genesis 12:3 promised blessing has not touched the nations. They are reminded of the reality of the resurrection in which not even death can keep them from the plan of God for Israel and the nations.

¹⁶ ... they poured out a prayer when Your chastening was upon them. ¹⁷As a woman with child is in pain and cries out in her pangs ... ¹⁸we have, as it were, brought forth wind; we have not accomplished any deliverance in the earth ... ¹⁹Your dead shall live; together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; for your dew is like the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. (Isa. 26:16-19)

⁵For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us ... ⁸For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. ⁹Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, ¹⁰who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us... (2 Cor. 1:5, 8-10)

- B. *Song of the Exodus* (26:20-27:1): The person of this song alludes to the Passover in Exodus 12. The prophet is describing, as it were, “an eschatological Passover.”¹ The people of God are reminded to continue trusting in God. Isaiah exhorts the faithful to wait for the deliverance of the Lord. God’s judgment will result in the salvation of Israel and the destruction of the works of Satan.

²⁰Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation is past. ²¹For behold, the Lord comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth will also disclose her blood, and will no more cover her slain. ^{27:1}In that day the Lord with His severe sword, great and strong, will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan that twisted serpent; and He will slay the reptile that is in the sea. (Isa. 26:20-27:1)

¹Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. ²He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; ³and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while. (Rev. 20:1-3)

¹ This could be related to the Revelation 15-16-time period when the wrath of God is released. The eschatological Passover is when God ultimately deals with the eschatological pharaoh—the Antichrist—and the “Lamb of God” revelation prevalent in the book of Revelation

VI. ISAIAH 27:2-13: ISRAEL RESTORED

- A. **The Song of the Lord** (27:2-6): In Isaiah 5, the prophet sang a song of God's displeasure and judgment against His vineyard Israel. Now we see that God has returned to the vineyard formerly forsaken by Him, and He has restored that vineyard. God will nourish, cultivate, take pleasure, watch over, and defend the vineyard, and she will be fruitful. She will expand and fill the whole world with fruit, and so in her all the nations are blessed.

²*In that day sing to her, "A vineyard of red wine! ³I, the Lord, keep it; I water it every moment. Lest any hurt it, I keep it night and day. ⁴Fury is not in Me. Who would set briers and thorns against Me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together [curse those who curse you]. ⁵Or let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me [bless those who bless you]." ⁶Those who come He shall cause to take root in Jacob; Israel shall blossom and bud [you shall be a blessing] and fill the face of the world with fruit [In you all the nations of the earth will be blessed]." (Isa. 27:2-6)*

- B. **God's faithfulness towards Israel in judgment and redemption recounted** (27:7-11): He dealt with her according to the covenant and uses the nations and the environment as His instruments of judgment and restoration. No longer the tail but the head (Deut. 28:13, 44), Israel is a blessing to the world.

⁷*Has He struck Israel as He struck those who struck him? [Deut. 28:35; Isa. 1:5-6, 53:5] Or has He been slain according to the slaughter of those who were slain by Him? ⁸In measure, by sending it away, You contended with it. He removes it by His rough wind in the day of the east wind. ⁹Therefore by this the iniquity of Jacob will be covered; and this is all the fruit of taking away his sin: when he makes all the stones of the altar like chalkstones that are beaten to dust, wooden images and incense altars shall not stand. ¹⁰Yet the fortified city will be desolate, the habitation forsaken and left like a wilderness; there the calf will feed, and there it will lie down and consume its branches. ¹¹When its boughs are withered, they will be broken off; the women come and set them on fire. For it is a people of no understanding [24:10]; therefore, He who made them will not have mercy on them, and He who formed them will show them no favor. (Isa. 27:7-11)*

- C. **The Lord brings back His people from the nations** (27:12-13): They will come and be established in the land promised to their fathers (Gen. 15:18-21). He will thresh and bring in the remnant from among the nations—Assyria, Egypt, and Babylon. (Isa. 42; 49; 53; 60-62)

¹²*And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord will thresh, from the channel of the River to the Brook of Egypt; and you will be gathered one by one, O you children of Israel. ¹³So it shall be in that day: the great trumpet will be blown; they will come, who are about to perish in the land of Assyria, and they who are outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem. (Isa. 27:12-13)*

¹⁶*For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus*

we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸*Therefore comfort one another with these words.*
(1 Thes. 4:16-18)