

Session 7 The Forerunner Message in Isaiah 24-25

I. REVIEW: THE CONTEXT OF ISAIAH 24-25

- A. Isaiah 24-27 is inserted in the context of two important sections and themes:
1. Isa. 1-12 – God’s restoration of Israel
 2. Isa. 13-35 – God delivers Israel and brings the nations into His glory
- B. Isa. 1-12 primarily addresses God’s dealings with the nation of Israel and His commitment to lead them into their promised destiny—Gen 12:2. Yet, Isa. 13-35 puts before us God’s commitment to bless the nations by bringing them into His glory—Gen 12:3.
- 2“I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. 3I will bless those who bless you ... curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” (Gen. 12:1-3)***
- C. In Isaiah 1-12, the nation of Judah is in crisis and they are refusing to put their trust in the Lord. Yet the Lord is committed to bringing Israel into her destiny as seen in Isa. 2:1-5 and Isa. 8-12, thereby assuring Israel that He is with her and faithful to His covenant as seen in:
1. His manifested discipline according to covenant (Deut. 28:15-68)
 2. His giving of a Son—Messiah (Isa. 7:14; 9:6; 11:1-3)
 3. His promised future deliverance of Israel (Isa. 10:25-27)
 4. His fulfilling of the promise of Gen 12:1-3 in the age to come (Isa. 11-12)
- D. 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).
- E. Isaiah 13-35 prophesies how God can effortlessly confront Israel’s misplaced trust in the nations and the self-reliance of the nations, as well as deliver and establish Israel, then bring the nations to the mountain of the Lord according to the promise given to Abraham.
1. The Burden Against the Nations—His plans will not be thwarted, 13-23
 2. The Triumph of God, 24-27
- F. Isa 24-25: The Triumph of God, Pt. 1

1. 24:1-23: The Day of the Lord
2. 25:1-12: The Millennial Reign and the Feasts of God (Rev. 19-20)

II. ISAIAH 24-27: ISAIAH'S LITTLE APOCALYPSE

- A. Isa. 24-27 is also termed the “little apocalypse” of Isaiah. It could be described as a “Reader’s Digest” version of the book of Revelation.
- B. Prophetic and apocalyptic passages have similarities, but there is a difference. The word *apocalypse* means *disclosure*, usually referring to the disclosing of something secret. Daniel the prophet makes mention of “the secret” (Dan. 2) which gives insight into God’s leadership pertaining to the end of the age. It is the unveiling of God’s hidden strategy to bring about the consummation of His promise to Israel and the nations.
- C. Prophetic and apocalyptic passages alike deal with God’s divine activity and His engagement in human affairs. The apocalyptic passages, however, deal with how God triumphs over evil and accomplishes His eternal purpose even when it seems that evil will overcome and all seems lost. The apocalyptic literature unveils the secret of God’s divine strategy designed to give hope in dark times.
- D. Paul referred to the secret as the mystery (Rom. 16:24-27) or the hidden wisdom (1 Cor. 2:6). It is God’s divine strategy (Rom. 12:2) that indicates that no measure of evil will thwart God from bringing Israel and the nations into the promised blessing.
- E. In the apocalypse God declares that He is going to confront evil and triumph over it. This reality perplexed the prophets (1 Pet. 1:10-12). The New Testament shows that the triumph is inaugurated when YHWH:
 1. Becomes a human being (Jn. 1:14)
 2. Confronts our dilemma (Isa. 53:4-5)
 3. Pays for our judgment (Rom. 3:25)
 4. Triumphs over sin and darkness (Col. 2:14-15)
 5. Eschatologically confronts evil through the crucified Man (Rev. 5:4-7)

29“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (Jn. 1:29)

14having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.” (Col. 2:14-15)

⁴So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. ⁵But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.” (Rev. 5:4-5)

- F. Jesus will triumph over insurmountable evil and gives us the assurance that Israel and the nations will be delivered, which has spiritual, political, societal, economic, global, as well as cosmic implications (Is 60-66).

III. ISAIAH 24: THE DAY OF THE LORD

- A. Isaiah 24 is one of the clearest passages that outline the global end-time landscape. The prophet describes the severity of the manifestation of darkness in the world and the societal, environmental, and psychological impact.

- 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)

⁶Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, and those who dwell in it are desolate. Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left [Isa 13:12].” (Isa. 24:6)

¹⁵So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind. (Rev. 9:15)

- C. Isa 24:1-3: The prophet draws our attention to the Gen. 1-12:3 narratives as the pattern with which God deals with Israel and the nations. Genesis 1-12:3 shows us how through judgment and mercy He pursues the nations back to Himself.

¹Behold, the Lord makes the earth empty and makes it waste [Gen. 1:2], distorts its surface [Gen. 7:17-14] and scatters abroad its inhabitants [Gen. 11]. (Isa. 24:1)

- D. Alluding prophetically to the Genesis narrative is a token of hope reminding us of God’s love and mercy in reaching out to Abraham to bless his descendants, make them a blessing, and bless all the nations. The Creator God (Gen. 1; Rev. 4:1-10) is faithful and will keep His covenant (Gen. 12:1-3).

²And it shall be: As with the people, so with the priest; As with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; As with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; As with the creditor, so with the debtor. ³The land shall be entirely emptied and utterly plundered, for the Lord has spoken this word. (Isa. 24:2-3)

- E. God’s judgment is comprehensive, and no one escapes. Everyone from all walks of life are impacted: lay people, priest, employer, employee, rich, poor. Everyone is held accountable including the messengers seeing and declaring the judgments (Isa. 6:5; 24:16).

- F. God's judgments not only affect the social sphere, but even creation is subject to shaking because of the sin of Israel and the nations. There are several passages that show us the correlation between the impact and reaction of the environment because of the condition of the human race (Gen. 3:17-18; 7:7-17; Lev. 26:3, 6, 20; Deut. 28:12, 18, 24; 2 Chr. 7:13-14; Rom. 8:19-22; Rev. 11:15).

The earth mourns and fades away, the world languishes and fades away; the haughty people of the earth languish. (Isa 24:4-6)

1. ***The earth mourns and fades:*** The vegetation will dry up due to drought.
2. ***The world languishes and fades:*** the world and all its systems.
3. ***The haughty people languish*** (2:9, 11-12, 16): Judgment creates opportunity for saving the humble.

IV. THE REASON FOR HIS JUDGMENTS

⁵The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. ⁶Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, and those who dwell in it are desolate. Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left. (Isa. 24:5-6)

- A. Isaiah 24:4-13 gives the apologetic for God's judgments in the world as well as its scope. The shakings are so severe, they affect the normal rhythms of domestic and social life (24:7-13) and the condition of the environment, which is significantly affected (24:4, 18-20) through droughts, disturbances in the vegetation, and violent quakes, all because of the sin of humanity (24:5-6).
- B. There is an ecological defilement that transpires as a result of the sin and disobedience of humans as well as poor management of the environment. Due to ambiguity in the Hebrew language, there is a question about whether *the earth* in this passage is referring to the land of Israel or to the whole earth. One can go either way, yet come out with the same message: there is an unprecedented environmental shift that is before us due to the sin of humanity.

¹⁹For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.

²⁰For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; ²¹because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. ²²For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. (Rom. 8:19-22)

³³"I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you; your land shall be desolate and your cities waste. ³⁴Then the land shall enjoy its sabbaths as long as it lies desolate and you are in your enemies' land; then the land shall rest and enjoy its sabbaths. ³⁵As long as it lies desolate it shall rest—for the time it did not rest on your sabbaths when you dwelt in it." (Lev. 26:33-35)

- C. The earth (the environment) is struck with the curse of God and there is unprecedented death (few are left) because of the sin of the world.
1. ***Transgressed the laws***: The people refuse the teaching and instruction of God.
 2. ***Changed the ordinance***: The people refuse God's requirement and live by their own broken moral compass.
 3. ***Broken the everlasting covenant***: Unfaithfulness and unresponsiveness to the covenant
- D. The idea of the everlasting covenant could be pointing back to the days of Noah where God makes an everlasting covenant with the people regarding the environment and the mode of His destruction through water. Jesus likened the day of the Lord to the days of Noah which tells as about the unprecedented nature of God's end-time judgments.
- ⁷By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen [unprecedented]... (Heb. 11:7)*
- ²⁶And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man. (Lk 17:26)*

V. THE BREAKING OF THE EVERLASTING COVENANT

¹⁴And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. (Mt. 24:14)

- A. It is to be noted that the nature of the end-time judgments that the nations undergo are covenantal. The Old and New Testament messengers describe the global judgments just as described in passages like Deuteronomy 28 and Leviticus 26. The nations will undergo the judgments that God spoke to Israel along with her at the end of age.
- B. The Lord makes it clear in Deuteronomy 28 and Leviticus 26 that there is judgment largely in context to lack of response to the covenant He made with Israel. Thus the prophets come with a severe message of the accountability. However, it is striking that the nations undergo similar judgments at the end of the age.
- C. Matthew 24:14 is a passage filled with hope and good news even while it is one of the most terrifying passages in the Bible. The gospel witness has brightly shone; however, there is significant global unresponsiveness. This lack of responsiveness results in similar judgments upon the nations as upon the Jewish people.
- D. Paul in Romans 1-2 lays out a theology of priority in which he indicates that as the gospel priority (Rom. 1:16) is to the Jew first (because God started there), and second to the Gentile (who will receive that same light as well), even so there is judgment priority (Rom. 2:9) to the Jew first (because to them it first given; Rom 9:4-5), and also to the Gentile second (because to them has been given the full witness; Mt. 24:14)

⁸but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, ⁹tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek ... (Rom. 2:9)

- E. The judgments that happened in Bible history, e.g. Babylon, were rehearsal judgments because they were in keeping with the shadows of the old covenant (Heb. 10:1). Not responding to the shadow which was communicated by angels (Heb. 2:2) was met by a just reward for disobedience. However, the neglect of the message communicated by the Son of God and the brightness of the revelation of Jesus requires far more severe sanctions (Heb. 2:3).

¹²For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, ¹³how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, ... spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him ... (Heb. 2:2-3)

- F. The gospel is the new covenantal witness with its corresponding apocalyptic judgment. The message will be clear as well in its representational witness, and then the end shall come.

³⁰Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, ³¹because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man [Jesus] whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead. (Acts 17:30-31)

VI. DESIRING HIM IN THE NIGHT OF JUDGMENT

⁹With 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... (Isa. 26:9)

- A. Isa 24:7-13: The prophet declares again not only the scope of God's judgments, but he also highlights the emotional impact that it will have on humanity. All joy is removed, and anguish, bitterness, and confusion have taken root.

⁷The new wine fails, the vine languishes, all the merry-hearted sigh. ⁸The mirth of the tambourine ceases, the noise of the jubilant ends, the joy of the harp ceases. ⁹They shall not drink wine with a song; strong drink is bitter to those who drink it. (Isa. 24:7-9)

- B. Social gatherings and parties no longer satisfy, and alcoholic drinks lose their pleasure.

¹⁰The city of confusion is broken down; every house is shut up, so that none may go in. ¹¹There is a cry for wine in the streets, all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone. (Isa. 24:10-11)

- C. There is tremendous confusion, and destruction is such that no one can go into their homes. There will be a cry for alcohol in order to deaden the pain and anguish, but it will not be found or satisfy.

12In the city desolation is left, and the gate is stricken with destruction. 13When it shall be thus in the midst of the land among the people, it shall be like the shaking of an olive tree, like the gleaning of grapes when the vintage is done. (Isa. 24:12-13)

- D. The shaking will be violent, like the shaking of an olive tree, but God’s activity will also be like the careful harvesting (gleaning) of grapes. The grapes, because of the gentle process of the harvest, could be referring to those who are responding to the Lord’s dealings.

14They [the grapes] shall lift up their voice, they shall sing; for the majesty of the Lord they [the grapes] shall cry aloud from the sea. 15Therefore glorify the Lord in the dawning light, the name of the Lord God of Israel in the coastlands of the sea. 16From the ends of the earth we [grape] have heard songs: “Glory to the righteous!” But I said, “I am ruined, ruined! Woe to me! The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously, Indeed, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.” (Isa. 24:14-16)

- E. The Church will be present in the midst of the Great Tribulation with a witness of joy and worship, though everything around is being shaking. There will be deep connection and agreement with the heart of God and His purpose. Whereas the nations are filled with confusion, the Church will have clarity insofar as God’s personality, power, and purpose.

20The anger of the Lord will not turn back until He has executed and performed the thoughts of His heart. In the latter days you will understand it perfectly. (Jer. 23:20)

6And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, “Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! 7Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory...” (Rev. 19:6-7)

- F. God’s judgments are followed by God being exalted and worshipped. The message of His judgment is part of His message of hope and comfort to the Church. In Rev. 5:4-6, judgment comforts John.

VII. GOD’S TRIUMPH OVER INSURMOUNTABLE EVIL

- A. 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. The cross is God’s great and ultimate apocalyptic weapon. The Man Jesus, YHWH in the flesh, has prevailed.
- B. Demonic spirits and evil kings are also put in prison like Satan, as prophesied by Isaiah.

21The LORD will punish on high the host of exalted ones [demonic principalities], and on the earth the kings of the earth. 22They [demons and kings] will be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit [bottomless pit], and will be shut up in the prison [Rev. 20:1-3]; after many days [1,000 years] they will be punished [lake of fire]. 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)

- C. Satan will be thrown into prison for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1-3). The final judgment for Satan and his angels is the lake of fire, not the bottomless pit (called the abyss by some).
¹I 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...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... (Rev. 20:1-3)
- D. In Isaiah 27:1 and Isaiah 24:18-21, we gain insight into Satan and the demons being punished.
- E. The bottomless pit (abyss) is a temporary place of prison for fallen angels. There is a huge shaft extending from the earth's surface to its depths that is currently sealed up, needing an angel with a key to open it. In this deep pit the Beast/Antichrist dwells (Rev. 11:7; 17:8) along with a demonic king named Abaddon (Rev. 9:11).
⁴God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment. (2 Pet. 2:4)
⁶The angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day (Jude 6)
- F. A multitude of demonic locusts: In Rev. 9:1-4, demonic locusts came out of this locked shaft or bottomless pit (Rev. 9:3).
He opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like...a great furnace. (Rev. 9:2)
- G. In Revelation 12, war will break out in heaven between Satan and Michael the archangel. The result is that Satan will be cast to the earth. This will happen at the beginning of the Great Tribulation.
⁷War broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon [Satan]; and the dragon and his angels fought, ⁸but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. ⁹The dragon...called the Devil...was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him... (Rev. 12:7-17)

VIII. ISA 25 - CELEBRATING THE TRIUMPH OF GOD

- A. When there is tragic crisis, basic human response is, "Where is God, and what is He doing about it? Does God care, etc.?"
²⁷Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel: "My way is hidden from the Lord, and my just claim is passed over by my God"? ²⁸Have you not known? Have you not heard?" (Isa. 40:27-28)
- B. Isaiah 25 is worship based on the understanding of the beauty of God's ultimate triumph over evil. The study of and reflection on Isaiah 24 ought to produce worship. The prophetic receiving of insight into the end-time drama produces longing, awe, and worship.

¹⁰O Lord, You are my God. I [the prophet] will exalt You, I will praise Your name, for You have done wonderful things; Your counsels of old are faithfulness and truth. (Isa. 25:1)

- C. The end-time church will understand God's judgments. This will inspire songs of longing. Songs are often inspired by longing, remembrance, a storyline, or the displaying of a hidden feeling. It is essential that singers give themselves to the place of gazing to find their hearts connected to God's plan.

¹⁰Sing to the Lord a new song, and His praise from the ends of the earth... (Isa 42:10)

- D. The new song is often in the context of God's judgments (Ps. 33:3; 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9; 149:1; Isa. 42:10; Rev. 5:9; 14:3) related to all of that which was accomplished in the New Covenant. For most of us, the New Covenant is limited to the idea that through Christ's blood we can have access to God; however, that is only the glorious *foundation* of the New Covenant. The full expression of the New Covenant is the fullness of Jesus' glory and justice established in the earth in the context of the end-time landscape. It is essential for prophetic singers to peer into and understand the end-time landscape.

¹⁰Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, ¹¹searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow... (1 Pet 1:10-11)

- E. The Lord is raising up singing theologians who have depth in the Word of God and who have trembled and rejoiced before the majesty of Jesus as the Bridegroom, King, and Judge. These singers will lead the end-time church into singing the new song that will release a trembling among the nations. A song that produces a trembling in a people comes from a person who has trembled.
- F. Mike Bickle in his *Studies in Joel* states – ***The memory of this event will impact the social, emotional, legal, and economic decisions in the earth for the next one thousand years (Rev. 20). The memory will live on, and the power of it will affect generation after generation.***¹
- G. Isaiah 25:6-8 describes what John saw in Revelation 20-21

⁶And in this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all people a feast of choice pieces, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of well-refined wines on the lees. ⁷And He will destroy on this mountain the surface of the covering cast over all people, And the veil that is spread over all nations. ⁸He will swallow up death forever, And the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces; The rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken. (Isa. 25:6-8)

1. The marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19)

¹ Mike Bickle, *Studies in Joel: A Call to Radical Christianity in the End Times*, (Kansas City: Forerunner Publishing, 2004), p. 144.

2. The veil of darkness of the earth is removed.
³But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. (2 Cor. 4:3-4)
 3. The last enemy, Death, is conquered.
²⁵For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. (1 Cor. 15:25)
 4. Every tear is wiped away by removing rebuke and shame from the redeemed.
- H. Isaiah 25:9-12: Israel is vindicated, and Moab is punished.
- I. Moab, in various places, resisted Israel in her greatest time of need (Num. 21-25) and some of the most severe judgments against any Gentile nation seems to be against the Moabite regions (Isa. 16, 34, 63; Ezek. 25; Mal. 1:1-15); we also see special mention of them in Amos 9:11
*⁹And it will be said in that day: **“Behold, this is our God; We have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is the LORD; We have waited for Him; We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.”** ¹⁰For on this mountain the hand of the LORD will rest, And Moab shall be trampled down under Him, as straw is trampled down for the refuse heap. ¹¹And He will spread out His hands in their midst as a swimmer reaches out to swim; He will bring down their pride together with the trickery of their hands. ¹²The fortress of the high fort of your walls He will bring down, lay low and bring to the ground, down to the dust. (Isa. 25:9-12)*
¹¹“On that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, ... I will raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old; ¹²That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the Gentiles who are called by My name” ... (Amos 9:11)
- J. The message to Israel in Isaiah’s day was that they were not to put their trust in the nations, but they were to wait on the Lord and wait for His deliverance (Isa. 36). God will vindicate those who put their trust in Him. It is futile to trust the nations (Isa. 30). The God of Israel is the only one able to rescue her (Isa. 36). He will deliver those who wait on Him.
*¹⁵For thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: **“In returning and rest you shall be saved; In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.”** (Isa. 30:15)*