



Isaiah 24 – 25 Judgement and Grace

Warm up On which media outlet do you rely upon for news (e.g. ABC Radio National or Chanel 7 TV news etc.)?

24:1 – 20

Read Chapter 24.

1. What are the disasters brought upon by judgement?
2. Why has this come about?
3. How comprehensive is the extent of the judgement?
4. What is the everlasting covenant that has been broken?
5. How do you answer critics that say the Old Testament is entirely about terrible violent judgement?
6. How is the wasted city branded meaningless?
7. What are the parallels to the formlessness of Genesis 1:2 and Jeremiah 4:23 – 26?
8. How does the world as a city under judgement reflect the tower of Babel in Genesis 11:1 – 9?

The world rejoicing in salvation – the blessings of Mount Zion

25: 1 – 12

Read chapter 25.

1. What are the blessings of Mount Zion?
2. How is the doctrine of salvation rooted in the Exodus?
3. What are the main elements of praise (24:16) in the unfolding of the song – 25:4 – 5?
4. What does the name Lord of Hosts mean? (vs 6)
5. What do you understand by the great banquet (6)

6. What is the covering or veil of verse 7?
7. How do we see the work of Christ (7 – 8)
8. What is meant by ...”on that day.” (9)
9. In verses 10 – 12 What is the contrast between the hand of the Lord and the trampling of Moab?
10. What do you understand of the picture of a swimmer spreading out his hands?

PRAY

As you pray you may find the Collect for advent a helpful structure to pray: -

Almighty God,

Give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility;

that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious Majesty to judge both the quick and the dead we may rise to the life immortal; through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, now and ever.

Amen

Isaiah 24 – 25 Judgement and Grace PRAY

24:1 – 20

In chapter 24 of Isaiah's mighty book he comes to the third of five visions. He started looking at the world around him – the second using cryptic titles probed the future and still the same features dominated.

He looks next to the end. There are no divisions – everything merges into a single vision.

- The collapse of the world (city a heap)
- The human attempt to organise the world into one global village
- The Lord reigns over the kings of the earth in Zion
- And the great messianic feast in chapter 25.

24:1 – 3

A list covering the comprehensiveness of the Lord's judgement: -

- Priest and people
- Slave and master
- Maid (servant girl) and mistress
- Buyer and seller
- Lender and borrower
- Creditor and debtor

No single class or type is left out – the terrifying judgement – verse 3

**The earth shall be utterly empty and utterly plundered;
for the Lord has spoken this word.**



4 – 6

The earth withered the everlasting covenant broken

**The earth mourns and withers;
the world languishes and withers;
the highest people of the earth languish.**

⁵**The earth lies defiled
under its inhabitants;**



**for they have transgressed the laws,
violated the statutes,
broken the everlasting covenant.**

**⁶Therefore a curse devours the earth,
and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt;
therefore the inhabitants of the earth are
scorched,
and few men are left.**

All that echoes around the empty earth is a devouring curse. (6)

Although the OT is wrongly accused of being entirely about terrible violent judgement – the reality of a world without God is unimaginable horror.

Before we can appreciate any good news, or amazing enormous grace we need to be clear regarding the horrors of the godless condition we are in.

7 – 12

The prophecy continues in this vein – the songs stilled, the fall of the city – in the middle of this section we have verse 10: -

The wasted city is broken down;



Alec Motyer translates the word for wasted city as “The city of meaninglessness.” The same word is used in Genesis 1:2 of the material world before the Creator gave it

- shape,
- order,
- light,
- life and meaning.

Jeremiah 4:23 – 26 uses the same word when he foresees creation under judgement

- bereft of light,
- bereft of stability,
- bereft of living creatures,
- bereft of ordered growth and organised society.

Isaiah pictures the world as a city (Man's greatest effort at organised society) a city where nothing adds up.



Under judgement everything comes crashing down – like Babel, humankind's first city with its meaningless gabble and its unfinished tower. (Genesis 11:1 – 9)

**The wine mourns,
the vine languishes,
all the merry-hearted sigh.**

**⁸The mirth of the tambourines is stilled,
the noise of the jubilant has ceased,
the mirth of the lyre is stilled.**



Even that which is supposed to give merriment to its people mourns – languishes – even the vine heaves a great sigh of sorrow.

The party atmosphere of the city that once was, shows a life dependent on the elation from alcohol. The city looked wholly to what this world provides seeking instant gratification.

**¹²Desolation is left in the city;
the gates are battered into ruins.**

All that is left of the city is ruin – destruction – defencelessness.

Life in the city of meaninglessness is unsatisfying – even impossible.

Isaiah goes on to widen the recipients of judgement to include the nations. An earlier illustration he had given was of an olive tree being beaten to drop its fruit. Similarly the grape harvest is complete – nothing is left.



You get the message – the world we live in doesn't add up – hardly a day passes when we ask why this or that happened – why this person or those people suffered for such a prolonged period.

This is what Ecclesiastes meant by saying all is vanity – trying to explain the world's tragic events is like trying to grab a handful of wind!

But our Bibles, reveal a higher wisdom that rules over all: a total complete justice more than humanity can bring is coming.

An almighty power is having its way and a total love, beyond our understanding is directing everything – determining times and seasons.

I want us to go to chapter 25 as set for us for the series or we will run out of time.

The world rejoicing in salvation – the blessings of Mount Zion **25: 1 – 12**

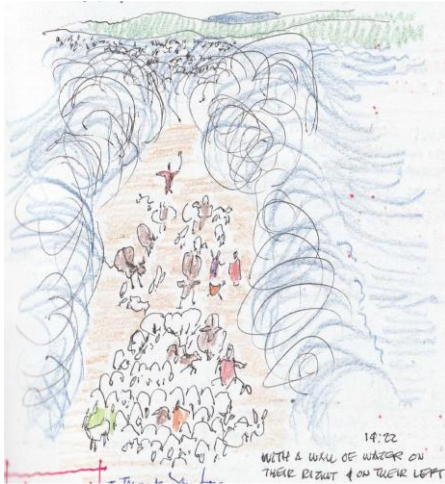
**O Lord, you are my God;
I will exalt you; I will praise your name,
for you have done wonderful things,
plans formed of old, faithful and sure.
²For you have made the city a heap,
the fortified city a ruin;
the foreigners' palace is a city no more;
it will never be rebuilt.**



**³Therefore strong peoples will glorify you;
cities of ruthless nations will fear you.**

As 24:16 says **“From the ends of the earth we hear songs of praise, of glory to the righteous One.”**

Next Isaiah unpacks this world-wide song of praise.



The doctrine of salvation is rooted in the Exodus. There we find the Lord who saves his people and overthrows his enemies.

Vs.4 – 5

**For you have been a stronghold to the poor,
a stronghold to the needy in his distress,
a stronghold to the needy in his distress,
a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat;
for the breath of the ruthless is like a storm**

against a wall,

⁵ like heat in a dry place.

You subdue the noise of the foreigners;

as heat by the shade of a cloud,

so the song of the ruthless is put down.

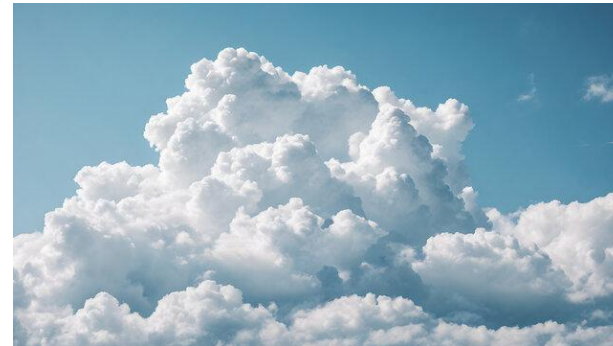
THE PILGRIMES TO Zion move through a ruined world.

They enter the Lord's stronghold which is identified as the Lord Himself.

For you have been a stronghold to the poor,

Salvation and rescue.

The foreigners are subdued – the heat replaced by the shade of a cooling cloud.



Yahweh the LORD, is praised for destroying the cities of the ruthless, silencing their song. Instead, he has made himself a refuge for the poor and needy.

Vs.6

⁶On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.



The name for the Lord used here is Yahweh Sabaoth – the Lord of heaven’s hosts – the vast army of angels.

Then, next, what is the picture of the Lord – it is not only as the head of his mighty hosts of angels – but also of being the host himself of a great banquet – a feast of rich food and fine wines.

Vss. 7 - 8

⁷And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations.

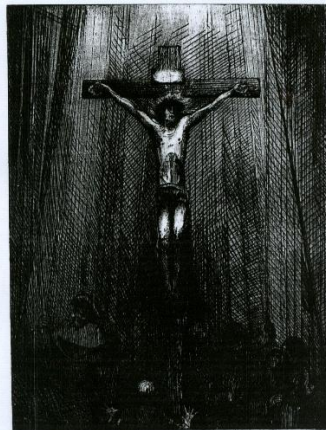
⁸ He will swallow up death for ever; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken.

What is the covering or veil of verse 7? – Verse 8 explains – it is death itself that will be swallowed up forever. The death explained here is not just the transience of this life or its brevity.

For every thoughtful person fears death unless and until salvation in Christ has removed that fear. What Isaiah is emphasising is the death of the curse brought on as the consequence of sin.

We have the same exquisite picture echoed in Revelation 21:4, that it is the Lord Himself who will wipe away tears, moving from person to person until each eye has been dried.

He Himself will take away the reproach of his people. They no longer need to listen to the nagging voice of the accuser.



What we are seeing here is the work Christ accomplished on the cross and the profound depth of Grace and forgiveness.

Vs 9

⁹ It will be said on that day,

“Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us.

**This is the Lord; we have waited for him;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”**

“On that day” looks to the last day with another song of praise – the waiting for God to act was answered with His salvation – gladness and rejoicing spills out.

Vss 10 - 12

¹⁰ For the hand of the Lord will rest on this

mountain,

**and Moab shall be trampled down in his place,
as straw is trampled down in a dunghill.**

**¹¹ And he will spread out his hands in the midst of it as a swimmer spreads his hands out to swim,
but the Lord will lay low his pompous pride together with the skill of his hands.**

**¹² And the high fortifications of his walls he will bring down,
lay low, and cast to the ground, to the dust.**

Summary and wrap up

The messianic banquet is foretold in Jesus’ feeding miracles (e.g. Mk.6:30 – 44; 8:1 – 9) and in the parable of the 10 bridesmaids (Matthew 25:1 – 13). In this parable the welcomed guests are safely shut in with the bridegroom.

This in turn anticipates the marriage feast of the Lamb (Revelation 19:1 – 9)

In 25:6 – 9 we have a picture of ultimate, eternal reality – it’s a banquet with no expense spared – every provision is made and all sorrow is comforted with every tear dried. (Rev.7:17)

There are the double promises of first Jesus and then John who was caught up to heaven or bestowed with heavenly visions where he is shown its delights. (Rev.4:1).

Three aspects of the heavenly banquet: -

1. We have the character of our God who reveals such an end view and who brings us to the enjoyment of it – spreading all his heavenly riches for our participation (This is our God vs.9)
2. Salvation's destiny is – eternal bounty – the pure hilarious joy of the Lord's wedding breakfast. (9)
3. It is a matter of confident patient expectancy – a call for us to have an upward and onward gaze for the returning of the Lord Jesus. We need the patience to wait BUT also to maintain an urgency in our expectation.

Verse 9 “Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us.

**This is the Lord; we have waited for him;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”**

Lord there is so much you have prepared for us – to look forward to – the enjoyment of your heavenly riches. Surely, You are our God.

Give us we pray confident, patient expectancy – to hear your call - to gaze upward and onward as we wait for your return and your banquet.

PRAY