

Wednesday, October 4, 2023 • Read Isaiah 24–25

Questions from the Scripture text: Who is bringing this devastation (24:1, 3)? Upon what sorts of people (v2)? From where (v4)? Why (v5)? How does God respond to this covenant-breaking (v6)? What pleasures are taken away (v7–9, 11) by the emptying of the city (v10, 12–13)? Following this judgment, what will the remnant nations learn to do from west to east (v14–16b)? But what is Isaiah's experience in foreseeing the judgment (v16c–20)? Besides those of the earth, from what other realm will sinners be punished (v21–23b)? Who, then will reign (v23c)? Among whom (v23d–e)? Considering this outcome of the judgment, how does Isaiah now respond (25:1)? When did YHWH plan all this? What will have happened to the world-city (v2, cf. 24:4, 10, 12)? And what city will be left (v3)? What was their former condition (v4)? From whom will the Lord have spared them (v5)? What is going on in the other city (v6, cf. 24:23d–e)? Who is hosting the feast? How rich/nice is it? What curtain/veil will He have removed (v7–8)? What will He do for His people? Who are speaking in v9? About what (Whom!) are they speaking? What about Him? How do they feel about this relationship? Whose hand brings prosperity and blessing to this mountain (v10a)? What does this mean for their enemies (v10b–12)?

What will God do about this sin-filled world? Isaiah 24–25 looks forward to the first serial reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these thirty-five verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **God will judge the covenant breakers and replace His people's death and sorrow with life and joy.**

A world-city in rebellion, 24:1–13. In ch23, Tyre was the city that made the world wealthy. Now, in ch24, the world that is addicted to wealth and pleasure is called "the formless city" (v10a). The word is famously used in Gen 1:2a. In his sin, man has brought disorder and chaos, where he was supposed to have taken God-imaging dominion. He has uncreated the world. Or, in the language of this chapter, they have "defiled the earth" (v5a) and "broken the everlasting covenant" (v5d). Here, like Hosea 6:7, the arrangement in the garden is called a covenant—what we call the "covenant of works" (WCF 7.2) or "covenant of life" (WSC 12).

So the Lord is wiping them all out. v2 focuses especially on the purveyors of trade as it uses a series of pairs to say that this is a universal judgment. Just as in Genesis 6, man had defiled the earth by filling it with violence, so now man has defiled the earth (v5), and YHWH is once again emptying it (v3–4) putting an end to all of their drunken self-indulgence (v6–13).

A day of worship, 24:14–16. With the world emptied of wickedness, the way is now clear for worship. From west (v14c) to east (v15a) the song arises (v14a) of the majesty of YHWH (v14b), and His righteousness (v16b), until it reaches the ends of the earth (v15b–16a).

A day of terror, 24:16c–23b. For Isaiah's part, he can hardly notice the song at first, because of the horrors (v16c–d) of fear and pit and snare (v17). He clearly invokes the terror of the flood, with v18f–g referencing Gen 7:11. The flood anticipated final judgment, with the Lord delivering the godly and reserving the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment (cf. 2Pet 2:4–9). It should sober us that the prophet, who is among the godly, was yet so dismayed just seeing the vision of judgment.

Many a believer ought to be more tender to the peril of the wicked as was Isaiah—like our Lord Jesus, Who wept over a city for what would happen to it for rejecting Him. And every unbeliever ought to tremble at the greatness of the glory that will express itself in righteous wrath upon him!

A world-city of rejoicing, 24:23c–25:11. While the former creation (v23a–b) and His people's enemies (25:2, 5, 9–12) will be wiped out, the Lord will wipe the tears from His people's faces (v8). The elimination of sin (v7) and death (v8) will pave the way for Zion and Jerusalem (v23d) to be where the Lord hosts a banquet for His people as He once did for the elders on Mount Sinai (v23e, 25:6; cf. Ex 24:9–11). His praise and glory before them will be not only for what He has done (v1–3), but especially for Whom He has made Himself to be to them (v9). Their very own covenant God. Their gladness.

Even now, this worship takes place in heavenly Zion, which we join in the Lord's Day assemblies (cf. Heb 12:18–29)—anticipating that final and forever worship assembly (cf. Rev 21:1–7). Those who have been delivered from sin and death and hell ought to worship the Lord for what He has done. Those who have come to know God as Father, in union with Christ, by the constant and indwelling companionship of the Spirit, ought to worship the Lord for Whom He has made Himself to be unto us. Such worship is practice for the feast of heaven!

When have you been horrified over what is coming upon the wicked? Why do you think that you will escape it? What will you receive instead? How are you preparing for and participating in the joy to come?

Sample prayer: Lord, as You once did with the flood, we know that You will ultimately do in the last day: destroy the wicked from the creation and produce a new creation. But we tremble to consider the greatness of our sin and self-indulgence, like the world city of which we have read in Isaiah. Truly, we deserve to be among the destroyed. But Christ has suffered wrath in the place of sinners, although He alone has perfectly obeyed You. For His sake, remove the curtain of ignorance from over us, and swallow up death forever, and wipe the tears from our faces. Bring us into the feast of knowing You to be ours, and knowing ourselves to be Yours. Bring us to Your banqueting table, with the knowledge that Your banner over us is love, we pray, through Jesus Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP98 "O Sing a New Song" or TPH299 "Joy to the World!"

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Isaiah 24 to 25. These are God's words. Behold your way, it makes the earth empty and makes it waste. To sorts its surface and scatters are broad. It's inhabitants. And it shall be as with people. So, with the priest, as, with the servant. 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, The land shall be entirely emptied and utterly plundered. For y'all play has spoken this word. The earth mourns and fades away the world languages and fades away.

The haughty people of the earth languish, the earth is also defiled. Under its inhabitants because they have transgressed the laws change the ordinance. Broken. You everlasting covenant? Therefore, the curse has devoured the earth. And those who dwell in it are desolate. Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned.

And few men are left. The new wine fails the vine languages. All the merry hearted sigh. The mirth of tambourine, ceases the noise of the jubilant ends. The joy of the harp sees us They shall not drink wine with a song. Strong drink is bitter to those who drink it.

The city of confusion. This broken down. Every house is shut up, so that none may go in. There's a cry for wine in the streets. All joy is darkened. The mirth of the land is gone. In the city desolation is left. And the gate is stricken with destruction. There shall be thus in the midst of the land among the people.

It shall be like the shaking of an olive tree. Like the gleaning of grapes. When the vintage is done. There's a lift up their voice. They shall sing. For the majesty of yahweh. They shall cry aloud from the sea, therefore glorifying all the way. In the dawning light. The name of your god of Israel in the coastlands of the sea.

From the ends of the earth, we have heard songs glory to the righteous. But i said i am ruined ruined woe to me. The treacherous dealers have dealt dreacherously, indeed, the treacherous dealers. Have dealt very treacherously. Fear, and the pit and the snare. Are upon you, oh inhabitant of the earth.

And it will be that he who flees from the noise of the fear. Shuffle onto the pit and he who comes up from the midst of the pit. Shall be caught in the snare. For the windows from on high are open. And the foundations of the earth are. Shaken.

The earth is violently broken. The earth to split open. The earth is shaken exceedingly. The earth shall reel. To and fro like a drunkard and shall be taught her like a hot. Its transgression shall be heavy upon it and it will fall and not rise. Again, it shall come to pass.

In that day. But y'all say will punish on high the host of Exalted ones. And on the earth, the kings of the earth. They will be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit. And we'll be shut up in prison. Now, for many days, they will be punished.

Then the moon. Will be disgraced and the sun ashamed.

Your way of hosts will rain on Mount, Zion? And in Jerusalem, And before his elders. Gloriously. The offer you are my god. I will exalt you I will praise your name. For you have done wonderful things, your councils of old our faithfulness and truth. For you have made a city or ruin of fortified city, a ruin a place of foreigners to be a city, no more.

It will never be rebuilt. Therefore, the strong people will glorify you. The city of the terrible nations will fear you. For you have been a strength to the poor, a strength, to the needy in his distress. A refuge from the storm. A shade from the heat. For the blast of the terrible ones as a storm against the wall.

You will reduce the noise of aliens as heat and a dry place as heat and the shadow of a cloud. The song of the terrible ones will be diminished. And in this mountain yahweh of hosts will make For all people. A feast of choice pieces. A feast of wines on the leaves.

A fat, a fat things full of marrow. Of well-refined wines. On the lease. And he will destroy on this mountain. The surface of the covering cast over all people. And the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever. And the lord, y'all faith will wipe away tears from all faces.

The rebuke of his people, he will take away from all the earth. For y'all-way has spoken. And it will be said, in that day, behold. This is our god. We have waited for him and he We'll save us. This is your boy. We have waited for him. We will be glad and rejoice.

And his salvation. From this mountain. The hand of yahweh will rest. Moab shall be trampled down under him. A straw is trampled down for the refuge heap. And he will spread out his hands and their midst. As a swimmer reaches out to swim. And he will bring down their pride.

Together with the trickery of their hands. The fortress of the high fort of your walls, he will bring down Lay low. And bring to the ground. Down. To the dust. So far the reading of god's inspired. And inherent word. In which we have. Portion in Isaiah 24 and 25.

That looks back from all the way to the beginning of the bible. And looks forward all the way to the end of the bible. And it does so following upon this judgment of Tere. The coastland city where all the merchant ships would go and Things were exchanged from the west to the east from tarsus.

Um, All the way to the Babylonian plains. The wealth of the world came through there. And it was a place of man, delighting in himself. By way of pleasure, by way of wealth. Not that joy and enjoying created things is wrong. No, even in this chapter. Uh, at the last when the lord.

Has prepared a banquet for the remnant. That he's gathered to himself. There is much enjoyment of created things. Even enjoyment of wine isn't bad. The lord's banquet has well, refined wine. And, And plenty of it. Something that is. Looked forward to. And John chapter 2. When Jesus provides the well-refined wine after man runs out of his own.

It is very much indicating that Jesus is your way of Isaiah 24, and 25. Uh where here they run out as a judgment upon them. But for those who are with the lord, for those who are provided for, At their banquet by him. They have. Uh, they have plenty of the good stuff.

As it were. But the city of Tere was. Let's set you that represented man's enjoyment of himself. Inner sleep pleasures over against Man's enjoyment of god. Himself. And when man, enjoys himself, when man tries to enjoy the creation, Apart from the creator, what he does. Is he unmans himself and he uncreates The creation.

As it were. In particular verse 10, it's more difficult to see. Uh, in the English where it says the city of confusion, The word for confusion there is Toh who? When the earth was, Formless and void, purposeless. And, And empty. And Genesis 1 verse 2. And so, when he refers to the the world city, Now, the city here is not just Tere.

It is the whole world viewed as a city. When he says that the the world city is a city of towu, He's saying that. The, the world and mankind and trying to enjoy himself in the way that is. Um, That has been described and as alluded to, by its Elimination.

In these chapters that when man and tries to enjoy himself apart from the lord or enjoy himself by way of the created pleasures, Rebels against the very purpose and order. Of all things. As being made by god for good and for man to use to image god and for man to use In a way.

That is righteous and good. And so there's this language throughout Isaiah 24 of this worldwide. Equal opportunity, judgment. At the beginning of the passage and then Um, I'm going on to describe, man having Defiled. The earth. And what had got done when the whole world was united in indulging themselves and had Uh, defiled the earth.

God had come with the flood. And so the flood looked forward to god's judgment. Has second Peter two describes. It was An indication that god knows how to reserve the wicked for punishment under judgment, while preserving the godly As he preserved Noah. And so, in the immediate future, In the Assyrian invasion.

And then what comes upon them by way of Babylon. And then what comes on Babylon by way of Persian, even what comes on Jerusalem, by, by way of all of them, the lord is showing the same thing because he is sparing a remnant. Like the Gleaning of olives and grapes.

After the, the The large part are destroyed in the In the immediate historical situation in the coming centuries. Relatively few. No are spared from any, any of those judgments? But again, It is a reminder of God. Knowing how to reserve the wicked for punishment unto judgment. While sparing the righteous.

Like, A second Peter to. Versus four through nine. Tells us. But while, Isaiah is. Is seeing this in his vision, considering this in his prophecy and he does hear the song of the remnant. Um, in verses. 14 and 15. He is horrified. So there are those those gleanings. To which the end of verse 13 refers who are the remnant and they are the ones who had maybe when we were reading it.

Um, it surprised you because it felt so, To be such a contrast to what was up to that point when you get to verse 14, Then they're singing for the majesty of yahweh. They're crying allowed from. Um, From the sea, which refers? Of course to the west. At the glorify yahweh and the dawning of the light, which refers to the east.

For the coastlands of the sea verse 15, the ends of the earth verse 16, it's describing a renewed world. But through what did the renewed world in Genesis 9? Come it

came through the flood. It came through. A horrific. Destruction and even as Isaiah is seeing in the vision, the fact that there is this remnant to worship the lord.

He is still. Uh, horrified. By the judgment that is coming. I said, I am ruined. Whoa to me. And he uses the language of the flood, doesn't he? At the end of verse 18, The windows from on high opened and the foundations of the earth are shaken.

You remember in Genesis chapter 7 and verse 11? Where God opened the windows in the firmament and the fountains of the great deep were opened, and He brought judgment from above and judgment from below. And so, there is a picture of the flood here, but there's a picture even not just of the flood originally but of what the flood looked forward to.

When you look at verses 19 and 20, that's Uh, that's revelation language, isn't it? But the earth violently broken and split open and shaking exceedingly. This is a same sort of thing. Uh, that second Peter. There's all also looking forward to. So there's this saving of his people in the short term, that is going to happen that Isaiah's prophesying about, but it's connected to the last day.

It's connected to the final judgment. It's connected to. Not just the final judgment. But also the final worship. The final gathering. Of God's people to himself. When in this mountain, he says,

Me. When in this mountain, he says, in verse 6 of chapter 25, he always have hosts will make for all people. The feast of choice pieces. The feast of wines on the leaves. A fat things full of marrow of well-refined. Wines. On the leaves. And he will have taken away the covering the veil.

That was over all the people that was spread over all the nations. Uh, the way that sin. Uh, keeps us from. From seeing God rightly and responding to him, rightly from loving him, from enjoying him, from serving him. That will be gone. Death. Also gone verse 8. He will swallow up death forever.

And the Lord Yahweh will wipe away tears. From all faces. Also verse 8 subscribing, isn't it? The same thing as revelation? 21 verse 1, through 7. A new heavens and a new earth. In which a righteous people dwell with God, and they know him and he knows them and they no longer sin against him.

And they're no longer confused and ignorant. And, And their great delight is not just this new creation. Praise God. But, That in this new creation, they enjoy him himself. Despite all of the wonderful provision to which Um, Versus or which verse, Excuse me, despite all the wonderful provision which verse 6 describes as the feast.

It is God himself. And the relationship to him that they rejoice over. On inverse 9. It will be set in that day. Behold, this is our God. We have waited for him. He will save us. This is Yahweh, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

And that's the most wonderful thing at the end of revelation, isn't it? It's not just a city, and And it's description. Mirroring that of Eden. With all of the true, the trees and the fruit bearing even the tree of life and And, The jewels and the gold that are readily available everywhere.

In fact, the city has been made out of the stuff in the vision and revelation but the great Joy. The great blessedness at the end of revelation. As behold the dwelling place of God is with, man. He is their God. They are his people. And so, There's in a sense.

These two chapters are pulling from. Both ends of the Bible. To say that what God is doing in the exile. Just like what God had done in the flood. There's a picture is a participation in and anticipation of what God is doing in history as a whole. He knows how to reserve.

The wicked for punishment. Under judgment while sparing and preserving the righteous. And two big takeaways for us is Isaiah, who knew and understood this was still horrified. That's the greatness of the judgment. And so, we need to be those who are sober and horrified at the greatness of judgment.

Even though the judgment was coming up on the wicked, So also, we ought to have a sympathy with them. And a horror, what's going to come upon them? And yet. Even more than that together with that. We ought to rejoice over the Lord preserving us. And ask that he would.

And in each of our own hearts, we need to Uh, we need to Um, Ask God to. Help us see whether we are enjoying the good things. He gives us. As an enjoying of ourselves in those things. Or as an enjoying of him. In the good things that he has given us.

Because that's the difference between the two cities, isn't it? Tire and the world city. Enjoy themselves and their pleasures. The city of Zion the heavenly Jerusalem. Glorious Jerusalem. Enjoys God. In the good pleasures that he gives them. May he help us to enjoy him? Amen, let's pray. Father, we thank you for this part of your word, and For your help and understanding it well, and seeing how it connects.

To the other parts of your word. But Lord, now we need the help of your Holy Spirit. To see ourselves. Well, By the use of your word. And so, we pray that You would help us by your spirit and that you would deliver us from our sin. That you would wipe away the tears from our eyes and make us.

To enjoy you. In the good things that you give us where we ask it in Jesus name. Amen.