

Isaiah 26-27:1-13

"The Pathway To Peace"

We're in a section of scripture that has catapulted us forward in time. To time when life as we now know it no longer exists. God's judgment has been poured out upon the earth in (what the Bible refers to as) the Great Tribulation. The earth has since experienced restoration, & now we're in this post tribulation period known as the 1,000 yr reign or "Millennial" reign of Christ upon the earth when we will rule & reign w/Him as kings & priests & we will enjoy His exaltation over all creation.

Vs 1-2

If you were w/us last week you remember that we spent significant time in the very 1st Vs of Ch 25. We were looking *at* it & learning *from* it what it means to praise, to worship & to exalt the name of God...

It seems there will be a lot of singing/worshiping & rejoicing in the kingdom age (& appropriately so). Here, Isaiah gives us an advanced viewing of one of the songs that will be sang in the land of Judah, a song that celebrates the Lord's salvation.

Couple things we want to make mention of here as we work our way through. #1 Isaiah writes, "We have a strong city; God will appoint salvation for walls & bulwarks" (or ramps/protective measures). What that means is that the city will be so safe, so secure, it won't need walls, it won't need ramparts or what we might consider to be common defensive measures. God has delivered His people. His salvation serves to keep us secure & safe...

Today, we *need* walls, we need border protection. Drug trafficking increasing, human trafficking increasing, crime rates surging, overdose rates on the increase among America's youth can all be tied & traced back in some measure to our current administration's continual neglect of border security. Open borders aren't safe in a world riddled w/sin & self-seeking. But when Jesus rules the earth, such measures aren't going to be necessary. "We have a *strong* city." Salvation will serve as its security.

Btw, I don't know if you've ever stopped to think about it, but this world has never truly known a *righteous* city. Before the fall there never was a city. Adam & Eve don't really qualify as making a "city", I've never driven past a city census sign that said, "Population 2". ☺ It wasn't until after the fall that cities came into being. So, all we've ever really known are cities from a fallen perspective. We've never known a truly godly city.

It's not uncommon to find folks (I'm generally in their number) who disapprove of "city life".

“I mean, they’re ok to visit, but I wouldn’t want to live there” (we often say). We like to romanticize the idea of isolation. A little cabin out in the woods, crystal clear river running by it. Maybe you’re swillin’ coffee or playin’ your guitar out on the front porch... communing w/nature... **But the bible says that the man who isolates himself seeks his own desire. Our desire is to get away from all this madness & just have a little solace, some reprieve from the crazy. ☺**

But we need to see the fact that when the kingdom of God is upon the earth, there’s gonna be cities! However, they’ll be *redeemed* cities, glorious communities organized under the strength/salvation, truth & righteousness of the Lord. God’s ultimate ideal isn’t an escape from humanity & communing privately w/nature. It’s found in godly community; it’ll be realized in a strong city!

He says, “Open the gates, that the righteous nation which keeps the truth may enter in.” **It’s something I’ve been pounding on as of late because our culture has been spiraling out of control in this area, but I want you to notice the relationship between *righteousness & truth*. Truth is not subjective; it’s not based in personal opinion or perspective. It’s an inescapable, unavoidable reality/actuality to which we’re all accountable.**

In fact, the wellspring of truth isn’t a program or a simple agreed upon set of standards/procedures, it’s a Person. Jesus said, **“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”**¹ Of course the Bible also tells us that God is love. That’s why I say that truth/love are so intimately integrated that they are essentially one. You can’t really be about one apart from the other. Love *is* truth & truth *is* love. **If you’re not willing to speak hard truth to someone, don’t say it’s because you love them. It may be because you feel more comfortable coddling them. It may be easier to avoid the issue. But love *demand*s truth, & truth *demand*s love. If you neglect *one* of those elements, then I submit to you, you’ve really neglected both... If we *love* them, we’ll share the truth w/them because it’s truth that sets people free. Anything less is entertaining a lie...**

But something else that we see truth tied to here is this word, “righteousness”. It’s not found in perversion, a twisting of reality, a compromise of integrity, Truth is established in righteousness. The 2 are tethered together.

¹ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). [In 14:6]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

So that we read things in scripture like, *"The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."*² I'll give you one more... Rev 19:11 *"Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war."*³ Truth & love are essentially one, & truth is tethered (irreversibly) to righteousness. *

Vs 3-4

We've got some territory to cover today, but we're gonna spend a few minutes right here these Vs that "open up" for us (if you'll allow me that term) the pathway to peace.

I'm not sure how much research you've done on the topic, but the Bible actually has quite a bit to say about peace. & The truth is that * there's more than one kind of peace to be had. There is a deceptive peace, a peace of this world that we might recognize as spiritual sleep or slumber, perhaps even more of a numbness, that leads to destruction.

So at the risk of splitting hairs, that's not really *true* peace. Being numb to something doesn't mean that there's no longer a problem, I just can't discern it. There you are in the hospital, you're in tremendous pain, so you hit the morphine drip & all the pain goes away. It doesn't solve the problem, only numbs you to its reality (that's the peace of this world).

True peace takes place when I've *obtained* peace w/God. Now, what Isaiah is talking about here is what we would call the peace of God, but you can't experience the peace of God until you've 1st experienced peace w/God. This takes place when we stop *fighting* God & surrender to God through faith in J.C. The Bible makes clear that you're either at war w/God, or you're at peace w/God & the only way we have peace w/God is through absolute surrender to God through submitting to Jesus as Lord of our lives. Romans 5:1 says, *"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,"*⁴ *

*Now. Once you have peace w/God, you can have the peace of God "kept" in your life. Notice, "perfect peace". In Hebrew it's "shalom shalom", the repetition communicating intensity. It's not just "shalom", you're kept in "shalom shalom," perfect peace. But there's a bit of personal responsibility connected to this, did you catch it?

It has to do w/how we occupy... our *minds*. "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose *mind* is stayed on You..." Perfect peace isn't a matter of emotion, of spirit or soul so much as it is a matter of the *mind*. Remember Matt 22:37?

² *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ps 19:9). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

³ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Re 19:11). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁴ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ro 5:1). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Not only are we' to love the Lord our God w/all our heart & all our soul, but also w/all of our *mind*. Rom 12:2, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your... *mind*,"⁵

We're not to set our mind on earthly things (Phil 3:19), but on things above (Col 3:2). Remember these words? "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate (that's a mindset) on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you."⁶ See how the peace of God & the occupation of the mind are connected? – The Christian life isn't a simple unthinking life of just doing or experiencing. It also occupies the mind, and where we set our mind is absolutely essential as it pertains to our walk w/the Lord. █

& To take it one step further, this peace isn't kept in us because we *placed* our mind on Him, but because we *stayed* our mind on Him. █ "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You..." This word "stayed" carries the idea of "to lean" or even "to sustain", "to be established". It's the same idea as when the priests (in the O.T.) would lay their hands upon the head of the sacrificial animal w/the idea of transferring the sins of the people upon it. Their hand would be "stayed" upon that animal, would "rest upon" that animal. What does your mind "rest upon" "lean upon"? What is it "sustained/established" upon?

Satan wants to get your mind upon *anything other* than the Lord. But you & me, if we're to have this perfect peace, our mind can't come & go upon the Lord, or *occasionally* lean upon the Lord; it has to be *stayed* upon Him.

Why? Because that's indicative of *trusting in* the Lord. (The more familiar w/Isaiah I become, the more convinced I am that the apostle Paul was an avid student of this book.) Remember these words, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."⁷ It's like an exposition of Isaiah 26:3. Worry about nothing, pray about everything, thank God that He's got your eternal best interests at heart & He will keep you in perfect peace.

⁵ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ro 12:2). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁶ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Php 4:8-9). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁷ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Php 4:6-7). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

It's not a ritual of peace through prayer, it's learning to place your situations & circumstances in the hands of God & trusting Him to take care of it... You see, if I trust the Lord, I can thank the Lord that He's got it & I don't have to worry about it (I have peace). *

The same idea is expressed in Prov 3:5... *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding;"*⁸ We talked about the word "stayed" meaning "to lean upon" ... Same root word here, "Lean not" on your own understanding. If we trust in the Lord, we don't lean on our own understanding, we lean upon Him, we're upheld by Him...

Because of the promise of Vs 3, we're issued the exhortation of Vs 4. "Trust in the Lord forever." Perfect peace comes to the one who trusts in the Lord... so trust in the Lord forever. For in Him (that is the Lord) is everlasting strength. *Why* should we trust Him so completely, so utterly & absolutely? Because in *Him* is *everlasting* strength. There will never be a time that His strength is insufficient to sustain you.

Vs 5-6

The city of man, the city of the lofty, the prideful people He lays low. We're seeing comparison/contrast to the city of man & the city of God. The humble, He lifts up. The proud He brings low. God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.

Vs 7-9

Btw, Vs 7 says, **"The way of the just is uprightness not uptightness* (as someone has pointed out). Some Christians seem to misread this. They think the way of the Lord is uptightness. ☺ It's not. It's uprightness.

In other words, there's a way about believers. It's not dishonesty, there's nothing shady or untrustworthy. The "just" are about integrity, honor, truth & transparency... Notice, "O Most Upright." Why are those whom God has justified upright? Because they serve Him who is *Most Upright*. It carries the same connotation as, *"Be holy, for I am holy."*⁹ The idea being that the apple doesn't fall too far from the tree. If God is holy & He lives in you, His nature will evidence itself *in* you. If God is upright, His people will walk in uprightness... *

"You weigh the path of the just." God evaluates the way of our lives. It matters to Him how we live, what we say, the things we do... & As we wait for Him, it's important that we be able to say, "We've honored Your word in the wait..." "In the way of Your judgments, O Lord, we have waited for You." "The desire of our soul is for Your name..."

⁸ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Pr 3:5). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁹ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (1 Pe 1:16). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

What's the desire of your soul? When you desire something, or someone, you'll wait for them, (& you'll be glad to do it).

So, our desire for the Lord is realized in our waiting upon Him, honoring His word & notice, "seeking" after Him. It doesn't matter if you're a night person, or a morning person. The yearning of your spirit is to seek Him (in the night I have desired You, by my spirit I will seek You early).

-- & The day will come, when His judgments are in the earth & the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. In that day, righteousness will cover the earth as waters cover the sea.

Vs 10-11

Rom 2:4 tells us that the goodness of God leads us to repentance. But don't be misled. It doesn't say that it leads *everyone* to repentance. **Not everyone will respond to the grace/mercy of God. Some people will only take advantage of it to further their own wicked ways... They aren't grateful for the grace of God & their ways will end in shame, disaster & destruction.**

Vs 12

Are these words ringing any kind of bell in you? Listen to this, **"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."**¹⁰ & Again, **"...it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure".**¹¹ I'm telling you, Paul loved the book of Isaiah. "He has done all our works in us..."

Vs 13-15

Be it past idolatry, or Gentile tyrants who've oppressed them previously, he's confessing the past failures of his people. He's acknowledging that the Lord alone has brought them victory & the good that's come of their nation is to His glory.

Vs 16-18

You might underline Vs 16. Have you ever noticed how trouble has a tendency to take us to our knees in prayer? That's what he's saying. In trouble, they poured out a prayer. It's not the *only* reason trouble may visit us, but it's certainly *a* reason trouble may find us. Pain leads to prayer. It drives us back to the foot of the cross. On our own we can tend to drift; God is always bringing us back.

¹⁰ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Eph 2:10). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹¹ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Php 2:13). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

He says, “We were like a woman giving birth...” But nothing fruitful came of it. Israel didn’t respond to God’s chastening in a way that fulfilled His plan for them. God wanted to birth blessings to the world through the nation of Israel, but it didn’t happen (Paul talks about that in the book of Romans). One day God will use the nation tremendously, but initially they failed to bring forth the fruit He desired.

God help us to learn in our seasons of suffering to bring forth the fruit He desires from our lives.

Vs 19

The reality of resurrection isn’t a N.T. truth. It’s found all throughout scripture. Granted it’s a bit more veiled in the O.T. Paul tells us that life & immortality has been brought “to light” through J.C. who abolished death... Jesus said, *I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?*¹² The confident expectation of resurrection of the righteous is consistent throughout scripture.

Vs 20-21

These words snap us back to the idea of, “But 1st”. All these wonderful things are coming to pass, but 1st, the indignation, the Great Tribulation... There will be those Jewish individuals who will flee as Jesus instructed when the abomination which causes desolation occurs ½ through the Tribulation period. & God will protect them until the indignation is past (when He punishes the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity).

Some like to see in this a reference to the rapture. I don’t really see that as it pertains to the interpretation, but it could certainly be drawn as an application.

Chapter 27

Vs 1

Is this a literal sea serpent? It could be. Most see this as a reference (ultimately) to Satan, (that serpent of old, Rev 12:9) who resists the Lord will be destroyed by the Lord.

Vs 2-6

In Ch 26 we saw Israel fail to bring forth fruit. But when the Lord restores them their fruit will fill the face of the world. The vineyard of red wine is a reference to a fruitful Israel whom the Lord Himself will tend *to* & take care *of*. He will keep it night & day, provide for & protect it... How is it that the Lord waters His own?

¹² *The New King James Version*, (1982). (Jn 11:25-26). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Ps 1:3, Jn 7, By His word through the Person/power of His Spirit... So if you're feeling a bit parched lately, you might examine the time you've spent w/the Lord, sitting & soaking in His word...

& Btw, we love this invitation to reconciliation. Why be found fighting against the Lord. Take hold of His strength that you might make peace w/Him. Remember, it's peace *with* God before we can experience the peace *of* God.

Vs 7-9

He says that even in God's judgment against Israel, He showed mercy in not striking them as harshly as He struck those who struck them.

& We see that the iniquity of Jacob will be covered (Paul says that in that day, all Israel will be saved, Rom 11:26). – In Vs 9 we see the fruit of Israel's repentance. A renouncing of idolatry, destroying the altars & serving the Lord exclusively. (Btw, May that be the fruit of our repentance as well. Serving J.C. exclusively, putting away those things that vie for the place of His priority).

Vs 10-11

The strong city (the city of righteousness) in Ch 26 had salvation as its walls. Here, the fortified city (the city of man, the world system) will be made desolate by the judgment of God... You know this is going to happen. Why then place your hope or confidence in the ways of this world? He who formed them will show them no favor...

Vs 12-13 Close

Similar overtones to the way our time ended last week. 2 Cities, 2 choices, 2 destinies. Victorious worship & salvation... or Eternal destruction & condemnation. Be reconciled to God in Christ Jesus, choose life & peace in His name.

Prayer Points:

Father; day after week, after month, after year we stand in awe of your steadfast patience w/us. That You continue to draw us back to Your feet. Help us that we not resist You, but that we submit our hearts fully/completely to You. Teach us to keep our minds stayed on You, because we trust You, & may Your peace guard our hearts & minds through Christ Jesus our Lord...

If you're at a place where the peace *of* God seems like a distant 2nd because you don't even have peace *with* God, you can change that right here, right now. Jesus shed His blood for your sin & mine, was put to death & on the 3rd day rose again to life. To believe on Him is to receive everlasting life.