

Lesson 15
Isaiah 24-25
A Refuge From The Storm (Part 1)

Memory verse: “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Roms. 6:23 NIV

After prophesying concerning eleven different nations, Isaiah enlarged his prophecy and described a judgment that would fall on the whole world. The Hebrew word “erets”, used sixteen times in chapter 24, is translated land, earth, and world in the King James Version. It is not always easy to tell when “erets” refers to one country or to the whole earth, but the context usually guides us. Isaiah 24 - 27 describes a global judgment that will end with the destruction of God’s enemies and the restoration of God’s people Israel in their land.

Isaiah warned the northern kingdom that the Assyrians would destroy them, and he told Judah that the Babylonians would take them captive, but these local calamities were only forerunners of a vast end times catastrophe that would engulf the whole world. The prophets call this time of terrible judgment “the day of the Lord,” and in the New Testament it is described in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Revelation 6 to 19.

This section of the text in chapter 24 to 27 has similarities to the preceding prophecies against the nations (chapters 13 to 23), but it is also different in certain respects. The content integrates with the prophecies, but chapters 24 - 27 are one continuous section. It is similar to the finale of a great piece of music; it is climactic but can be appreciated by itself (cf. Zech. 9 - 14). As such, we will study the section in two parts – chapter 24 to 25 and 26 to 27.

The theme of this section is the triumph of God over His enemies for His people. Isaiah developed this theme by picturing the destruction of one "city" ("the ruined city" [v. 10], which is the city "of man," i.e., "of the whole world"), and the establishment of another city (Mount Zion, Jerusalem, the city of God). These two "cities" are the focal points of the judgment and restoration that Isaiah alluded to in the preceding prophecies. As the city of man falls under divine judgment, the songs of God-neglecting people disappear; and as the city of God appears, the songs of the redeemed swell.

Temporally, the first five prophecies (chapters 13 - 20) had strong connections to Isaiah's own times, and the second five (chapters 21 - 23) reached further into the future. This is not saying, however, that the first prophecies were entirely restricted to Isaiah's time and the second were completely futuristic. The comparison is only general, not absolute, as exposition of the prophecies has shown. This section (chapters 24 - 27) stretches even further into the future and is mainly eschatological.

These are prophecies regarding the eschatological day of the Lord. Later scriptural revelation enables us to locate these judgments more specifically in the Tribulation, at the return of Christ, in the Millennium, and at the very end of human history on this earth.

Isaiah revealed that the Lord's people are at the centre of His plans for the world (cf. 14:2; 21:10). He will preserve them even though He will judge sinful humanity. It is believers who will be living on the earth during the Lord's devastation of this planet that are in view (Tribulation saints), not Christians living before the Tribulation who will be taken to heaven in the Rapture before the Tribulation begins. This passage contains many connections with the Flood narrative (Gen. 6 - 9). Essentially, what God did in Noah's day i.e., the preservation of the righteous - He will do in the future Tribulation (cf. Mark 13).

Scripture reading: Isaiah Chapter 24:3-6, Isaiah 25

Things to learn: 1) The Lord will judge His enemies 2) The Lord will preserve His people 3) The comfort for believers

Discussion Questions:

1) Isaiah in chapter 24 prophesied that God will judge His enemies. What do you think of the scope, the reason, the scene and character of His judgment in this chapter?

2) Chapter 25 is a song of praise to the Lord from the believing remnant that He preserved during “the day of the Lord.” In this song, try explaining the images that stood out.

3) What comfort will you take from these two chapters as a believer?