

EXPOSITION OF ISAIAH

Message #35

Isaiah 26:1-21

Just recently I have listened to entertainers suggest that the most innovative dancer to ever move on a stage was Michael Jackson. However, from the years 1948-1954 there was a singer, dancer and actor who was said to be the most cheerfully mannered and most innovative dance sequencer to ever come out of Hollywood, who actually turned choreography into “athletic American art.” It is said that he was the one reason for “Hollywood’s most memorable musicals.” He was from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and his name was Eugene Curran Kelly, better known as Gene Kelly. His most famous athletic dancing style was featured in the 1952 musical “Singin’ in the Rain.” It is a classic street scene which features him singing and dancing in the rain.

When we come to **Isaiah 26**, we come to a prediction of what the nation Israel will be singing after the rain has stopped, after the storm of the Tribulation is over. It is possible to sing during the rain if you are in a right relationship with the One who causes the rain.

When we read **Isaiah 26** two things become very clear: **1)** God’s Word says Israel will one day sing this song; **2)** Israel is certainly not singing this song right now. In fact, it has been a very long time since Israel has had anything to sing about. It has been a very long time since Israel has been able or willing to sing praises to God in her land.

But that day is coming and that is exactly the day Isaiah saw right here. We may notice from **verse 1** that the time of the singing is “in that day.” What day? This will be the period of time after the Tribulation when Israel is in her land. The Messiah will be there in Person and all redeemed Israel will sing praises to God.

AFTER GOD HAS Poured OUT HIS WRATH ON THIS EARTH, THERE IS COMING A DAY WHEN ISRAEL WILL BE SINGING IN HER LAND BECAUSE IT WILL BE A LAND FILLED WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE AND THE BLESSINGS OF GOD.

There are at least ten specific topics about which Israel will be singing:

TOPIC #1 – Israel will sing that Jerusalem is a strong city. **26:1**

During the Tribulation all of the cities of the world will have been brought down by God. But one city will stand tall and strong and it will be Jerusalem .

We may notice why this city stands so tall and strong; because “He,” that is Jesus Christ, is there and He sets up walls and ramparts and He is in charge of the security system.

Jerusalem today is anything but a strong city. It is a confused city and it is a city “under siege.” The city is split between Jews and Arabs, and even attempts to rebuild a third temple have been thwarted because of the demonic religion Islam and their demonic shrine, Dome of the Rock.

That will all change one day. Eventually Jerusalem will be the most secure city in the world filled with singing Jews and a city run by Jesus Christ. It will be a city of righteousness and peace. It will finally become the city that it should be right now.

TOPIC #2 – Israel will sing that Jerusalem is an open city. **26:2**

We may assume that in order to get into this city that features the reign of a righteous King, one will have gone through a righteous judgment. We know from Jesus' own words that when he returns there will be a judgment of Israel and a judgment of the nations (Matthew 25:31-46) to determine who gets to enter the Kingdom. We may assume that also includes who gets to enter Jerusalem.

“The righteous nation” is a reference to redeemed Israel who has been through the judgment. The city of Jerusalem will be open for business for righteous Israel. Israel the redeemed nation will enter the city. She will be seen and known as the nation of God. When this actually happens after the Tribulation, the entire nation Israel will be a righteous nation.

Now we may notice at the end of **verse 2**, that the righteous nation will be comprised of faithful individuals. In other words, each individual will have been judged to determine whether or not they had a true faith in Jesus Christ.

TOPIC #3 – Israel will sing how she received the perfect peace of God. **26:3-4**

Notice carefully that it is the “steadfast mind” that “trusts” in Jesus Christ that is kept in perfect peace. The word “steadfast” means to lay your support or rest on something. It presents the idea of laying something onto something else with the idea that it will uphold you and sustain you (Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 590). The idea here is that a person mentally places all of his trust in Jesus Christ as the One who is able to sustain and uphold him. What has happened is that Israel has finally been brought to the point where she realizes her only hope is a trust in God. In fact, the word “trust” (batach) is one that means to set your mind and your hope and your confidence in God (Ibid., p. 112). Now those who do that will discover God gives them “perfect peace.”

In Hebrew the words “perfect peace” literally read “shalom, shalom.” Dr. Gesenius said that this repetition of nouns is used in Hebrew to express something to the highest degree at the ultimate level of quality (*Hebrew Grammar*, p. 396). So the peace that is experienced by those who trust in God is at the highest possible level.

The idea behind the word “peace” (shalom) is more than just absence of war. It includes all of the blessings of God which include prosperity, health, security, tranquility, quietness of life and soul (*Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 825). This environment will feature a perfectly kept peace because all of the blessings of God will be in full force.

In fact, you may notice in **verse 4** there is a repetition of the covenant name for God, Jehovah. Jesus Christ is identified as LORD, GOD the LORD, and the everlasting ROCK.

What no one can deny here is that the One who is actually residing in Jerusalem is classified as Jehovah and the member of the Godhead who is actually there is none other than Jesus Christ. This text actually teaches that Jesus Christ is Jehovah, Jehovah, Jehovah, the everlasting Rock or the Rock of Ages. This is the very verse from which Augustus Toplady wrote His famous song “Rock of Ages.” The Rock of Ages will be reigning in Jerusalem.

When you read these verses, it is clear that God wants His people totally and completely trusting in Him, and when they do He gives them His peace. In fact, **verse 4** says He wants His people to trust Him forever. This is exactly what Israel refuses to do and this is precisely why she does not have the peace of God in Jerusalem right now. She refuses to trust in Jesus Christ, her Messiah and Savior. If she would turn to God right now, God would not have to force her to learn the lesson via the Great Tribulation.

TOPIC #4 – Israel will sing that she experienced the elevation of God. **26:5-6**

God will humble the proud and exalt the humble. Jesus Christ will have destroyed all arrogant enemies against Him and His people. He brought low those God-mockers who lived the high life. He brought their cities down to the ground and He trampled Israel’s enemies. He reversed fortunes to the extent that the afflicted and helpless people of God were now trampling down all the arrogant people and places of the world.

Those lofty places, where His people would not have been previously welcomed, they will walk on as dust under their feet. God will have humbled them all.

TOPIC #5 – Israel will sing of the righteousness of God. **26:7-11**

What Jesus Christ specifically will do to display His righteousness to this world will be to start breaking open seals (Revelation 5-6) which will pour out God’s wrath through judgment. God wants this world to learn and understand that God is a righteous God and one of the ways that He shows this is by a ferocious judgment against that which is unrighteous. This is a fascinating text. As God will be pouring out His wrath during the Tribulation, some people will watch it and live through it. It will have a powerful affect on this world. It will make an impact. There are two impacting ways that God’s wrath will affect people:

Impact #1 - The affect on God’s people. **26:7-9**

Notice from **verse 9**, Israel will finally learn the lesson of turning to God when things are very dark. **Verse 8** informs us that God’s people were following the progress of the Tribulation and when the earth was experiencing the wrath of God, God’s people finally started to realize that this was all about eliminating evil and bringing righteousness. They also realized that this was all about glorifying the name of God. **During the Tribulation, Israel will learn about God’s righteousness as they watch God’s wrath.** God’s people will finally learn that the ways of righteousness are the ways of peace and the smooth way to live life (**v. 7**). As they monitored what was happening during the Tribulation, God’s people came to understand, it is our relationship with God that determines whether our lives are smooth and level (**v. 7**).

What is so tragic is that it takes this terrible judgment to get Israel to wake up to this fact. It takes the horrors of the wrath of God to get God's own people to realize, we have been on the wrong path. Sometimes it takes God permitting terrible things to happen in order for people to **learn righteousness**, to seek God diligently and to desire God to work in their souls. Notice from **verse 9**, righteousness is learned and unfortunately for some it takes horrific things to get people to learn it.

Those of us in the Church Age do not have to go into the Tribulation so we will learn about God's righteousness by seeing God's wrath. We already know about it since we saw it on the cross aimed at His Son. But it will take this horrific judgment to bring Israel to the point where she will finally realize this point.

Impact #2 - The affect on wicked people. **26:10-11**

All the wicked people of the earth will be the direct target of God's wrath during the Tribulation. The wicked (**v. 10**) see God's judgments and have no clue what God is doing. They do not realize the majestic holiness of God that is working in pouring out wrath. The wicked just continue living their lives in unrighteous and unjust ways. They do not learn righteousness; they continue to blaspheme God right while He is pouring out His wrath.

They do realize this is coming from the hand of God, but they don't get it and they will not repent. They see that God is doing wonderful things for Israel, His own people who are right with Him, but they are put to shame and burned. Israel will be singing and the wicked will be burning.

TOPIC #6 – Israel will sing of the work of God. **26:12-13**

Israel will stand in total awe of the works God has performed in regard to her:

(Work #1) - God has established peace for Israel. **26:12a**

The peace that God brings is a peace that does not just mean absence of conflict, but absence of sin. In order to have a peaceful relationship with God, the sin issue must be addressed and that is exactly what the Tribulation will do. It will force Israel to address the sin issue.

(Work #2) - God has performed all His works for Israel. **26:12b**

Israel will finally realize all of the works that God did all over the world in order to get her into her land.

(Work #3) - Israel will realize that she was dominated by others and now is dominated by God alone. **26:13**

Israel has been dominated by Gentile forces for a long, long time. The "times of the Gentiles" have featured Israel under oppression to Gentile nations for 2000 years.

In fact, if we go back to the days of Solomon, which was the last resemblance of a blessed kingdom, Israel has been oppressed for 3000 years.

The Tribulation will be about regathering Israel by backing her into a corner so she will finally cry out to Jesus Christ. In fact, when Jesus Christ was here the first time, He predicted you will not see me again until every person in the nation confesses who I am (Matthew 23:38-39).

This will be the time when this will have happened. She will be singing a song confessing who Jesus Christ is. She no longer will be dominated by any, for Jesus Christ will reign and give her God's blessings. If she would cry out to God and to Jesus Christ now, she would experience the great blessings of God.

TOPIC #7 – Israel will sing about the elimination of the wicked. **26:14**

Once God has poured out His wrath, the wicked will never, ever inhabit this world again. They will never rise again. They will never even be remembered again.

When all of this finally happens, you will never hear or remember any false religion or religious leader. There will be no memory of Mohammed and the Koran. There will be no memory of Joseph Smith, Brigham Young and the Book of Mormon and Doctrine of the Covenants. There will be no memory of Mary Baker Eddy. There will be no memory of those civil leaders who racially led people away from God. All the wicked will be removed and there will be singing.

TOPIC #8 – Israel will sing about the increase of God. **26:15**

Notice what it stated in this verse - God will have increased the nation. Israel will be seen and known as the nation of God, and notice, God will have extended “all the borders of the land.” Those land dimensions spelled out in Scripture for Israel will one day be hers and then some.

There is coming a day when Israel will own every inch of her promised land. There will be no “two state solution” to the Middle East problem. Israel will have every bit of the land God has promised to her and He will expand her borders.

TOPIC #9 – Israel will sing about how she finally sought God. **26:16-18**

Israel will have to learn a very tough lesson. She will have to live through a time of distress the likes of which she has never seen. It will be a time when she can only whisper a prayer because if any discover a person is Jewish, he will be killed. Just before these things happen, it will be like Israel is in labor. She will be in great anguish and pain and many will die. She will finally realize she could not accomplish her own deliverance (**v. 18**). She will finally stop trusting in herself and start trusting in God. But in the end, Israel will awake and be raised up to enter the Millennium.

TOPIC #10 – Israel will sing about her national resurrection of God. **26:19**

Here is one of the most important moments of eschatology for Israel. Israel will get her own special national resurrection. Dr. John Walvoord said concerning this text that this reference in **Isaiah 26:19** and the one in Daniel 12:1-2 are “the most important prophecies of resurrection of the Old Testament saints” that are revealed in Scripture (*The Prophecy Knowledge Handbook*, p. 105).

What is specifically revealed here is that Old Testament Israel will have its own resurrection in which God will cause the nation to rise again so she will be able to live in her promised land. Those “dry bones shall live” (Ezekiel 37:11-14). Israel will be raised up and brought home to her land by God and she will be singing.

Now when we come to **verses 20-21**, the topics for singing are over. What Isaiah basically says here is that in view of the fact that one day you will be singing these songs, those of you who believe God, need to be willing to wait awhile until God punishes the world. God promises that He will shelter His faithful people until all these things are fulfilled.

The “my people” is a reference to Israel. During the Tribulation, 144,000 Jews will be sealed to communicate the truth of what is happening to Jews all over the world (Revelation 7). Many Jews will get it and believe it and God will protect those Jews as He is destroying the God-mocking world.

By the way, during the Tribulation, the Church will be tucked away in heaven in our rooms prepared by Jesus Christ, waiting until God has poured out His entire wrath, and then we will come back with Jesus Christ to reign.

PRACTICAL LESSONS:

- 1. Complete peace comes to one whose mind is steadfastly fixed on trusting Jesus Christ for salvation and everything else in life.**
- 2. By obeying God’s righteous Word, we will discover our life is smooth and level.**
- 3. Righteousness is a learning process that hopefully will not require judgments of God.**
- 4. For the believer the future will be singing; for the unbeliever it will be burning.**