

Isaiah 24-27 • Prophecies of the End Times

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Isaiah, chapter 24, let's begin with prayer.

Father in heaven, every time we come to Your Word, we come with an attitude of complete dependence upon Your Holy Spirit to make the Word alive in our hearts to give us a heart of understanding to help us to apply the Word to our daily lives.

Father, as we go through some of these chapters here in Isaiah tonight, we pray that you would use them to nourish and equip us. Whatever we're going through, Lord, you know, you know what people are going through. You know what everybody's going through. You know intimately the circumstances and situations that people are enduring.

And, Lord, I know that there are many people who are being called during this hour to patiently endure, as they pray, as they wait, as they trust. And, Lord, we want to take that same attitude as we approach the Word.

Use this time, Father, use it to strengthen your children. We ask it in Jesus' name, amen.

I want to show you an outline of the next 4 chapters of Isaiah on the screen and I don't know if we're going to get through all these chapters tonight to be completely honest with you because there's quite a bit here. But I wanted to at least give you a bit of a roadmap so that you could kind of see what we're looking at.

Isaiah 24-27 Outline

- Chapter 24 • judgement upon the whole earth
- Chapter 25 • God will swallow up death
- Chapter 26 • Joy for God's people
- Chapter 27 • Israel will be exalted

In the 24th chapter of Isaiah, which is where we will begin, it is going to cover the Great Tribulation essentially, the judgment of God that is going to come upon the whole earth. And that chapter is kind of a challenging one to read to be honest, because it's not anything that's fun. There's nothing fun about the day of the Lord as it relates to judgment.

And then in chapter 25, we start to get into some good news where God speaks of death and you might say, well, that doesn't sound like very good news. No, He actually talks about overturning it and He actually uses the term two times, swallow up and I like that that term where God is going to overturn death. We'll talk about what that means.

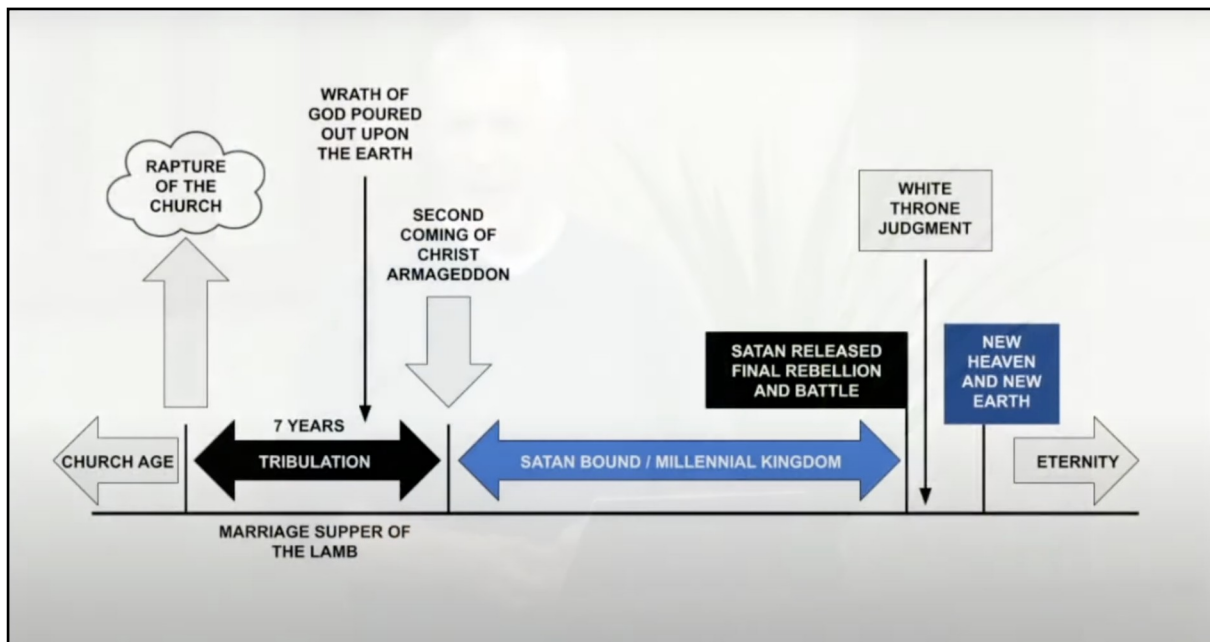
Chapter 26, it really reads very much like one of the Psalms and it's really a Psalm of praise, it's a song of praise. But I believe that it is connected to the chapters that we're looking at. You'll notice that we're dealing with end times prophecies and we start with the Great Tribulation.

We then go into this whole idea of God overturning death, which we know takes place then. And then chapter 26 is just the joy of God's people, seeing the work of the Lord, His justice, His redemptive plan finally unfolding in a beautiful and powerful way.

And then in the 27th chapter of Isaiah, we see something that we see actually quite often in the prophetic works in the Old Testament and that is prophecies about Israel one day being the center of the world. And this of course, is a prophecy about the Millennial Kingdom.

Now, what you're going to see in these four chapters as you look at those headings you see a bit of a consistent timeline, beginning with the Great Tribulation, the Millennial Kingdom, the joy of the Lord, Israel being exalted during that time.

And so in order for some of you to perhaps help solidify these timeline elements a little bit more in your heart and mind, I want to put up that familiar timeline that we've put up several times in the past that I basically refer to it as an End Times timeline.



But on the left-hand side, you see the church age and that's what we're in right now. The next thing to take place on God's prophetic calendar is the catching away of the church, which of course means that we will meet the Lord in the air. That's what Paul says in Thessalonians, but that is going to usher in the period of time that we call the Tribulation Period. About halfway through that period begins what many commentators refer to as the Great Tribulation, where the wrath of God is poured out upon the earth. And that is a period of time we discern from the Book of Daniel, to last for seven years.

At the end of that time period, at a time when Israel seems to be in desperate straits with the nations of the world coming against it to destroy that nation, the Lord will return.

Jesus will then come to earth in what is referred to as the Second Coming and a battle will ensue and that will be that Battle of Armageddon. Which, of course, our Lord will win on behalf of Israel and that will usher in a period of time known as the Millennial Kingdom. And it's a time of great peace and prosperity, mostly because Satan is bound during that time and cast into the abyss for that 1,000 year period of time and therefore he's not there to cause all kinds of problems. And with Jesus on the throne, Israel as a nation is exalted, incredible things are happening.

But at the end of that 1,000 year period of time, Satan we're told, will be released for one final time of deception and he will find after a 1,000 years, a fairly ready audience among those who are mortals still on the earth and yet that rebellion will be put down quickly by our Lord Jesus.

Following that rebellion, will come the White Throne Judgment. This is where the final judgment is made; the judgment for sinners, for those who have rejected the purpose of God and so forth in their lives.

And following the right White Throne Judgment, we find on the calendar, and we're not exactly sure how quickly these things all happen back to back, but there will be a new heaven and a new earth created.

The Bible tells us that the old heaven and the old earth will pass away and that the new heaven and the new earth will actually be merged. And the Bible tells us at the end of the Book of Revelation, that God will dwell with mankind, and we enter into that time frame we call eternity, which is ridiculous to call it a time frame because eternity has no time. But it's language that we understand, and it helps us to kind of grasp it with our puny minds. So anyway, that's kind of the timeline that is laid out in the scripture and it helps to understand a little bit of what is going on here in Isaiah.

Now again, in Chapter 24, as we get into this first chapter we are in, this is the tribulation period, okay. So that's what it's going to say and it says, *“Behold, the LORD will empty the earth and make it desolate, and he will twist its surface and scatter its inhabitants.” (ESV)* This is really incredible and some of these things will be repeated in this chapter and it describes an awful loss of human life during that time.

It describes convulsions that come upon the earth to devastate it and it basically, this chapter outlines that period of time that we call, the tribulation. Again, it takes place after the Lord returns for His bride. I believe that the catching away of the church is the heralding moment that begins the tribulation period, at which time the world is plunged into that 7 year time of difficulty.

But God has a plan during that time. He has a plan for Israel and He has a plan for the world. And Israel, during the 7 year tribulation period, will be disciplined by the Lord for rejecting their God, rejecting their Messiah and yet in many ways, God will protect Israel during the tribulation period. But they will still be disciplined very, very strongly.

We're told that in fact, the nation of Israel will make a deal with the anti-Christ at the beginning of the tribulation period, but then he will betray them halfway through. And then, he will begin to persecute them, demand their worship of him and so forth and it will be a terrible, terrible time. In fact, the Bible refers to the Great Tribulation in the Old Testament, as the time of Jacob's trouble.

And yet for the world, it's even worse because for the rest of the world. And I'm talking about now those who have rejected the purposes of God, rejected His will for their lives and the forgiveness that He offers through Jesus Christ. The Great Tribulation will be a time of the outpouring of God's wrath.

Now, people ask me a lot whether or not individuals will come to know Christ as Savior during the tribulation period and the answer is yes, they will, absolutely they will. In fact, in the Book of Revelation, John beholds a vision, if you will, of many, many saints. He says they're just, they're uncountable and he is asked, who are these? He says, these are they who come out of the Great Tribulation. They are those who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb and we know that they've been martyred. They've been martyred for the cause of Christ during that time.

Because they've stood, having seen that the church was taken away, they put their faith in Jesus, but they paid for that faith with their lives. And they cry out to the Lord, and this voice comes from under the altar, and John hears it, and these voices say, Lord, when will you avenge us for our deaths and so forth, and they're told to wait a little while longer. And so, there are many, many people who will come to Christ during the tribulation period and the wrath of God is not for them. Rather it is to fall upon the people of the world who have rejected God.

Now, Isaiah goes on in verse 2, and he says, *“And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the slave, 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.”* And this is just a poetic way of saying that the wrath of God is going to come upon all people of the world, regardless of their class, regardless of their social standing, regardless of their income level, their poverty level or whatever, it's going to come upon all of us.

In fact we're told in the very next verse, verse 3, that *“The earth shall be utterly empty and utterly plundered; for the LORD has spoken this word.”* And we're told actually in the Book of Revelation that more than one third of all those living on the earth will perish at various times when God pours out His wrath during the Great Tribulation. And I imagine it will seem very much like the world is empty.

Look at, it goes on to say, it says, *“⁴ The earth mourns and withers; the world languishes and withers; the highest people of the earth languish.”* Meaning those who have the most resources and yet they are completely affected. And

then God in verse 5 and following gives the reason for the judgment. *“The earth lies defiled under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore a curse devours the earth, (that's an important statement) and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt; therefore the inhabitants of the earth are scorched, and few men are left.”*

So it's painting a picture here for you and I, a very desperate time in human history when God's wrath is poured out upon the whole world. And then we're going to see here in verses 7 through 9, how the rejoicing of mankind has ceased during that time. It says, *“The wine mourns, ...”* You know there's other places in the Bible where it talks about wine making someone happy. Well, it doesn't do that anymore. *“The wine (in fact, it says) mourns (and) the vine (even, where the wine, the grapes are grown) languishes, all the merry-hearted (are now are in a posture of) sigh (sighing instead of rejoicing).”*

It says, ⁸ *“The mirth of the tambourines is (now) stilled, the noise of the jubilant has ceased, the mirth of the lyre (an instrument used to praise and make merry music has now been) is stilled. ⁹ No more do they drink wine with singing; strong drink is bitter to those who drink it. ¹⁰ The wasted city is broken down; every house is shut up so that none can enter. ¹¹ There is an outcry in the streets for lack of wine; all joy has grown dark; the gladness of the earth is banished. ¹² Desolation is left in the city; the gates are battered into ruins. ¹³ For thus it shall be in the midst of the earth among the nations, as when an olive tree is beaten, (in other words, there's no more fruit left on the tree and) as at the gleanings when the grape harvest is done.”* So, and again, this speaks of the condition that's going to be all in the earth, all around the earth.

There will be an outcry in the streets, there will be darkness, there will be no gladness. As the Bible says here, it will be banished and there will be very slim pickings as it says, *“as when an olive tree is beaten”* to bring all the olives down to the ground and so forth. It says there will be nothing left, it will be very lean times, very desperate times.

Now this is all very dark and difficult, but I want you to notice as we keep reading in verse 14, we come upon these verses that are almost strange sounding amidst the wrath and destruction that we've been reading about because now it says in verse 14. *“They lift up their voices, they sing for joy; over the majesty of the LORD they shout from the west. ¹⁵ Therefore in the east give glory to the LORD; in the coastlands of the sea, give glory to the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. ¹⁶ From the ends of the earth (look at this) we hear songs of praise, of glory to the Righteous One. But I say, (and this is interesting, now*

Isaiah speaks and says) *“I waste away, I waste away. Woe is me! For the traitors have betrayed, with betrayal the traitors have betrayed.”*”

I think these are very interesting verses that probably deserve our thought because we see here that during some of the worst times of the tribulation period, Isaiah is given in his vision to hear songs of praise. Voices lifted up in thanksgiving to God and people giving glory to the name of the Lord. And whether Isaiah is hearing the tribulation saints who are on the earth and praising God, even though they are too in desperate situations and giving their lives for the gospel or whether he's hearing the saints in heaven; the church, the bride of Christ, we don't know.

And it could be that the bride of Christ is witnessing the outpouring of God's righteous judgments and are praising Him because His judgments have finally taken hold, we don't know for sure. But, it's interesting that in verse 16 in the midst of the praise, Isaiah then says, *“Woe is me!”* And I believe that Isaiah here is speaking as a representative, if you will, of Israel. And he is speaking, in fact, from the collective voice of Israel during that time, because we know that midway through the tribulation period, as I said earlier, Israel will be betrayed by the anti-Christ. Did you notice that as Isaiah is speaking there in verse, end of verse 16, he says, *“I waste away. Woe is me! ... the traitors have betrayed, with betrayal the traitors have betrayed.”*

And so, I think this is the voice of Isaiah speaking what is in the heart of Israel during the great tribulation. The saints of God, wherever they may be, are praising the Lord saying, God, your righteous judgments have come finally and we praise you because your judgments are true. But Israel is saying, woe is me for we have been betrayed and truly, the anti-Christ betrays Israel.

Back now to the difficulty upon the whole earth, verse 17. *“Terror and the pit and the snare are upon you, O inhabitant of the earth!”*¹⁸ *He who flees at the sound of the terror shall fall into the pit, and he who climbs out of the pit shall be caught in the snare. For the windows of heaven are opened,...*” And these aren't the windows of blessing. We talk about that sometimes about the windows of heaven and the blessing God being poured out. No, these are the windows of wrath and they are being poured out. *“¹⁸...the windows of heaven are opened, and (because of that, it says) the foundations of the earth tremble.”*

Now, I want you to listen to the following poetic language in verses 19 and 20 describing the effect of God's wrath and the effect it has on the earth. On the earth that you and I live on, check this out. It says, *“¹⁹ The earth is utterly broken, the earth is split apart, the earth is violently shaken.”*²⁰ *The*

earth staggers like a drunken man; it sways like a hut; its transgression lies heavy upon it, and it falls, and will not rise again.” Isn't that incredible?

I mean, the language that is used here, Isaiah employs the use of what we call similes. And the 2 similes that he speaks of here to reference the condition and the effect that this tribulation is having on the earth is first of a drunkard staggering, a man who is completely drunk and can't even walk straight. That's how the earth is going to appear, can you imagine what that's going to be like? The earth staggers, the earth will stagger and then he uses the simile of a hut, which is a simple shack or a shelter. They were usually very simply built, being shattered by the terrible wind and destroyed and so forth.

So God is communicating that the earth is going to be demolished by God's wrath. And in verse 21, He says, *“On that day the LORD will punish the host of heaven, in heaven, and the kings of the earth, on the earth.”* And so we see that the judgment of God during the tribulation period is not limited just to the earth, it extends to the heavens. So there are judgments going on at that time all throughout heaven and earth.

Verse 22, *“They will be gathered together as prisoners in a pit; they will be shut up in a prison, and after many days they will be punished.”* And that reference to *“many days”* is seen by many Bible commentators as a reference to the Millennial Kingdom, that after the Millennial Kingdom, they will be punished or dealt with because that's when the White Throne Judgment takes place, that's why I gave you that timeline.

And then the chapter ends by saying, *“²³ Then the moon will be confounded and the sun ashamed, for the LORD of hosts reigns on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and his glory will be before his elders.”* And it is a great way to end the chapter, frankly, because it says that the sun and the moon will be outshined by the glory of the rule of Jesus Christ on Mount Zion at the conclusion of the Great Tribulation when He establishes His throne in Jerusalem, all right.

So chapter 25, we've gotten through the Great Tribulation here. Chapter 25 is, I believe a very important chapter for understanding some things that have caused, I think people and believers as well, much consternation for many years and that is the existence of death. I know that people really struggle with death and much of the reason is because they don't understand the Word of God related to death. And in fact, I had a woman write me here just about 2 weeks ago or so and her actual question was to me, why does God allow death and can He not get rid of it?

She was really concerned. Is God unable to get rid of death? Is that why it's still going on and so forth? Well, this chapter answers much of what this woman put to me in the form of her questions. Particularly, can He not get rid of it? So, I want to share with you what I wrote to this woman two weeks ago, because I shared with her things that everybody needs to know about death.

So if you're taking notes, this is what we're going to be looking at, “Things that everyone needs to know about death.” This is going to be, this is going to be real fun, serious, it'll be actually. It ends well, let's say that, okay.

Things that everyone needs to know about death:

1. Death was never part of God's creative plan. He created a world where no death existed. Therefore, death is an intrusion in God's creation and considered an “enemy.”

“...*Therefore, death is an intrusion in God's creation and considered* (in the scripture, in fact, called in the scripture,) *an enemy.*” The Bible says the last enemy to be destroyed will be death, okay? This is the part that really messes people over. Why did God create death? He didn't, He didn't create death. Death was a consequence of sin and the curse that goes along with sin.

Here's the second thing you should know, everybody needs to know about death.

Things that everyone needs to know about death:

2. God warned Adam that his disobedience would introduce death. (Adam and Eve ignored the warning after being tempted by the devil.)

He told him that would happen, and we know from reading the passage that they ignored that warning.

Here's the third thing everybody needs to know about death.

Things that everyone needs to know about death:

3. Death is the result/consequence of sin.

And there's a couple of scriptures that go along with that from the New Testament. First, in Romans chapter 5, let's put this up on the screen for you as well. It says,

Romans 5:12 (ESV)

...sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—

...sin came into the world through one man, (that's talking about Adam) and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—

We know where death came, right? And then Romans 6:23 goes on to say this, that,

Romans 6:23 (ESV)

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

For the wages of sin is death, but (of course we know that) the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Alright, next thing you need to know about death, number four,

Things that everyone needs to know about death:

4. By sending His Son to die in our place, God initiated the first step in overturning death.

People, this is what people don't get, yet death was this huge intrusion in God's creative program. Man caused it by his sin, God stepped into the fray by becoming a man, bearing the punishment of our sin so that death might be overturned. And people don't realize that Jesus coming to this earth was the process that God put into play to overturn death.

And in number five, the fifth thing you need to know about death is that,

Things that everyone needs to know about death:

5. Jesus bore our penalty (not just physical death, but spiritual death).

“Jesus bore our penalty, not just our physical (penalty,) but (also our) spiritual (penalty), that's spiritual death and that's an important thing to remember.

The sixth thing is that,

Things that everyone needs to know about death:

6. Jesus rose from the dead as the “firstfruits” of those who conquer death.

“Jesus rose from the dead as the firstfruits (we talked about this on Sunday in our study of Colossians) of those who conquer death.”

Number seven,

Things that everyone needs to know about death:

7. When Jesus returns He will raise our old bodies and transform them into new bodies that will never die.

When I say our, I'm talking about believers. And then finally, the eighth and last thing you need to know about death is that,

Things that everyone needs to know about death:

8. Death itself will one day be overturned.

“Death itself will one day be (completely) overturned” and that's what we're going to read about in this chapter of Isaiah.

So look with me now, beginning in verse 1. *“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.”* And the overturning of death is something God planned from old.

“² For 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. ³ Therefore strong peoples will glorify you; cities of ruthless nations will fear you. ⁴ For you have been a stronghold to the poor, 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.”

On this mountain (check this out now, On 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.” You can tell about there's a feast going on. What's going on?

Verse 7, “*And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering (your Bible may say veil) that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations.*” And in case the poetic language of that is a little unclear, the Lord gives it to you straight.

Verse 8, “*He will swallow up death forever; 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.*” Wow, this is it right here. What you're reading, this is prophetically God's plan, His promise to all who are awaiting the fulfillment of His redemptive program. He says, that will be the final victory when death is completely wiped away.

Now the apostle Paul talks about this, he talks about death being eliminated. Look at what..., I'll put on the screen from 1 Corinthians chapter 15. It says,

1 Corinthians 15:54-55 (ESV)

When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”

When the perishable (and that's talking about the bodies we have now) puts on the imperishable, (that's talking about the bodies we will receive when the Lord comes for us) and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”

And then a verse that we talked about or alluded to before, 1 Corinthians 15:26,

1 Corinthians 15:26 (ESV)

The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

And once again, I want to remind you, death is an enemy, it is an enemy and that's the way God sees it.

Verse 9 says, “*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.”*” In other words, Isaiah is being told that the saints of God will burst into praise because the final work of God's redemptive plan has happened. And it says here that the saints will just overflow with gladness and rejoicing.

It says in verse 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 in this case, He's spreading out His hands in judgment over the Moabites) but the LORD will lay low his pompous pride together with the skill of his hands.”*

And finally, *“¹² And the high fortifications of his walls he will bring down, lay low, and cast to the ground, to the dust.”* All right, so very important chapter to read here in Isaiah because we gain a real strong sense of God's program, His redemptive plan to one day overturn death.

And chapter 26 is the chapter that I was telling you about that really kind of reads like a Psalm because this is just, this is Isaiah giving a picture of rejoicing, the rejoicing of the people of God. And it says, *“In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: (and the song will go like this) “We have a strong city; he sets up salvation as walls and bulwarks. ² Open the gates, that the righteous nation that keeps faith may enter in.”*

And then this verse that many of you know, and no doubt have probably even memorized. *“³ You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.”* So, verse 4, *“Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD God is an everlasting rock. ⁵ For he has humbled the inhabitants of the height, the lofty city. He lays it low, lays it low to the ground, casts it to the dust.*

⁶ The foot tramples it, the feet of the poor, the steps of the needy.” ⁷ The path of the righteous is level; you make level the way of the righteous. ⁸ In the path of your judgments, O LORD, we wait for you; your name and remembrance are the desire of our soul.

⁹ My soul yearns for you in the night; my spirit within me earnestly seeks you. For when your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness. ¹⁰ If favor is shown to the wicked, he does not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness he deals corruptly and does not see the majesty of the LORD.

¹¹ O LORD, your hand is lifted up, but they do not see it. Let them see your zeal for your people, and be ashamed. Let the fire for your adversaries consume them. ¹² O LORD, you will ordain peace for us, for you have indeed done for us all our works. ¹³ O LORD our God, other lords besides you have ruled over us, but your name alone we bring to remembrance.

¹⁴ They are dead, they will not live; they are shades, they will not arise; to that end you have visited them with destruction and wiped out all remembrance of them. ¹⁵ But you have increased the nation, O LORD, you have increased the nation; you are glorified; you have enlarged all the borders of the land.

¹⁶ O LORD, in distress they sought you; they poured out a whispered prayer when your discipline was upon them. ¹⁷ Like a pregnant woman who writhes and cries out in her pangs when she is near to giving birth, so were we because of you, O LORD; ¹⁸ we were pregnant, we writhed, but we have given birth to wind. We have accomplished no deliverance in the earth, and the inhabitants of the world have not fallen.

¹⁹ Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a dew of light, and the earth will give birth to the dead.” Interesting chapter.

I know we have a couple of verses left here, but interesting chapter as Israel kind of gives praise to the Lord, but considers her past and how at that time there will be such clarity and understanding. And the nation of Israel will speak of how they've been disciplined, but they didn't respond, how they were pregnant and gave birth, but they gave birth to wind. They were given the law of God, but rather than reaching out to the world they became legalistic.

Now, the final 2 verses are kind of interesting and they seem to take us back to the time of the tribulation. You'll notice how the Lord speaks of His faithful remnant to be hidden during that time. He says, “²⁰ Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until the fury has passed by. ²¹ For behold, the LORD is coming out from his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, and the earth will disclose the blood shed on it, and will no more cover its slain.” And I personally see this as the Lord speaking to Israel about how they will be partially sheltered during that time of the Great Tribulation.

Isaiah chapter 27. This is the last chapter we're going to look at this evening. This final chapter for tonight is a prophecy of how Israel will be exalted during the time of the Millennial Kingdom and how the rest of the nations will see it. But before it gets to that, it says, “*In that day the LORD with his hard and great and strong sword will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will slay the dragon that is in the sea.*” Now, this is obviously figurative language, speaking of judgment.

But as for the identity here of Leviathan, I'll just tell you that Bible commentators are somewhat divided. I mean, what we know is that the Lord is going to punish this Leviathan, who is referred to as a "*fleeing serpent*," a "*twisting serpent*," which may speak of twisting the truth or whatever. And he is referred to as, "*the dragon that is in the sea*," which causes people to wonder just exactly who is Isaiah prophesying about here?

Some believe it is, what we're told about in Revelation, that it's spiritual and physical Babylon others believe it is the anti-Christ because of some of the same kind of imagery that we see in Revelation related to the anti-Christ. So, my response is, I guess we'll see. It's a little bit like reading the Book of Revelation.

"² In that day, "A pleasant vineyard, sing of it! ³ I, the LORD, am its keeper; every moment I water it. Lest anyone punish it, I keep it night and day;" Look what the Lord says about His vineyard and of course this is speaking of Israel. He says, *"⁴ I have no wrath."* So this is talking about the Lord's keeping of Israel during the Millennial Kingdom. He's saying that God's wrath has been spent, it's done.

He says, *"I have no wrath."* In fact, He says, *"⁴ ... Would that I had thorns and briers to battle! (and He's talking here about if any nation should come against Israel, would that I had something with which to fight on their behalf) I would march against them, (He says) I would burn them up together."*

But better yet, He says in verse 5, *"Or let them lay hold of my protection, (and this is where He's saying that He would much prefer that anyone who did possibly come against Israel would simply come under His protection. He says) let them make peace with me, let them make peace with me."*

Verse 6, *"In days to come Jacob shall take root, Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots and fill the whole world with fruit."* Now I'll tell you that I think this is a prophecy of the Millennial Kingdom, but there are some people who believe that this is also a prophecy of what is happening in Israel right now. The fruitfulness that we see in the nation of Israel and then the Lord asks a question. *"⁷ Has he struck them (and that's Israel, Has he struck them) as he struck those who struck them? Or have they been slain as their slayers were slain?"*

And this is a rhetorical question and He's saying, has Israel been treated like those who abused her? Has she been slain like those who slayed her? And the answer is no, God maintained Israel for His own purpose and He goes on to say how he did deal with Israel.

Look at verse 8, this is interesting, *“Measure by measure, by exile you contended with them; he removed them with his fierce breath in the day of the east wind.”* And this is saying, God is saying, no, I didn’t treat my nation like those other nations. When they sinned against me, I destroyed them completely, with Israel, I took them into exile and that was my disciplinary action in their lives.

And why did God take the nation of Israel into exile? Well, it's because they'd given themselves to idolatry and do you know that when they came out of exile from the Babylonian empire, they no longer dealt with idolatry as a problem. They were cured and so, this is God saying how He dealt with Israel.

Verse 9, *“Therefore by this the guilt of Jacob will be atoned for, and this will be the full fruit of the removal of his sin: when he makes all the stones of the altars like chalkstones (and that’s talking about pagan alters, all they’ll be) crushed (He says) to pieces, no Asherim or incense altars will (even) remain standing.”* Idolatry, done away with.

Now as we read these last 4 verses, I want you to understand that we're hearing the heart of God toward Israel in a way that kind of takes us back in time to the purpose of the tribulation period, which is to discipline Israel. Remember I said that. God has a two-fold purpose in the tribulation period; one is to bring discipline to the nation of Israel and the other is to bring wrath upon the earth to those who rejected God.

And so the Lord says in verse 10, *“For the fortified city is solitary, (and a fortified city, of course, is that city that would otherwise stand against the approaching enemy, but it's uninhabited here. He says it's solitary, it's empty) a habitation deserted and forsaken, like the wilderness; there the calf grazes; there it lies down and strips its branches.¹¹ When its boughs are dry, they are broken; women come and make a fire of them. For this is a people without discernment; therefore he who made them will not have compassion on them; he who formed them will show them no favor.”* This is speaking of how God is going to allow them to go through great stress during the Great Tribulation.

He says, *“¹² In that day from the river Euphrates to the Brook of Egypt the LORD will thresh out the grain, (notice that language, He says) and you will be gleaned one by one, O people of Israel.”* So just as Peter was sifted by Satan the night that the Lord was arrested, He's saying here that Israel will be sifted in that same way during that time and that's the discipline of the Lord.

Verse 13, *“And in that day a great trumpet will be blown, and those who were lost (and that’s talking about the scattered people of Israel, lost) in the land of Assyria and those who were driven out to the land of Egypt will come and worship the Lord on the holy mountain at Jerusalem.”*

So, the chapter ends by saying that, when Jesus returns the scattered Jews will be brought home from wherever they were scattered over the earth and they will begin to worship the Lord again now in their homeland. And so that's where chapter 27 ends.