

INITIATION INTO ISAIAH

by

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CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

THEME:

Coming—the Kingdom (continued).

REMARKS:

It is well for us to keep in mind that the blessings spoken of here are for those who enter the earthly kingdom—Israel in particular, and the Gentiles in general. Certainly believers today can, and do rejoice in these blessings promised to Israel in particular. Likewise there are great spiritual principles put down here which are applicable for God's people in all ages, as we shall see.

Although this chapter continues to set forth the same subject as does chapter 25, it is not on so lofty a plane. The testimony is more to the prosaic than to the poetic; more literary than musical.

The style is didactic. Great spiritual truths are stated as if they were proverbs. These factors will be in evidence as we consider the separate verses under COMMENT.

OUTLINE:

1. **PROSPECT**—“**In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah.**” Verses 1-8
2. **INTROSPECT**—“**With my soul have I desired thee in the night.**” Verses 9-15
3. **RETROSPECT**—“**We have been with child, we have been in pain.**” Verses 16-21

COMMENT:

Verse 1 —**In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.**

This chapter is a song but not to the same degree as the preceding chapter. The language here precludes the possibility that this is a literal city. This is God's metropolis where He protects His own. The walls are salvation. This is the city prepared for the earthly people.

Verse 2—**Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.**

“The righteous nation” is Israel in the Kingdom.

Verse 3—**Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.**

Here is the first example of a great spiritual principle which is applicable to all ages.

Is the mind the physical brain or the thought which the brain conveys? The word for mind here means *“that which is formed.”* The heart is the womb of thought and the brain merely carries it as a telephone does a message. When all our thinking is positioned on God in Christ today, then perfect peace is our portion. This same thought is suggested in Philippians 4:6-7.

Be careful for nothing: but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Verse 4—**Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:**

As has been suggested, the expression **“everlasting strength”** is literally *“Rock of Ages.”* This has become familiar to us in the hymn. *Jehovah is a name given peculiarly to Israel.*

And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said. Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you (Exodus 3:14).

Basically it means the Self-existing One. It is likewise given to us in a little different form in Revelation 1:8.

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

The **“which is, and which was, and which is to come”** is the same as Jehovah.

The same thought is suggested again in Hebrews 13:8.

“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.”

Verse 5—**For he bringeth down them that dwell on high; the lofty city, he layeth it low; he layeth it low, even to the ground; he bringeth it even to the dust.**

Another city is brought before us here. This is man’s city, the city of *tohu*—**“destruction.”**

Jennings has aptly called this section, *“The Tale of Two Cities.”* God’s city versus man’s city. The eternal versus the temporary. Man’s city is to be destroyed that God’s city might be exalted.

Verse 6—**The foot shall tread it down, even the feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy.**

The city seems to carry its own destruction. It is like the smoking flax. It destroys itself.

Verse 7—**The way of the just is uprightness: thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just.**

Here is another grand spiritual principle. It literally means that God levels out the path of the just, not necessarily weighs in the sense of balance.

Verse 8—**Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.**

This is not the “**blessed hope**” of the Church. Israel was to wait for her Messiah coming in judgment of her enemies. It is always through judgment to blessing, through the night to the dawn.

For the believer the judgment is in the past—at the cross.

Verse 9—**With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.**

Through the long night the righteous and patient soul waits for God. Remember we are not the children of the night but of the day, nevertheless we need to alert ourselves and not sleep in the night of sin.

And that, knowing the time, and now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day: not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying (Romans 13:11-13).

Verse 10—**Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord.**

God’s grace is extended to the wicked but they spurn and reject it.

Verse 11—**Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them.**

Since the wicked will not have God’s grace, they must inevitably have His judgment.

Verses 12—**Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us.**

Verses 13—**O Lord our God, other, lords beside thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name.**

The redeemed remnant will confess their part in the sin of the nation. As they examine their own lives in the light of His presence they will come in confession of sins.

Verses 14—**They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish.**

They see the folly of their past acts. These nations of the past that ruled over Israel and to whom they looked for help and aped their ways, these shall never rise again. They have gone into oblivion.

Verses 15—**Thou hast increased the nation, O Lord, thou hast increased the nation: thou art glorified: thou hadst removed it far unto all the ends of the earth.**

Now the nation Israel comes into its rightful position.

Verse 16—**Lord, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them.**

In the past the remnant turned in prayer to God, he goes back in retrospect to those difficult days.

Verse 17—**Like as a woman with child, that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in thy sight, O Lord.**

In the past the nation Israel was like a woman in childbirth, so great was their suffering. The prophet is now looking back over that period which is yet future, he saw it from the other side of the river of time.

Verse 18—**We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen.**

The suffering never produced any fruitful results. This time of travail is evidently the Great Tribulation. This period did not change the heart of the wicked. They continued to blaspheme the God of Heaven.

Verse 19—**Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.**

This is the voice of the Lord God breaking into the prophet's reverie. The Lord says, "**Thy dead shall live.**"

Whose dead? Obviously the nation Israel, he continues, “**My dead bodies shall arise.**” Some interpret this as the national resurrection of the nation Israel and use Ezekiel 37 where we have the Valley of Dry Bones as the counterpart.

Others turn to Daniel 12:2 where the resurrection is definitely of individuals. It is not both national and individual? It is difficult to have a resurrection of a nation as suggested here without having the resurrection of individuals who constitute that nation. These dead are now included in the Hallelujah Chorus, “**Awake, and sing.**”

Verse 20—**Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.**

He moves back to the scene of the Great Tribulation as he describes it as “**the indignation.**” Some have attempted to identify this with some geographical spot where God will preserve His people. This spot has been identified at times as the rock hewn city of Petra. Both Jennings and Ironside suggest that the Lord God, Himself, is to be their protector.

For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me upon a rock (Psalm 27:5).

This seems to be the more likely explanation.

THE FUTURE

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the vision of the world, and all the wonders that would be:
Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of mighty sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight drooping down with costly bales,
Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rained a ghastly dew
From the nation's airy navies grappling in the center blue:
Far along the world-wide whisper of the south wind rushing warm,
Were the standards of the peoples plunging through the thunder-storm,
Till the war-drum throbbed no longer, and the battle-flags were furled,
In the Parliament of man, the federation of the world.
There the common sense of most shall slumber, lapt in universal law.

—Tennyson

Tennyson was wrong—not the parliament of man will bring in the Kingdom—only the coming Christ will accomplish this glorious end.

~ end of chapter 26 ~

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