

The Song of Those Enroute to Glory

Isaiah 26:1-21

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Introduction

Today in our sermon series from the book of Isaiah,

- we come to chapter 26.

Recently, in chapter 24, we saw how Isaiah spoke in general terms about the dreadful judgements of God that were to come upon the whole earth.

- But we also saw a very marvellous outcome from all these judgements.
 - In the very last verse (of chapter 24), we are told that God will establish such a glorious kingdom upon Mount Zion that it will make the very sun and moon ashamed!
 - Isaiah 24:23: “Then the moon will be disgraced And the sun ashamed; For the LORD of hosts will reign On Mount Zion and in Jerusalem And before His elders, gloriously.”
- It is such an amazing thing when you stop and think about this!
 - Our gracious Lord has purposed that He will take sinners out of this ruined fallen desperate world that is fit only for judgement and establish them in His own righteous kingdom to live with Him forever and ever!
 - It is a wonderful work!
 - In chapter 25, Isaiah praised God as the God who performs wonders!
 - A wonder (a *pelee* in Hebrew), you will remember, is something that can only be done by divine agency and power.
 - It is something that is impossible for any creature in heaven and earth to do.
 - Isaiah praised our gracious God as the one who would work wonders:
 - to bring down Satan and all who oppose His righteous kingdom...
 - to preserve and keep a people for Himself despite their weakness and the many temptations that surround them...
 - to prepare for them a most excellent feast that will bring them complete satisfaction...
 - to lift the veil of blindness and confusion that they might see Him and His way clearly...
 - and to swallow up death for them as their priest and then to comfort them, even wiping away all their tears!
 - All this is the work of our Triune God through the agency of our dear Lord Jesus Christ who will reign until all His enemies are brought down and His kingdom is perfected!

- It is a wonder that only He can accomplish!
- Just think of it!
 - Out of the ruined mass of fallen man, a glorious kingdom emerges!

Now I am sure that some of you have noticed that as we have looked at this portion of Isaiah's prophecy,

- I have not always been specific about the time in which these things of which Isaiah speaks are to occur.
- And there is good reason for this indefiniteness...
 - Isaiah is indefinite!
 - I cannot be specific where he is indefinite.
 - These are very generalised prophecies and they can be applied to more than one circumstance.
 - Isaiah is certainly speaking about the establishment of God's kingdom after the coming judgements under Assyria and Babylon...
 - when Judah is restored to the land as happened under Nehemiah and Ezra...
 - but it is clear that he is also looking beyond this to the coming of Jesus Christ to redeem His people and to gather them into His righteous kingdom from the nations of earth...
 - and even beyond that to His coming at the last day when He will bring down all opposition and establish a kingdom of perfect righteousness.
 - Isaiah is looking at the complete work of God from his day until the return of our Lord at the end of the age in which we now live.
 - And at the many stages in which it can be said that the Lord is reigning over His people...

And now, when we come to chapter 26,

- we see that Isaiah begins with the words:
 - Isa 26:1: "In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah"
 - And it is clear that he is talking about the day when the Lord's kingdom is exhibited...when His reign has been established.
 - It seems that he is again speaking in a very general way about this...
 - telling us that when the Lord's kingdom is manifested, His people will sing of what He had done!

And what Isaiah is doing here in presenting this song that will be sung in that day

- that day when God's kingdom is seen to emerge from the ruins of this world...
- He is presenting this to encourage the people who trust in God to take heart!

- He is saying,
 - “Do not worry, if you are trusting in Him and waiting for His kingdom, you will soon be singing this song of victory and triumph!”

- Remember that the people of Judah were already entering into a very severe time of judgement.
 - Jerusalem itself would be utterly destroyed and they would be deported to Babylon.
 - They would need all the encouragement they could get!
 - And one of the best ways to encourage them was to tell them what the end result of all this judgement would be!
 - How these words must have supported them as they endured the long night in Babylonian captivity as those who were in a grave, as it were,
 - waiting to be resurrected by their Lord.
 - Isaiah has told them that the righteous reign of Christ will come, and now he tells them that all who trust in Him will sing!
 - Even those who would die in the middle of all the turmoil will be raised from the dead to live in the New heavens and New earth of perfect righteousness!
 - What an encouragement this must have been!

- Now my brothers and sisters,
 - we do not have a prophet to tell us specifically that God’s judgements are going to fall on our land today,
 - but we know from God’s word that whenever a people who has been blessed with the light of the Lord becomes idolatrous, immoral, and bloodthirsty,
 - it is God’s way to visit them with judgements.
 - That is what He has always done in history and we have no reason to suppose that He will not do the same to us.
 - Indeed, we are already facing many troubles in our economy and in the social arena with the break up of the family...
 - And this being so, we need to prepare ourselves for greater judgement...
 - And what better preparation could there be than the encouragement that Isaiah gave to Judah when they were soon to be carried away into Babylon...
 - Don’t misunderstand though, soon was a full century away.
 - God does not rush such things.
 - Nevertheless, even though the worst was yet to come,
 - God’s judgements were already being felt in their early stages, and the people needed to have the right focus...

- They needed to see that the end result would be the establishment of God's righteous kingdom on the earth.

Let us now turn to these very helpful words for our own edification...

- that we might be equipped to trust our God as we feel His judgements upon us in these days.
- Let us see that we too will sing this song when God's work is complete if we have been among those who have waited for Him.
 - Isn't it a marvellous to think that those who first heard this song from Isaiah and believed will be raised up at the last day at the same time we are...
 - And together we will sing this Song of God's faithfulness!
 - Look at it and be encouraged!

TRANS> First, see that when Christ's kingdom comes,

I. We will realise the tremendous security we have in the LORD as His people.

A. How amazing it will be for you to look back and realise all that He has brought you through...

- to consider how He has kept you and all your brothers and sisters in the LORD when there were a thousand strong enemies that were ready to devour you.
- 1. You will so sure of His keeping power that you will declare (as in verse 1),
 - "We have a strong city; God will appoint salvation for walls and bulwarks."
 - You will that God's city needs no walls because God gives us something better than that.
 - He gives salvation in place of walls and bulwarks!
 - If you have complete deliverance, you don't need walls and bulwarks to protect you.
 - How confident you will be the future of this city!
 - If God kept this city through all those days when it was weak in the world—
 - if He kept His people under persecutions and afflictions of all kinds, and under a devil that walked about as roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour...
 - it He kept a remnant through Babylonian captivity, and through dreadful days of the Greek empire and then the Roman...
 - And through the times of apostasy and persecution before the reformation...
 - How much more sure you will be that He will keep His city of righteousness in the day that He has glorified us!

2. In that day,
 - you will request entrance to this great city that has been prepared for you...
 - this city that you have been on pilgrimage since you came to Christ to get to...
 - In that day, you will say, as verse 2,
 - “Open the gates!”
 - “Open the gates” to this strong city “that the righteous nation which keeps truth may enter in!”
 - You will know that that nation is righteous because God made it righteous by His power and grace when it was ruined and defiled...
 - He gave it a righteousness through His own Son, Jesus Christ, who came to atone for its sins and who was raised for its justification...
 - He is the king of glory and the gates have been opened to Him because of His righteousness...
 - And He has already entered and is seated at the right hand of God as our representative...
 - And now we are able to enter by faith in with Him as the people He came to represent!
 - and at the last day, we shall be able to enter...
 - as those who have been kept by the power of God through faith against all the opposition that has been thrown against us in this present age...
 - You will see that God has made you the righteous nation that keeps truth—
 - and that you are admitted into this strong city where nothing that is defiled or that makes a lie may come!

B. And surely the God who has kept you in this world of tribulation, through faith, will keep you securely forever more!

1. The words of assurance that you will say in that day are expresses in verse 3:
 - Isa 26:3: “You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You because He trusts in you”
 - The mind that is stayed on the Lord is the mind that is fully settled on Him...
 - The mind that is single and focused on Him, not wavering about...
 - The mind that is steadfast, rooted and grounded, fully established upon Him.
 - Here is the person who has made it to end, holding fast to his faith through all the difficulties and testings of this world.

- He has fought the good fight, he has kept the faith.
 - How certain that person will be that if God has kept him through all the difficulties of this world...
 - He will bless him now with complete peace!
 - The words “perfect peace” translate the Hebrew word “shalom.”
 - Shalom is that wonderful OT word that speaks not only of freedom from discord and conflict,
 - but also the presence of complete prosperity—the fullness of all that is good.
 - The word is repeated in the original (*shalom, shalom*) to show the completeness of it!
 - This is an expression of the total confidence you will when Christ’s kingdom comes
 - that nothing will ever shake the peace that God gives to you because you trust Him.
2. And so there is an exhortation that we will sing to each other in that day
- v. 4: “Trust in the LORD forever, For in YAH, the LORD, is everlasting strength.”
 - a. It will be so certain to you in that day that He is the everlasting strength of His people...
 - We will see how foolish all our doubts were in this world, how weak our faith was—
 - and we will encourage each other to put our full trust in Yahweh!
 - We will see that He who is the great self-existing one can be fully relied upon forever.
 - Our faith will be brought to a whole new level! a level of perfection.
 - b. We will see His everlasting strength now fully displayed in the destruction of all His and our enemies...
 - In our song we will declare the reason we know Him to be our everlasting strength...
 - Verse 5-6:
 - Isa 26:5-6: For He brings down those who dwell on high, the lofty city; He lays it low, He lays it low to the ground, He brings it down to the dust. The foot shall tread it down—The feet of the poor And the steps of the needy."
 - All of our enemies who tried to keep us from God,
 - All of our enemies that looked so powerful and so invincible will be brought completely down...

- This is the first promise God made concerning redemption.
 - He made it in the garden after the fall when He declared that the seed of the woman would crush the serpent’s head...
 - The serpent who had deceived the whole world and led it into rebellion!
- See how complete the fall of the lofty city that dwells on high is according to the declaration in verses 5 & 6 that we will make in that day...
 - Three times we will speak of its being made low...
 - “He lays it low...”
 - “He lays it low to the ground...”
 - “He brings it down to the dust.”
 - It will be so low that it will be tread upon without even realising it...
 - Even those who were poor and needy in this world will walk upon it as they walk upon the dust of the ground.
 - The city of rebellion will have not place at all in the city of God—never again will it trouble the people of God.

TRANS> What a perspective we will have in the day that Christ’s kingdom fully comes!

- We will see how secure we really are in the LORD who is our everlasting strength!
 - But doesn’t it greatly encourage you *now* to know that this will be your song?
 - Doesn’t it strengthen your faith to know that through all the troubles that may come upon you in this world—
 - God will keep you and at last will bring you to this place of security and peace?
 - See then that you are one of the ones who believes—
 - whose mind is stayed upon Him in true faith, never to be shaken.

TRANS> **Second, see that when Christ’s kingdom comes,**

II. We will realise His all-for-our-good-providence along every step of the way.

- In verses 7-12,
 - those who have been brought to city of perfect righteousness look back and consider the pathway by which God has brought them...

A. We do so much questioning of the path He has appointed for us now...

1. We wonder why we are called to endure tribulation...
 - Why this sickness?
 - Why these difficult relationships with my family?

- Why set backs and bereavements, and disappointments and sorrow upon sorrow?
 - Why does the LORD not just go ahead and bring us on to glory...
 - Oh sure, there is the reason that we are here to win others, but why doesn't He just bring them on to glory too!
 - Why is there all this process to go through?
2. How full of perplexity Job was when he had to endure so much along the pathway that God had appointed for him.
- How he struggled and how he questioned.
 - Though he was kept by the power of God through faith...
 - it was a time of great perplexity for him.
3. And how much more full of perplexity the disciples were when Christ kept telling them that He was going to be betrayed into the hands of the chief priests and crucified...
- They couldn't even take in such information...
 - They had no way to process it in their minds.
 - They just... changed the subject and forgot about it.
 - And then when it happened, they were even more perplexed.
 - So perplexed that if it had been possible, the seed of faith would have completely died in them...
 - But now that it is done and now that Christ has entered into glory, having obtained eternal redemption by the blood of the cross,
 - it all makes perfect sense to us...
 - We can perfectly understand how it was that Christ always saw Himself on a definite path from the beginning of His life to its end.
 - He know that every step was in place.

TRANS> And my friends, when the kingdom of God comes in its fullness,

- We will look back and see that every step in our pathway was a part of the perfect plan of God...
 - our trials, our blessings, and even our failures...
 - It was not a chaotic mess, but it was all part of the determinate purpose of God to bring us to His righteous kingdom.

B. See how we shall look back upon His appointed path according to verses 7-11...

1. First, in verse 7, we have the words, "The way of the just is uprightness."
- The word "uprightness" means *straight* or *plain*.
 - This is not talking about uprightness in the sense of piety...

- The idea is that the pathway the LORD has appointed for us is straight.
 - There are no twists in it—no unnecessary aggravations or bumps.
 - It is a path that runs directly from ruin to glory.
- The verse goes on to say that He *weighs* our path...
 - That is, He carefully parcels out to us each event, each experience, every step along the way.
 - Nothing is without purpose or design.
 - Nothing is superfluous.
 - Everything is measured and deliberate.
 - Everything is in its place.

TRANS> That is the first thing we will say when we look back at the path on which He brought us.

2. Secondly, we will remember the yearnings we had along the way as those whose hearts had been renewed by grace...
 - a. We will confess that all along the way, we wanted Him to come and make things right.
 - v. 8 says, “in the way of your judgements, O LORD, we have waited for you. The desire of our soul is for your name and for the remembrance of you.”
 - We want Him to come and show Himself—to bring righteousness!
 - We are tired of our sin and we are tired of the sin all around us and we want Him to come and judge.
 - We want Him to put a stop to all the injustice in the world and all the atrocities that are done.
 - We want Him to bring justice to the earth.
 - God has put it in the hearts of His people to desire that.
 - Don’t you—you who trust in our Lord—yearn to see justice done in the earth?
 - b. Verse 9 shows that even in the night,
 - we yearn for Him to make Himself known—
 - and in the morning, the yearning still continues...
 - Isa 26:9: With my soul I have desired You in the night, Yes, by my spirit within me I will seek You early [in the morning].
 - We only see Him through a glass darkly now,
 - but we yearn to see Him as He is, in all His glory and truth and righteousness.

- We want him to show us if there is any wicked way in us, and we want Him to reveal Himself in the world that denies Him.
 - We want Him to reveal Himself by His judgements and no longer to hide...
 - We wonder why He doesn't stop the oppressor in his tracks with a lightening bolt...
 - and why He allows tyrants to go on with their tyranny.
 - Like the martyrs in Revelation we say,
 - "Lord, why don't you do something?"
 - Why don't you stop the Assyrian?
 - Why don't you stop the Babylonian?
 - Why don't you stop the Nazi?
 - Why don't you stop the abortionist?
- We know that if God would only (verse 9):
 - Isa 26:9: "send His judgements upon the earth, the inhabitants of the world would learn righteousness."
 - With David, we can testify that unless I had been afflicted, I would have gone astray.
 - We know, as verse 10 says,
 - that as long as grace is shown to the wicked, they do not learn righteousness...
 - Even if they dwell in a land of uprightness—where God is loved and served—they continue in their injustice and will not behold the majesty of God...
 - We want God to make Himself known so that they will fear Him!
 - Yet, we know that even when His hand is lifted up (when he makes His judgement clear), they still do not see.
 - Such is the depravity of man that if God is good to them and surrounds them with a godly example,
 - it is not enough for them...
 - It is not enough for any of us!
 - We go on in our blindness and rebellion unless we are born again.
 - With such a nature, there is no injustice in God for Him to leave the wicked to perish in their own rebellion.
 - It is an act of sheer grace that He should save any.

- But their blindness *will* end!
 - It does not end when we want it to, but God will certainly make Himself known to them in time...
 - He will gain glory upon them at the appointed time and
 - then, as verse 11 says,
 - “they will see and be ashamed for their envy of people and the fire that God has reserved for His enemies will devour them.”
 - Justice will at last be done.
3. But what is the point of all this?
- a. We must go back to verse 7.
 - God makes no mistakes in leaving tyrants to go their own way—
 - Pharaoh in Egypt,
 - Sennacherib of Assyria
 - The chief priests and scribes who crucified Jesus
 - Nero of Rome,
 - Hitler and Stalin,
 - Osama Ben Laden...
 - Yes, and even the oppressive parent or the difficult co-worker in your own life.
 - God has put them all across the path of His people with careful deliberation to accomplish His purpose our lives.
 - The Sabeans and the Chaldeans and the wind destroyed Job’s property, his servants, and his children.
 - Yet, every one of them was on Job’s path just as God had purposed.
 - b. The day will come when we will look back and see that God carefully designed each step along our pathway.
 - You will be able to say what it says in verse 12:
 - Isa 26:12: “LORD, You will establish peace for us, For You have also done all our works in us.
 - This verse is not about the fact that God has ordained the good works that we do... Ephesians 2:10 teaches that, but not Isa 26:12.
 - This verse is teaching us that all the things that God does in the world, He does for our blessing and our profit.
 - The idea, as Calvin points out, is that all our affairs are arranged so as to at last bring us into God’s final peace.

- He moves us along the pathway from ruin to righteousness.
- This is saying what Romans 8:28 says...
 - That “all things work together for good to those who love Him and who are called according to His purpose...”
 - And what is that *good* that they work together for?
 - It is not the good of having things turn out well for us with our investments or our work...
 - or that He works out everything so that you get the best parking place in the storm?
 - No!
 - It is a much higher good—the good of becoming more like Christ.
 - Romans 8:29 makes that very clear, but nobody ever includes it on the verse plaques.
 - Verse 29 says that God has “predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son.”
 - And so He works all things—all things along our path of life—to make *that* happen!

TRANS> The day will come when you will look back and you will know that this is so.

- You will know much more clearly than you know it now.
- But let your knowledge of that future knowledge give you confidence as you face difficulties now.
 - God makes no mistake—every step is planned.
 - What a help for the godly in Isaiah’s day who yearned and prayed that God would stop the Assyrian and the Babylonian from advancing,
 - only in time to see the city of Jerusalem fall to the ground and the whole nation deported to Babylon.
 - What a help for them to know that each blow that was felt from the Assyrian and the Babylonian’s hand was ordained by God for the good of His people.
 - He was using these enemies to work good in His people and to bring them to glory—

TRANS> Third, see that when Christ’s kingdom comes,

III. We will realise how superior He is to all other possible objects of our trust

- There are two particular objects in which we might trust that are mentioned here by Isaiah...
 - In verses 13-14, “other masters” are mentioned as a possible object of our trust;

- And in verses 15-19, we ourselves are mentioned as a possible object of our trust (self-trust).
 - Let us consider each of these.
- A. First, in that day, we shall see that God is superior to all other masters.
1. In verse 13, our song declares that we have had many other masters...
 - Isa 26:13: O LORD our God, masters besides You have had dominion over us.
 - a. Whenever Israel was disobedient, the LORD would raise up tyrants to rule over them.
 - The book of judges is full of examples of this.
 - There were the Syrians, the Moabites, the Canaanites, the Midianites, the Ammonites, and the Philistines who ruled over them.
 - Israel would suffer dreadful oppression and then they would return to the LORD again...
 - b. But sometimes, Israel's allegiance to these other masters was deliberate...
 - There were times when they forsook the LORD and chose to worship Baal.
 - And in Isaiah's day,
 - Ahaz refused the LORD and chose rather to trust in Assyria.
 - But these masters always failed them...
 - When the worshipped Baal, the God of rain, they had droughts...
 - When they looked to Assyria to protect, Assyria ended up coming to destroy them!
 2. But there were those in Judah who continued to trust the LORD through all these changes of masters.
 - And now they are the ones who are seen (in Isaiah's vision) to appear before the LORD when His kingdom is established and say...
 - v. 13-14: O LORD our God, masters besides You Have had dominion over us; But by You only we make mention of Your name. They are dead, they will not live; They are deceased, they will not rise. Therefore You have punished and destroyed them, And made all their memory to perish.
 - Those leaders that can seem so important to us in our own generation are all but men who die...
 - But our LORD is the one who lives on.
 - He is the one that the true people of the covenant remember.
 - All the others, however bold and strong they may have seemed on the earth—
 - however much they may have ignored God or even mocked God,

- are all brought down to the grave and will be brought before Him to be judged.
 - How helpless they will be—how helpless they are already before the hungry grave.
 - As the LORD tells them in Psalm 82,
 - “You may be gods, but you will all die like men.”
 - Their memory perishes and they are no more,
 - but the kingdom of God goes on and on and on!
 - We can cross these leaders and they can imprison us and even kill our bodies...
 - But they have no power to appoint us to our final destiny.
 - The LORD alone is worth mentioning when He is compared to these shadow gods.
 - And how much more is our LORD’s endless life a point of comparison now that He has come to the earth for us...
 - For though He died, it was only for our sins and only for a time until He had conquered death and risen again for us!
 - Having risen from death, we catch hold of Him by faith and are raised with Him from death to life.
 - He is the only one worth mentioning...
 - All other masters are but dead men.
 - Do not be intimidated by them.
 - Do not be afraid of them.
 - Do not let them cause you to compromise.
 - Why should you trust in men who will die?
 - Like Peter and John, tell them you have a master in heaven to obey.
3. Verse 15 stresses that the LORD is the One who makes His kingdom increase...
- These other kings cannot even keep themselves alive, much less their subjects!
 - Their kingdoms perish with them.
 - But whenever a soul is added to the kingdom of Jesus Christ by genuine faith, it is added forever!
 - Death does not break up God’s kingdom, but is rather the gathering of His people to Him which will (as we shall see shortly) be followed by their resurrection to an endless life with Him in glory.
 - Thus verse 15 says:

- Isa 26:15: You have increased the nation, O LORD, You have increased the nation; You are glorified; You have expanded all the borders of the land.
- It is a true increase—not an increase that lasts until they die.

TRANS> How clear His superiority to all other masters will be to us on the last day when we stand before the gates of the great city and see the power of His endless life!

B. Second, we shall see that the LORD is superior to ourselves.

1. It is really quite an absurd thing, but one of the objects of man's trust is often himself!

- a. We have just seen how the LORD increases the number of His people,
 - but often when He does, there are many who join them who are not true...
 - And over time, oddly enough, under God's blessing,
 - the nation as a whole begins to trust in themselves and in their own works to save them.
- b. Is that not the state that Israel was in when Jesus Christ came into the world?
 - They were full of self-righteousness.
 - They wanted God to deliver them from the tyranny of Rome,
 - but they did not see their need to be redeemed from sin.
 - There was humility about their ability against Rome, but there was no evangelical humility about their sin.
 - And because this was so, the Messiah that was sent to them did not suit them...
 - for He came to save His people from their sins.
 - To be their priest and their lamb.
 - They thought themselves to be too good for such a Saviour.

2. The covenant people are described in this sorry state in verse 16-18.

- a. You see here that they cried out to the LORD when they were chastened...
 - Look at verse 16-17:
 - Isa 26:16-17: LORD, in trouble they have visited You, They poured out a prayer when Your chastening was upon them. As a woman with child Is in pain and cries out in her pangs, When she draws near the time of her delivery, So have we been in Your sight, O LORD.
 - This "prayer" is actually a mutter or a whisper...
 - It was an earnest and sincere request to be delivered from oppression when the LORD chastened them,
 - but it was not a prayer of true repentance.

- It was only a prayer for relief.
 - It was the prayer of one who wants to go on in his sin and not be punished...
 - of one who wants God to ignore his sin and spare him from judgement.
 - Such a person feels that the LORD ought to treat him better than he has.
 - Such a person feels that he is good enough to be treated better and so cries out to the LORD for deliverance without repentance.
- b. But you see what the fruit of such a prayer was...
- They brought forth nothing but wind!
 - That is what we are told in verse 18:
 - Isa 26:18: We have been with child, we have been in pain; We have, as it were, brought forth wind; We have not accomplished any deliverance in the earth, Nor have the inhabitants of the world fallen.
 - Their prayers were not effectual.
 - They did not secure any deliverance in the earth, nor were they able to bring down their enemies.
 - This is the great sin of covenant people!
 - to trust in their own righteousness while expecting God to bless them and deliver them from their enemies.
 - But the sought after deliverance does not come from such a people.
3. It is only those who die in the LORD who are at last delivered...
- Those who are the true circumcision—who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh.
 - Verse 19 describes them as “**your** dead...”
 - Those who are the Lord’s dead—who have come to Him on His terms...
 - as sinners who need to be redeemed.
 - as sinners dead in their sins...who are prepared to die with Christ.
 - These are the ones who are the Lord’s dead—who die in the LORD.
 - Verse 19 says:
 - Isa 26:19: Your dead shall live; Together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; For your dew is like the dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead.
 - What a contrast!

- We come to God without Christ, and we bring forth the wind...
- But the Lord's dead shall be raised up to sing!
 - They are like herbs that appear to be dead in the winter until the dew of spring comes and brings them back to life again!
 - The earth casts them out to live forever with the Lord because they are dead in Him and in his righteousness.
- Look at how Isaiah,
 - who mentioned himself as a part of the whole nation that had called upon God in vain (in verse 17, he says "So *we* have been in your sight O LORD...")
 - now sees himself as part of the true remnant who is raised with the others to awake and sing of God's deliverance of them!
 - If you have repented and are trusting in the LORD,
 - You too will have a part in that glorious resurrection of the just.
 - You will be raised with Isaiah and the rest of God's people to live with Him in His glorious kingdom of righteousness forever.
 - Out of this ruined sinful world, He brings forth such a kingdom by His wonder-working power and grace.

TRANS> There is no other master and no self-righteousness that can accomplish that!

- We must die to all others and we must die to self and we must come to Christ.

Conclusion: If this is going to be our song at the end of our course,

- It is for us to trust the LORD through whatever indignation comes on our people and our land.
 - We must not see the indignation as something that has come upon us at random or as something that we do not deserve.
 - We must rather repent and turn to Jesus Christ for forgiveness and deliverance.
- This is the conclusion that Isaiah draws for Judah as they faced the coming judgements of God, and this is the conclusion we also need to draw.
 - Look at verse 20 and 21:
 - Isa 25:20-21: Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation is past. For behold, the LORD comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth will also disclose her blood, and will no more cover her slain.

- You see here that Isaiah assures us that the Lord will come to punish the inhabitants of the earth.
 - This is God's promise.
 - He will not leave the world to continue forever in unrighteousness, but has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness.
 - There are many preliminary days until the final day,
 - but the thing that matters most is that we are hiding until the indignation is past!
- The Lord invites us, as His people, to enter into our chambers and shut the doors behind us...
 - This is just what Israel did when, at God's command in Egypt, they applied blood to the door posts and lintel of their houses and shut themselves inside until God's judgement had passed by.
 - Isaiah actually uses the same word that Moses used to speak of God's passing over the marked houses of Israel when He came in judgement on that night.
 - Isaiah exhorts the people to betake themselves to the way that God has provided for their escape from His judgements.
- Is this not what Noah did when he took his family into the ark, as God had commanded, until the indignation was past?
 - So what are we to do today?
 - We are to shut ourselves up in our Lord Jesus Christ who is seated at the right hand of God in the heavenly places.
 - He is our refuge and our rock in which we find safety from the judgement of God.
 - He has overcome God's judgement for us by being cursed for us,
 - And He has entered into glory and we are to join ourselves to Him by faith.
 - When you do, you will be perfectly secure!
 - Every step you take will be for-your-good as God brings you along the pathway to glory...
 - And you will find that there is no other object in which you can safely trust.
 - The LORD will keep you in perfect peace if your mind is stayed upon Him.
 - And then when all things have been accomplished, you will be able to sing this song of rejoicing forever.