

Isaiah 26-27 Handout

Last week in Isaiah 24 we saw God bring judgment on the entire world. Human pride, justice, and misplaced trust all collapse and the earth is left shaken and empty. Even after all of this, a faithful remnant remains who lifts up their voice in praise to God. Chapter 25 answered that judgment with hope. God is praised for defeating oppressive powers, protecting the weak and preparing a future feast where death is swallowed up and tears are wiped away. Those who trust in him are saved, but those who keep leaning on self-reliance are brought low. Isaiah 26-27 are considered songs that seem to reflect chapters 24 and 25.

Thanks for God's Deliverance (vs. 1-6)

Verse 1-2

What phrase does this chapter start with? _____

This phrase is tying back to God's final act of deliverance and judgment in Isaiah 24-25.

Where is "this song" going to be sung? _____

The phrasing, "this song" seems to be suggesting this is something already known or anticipated. It refers to the salvation celebrated in chapter 25 and is now coming from the mouths of God's people. This seems to be a communal song that is being sung by the people together. You could say that chapter 25 was God's victory announced and chapter 26 is God's victory sung. It is a song that has been shaped by judgment.

"We have a strong city" - this is thought to be referring to the city of God or the New Jerusalem. Many interpret the New Jerusalem to be a literal city with walls and gates. Others interpret this description as being metaphorical.

The city has the salvation of God as its walls and ramparts. This is not something that the people have built but rather something God has given them. God's saving power is the complete, impenetrable protection of His people, not physical walls.

How does verse 2 start? _____

This signifies an invitation to enter into a secure place and communion with God. These gates are not locked to the faithful. They are open and ready to receive those who belong to Him.

Psalm 15:1-5

"1 LORD, who may dwell in your sacred tent?

Who may live on your holy mountain?

2 The one whose walk is blameless,

who does what is righteous,

who speaks the truth from their heart;

3 whose tongue utters no slander,

who does no wrong to a neighbor,

and casts no slur on others;

*4 who despises a vile person
but honors those who fear the LORD;
who keeps an oath even when it hurts,
and does not change their mind;
5 who lends money to the poor without interest;
who does not accept a bribe against the innocent.”*

Psalm 24:3-10

*3 Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD?
Who may stand in his holy place?
4 The one who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who does not trust in an idol
or swear by a false god.
5 They will receive blessing from the LORD
and vindication from God their Savior.
6 Such is the generation of those who seek him,
who seek your face, God of Jacob.
7 Lift up your heads, you gates;
be lifted up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.
8 Who is this King of glory?
The LORD strong and mighty,
the LORD mighty in battle.
9 Lift up your heads, you gates;
lift them up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.
10 Who is he, this King of glory?
The LORD Almighty—
he is the King of glory.”*

Psalm 118:19-20

*“19 Open for me the gates of the righteous;
I will enter and give thanks to the LORD.
20 This is the gate of the LORD
through which the righteous may enter.*

All four of these passages show that the “admission fee” for God’s city is righteousness. When we honestly look at ourselves, even the best of us will fall short of the righteousness that God requires. That’s why Jesus and the Gospel are such good news. The righteousness we can never attain, is given to us through the righteousness of Jesus.

Verses 3-4

Who does the Lord keep in perfect peace? _____

“Perfect peace” in the Hebrew is “shalom, shalom”. When a word is repeated in Hebrew it intensifies it. So “shalom, shalom” signifies the ultimate, complete or total peace—a “peace piled upon peace” that represents wholeness, safety and tranquility that goes way beyond the absence of conflict.

The word “steadfast/stayed” in Hebrew is *yetser sāmûk*. *Yetser* refers to inner disposition, imagination, thought patterns and the direction of a person's inner life. This is how a person is formed on the inside.

Samak means to lean, rest weight upon or be supported. This word envisions weight-bearing trust, not mental discipline.

When we put these two words together it means an inner life that is formed by leaning its full weight on God.

A mind steadfast on God is:

- A mind that is supported by God
- A life that is oriented toward Him
- A trust that bears weight in real pressure

This then leads to perfect peace and comes from where the mind rests. A mind that rests on God doesn't have to carry itself.

Verse 4 calls us to trust in the Lord forever. Why? _____

Notice that we are called to trust in the Lord forever. This expands way beyond a moment of crisis or fear into a way of life.

What comes to mind when you see that God is the Rock eternal?

We see from these first four verses that:

- God provides salvation and security (vs.1)
- God welcomes trusting people (vs.2)
- God gives peace to those who rely on Him (vs.3)
- God alone is worthy of lifelong trust (vs.4)

Verses 5-6

What happens to those who dwell on high? _____

The theme of pride and arrogance being brought low continues. This isn't talking about one city in particular but rather every human system that sets itself up against God. He will cast it all down to dust.

Verse 6 shows a huge reversal. What happens to the city that once oppressed the poor?

The poor will be empowered by God's justice.

We see a contrast in the first six verses with — God’s people resting securely in Him (vs.1-4) and then God dismantling the false security of pride (vs.5-6)

Dependence on God (vs.7-19)

Verses 7-8

These two verses show us what faithful living looks like while God’s justice unfolds. They describe the daily stance of people who trust God.

What does it say about the righteous path in verse 7? _____

This doesn’t mean our life will be easy and free of problems though. In Hebrew the word “path” usually means the direction of our life, our moral and spiritual journey and the choices that shape our character. The word “level” has the idea of straight, stable, sure-footed and free of hidden traps.

So, verse 7 is basically saying that someone who trusts in the Lord is ultimately guided toward rightness and stability, even though circumstances may feel difficult.

What are the people doing as they wait for the Lord? _____

This is showing how a righteous person actually walks that path.

His name and fame should be our utmost desire. More than we want to be rescued from our troubles, we should want God Himself to be honored and known.

Verses 9-10

When do the people of the world learn when judgment comes? _____

What do we learn about the wicked when grace is shown to them? _____

They just keep on doing evil, nor do they regard the majesty of the Lord.

Verses 11-12

In verse 11 we see God’s hand is lifted, but the wicked do not see it.

What do God’s people want the wicked to see? _____

They want the fire of judgment to consume them.

Verse 12 is a beautiful affirmation by God’s people.

What do they say about everything they have accomplished? _____

He’s the one who has made it possible for them to have true peace and to do everything they have accomplished.

Verses 13-15

God’s people confess misplaced allegiance. Whose name alone do they honor? _____

All the kings who ruled over them are no more. They have been wiped out.

But what has God done to their land (vs.15)? _____

The timeframe of what this verse is talking about has different interpretations depending on how it’s viewed.

Here are some of the ideas:

- Historical Interpretation (The “Near-View”) – A lot of scholars believe this verse is a reflection of God’s past faithfulness to Israel.
 - The expansion that happened under kings like Uzziah and Hezekiah.
 - The “enlargement” could be referring to the miraculous preservation of Jerusalem in 701 BCE from the Assyrians which kept the nation from being destroyed.
- Messianic and Gospel Interpretation – the timeframe extends to birth, life and earthly ministry of Jesus and the subsequent growth of the Church.
 - The enlargement of the nation is seen as the spiritual expansion of the people of God to include all nations through the Gospel (inclusion of Gentiles).
 - It would be pointing to the period starting from the Great Commission, where God’s kingdom begins and extends to the “ends of the earth”.
- Eschatological Interpretation (The Far-View) – Many commentators consider the ultimate fulfillment of this verse in a future End Times context.
 - This is seen to be taking place during the Millennial Kingdom when Messiah establishes His 1,000 year reign on earth.
 - Some view “you have extended all the borders of the land” as meaning the New Heavens and New Earth where the borders of God’s dwelling have no limits and encompass the entire renewed creation.

What does it say God has gained for Himself (vs.15)? _____

No matter how verse 15 is viewed God is glorified because He is recognized as the source of their growth, security and abundance.

Look at the repeated phrase, “*You have enlarged the nation*” and then “*You have extended all the borders of the land.*” It’s all about God and what He has done.

Verses 16-18

We move from the might of God to the weakness and helplessness of the people.

Verse 16 seems to be showing that the people recognize that their distress (oppression) from other nations was due to God’s discipline of them, not due to the power of those nations.

What imagery is used in verse 17? _____

Verse 18 is a heartbreaking depiction. All that pain comes without the result they expected. They expected salvation, justice or national restoration, but nothing changed. Their enemies still remained. They were completely disillusioned.

This is showing that their suffering and effort didn’t bring deliverance. Israel endured all kinds of suffering and pain along with discipline, but that didn’t fix the world. Isaiah is trying to dismantle the idea that endurance equals righteousness, that pain equals progress or that effort equals redemption. He is showing here that only God can bring true deliverance. Verse

18 shows the moment that the people come to the end of themselves, and human hope runs out.

We are going to see how human failure sets the stage for God alone to act.

Verse 19

Verse 19 is God's answer to verse 18. Where human effort fails, God Himself acts. Where there was only death and dust, God speaks life.

What does it say about the dead? _____

"Dust" here refers to death. We get this back in Genesis 3:19 where it says, *"By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."*

What are the dead commanded to do? _____

It goes on to say, "the earth will give birth to her dead." Back in verse 18 it said, "we writhed in labor, but we gave birth to wind." Now God says the earth itself will give birth. Creation itself will obey God and release the dead.

Notice that the bodies rising here have nothing to do with what they themselves can do. Life comes only from God's voice, not human effort.

This is thought to be one of the clearest prophecies about the bodily resurrection of the dead in the Old Testament. We see that God's salvation ultimately includes the reversal of death itself.

Later scripture helps "locate" this verse in time:

-Daniel 12:2 places the resurrection at "the end of days".

"Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt."

-John 5:28-29 speaks of a future hour when the dead hear God's voice.

*"Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice **29** and come out—those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned."*

-I Corinthians 15 ties the resurrection to Christ's return and the final defeat of death.

So we see that verse 19 aligns with what the New Testament calls the final resurrection at the culmination of history. It refers to the ultimate future act of God at the end of history, when—after judgment and human failure—God raises the dead and fully restores His people, a hope later clarified as the final resurrection.

Promises to the Faithful (vs.20-21)

Verses 20-21

We need to see these two verses as they flow from the previous two:

- Verses 16-18 showed how human effort fails—no deliverance
- Verse 19 shows how God promises resurrection life
- Verses 20-21 show what God's people are to do while they wait for judgment on the earth to pass.

What does the Lord tell the people to do in verse 20? _____

These verses describe a temporary moment of hiding before final judgement is complete. Listen to the intimate language at the beginning of verse 20. It says, “Go, my people.” God is addressing His own people and He’s being protective.

It then goes on to say, “*enter your rooms and shut the doors for a little while.*”

Some see this as echoing earlier moments in the Bible:

- The Passover (Exodus 12) — God’s people stayed in their homes while judgment passed outside.
- Noah’s ark—God shut the door Himself.

The point here isn’t fear, but rather trustfully obeying God to provide the shelter.

“For a little while” shows that the judgment coming is limited in duration.

What does verse 21 say God is coming out to do? _____

The Lord is “coming out of His dwelling”. God is rising to act openly and decisively. There is no more restraint. This is a global act that matches the scope of Isaiah 24. Nothing and no one will escape the coming judgment.

“The earth will disclose the blood shed on it; the earth will conceal its slain no longer.” This is such a chilling disclosure. All the violence, innocent blood and unacknowledged suffering will be reckoned with. Forgotten victims are remembered, silenced suffering is named, and unpunished evil is finally addressed. God sees every wrong —nothing will remain buried.

These final two verses of chapter 26 picture God tenderly sheltering His people for a brief time as He rises up to judge the world, exposing every injustice, thereby clearing the way for resurrection life and final restoration.

Isaiah 27

Isaiah has shown us in the last three chapters what the end will look like and how God’s people wait for it. The next chapter resolves the tension that has been built up in chapters 24-26.

Verse 1

“In that day” what is the Lord going to use to punish? _____

What three words are used to describe His sword?

It says He will slay the monster of the sea: Leviathan - who is described as a gliding, coiling serpent.

So the chapter opens with this epic, heavyweight battle—The Lord vs. Leviathan. Notice that the Lord's victory is already proclaimed here (He will slay). The reality is this battle is between two infinitely unequal foes.

There are several references to Leviathan in the Old Testament:

- In celebration of the destruction of Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea crossing, Psalm 74:13-14 says, *"It was you who split open the sea by your power; broke the heads of the monster in the waters. It was you who crushed the heads of Leviathan and gave it as food to the creatures of the desert."*
- Psalm 104:26 – Pictures Leviathan more peacefully as a creature formed by God to play in the sea.
"There the ships go to and fro, and Leviathan, which you formed to frolic there."
- Job 3:8 – Job refers to those who are ready to rouse up Leviathan while cursing the day of his birth.
"May those who curse days curse that day, those who are ready to rouse Leviathan."
- Job 41 – The entire chapter is dedicated to a detailed description of Leviathan. It is used to highlight human helplessness and God's power.
- Revelation 12:9 While Leviathan is not actually mentioned in this verse, many see "the great dragon" and Leviathan as one and the same – reference to Satan.
"The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him."

Who is Leviathan? Interpretations include:

- It is a symbol of chaos and evil and symbolizes forces that oppose God.
- It is widely viewed as a prophetic reference to the devil or the "great dragon" mentioned in Revelation.
- It is viewed as a symbol of chaotic, idolatrous, or hostile nations (like Babylon and Assyria) that oppressed God's people.
- It is a mythological beast that comes from Ancient Near Eastern myths to highlight God's ultimate sovereignty over chaos.
- It is seen as end times judgment—referring to a future "day" of judgment where God brings justice upon all those chaotic forces.

No matter what it looks like, the major point here is that this is a victory that has already been won through Jesus Christ and will bring its final blow at the end of the world. So we see it is both "already and not yet."

Verses 2-6 READ

We get a depiction of the nation of Israel. What imagery is used once again for the nation?

In looking at these verses, we have to read them in light of the earlier song of the vineyard in Isaiah 5:1-7. That song started out so nicely with the Lord tending His vineyard — found a fertile hillside to plant on, removed all the rocks, chose the best vines, built a watchtower and a winepress. He looked for good grapes. But what did the vineyard end up yielding? Only bad grapes. The verses went on to say what God would do to the vineyard, and it wasn't anything good. Now we see the "vineyard" from the other side.

We get a list in verse 3 of what God does to take care of His vineyard:

- Watches over it
- Waters it continually
- Guards it day and night—so no harm comes to it

Let's look at the contrasts between these two vineyards:

First Song (chapter 5)

No fruit

No rain

Abandoned (wall removed)

Thorns and briers

Overrun

Second Song (chapter 27)

Fruit

Rain

Guarded

No thorns and briers

Spreads out

What we are seeing is that the judgment proclaimed in the first song will be totally reversed. The Lord had been angry with Israel and allowed her enemies to overrun her.

What does God say at the beginning of verse 4? _____

The anger that He had during the first song of the vineyard is no more. The rest of verse 4 is speaking to God's protection against any threat that might hinder them. If such threats came against them, He would confront them and take them out.

What does verse 5 show us? _____

Again, we see the heart of God. He wants even those who have opposed Him to turn and make peace with Him.

What is verse 6 saying that Israel will do? _____

They are finally going to be that blessing to the nations that they were always meant to be.

The vineyard had to be ravaged before it could be fruitful again. The people were without understanding and so couldn't see the wisdom of entrusting themselves to the only One who could save them. Discipline is the difficult route to fruitfulness. The fruit produced is good of course, but there is definitely an easier and better way to go if only we would take it.

Verses 7-9

The "her" in verse 7 is referring to Israel and is showing us that the discipline brought on Israel is not the same as what is brought on her enemies.

What means did God use to discipline His people (v.8)? _____

In verse 9 "Jacob" is referring to the whole of Israel. Jacob is the patriarch whose descendants are Israel. The word "atoned" is referring to the removal of guilt and sin from the nation.

"This will be the full fruit of the removal of his sin" – This is referring to the corrective discipline that was described in the previous verses (exile, warfare). In other words, God's actions brought purification to Israel and ultimately removed her sin.

What will the people completely get rid of? _____

For true atonement to happen, Israel's sins (particularly idol worship) needed to be completely removed.

We learn three things about the coming judgment from these verses:

- It is less severe than what is coming on Judah's enemies.
- It is carefully controlled, with no more severity than what is required to bring about the end goal.
- The end is atonement – it's removing what is offensive to God, so restoration can take place.

Verses 10-11

The chapter shifts here and suddenly focuses on what is unfruitful, lifeless and idolatrous—fortified cities that look strong, but are empty, dry branches that can't produce fruit and judgment that falls on the unrepentant.

What does it say about how the Maker feels about this (vs.11)? _____

These verses contrast with God's care and provision for His people that was described earlier.

Verses 12-13

What does God say He will do to His people from the northern to the southern borders?

When the threshing (judgment) is over, the grain (people) will be gathered up one by one. There is great tenderness here and strong reassurance.

What will sound “in that day” (vs.13)? _____

What will all the oppressed and exiled people do? _____

These verses point to both a historical and messianic fulfillment:

1. Historical partial fulfillment — when Israel returned from Babylon exile and scattered lands.
2. Ultimate eschatological fulfillment — final gathering of all God’s people when Christ returns. The trumpet usage in verse 13 leans toward the end time fulfillment.

Isaiah 26 focused on righteous living by faith and trusting God for His protection. Isaiah 27 emphasized God’s judgment and refining of Israel.

I want to go back and look at Isaiah 26:3 more deeply.

“You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in You.”

I want to talk about what this practically looks like for us today.

- Catch and replace – when a stressful thought arises, treat it as a prompt to “take every thought captive” (II Corinthians 10:5). Instead of letting our mind go to what-ifs, deliberately rehearse a promise of God or truth about His character.
- Saturate your mind with scripture
 - Fill your mind with God’s word through reading, studying and memorizing. If you struggle to memorize, just write passages down on cards and carry them with you.
- Practice the presence of God
 - Breath prayers - practice using short, one sentence prayers to re-center yourself during tasks. For example, “Your face, O Lord I seek”, “Lord, I lean on You now”, or “You are my God and I trust You.”
 - Daily Trigger – associate certain routine activities like washing dishes, commuting, or even opening your laptop with a moment to acknowledge God’s presence.
 - Midday Resets – Set a timer or a phone notification to pause for two minutes of silence or stillness and acknowledge that God is in control.
- Deliberate Dependence
 - Consult God first – before making decisions or reacting to something, ask, “What does God say about this?” rather than relying on your own understanding.

- Surrender Control – Identify areas where you are trying to “fix” or manipulate outcomes and consciously hand them over to God and say, “God, this belongs to You, not me.”
- Gratitude as an Anchor – Regularly list specific things you are thankful for. Gratitude reinforces our confidence in God’s past faithfulness and makes it easier to trust Him for the future.
- Community and Stewardship
 - Locking Shields – share your mental battles with trusted believers who can offer biblical counsel and prayer. This will strengthen your resolve when you feel weak.
 - Serving Others – redirecting your focus from your own anxieties to the needs of others often helps steady our mind by placing our own trials in a broader kingdom perspective.

Which of these areas do you find the most challenging to maintain during a busy week?