

GOD'S PLAN FOR THE WHOLE WORLD AND FOR HIS PEOPLE: GOD'S SEVEN-STEP PLAN FOR THE WORLD ISAIAH 25:01–12

Introduction

The preceding thirteen chapters of Isaiah have predicted that God's hand of judgment will fall on the nations of the world. God's universal judgment of the world was the prophecy discussed in the previous chapter.

Focusing on so much judgment can weigh heavily upon the hearts of people — and even cause them to shrink back from the message. But God's judgment is not haphazard or without purpose. When He executes judgment on the earth, He acts according to a *master plan*, a detailed course of action that He has devised for the world. All that happens on earth — even every evil, wicked deed — is twisted, turned, worked out and used by God to fulfil His plan. God's plan for mankind and this world *will* be fulfilled.

In the prophecy of the present Scripture, Isaiah gives us a glimpse into God's plan. After the terrifying days of universal judgment known as the *Great Tribulation*, Jesus Christ will then establish the kingdom of God on earth. The King is coming just as John the Baptist and Christ proclaimed (Mt. 3:2; 4:17). From the beginning of creation, God's purpose has been to bring His kingdom to earth, and He has a seven-step plan to accomplish His purpose. This is, *God's Plan for the Whole World and for His People*:

- I. Establish a personal relationship with His people (v. 1).
- II. Establish His worship among all people (salvation of the Gentiles) (vv. 2-3).
- III. Protection of His people: to be a refuge and shelter (vv. 4-5).
- IV. Provide a feast in the future for all of His people (v. 6).
- V. Conquer death (vv. 7-8).
- VI. Arouse people to trust and rejoice in His salvation (v. 9).
- VII. Defeat all enemies: Assure His people of victorious lives (vv.10-12).

I. Isaiah 25:01 God's Plan: Establish a Personal Relationship with His People

God's plan is to establish a personal relationship with His people. In addressing the Lord, Isaiah says "You are my God." He acknowledges the LORD in a very personal way, that a personal relationship exists between him and the Lord. A personal relationship is always the first thing God is after in seeking people. God longs to be the Father of every human being, for every man and woman to become an adopted son or daughter of His. This was His very purpose for choosing the Jews to be His people. As Scripture says:

Deu 14:2 "For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. Out of all the peoples on the face of the earth, the Lord has chosen you to be his treasured possession."

Isa 63:16 But you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us or Israel acknowledge us; you, O Lord, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name.

Hos 11:1 "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son."

Some commentators actually say that it is Israel who is addressing the Lord in this passage (H.C. Leupold). Other commentators say that it is the remnant that God preserved during the *Day of the Lord* (Warren W. Wiersbe). Still others say that it is Isaiah who is offering up praise to the Lord, acknowledging that he has a personal relationship with Him (Stanley M. Horton; *Bible Knowledge Commentary*; Mathew Henry). Most likely it is Isaiah himself who is claiming a personal relationship with the Lord. He is describing the praise that will be lifted up to the Lord when the Messiah returns to establish His kingdom on earth.

The point to note is this: God's plan for establishing a personal relationship with His people is fulfilled in Isaiah and all other believers. Believers are just what their name suggests: they are people who truly believe in the Lord and address Him as "My God."

A personal relationship is established between God and His people for two purposes: so that people will praise God's name and declare His faithfulness throughout the earth. This is the very first praise Isaiah offered up to the Lord, a praise for God's faithfulness. Down through history the Lord had done some wonderful works, works that He had planned long ago. Isaiah recognized that the Lord was faithful to do exactly what He had always said. Whatever the Lord had planned or promised, He had always done and would always do. In the past, God had always fulfilled His plan and Word. In fact, much of what He planned has already taken place. For example, remember His Word to Abraham: trust me. Leave your country and go where I lead you, and I will give you the promised land and bless you richly. And you will be a blessing to all nations (see notes, Gen. 12:1-3). Abraham trusted the Lord, and the Jews grew into a great people that God has used for three great purposes:

- => To be the people through whom the world would inherit the promised land of heaven (see note, Gen. 12:1c).
- => To be the people through whom He would give His Word to the world (see note, Gen. 12:3).
- => To be the people through whom He would send the Saviour into the world (see note, Gen. 12:3).

An honest comparison of the prophecies in the Bible with historical events clearly shows that much of what God has planned for the world has already taken place. The Word of God has been given to the world through the Jews in the Holy Bible. Furthermore the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, has been sent into the world through the Jews. And through faith in Christ, many people have inherited the promised land of heaven.

But God's plan for the world includes far more that still lies out in the future. There are still many events of God's Holy Word yet to be fulfilled. But God is faithful. What He says will come to pass. Quickly glance at the seven steps of God's plan that are covered in this passage. When Isaiah wrote this passage, none of the steps had yet taken place. Today, however, steps one through three have been partially fulfilled. Their complete fulfilment will take place when Christ returns to set up His kingdom on earth. The point is that God is faithful. He will fulfil His plan for the world. We can trust His faithfulness. Just as Isaiah praised God's faithfulness, so we too can praise Him. For the Lord is faithful and He will fulfil His Word, all His promises, to the people.

1 Cor 1:9 God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.

Heb 6:17-18 Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged.

1 Pet 4:19 So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

Deu 7:9 Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands.

1 Kng 8:56 Praise be the Lord, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses.

Psa 89:1 "I will sing of the Lord's great love forever: with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations."

Psa 105:8 He remembers his covenant forever; the word he commanded, for a thousand generations.

Psa 146:5-6 Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God. He is the maker of heaven and earth, the sea and everything in them — he remains faithful forever.

II. Isaiah 25:02–03 God's Plan for the World: Establish True Worship among All People

God's plan for the world includes a wonderful event: a day when all the Gentile nations will be saved and worship the Lord. Since the first coming of Christ, some people from all over the world have been turning to Him and trusting Him as their Saviour. But when Christ returns to set up God's kingdom on earth, *all* the Gentiles from every nation in the world will turn to Him and worship Him and Him alone.

However, before that takes place, a terrifying judgment will fall on all the wicked of the earth. As these verses say, God will destroy all the cities of the Gentiles because of their unbelief, wickedness and defiance of Him. The term *the city* is a generic term, referring to all the cities of the world. In Isaiah's day the cities of the world were centres of...

- worldly power and wealth
- godlessness and wickedness
- covetousness and greed

Down through history, the cities of the world have continued to reject and defy the Lord. The same spirit of rebellion against the only living and true God marches on. As a result, the day is coming when He will destroy them. These fortresses of defiance and centres of wickedness will become heaps of rubble, never to be rebuilt.

But there is also wonderful news in the Lord's coming judgment. Note God's purpose for destroying the cities of the world: to stir up the Gentiles to repent of their sins and worship Him. For those who repent, there will be salvation. The Father will accept them because they approach Him through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. But for those who reject Him, there will be only judgment. They will stand before the Lord Jesus Christ in judgment and bow the knee, acknowledging that He is truly the Son of the living God. After bowing the knee, they will face the judgment of God because of their defiance and refusal to repent. Note what other Scriptures say about the Gentile nations' being saved:

Mat 8:11 *"I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven."*

Lk13:29 *"People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God."*

Rom 10:12-13 *For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile — the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

Rom 10:17-20 *Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ. But I ask: Did they hear? Of course they did: "Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world." Again I ask: Did Israel not understand? First, Moses says, "I will make you envious by those who are not a nation; I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding. And Isaiah boldly says, "I was found by those who did not seek me; I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me."*

Phil 2:9-11 *Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Isa 2:2-3 In the last days the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. Many peoples will come and say, "Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the temple of the God of Jacob. He will teach us of his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

Isa 11:10 In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious.

Isa 24:14-16 "They raise their voices, they shout for joy; from the west they acclaim the Lord's majesty. Therefore in the east give glory to the Lord; exalt the name of the Lord, the God of Israel, in the islands of the sea. From the ends of the earth we hear singing: "Glory to the Righteous One." But I said, "I waste away, I waste away! Woe to me! The treacherous betray! With treachery the treacherous betray!"

Isa 60:3-4 Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. "Lift up thine eyes and look about you: All assemble and come to you; your sons come from afar, and your daughters are carried on the hip."

Isa 65:1 "I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me; I was found by those who did not seek me. To a nation that did not call on my name, I said, 'Here am I, here am I.'"

III. Isaiah 25: 04–05 Protection of His People, Being a Refuge and Shelter for the Poor and Needy

Concern for the oppressed has always filled God's heart. His plan for the world includes the protection of His people and everyone who is poor and needy. Down through history, God has been a refuge and shelter for all who call upon Him for help.

The powerful of this world have always oppressed God's people as well as the poor and needy. Isaiah compared their oppressive acts to the pelting rain of a storm driving against a wall and to the burning heat beating down upon the desert. God is planning a final, victorious day of deliverance for all the persecuted of this earth. Before that day comes, however, the Lord will strengthen and empower His people to endure the oppression of the ruthless. Throughout all of history believers have fled to the Lord as a refuge and shelter from such tyranny, and the LORD strengthened them. They were able to walk through the sufferings of the storm and the burning heat of persecution.

But the day is coming when the Messiah will establish His kingdom on earth. When He does, God will silence the roar of the ruthless forever and punish them for their wicked acts. Once they are removed from the earth, God's people will experience His perfect protection. *In that day*, the perfect refuge and shelter of God's presence will be the continued, unbroken experience of every believer.

The LORD is our hiding place from the stormy, fiery trials of this world. Listen to God's promise to all believers that He will be a refuge and shelter in time of trouble.

Deu 33:27 The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. He will drive out your enemy before you, saying, 'Destroy him!'

Psa. 17:8 "Keep me as the apple of the eye; Hide me under the shadow of thy wings."

Psa. 27:5 For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock.

Psa. 31:20 "In the shelter of your presence you hide them from all human intrigues; you keep them safe in your dwelling from accusing tongues."

Psa 32:7 You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.

Psa 46:1 "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble."

Psa. 64:2 "Hide me from the conspiracy of the wicked, from the plots of evildoers."

Psa 71:3 "Be my rock of refuge, to which I can always go; give the command to save me, for you are my rock and my fortress."

Psa 119:114 You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your word.

Psa. 143:9 "Rescue me from my enemies, Lord, for I hide myself in you."

Prov 14:26 Whoever fears the Lord has a secure fortress, and for their children it will be a refuge.

Prov. 18:10 "The name of the Lord is a fortified tower; the righteous run to it and are safe."

Isa 25:4 You have been a refuge for the poor, a refuge for the needy in his distress, a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat. For the breath of the ruthless is like a storm driving against a wall.

IV. Isaiah 25:06 Great Supper of God's Kingdom

God's plan for the world includes a feast which is to be held in the future in Jerusalem. This feast is known as the Great Supper of God's kingdom. When Christ returns to set up His kingdom on earth. He will hold this great feast for all believers of the earth, for all the saved from every nation, tribe, people and language (Rev. 7:9). The guests at this great feast will be all people, both Jews and Gentiles who are genuine believers in the LORD (see note 2 above, Isa. 25:2). No longer will there be a separation between Jews and Gentiles. When Christ returns to hold this great feast, all believers will be present. This was stressed by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He clearly stated that the *Great Supper of God* will include guests from the highways and hedges of the world, not just Jews. Thus this prophecy of the *Great Supper of God* has a strong personal message for people

everywhere: people are saved by trusting Jesus Christ as their Saviour and by responding to God's invitation to attend the supper. But tragically, those who reject are lost, no matter what their excuse is.

Note this fact about the feast: only the best food — the choicest meats and the finest wines — will be served. The idea being conveyed is that believers will receive the richest and most wonderful blessings imaginable *in that day*. When Jesus Christ returns to earth, He will create a flawless world in which everything will be perfect. To inaugurate His kingdom on earth, the Lord will hold this Great Supper, and all believers will attend (see notes, Mt. 8:1-11; 22:1-14; Lk. 13:28-29; 14:15-24).

Mt 22:1-10 Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come. Then he sent some more servants and said, ‘Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.’ But they paid no attention and went off — one to his field, another to his business. The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.’ So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, both good and bad, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.”

Lk. 14:15-17, 22-24 When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, “Blessed is the man who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God.” Jesus replied: “A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’.... ‘Sir,’ the servant said, ‘what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.’ Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in, so that my house will be full. I tell you, not one of those men who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.’”

Rev 19:6-9 Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting, “Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.) Then the angel said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!’” And he added, “These are the true words of God.”

V. Isaiah 25:07–08 Conquest of Death by Christ

God's plan for the world includes removing the worst enemy of life — death. From the beginning of human history, death has always cast a covering of gloom over people. In Isaiah's day, untold thousands of people were dying due to the cruelty of the Assyrian conquerors. The tears of the people were flowing like a blinding rain due to the slaughter and captivity of their loved ones, and the sufferings of the people weighed heavily upon Isaiah's heart.

In this prophecy, the LORD gave Isaiah a vision of what lay ahead in the distant future. Death would be conquered. Ever the very shadow of death would be removed forever. The day is coming when all tears of sorrow and grief will be wiped away. All the mockery and persecution by enemies will be removed, and the disgrace that God's people suffered at their hands will be forgotten. Note the surety of this promise: it is a promise given by the LORD God, the Sovereign LORD Himself. Note the emphasis on this promise: the Lord has spoken, has guaranteed it. Beyond any question, death will be conquered. Although it is no mentioned in this Scripture, Jesus Christ conquered death at the cross. When He returns to earth, death will be no more.

Heb 2:14-15 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil — and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

John 3:36 “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.”

John 8:51 “I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.”

John 11:26 “And whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

Rom 2:7 To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honour and immortality, he will give eternal life.

1 Cor 15:26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

1 Cor 15:52-57 In a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.” “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Tim 1:9-10 *Who has saved us and called us to a holy life - not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time. But it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*

Rev 7:17 *For the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.*

Rev 21:4 *He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.*

Isa 65:20 *“Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; the one who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere child; the one who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed.”*

Dan 12:2 *Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.*

Hosea 13:14 *“I will deliver this people from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. Where, O death, are your plagues? Where, O grave, is your destruction?” I will have no compassion.*

VI. Isaiah 25:09 Trust and Rejoice in Salvation

God's plan for the world includes stirring people to trust and rejoice in His salvation. When Jesus Christ returns to set up His kingdom on earth, the Jews and many others will trust Him as their Saviour (Zec. 12:10). The blindness of their hearts will be removed. They will see Christ and realize that He is the true Messiah, the Saviour of the world. As a result, they will turn to Him. Furthermore, *in that day* all persecuted believers will see the Lord and know it has been worth all the suffering. *In that day* they will sing a beautiful song:

“Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation” (KJV).

“Surely this is our God; we trusted in Him, and he saved us. This is the Lord, we trusted in Him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation” (NIV).

“This is our God. We trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the Lord, in whom we trusted. Let us rejoice in the salvation he brings!” (NLT).

VII. Isaiah 25: 10–12 Conquest of All Enemies; Victorious Life of Believers

God's plan for the world ensures the defeat of all enemies who stand opposed to Him and His people. Moab in this passage represents all nations and people who oppose God. *In that day* when the Lord returns to earth, God's hand will fall upon all who have denied and

defied Him. His enemies will be nothing more than worthless straw to be trampled under His foot. Isaiah declared that they would be like crushed straw left to rot in manure pits (v. 10). All God's enemies will be like swimmers seeking to escape the cesspool of guilt and condemnation. But there will be no escape. God will destroy their pride and the evil works of their hands (v. 11). Standing before God, all the proud people of earth, along with the fortress cities in which they trusted, will be brought low (v. 12). Once all the enemies of God have been destroyed, there will be no opposition left. No longer will God's people be persecuted, mocked, attacked or martyred. All the enemies who confront God's people will be defeated, utterly destroyed. Ultimately, God's people will be victorious.

***Luke 10:19-20** "I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you."*

***John 16:33** "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."*

***Rom 8:35, 37-39** Who shall separate us from the love [compassion] of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

***1 Cor 15:24** Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.*

***2 Cor 2:14** But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him.*

***2 Cor 10:3-5** For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

***2 Tim 4:18** The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

***1 John 5:4-5** For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.*

***Rev 15:2** And I saw what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire and, standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and over his image and the number of his name. They held harps given them by God.*

***Psa 44:5** Through you we push back our enemies; through your name we trample our foes. ■*