

# A Song of Salvation

Isaiah 26

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## **Isaiah 26:1-11 – The city of God and the city of Man**

*In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah:*

*“We have a strong city; God will appoint salvation for walls and bulwarks.*

*<sup>2</sup> Open the gates, that the righteous nation which keeps the truth may enter in. <sup>3</sup> You will keep him in perfect peace,*

*Whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.*

*<sup>4</sup> Trust in the Lord forever, for in Yah, the Lord, is everlasting strength.*

*<sup>5</sup> For He brings down those who dwell on high, The lofty city; He lays it low, He lays it low to the ground, He brings it down to the dust.*

*<sup>6</sup> The foot shall tread it down— The feet of the poor and the steps of the needy.”*

*<sup>7</sup> The way of the just is uprightness; O Most Upright, You weigh the path of the just.*

*<sup>8</sup> Yes, 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.*

*<sup>9</sup> With my soul I have desired You in the night, Yes, by my spirit within me I will seek You early; For when Your judgments are in the earth, The inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.*

*<sup>10</sup> Let 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.*

*<sup>11</sup> Lord, when Your hand is lifted up, they will not see. But they will see and be ashamed for their envy of people; Yes, the fire of Your enemies shall devour them.*

## **v1 – To what does “in that day” refer?**

The context from Isaiah 24 and 25 points to the day of the Messiah’s ultimate triumph, the day when the Messiah reigns over Israel, and over all the world.

- In that day, there will be a lot of joyful singing, such as this song that will be sung in the land of Judah.

## **What is the “strong city” that will be sung about?**

This is a reference to the Jerusalem in the Millennial Kingdom. Since cities came into being after the fall of man in Genesis 3, mankind has never known a truly godly city, the City of God on earth. In that day, all will know the strength and glory of the city of God.

## **What would be the city of man?**

The strong city is the Kingdom of God, the city of man is the world system.

## **What does it mean that God will appoint salvation for walls and bulwarks?**

The city of God, from beginning to end, is all about salvation. The walls and the bulwarks of the city are symbolic of security pointing to eternal security.

## **v2 – Who will be invited to enter the city of God?**

*Open the gates, that the righteous nation which keeps the truth may enter it:* The city of God, with all its strength and salvation, is only for the righteous, and those who keep the truth.

- This foreshadows the New Jerusalem that is a city filled with glory, which excludes the unrighteous (Revelation 21:22-27).

## **v3 – What will characterize the strong city?**

*You will keep him in perfect peace:* This is a wonderful promise: perfect peace. God promises that we can have perfect peace, and even be kept in a place of perfect peace.

- In Hebrew, the term perfect peace is actually shalom shalom. This shows how in Hebrew, repetition communicates intensity.

## **Who will experience the perfect peace during the Millennial kingdom (and now as well)?**

*Those whose mind is stayed on You:* This is the place of perfect peace and the source of it. When we keep our minds stayed — settled upon, established upon — the LORD Himself, then we can be kept in this perfect peace (it is a fruit of the Spirit, Galatians 5:22-23).

## **How is keeping perfect peace a matter of our mind?**

- We are to love the LORD our God with all of our mind (Matthew 22:37).
- We are transformed by the renewing of your mind (Romans 12:2).
- We can have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16, Philippians 2:5).

- We are not to set our mind on earthly things (Philippians 3:19), but to set our mind on things above (Colossians 3:2).

### **Why is what we think about so important in living the Christian life?**

The Christian life is not an unthinking life of just doing, or experiencing, but it is also about thinking, and where we set our mind is essential in our walk before the LORD.

Isaiah 1:18 – *“Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the Lord, “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”*

### **What is the prerequisite for keeping our minds stayed in Christ?**

*Because he trusts in You:* This is another way of expressing the idea of keeping our minds stayed on Him. Almost always, you keep your mind stayed on whatever you are trusting. When we trust the LORD, we keep our mind stayed on Him.

Proverbs 3:5 – *Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding.*

The word for *lean* in Proverbs 3:5 comes from the same root as the word *stayed* in Isaiah 26:3.

- When we trust in the LORD, we do not lean on our own understanding. To lean on the LORD is to trust Him.
- To be sustained by the LORD is to trust Him.
- To be established by the LORD is to trust Him.
- To be upheld by the LORD is to trust Him.

The battle for trust in our lives begins in our minds. If we trust the LORD, it will show in our actions, but it will begin in our mind.

### **v4 – What is the summary statement for having perfect peace?**

*Trust in the LORD forever:* Because of the promise of Isaiah 26:3, we are encouraged to trust in the LORD forever — and therefore to receive the blessing of the promise, perfect peace.

### **Why should we trust in the Lord?**

*For in YAH, the LORD, is everlasting strength:* If the LORD calls us to rely on Him completely with our mind, He appeals to our mind with a rational reason why we should trust the LORD — because He is everlasting strength.

- As in Isaiah 12:2, the word Yah here probably arose from the custom of the Jewish scribes, who, when they found a line too short for the word, wrote as many letters as filled it, and then began the next line with the whole word.”

### **What is the distinction between the Lord having everlasting strength, and being everlasting strength?**

As the Creator, the Lord is the source of all strength.

### **v5 – What will become of the city of man?**

*He brings down those who dwell on high, the lofty city:* The city of man is lofty, and the exalted ones of the city dwell on high. But the LORD will bring them down nonetheless. The city of man, the world system, is nothing to the LORD; He lays it low.

### **v5-6 – What is significant about the city of man being brought down to the dust?**

The city of man, the world system, is all about power and prestige, built on the backs of the weak and the poor. But when God brings the city of man down to the dust, He will turn all that around, and the feet of the poor shall tread it down.

Matthew 5:5 – *Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.*

Jesus expressed this same principle in the beatitudes...

- Jesus told us to oppose the power and prestige thinking of this world and to live with the thinking of His Kingdom right now.

### **v7 – What is the way of the just?**

*uprightness:* In the Kingdom of God, His righteous people walk in the way of uprightness. The Lord makes His people just by a relationship of faith and trust in Him, then they walk in the way of uprightness.

### **Why is God referred to the Most Upright here?**

The Lord Himself is the example for our own uprightness. The more we can conform our ways to the ways of the Lord, the more upright we'll be.

### **How is it God weighs the path of the just?**

The LORD looks at His righteous ones (the just) and He evaluates their path. The LORD cares about the walk of His just ones and He will judge us for rewards.

### **v8 – For what are the just waiting?**

The faithful remnant of Israel is waiting for the Lord, for His coming when He will initiate His Millennial Kingdom. In the Church Age, the children of God are waiting for the Lord as well, before He returns to deliver Israel...

Titus 2:12-13 – *denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ*

### **What is the *desire of our soul*?**

*For Your name:* In the Kingdom of God, His just people love Him and desire Him.

- When you desire something, or someone, you will wait for them, and do it gladly because of your desire.

### **Why is the remembrance of God important?**

It is part of keeping our minds stayed on Him which is what the upright will do.

### **v9 – When has the soul of the upright desired God?**

- In the night which is the absence of light that represents the knowledge of the Lord... so the upright seek Him when it looks like evil is overwhelming the light of Christ.
- Early – at the dawning of the day when the Lord reveals Himself to us through our spirit. And early in the sense that it is before the time of God's judgments on the earth.

### **When will the *inhabitants of the world* learn righteousness?**

During the Tribulation when God's judgments are on the earth. The term *inhabitants of the world* bring to mind the terminology of Revelation reference to *earth dwellers*... the citizens of the city of man, and not the city of God.

### **v10 – How is grace shown to the wicked?**

Grace is shown to the wicked whenever the good news of Christ paying the penalty of our sins is shared with them.

### **How is it the wicked will not learn righteousness?**

The wicked can not be righteous apart from Christ. The wicked can appear to be righteous for a time but acting righteous is not the same as being righteous.

### **What is the *land of uprightness*?**

This has to be a reference to the city of God, or in other words, the time of the Millennial Kingdom.

### **What will the wicked do during the time of the Millennial Kingdom?**

The wicked will *deal unjustly* and *not behold the majesty of the Lord*. They will be characterized by their sin and not have a relationship with the Lord... same as today.

### **v11 – What will the wicked not see?**

They will not recognize the judgment of God when it happens. God is very subtle often doing supernatural things through natural means so that only the spiritually discerning recognize the hand of God at work.

- Today's inflation, looming famine and wars can be dismissed by the ungodly as not being harbingers of

the Tribulation but as brought on by humans and thus something humans can fix.

- The sixth seal judgment in Revelation describes nuclear war.
- There will be a strong delusion (2 Thessalonians 2:11) which provides a natural explanation for the supernatural rapture of the church.

### **What will make the wicked ashamed?**

When they see God's deliverance of His people, the wicked will envy them wishing they were also God's people. Instead, they chose the way of the world rather than the way of God.

### **What will become of the wicked?**

They would be devoured by the fire of God's enemies... they will suffer the natural consequences of being God's enemies.

- God's pattern is to turn enemy armies against themselves... Midianites during Gideon's day, The Magog War, Ezekiel 38.
- Ungodly policies often bring about the very problems they are designed to solve.

### **Isaiah 26:12-21 – Promises made to a humble heart**

<sup>12</sup> *Lord, You will establish peace for us, for You have also done all our works in us.*

<sup>13</sup> *O Lord our God, masters besides You have had dominion over us; But by You only we make mention of Your name.*

<sup>14</sup> *They are dead, they will not live; They are deceased, they will not rise. Therefore You have punished and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish.*

<sup>15</sup> *You have increased the nation, O Lord, You have increased the nation; You are glorified; You have expanded all the borders of the land.*

<sup>16</sup> *Lord, in trouble they have visited You, they poured out a prayer when Your chastening was upon them.*

<sup>17</sup> *As a woman with child is in pain and cries out in her pangs, when she draws near the time of her delivery, So have we been in Your sight, O Lord.*

<sup>18</sup> *We have been with child, we have been in pain; We have, as it were, brought forth wind;*

*We have not accomplished any deliverance in the earth, Nor have the inhabitants of the world fallen.*

<sup>19</sup> *Your 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.*

<sup>20</sup> *Come, 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.*

<sup>21</sup> *For 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.*

**v12 – How do we know the Lord will establish peace for us?**

*You have also done all our works in us: Because he has done a great work in us, resurrecting our human spirits...*

*Ephesians 2:8-10 – For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

Even our good works are works that He has done...in us.

**v13 – What are these *masters* besides God that *have had dominion over us*?**

The humble heart repents of past idolatry, and rejoices that the Lord has revealed the Truth about these evil influences.

- The Hebrew word for dominion is baal, which can mean master or husband. Baal was the chief god of the native Canaanites, a seductive idol for Israel

**v14 – What is the status of the former idols to the child of God?**

They are dead to God's faithful and can not even be resurrected. The deliverance of God is forever.

**How has God punished and destroyed the former masters over Israel?**

The idols people worshiped during Isaiah's day represented demonic spirits. This is prophetic tense... God has punished demons and He will incarcerate them in the bottomless pit during the Millennial Kingdom (Revelation 20:1-2) then cast them into the lake of fire prior to the Eternal State when even the memory of them will be forgotten (Revelation 20:7-10).

**v15 – How has God increased the nation?**

Repetition here is for emphasis... Israel will be made the most preeminent nation on earth during the Millennial Kingdom in fulfilment of the Abrahamic Covenant...

*Genesis 12:2-3 – I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*

God reinforced this covenant with Isaac and Jacob...

*Genesis 26:4 – I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven ... Genesis 28:14 – your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth*

While this applies physically to Israel, it certainly also applies to spiritual descendants of Abraham...

*Galatians 3:6-9 – just as Abraham “believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, “In you all the nations shall be blessed.” So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.*

**Does this mean that the church as replaced Israel?**

No... replacement theology (aka supersessionism) spiritualizes or allegorizes the promises of God's blessing Israel to instead apply to the church. Major problems exist with this view...

- The Jewish people maintaining their culture despite centuries of the Diaspora and the revival of the modern state of Israel.
- The church is an entirely new creation (Ephesians 1:9–11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–17).
- The covenants, promises, and warnings of the Mosaic Covenant were valid only for Israel, not the church.
- Dispensationalism teaches that God will resume working through Israel as His representatives on earth after the rapture.

God has not forgotten Israel and will one day restore Israel to His intended role as the nation He has chosen...

*Romans 11:25-26 – blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved*

**How is God glorified by blessing Israel?**

It fulfills the many promises and covenants He has made and prove one of the most amazing attributes of God... despite the free will of mankind, God's will be done:

*Isaiah 46:9-10 – I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure’*

**How has God expanded all the borders of the land?**

The current border of the modern state of Israel is a very small part of what God promised them...

*Genesis 15:18 – On the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying: “To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates”*

This will be realized during the Millennial Kingdom (Ezekiel 47:13-48:29).

**v16 – When has Israel returned to the Lord?**

In times of trouble and when the Lord chastened them... kind of like our own personal relationship with Him.

### v17-18 – How has Israel been like a woman in labor?

The persecution of Israel has increased in frequency and intensity and this will continue to be the case until Israel is delivered by the Lord at the Tribulation.

- Jesus referred to the signs of His returning being characterized as birth pangs in Matthew 24:8.

### How has Israel *not* accomplished any deliverance in the earth?

Israel has tried to deliver herself by being like the Gentile nations throughout her history but this has not come to fruition. Israel is still oppressed by the world's Gentile powers...

Luke 21:24 – *Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled*

Israel conquered Jerusalem during the Six-Day War but yielded the temple mount to Jordan in an overture for peace but true peace will not come to Israel until Messiah returns.

- There will be a false peace when the Antichrist intervenes on behalf of Israel enabling them to build a temple but that illusion of peace only lasts 3.5 years.

### v19 – How is it Israel's dead shall live?

This is twofold... Israel will be restored into a relationship with the Lord as a nation (previous context). And those who've personally trusted in the Lord for their salvation will *arise*, be resurrected (following context, *the earth shall cast out the dead*).

The Old Testament gave a shadowy understanding of the life to come...

- The secrets of the life to come have now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Timothy 1:10).

But here is one Old Testament example of a confident expectation of resurrection and glory for the LORD's righteous ones.

### v20 – When should Israel hide herself from the indignation?

This has to be when the Antichrist turns on Israel at the Abomination of Desolation when Jesus said, *then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains* (Matthew 24:16).

Revelation 12:14 – *the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.*

The reference to *time and times and half a time* is 3.5 years, the second half of the Tribulation... Israel will probably go into hiding among the caves of Petra in Jordan.

### What is the principle here that we may apply to the church in the here and now?

This speaks to a pre-Tribulation eschatology. There will be refuge, safety, and security of God's people when we are raptured thus escaping the horrific indignation of the Lord that He pours out upon the world in the Great Tribulation.

- As God's people were protected from the death angel during the exodus, so will the church be protected in heaven during the Tribulation.

### Is the pre-tribulation doctrine just escapism?

You bet-ya... Jesus promised us this escape:

Luke 21:36 – *Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man* [applies to both Church Age & Tribulation]

### v21 – What is the timeframe for when Israel will go into hiding?

*When the Lord comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity...* the Tribulation, the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel, the time of Jacob's Trouble.

- The term *inhabitants of the earth* sounds a lot like the book of Revelation making repeated references to the earth dwellers during the Tribulation.

### How is it, *the earth will also disclose her blood, and will no more cover her slain?*

When the Lord punishes *the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity* during the Tribulation there will be so much death, there will be no one available to bury the dead...

Revelation 14:19-20 – *So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.*

Revelation 20:21 – *the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.*

### What applications come to mind from our discussion?

- We more we keep our minds on the Lord, the more peace we'll have.
- As citizens of the City of God, we need to remember that as we sojourn through the City of Man.
- The church has not replaced Israel in the promises of God... the church has our own promises!
- The Tribulation is coming to prepare world for the Millennial Kingdom.
- The rapture occurs prior to the Tribulation... live ready!