

GOD'S WORKS ON BEHALF OF HIS PEOPLE: TO BE CELEBRATED ON THAT DAY (CHRIST'S KINGDOM) ISAIAH 26:01–27:01

Introduction

Genuinely caring for people is one of the marks of true greatness. Caring for people means to consider them, tend to them and keep an eye on their welfare. It means to protect, provide for and pay attention to them. But caring for people also means disciplining them when they need to be corrected, lest they harm themselves or others. A person who wants to be truly great will acknowledge others, respect them and care for them. He will naturally look after his own interests, but he will also look after the interests of others. He will highly respect himself, but he will also highly esteem others (Ph. 2:3-4). So it is with the Lord.

The present Scripture consists of a song that will be sung *in that day*, the day the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, establishes His kingdom on earth. Remember that the people of Isaiah's day were facing the constant threat of attack by the Assyrians. Consequently, it was a day of extreme distress and uncertainty. Thus the Lord longed to assure His people that He cared for them and would look after them. There was only one condition: they had to repent of their sins and turn back to Him. To encourage His people, the Lord inspired His prophet to lift up the hope of their future blessings. This is, *God's Works and the Protection of His Vineyard, His People: God's Great Care for His People, 26:1 - 27:13*.

- I. God's works on behalf of His people to be celebrated in song *in that day* (Christ's kingdom) (vv. 26:1 -27:1).
- II. God's protection of His vineyard, Israel (His people) (vv. 27:2-13).

I. *Isaiah 26:1–27:1 Works of God for His People*

God always acts for the benefit of His people, for those who truly believe in Him and live righteously. Because of His great love, the Lord is moving human history toward one climactic day, the day when the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, will establish His kingdom on earth. *In that day* (v. 1) all believers will offer up to the Lord the song of praise found in this Scripture. Note that this song spells out ten specific works God does in behalf of His people.

1. God gives His people a strong city, a city of salvation (vv. 1-2). Here, the word *salvation* means God's deliverance and protection from all the evil and oppressive people of the world. When the Messiah's kingdom is set up on earth, Jerusalem will no longer be a city inhabited by sinful, wicked people (1:1-31). Nor will it be a city fought over and oppressed by the nations of the world, as it was in Isaiah's day and has
-

been down through history. Instead, it will become the New Jerusalem, the capital of Christ's government on earth. Jerusalem will be known as the city of salvation, the city from which the Saviour rules over the earth. *In that day* its gates will always be open so that the righteous can enter to worship Him. Note that Jerusalem's citizens will be the righteous, those who truly believe in God and obey His holy commandments. Only the righteous will enter and live with the Saviour. Jerusalem will no longer be known as a city of division and conflict, but as the city of God, the city of salvation.

Thought 1. A person who trusts Jesus Christ as Saviour will become a citizen of His kingdom. A genuine believer has the wonderful hope of living in a strong city, a city of salvation ruled over by Christ. *In that day* all believers will be delivered from all the evil of this world. All pain, heartache, and trouble will be erased. The citizens of the Lord's kingdom will never again experience grief, suffering or oppression from the unbelievers and the wicked of the earth. Listen to the promise of God's Holy Word:

Heb 11:8-10 *By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.*

Heb 11:13-16 *All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country — a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.*

Heb 12:22 *But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly.*

Heb 13:14 *For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.*

Rev 21:2-7 *I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people and God himself will be with them and be their God. 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." He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give*

to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. Those who are victorious will inherit all things, and I will be their God and they will be my children.”

Rev 21:10 *And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.*

Rev 22:19 *And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.*

2. God gives His people *perfect peace*. But *perfect peace* is given only to the person whose mind or thoughts are fixed on Him (v. 3). The word *peace* (*shalom*) means to be in harmony with God, experiencing *peace with God* and the *peace of God*. It means to be in such harmony with God that one is assured of having all needs met. Peace gives a person the assurance of health, wholeness, the absence of conflict and strife within and without his soul. *Peace* is the assurance of deliverance through hardship, accident, disease and calamity. The *peace* given by God is a quiet, restful soul; a sense of purpose, contentment, fulfilment and completion. God's *peace* is the assurance of present and future security, deliverance and success. God's *peace* delivers a person through all the conflicts, strife, divisions, trials and temptations of this life.

However, note this important fact: the person who has such peace is the person whose mind or thoughts stay fixed on the Lord, through all the turmoil of Isaiah's day, the prophet Isaiah clearly experienced what so many long for: the *perfect peace* of God — peace of heart and soul.

John 14:27 *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”*

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 5:1 *Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Phil 4:6-7 *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Phil 4:8-9 *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me — put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.*

Col 3:15-16 *Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly*

as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

Psa 34:14 Turn from evil and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.

3. One of the great works of God on behalf of His people is to provide a solid foundation for life. As the rock of life, the LORD provides stability, security, support and defence against all the stormy trials and temptations of life.

Thought 1. As we walk through life, we decide to build our lives either upon sinking sand or upon the solid rock of the Lord. Listen to what God's Holy Word says:

Mat 7:24-27 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

1 Sam 2:2 "There is no one holy like the LORD; there is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God."

2 Chr 16:9 For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. You have done a foolish thing, and from now on you will be at war.

Psa 18:2 The LORD is my rock, and my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, and my stronghold.

Psa. 18:31-32 For who is God besides the Lord? And who is the Rock except our God? It is God who arms me with strength and keeps my way secure.

Psa. 28:1 To you, LORD, I call; you are my Rock, do not turn a deaf ear to me. For if you remain silent, I will be like those who go down to the pit.

Psa 61:1-2 Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer. From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

Psa 94:22 But the LORD has become my fortress, and my God the rock in whom I take refuge.

4. On Judgment Day, God will humble the proud and bring down the arrogant to the dust (vv. 5-6). All people, cities, and nations that exalt themselves at the expense of others will face the judgment of God. Down through history, the proud have used their position, power and wealth to oppress and mistreat others. Far too often the prideful...

- mock and persecute the righteous
- rob and cheat people
- falsely accuse and threaten people to fulfil their own wicked lusts
- twist the law and use bribery to secure more position, power and wealth
- deny and defy the Lord, the only living and true God

But the day is coming when God will level the arrogant cities of this world and humble all their proud rulers and citizens. Once the cities have been levelled, the poor and needy will trample down their ruins (v. 6). In this Scripture, the term *poor and needy* refers to believers who have been oppressed and stripped of their possessions by the proud. But the day of God's judgment will bring a reversal of position, power and wealth. The proud will be destroyed, and the poor and needy will be exalted. The LORD will elevate all who have truly trusted Him to positions of leadership and give them unimaginable wealth.

Thought 1. In this world, many of God's people are looked upon as insignificant and unimportant. Because of their righteous lives and witness for the Lord, they are usually considered a thorn in the side of society. For this reason, the unbelievers of the world oppress and persecute them. They are poor, needy and powerless. But the day is coming when all proud unbelievers will be humbled and all arrogant cities will be levelled to the ground. *In that day* the poor and needy believers of the world will be exalted.

Mat 23:12 *"For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted."*

Luke 1:52 *He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble.*

Luke 19:17 *'Well done, my good servant!' his master replied. 'Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.'*

1 Cor 6:2 *Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases?*

Rev 3:21 *To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.*

Psa 91:14 *"Because he loves me," says the LORD, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name."*

Prov 6:16-19 *There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a person who stirs up conflict in the community.*

Psa. 101:5 *Whoever slanders their neighbour in secret, I will put to silence; whoever has haughty eyes and a proud heart, I will not tolerate.*

Prov 15:25 *The LORD will tears down the house of the proud, but he sets the widow's boundary stones in place.*

Prov 16:18 *Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.*

Prov 29:23 *A man's pride brings him low, but a man of lowly spirit gains honour.*

Isa 2:11-12 *The eyes of the arrogant will be humbled and human pride brought low; the LORD alone will be exalted in that day. The LORD Almighty has a day in store for all the proud and lofty, for all that is exalted (and they will be humbled).*

Isa 2:17 *The arrogance of man will be brought low and human pride humbled; the LORD alone will be exalted on that day.*

Mal 4:1 *"Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire," says the LORD Almighty. "Not a root or a branch will be left to them.*

5. God levels the path and smoothes the way for the righteous (vv. 7-9a). As the righteous walk through life, obstacles often appear in their paths. Some large hurdle or hazard confronts them — a serious trial, temptation or difficult circumstance Isaiah says that God will level the path and smooth the way for the righteous to continue their journey. Note how Isaiah addressed the Lord: he called Him *the Most Upright*. Because the Lord is upright (righteous, just), He will act on behalf of the righteous. He will make sure that nothing prevents the righteous from travelling the road He has appointed them to travel. Bu note who the righteous are:

- => people who obey the judgments or laws of the Lord
- => people who *wait* (*quavah* or *qawahl*) patiently on the Lord
- => people who diligently seek to glorify the name of the Lord
- => people who yearn for and seek the Lord

Righteous people are those who obey God's Word and eagerly wait on Him. They are those who yearn for the Lord morning and night and seek to glorify Him (v. 9a). God will act on behalf of such people, levelling the path and smoothing the way they travel throughout life.

Mat 07:13-14 *"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."*

Luke 1:76, 79 *"And you, my child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the LORD to prepare the way for him,...To to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace."*

Heb 2:12-13 *He says, "I will declare your name to my brothers, in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises." And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again he says, "Here am I, and the children God has given me."*

Psa 16:11 *You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.*

Psa 23:3 *He restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*

Psa 25:10 *All the ways of the LORD are loving and faithful toward those who keep the demands of his covenant.*

Psa 119:35 *Direct me in the path of your commands, for there I find delight.*

Prov 2:6-9 *For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. He holds success in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, for he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones. Then you will understand what is right and just and fair — every good path.*

Prov 4:11 *I instruct you in the way of wisdom and lead you along straight paths.*

Prov 4:18 *The path of the righteous is like the morning sun, shining ever brighter till the full light of day.*

Isa 2:3 *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 his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.*

Jer 42:3 *"Pray that the LORD your God will tell us where we should go and what we should do."*

6. Another work of God is to execute His judgments on earth (v. 9b-11). Note that the Lord has a very specific purpose for His judgments; to teach people to live righteously. When disaster strikes people, they tend to turn to the Lord, seeking His strength and deliverance. The Lord hears when the wicked cry for help, and though He often meets their need, they still refuse to learn His righteous ways. Even when they live in a so-called land of righteousness, they continue to live sinful lives, no matter how much kindness the Lord shows them or how many blessings He bestows upon them. Although the Lord lifts His fist to warn them of coming judgment, they refuse to see the disaster that lies right over the horizon. But a day of rude awakening will come. In *that day* of coming judgment, all the wicked will see God's zeal in saving His people and putting the wicked to shame. The fire God has reserved for His enemies will consume the wicked (v. 11).

Thought 1. The wicked of the earth have no spiritual understanding of the Lord or His Word. They are dull of hearing. They have closed their minds and chosen to be ignorant of the LORD, the only living and true God. Likewise, they reject Him and His

warning of coming judgment. Listen to what God says about the wicked having no understanding and being dull of hearing:

Luke 12:56-57 *“Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky. How is it that you don't know how to interpret this present time? Why don't you judge for yourselves what is right?”*

John 8:42-44 *Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me. Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”*

Acts 28:27 *For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn and I would heal them.*

Rom 3:10-11 *As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.”*

2 Tim 3:1-7 *But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy; without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God – having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them. They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth.*

Heb 5:11 *We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn.*

Psa 82:5 *They know nothing, they understand nothing. They walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken.*

Psa 92:5-9 *How great are your works, LORD, how profound your thoughts! Senseless people do not know, fools do not understand, that though the wicked spring up like grass and all evildoers flourish, they will be forever destroyed. But you, LORD, are forever exalted. For surely your enemies, LORD, surely your enemies will perish; all evildoers will be scattered.*

Jer 4:22 *“My people are fools; they do not know me. They are senseless children; they have no understanding. They are skilled in doing evil; they know not how to do good.”*

Jer 5:21 *Hear this, you foolish and senseless people, who have eyes but do not see, who have ears but do not hear.*

Micah 4:12 *But they do not know the thoughts of the LORD; they do not understand his plan, he who gathers them like sheaves to the threshing floor.*

7. God gives His people peace and He strengthens them (vv. 12-15). As Isaiah looked back over the history' of Israel, he remembered how often the Lord had delivered them from the oppressors of this earth. Because of the Israelites' sins down through the centuries, the Lord had used other nations to discipline them through oppression and captivity. These tyrants had included the pharaohs of Egypt, as well as the rulers of surrounding nations. In Isaiah's day, the rulers of Assyria were threatening Judah. But Isaiah knew that God had always strengthened the true believers in times of oppression. Thus the faithful among His people had continued to honour the name of the Lord (v. 13).

Note what Isaiah said about the oppressors: they were dead, and their spirits would never again rise (vv. 14-15). This is a startling prophecy, for Isaiah was contrasting the enemies of God with genuine believers who place their trust in God. In stating that the spirits of God's enemies would not rise again, he implied that the spirits of those who trust God would rise again.

When the Lord punishes His enemies, He will even wipe out all memory of them. By *memory*, Isaiah meant their honour. For example, although we know about the Pharaoh of Egypt during Moses' day, no one honours his memory today. His name is found only in the records of that period of history. But this is not true for God's people. In the coming day of the Messiah's kingdom on earth, the nation of Israel will be enlarged and honoured. Its borders will be extended, and the nation will be greatly honoured (v. 15).

Thought 1. Note the wonderful promises of God:

- 1) God promises to flood the hearts of His people with peace as they walk through life.

John 14:27 *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."*

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."*

Phil 4:6-7 *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Psa 119:165 *Great peace have they who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble.*

Isa 26:3 You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you.

Isa 48:18 If only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would have been like a river, your righteousness like the waves of the sea.

2) God promises to strengthen His people in times of oppression.

2 Cor 9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

Eph 3:16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being.

Phil 2:13 For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

Phil 4:13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

1 Tim 1:12 I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service.

2 Sam 22:40 You armed me with strength for battle; you humbled my adversaries before me.

Isa 40:31 But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Isa 41:10 So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

8. Another work of God is to discipline His people (vv. 16-18). When God's people sinned and failed to do what they should have done, the Lord disciplined them. As Isaiah reviewed the history of Israel, he saw that the Lord had disciplined the people so much that they were now bowed under the weight of the chastisement. But God had a very specific purpose for disciplining them: to cause them to cry out to Him. He longed for them to turn from their sins and return to Him. As a woman giving birth cries out in pain, so the Israelites suffering the discipline of God cried out in pain. Up until the time of Isaiah the Lord had always heard their cry and delivered the faithful believers among them, but His deliverance had not produced permanent righteousness in the nation. The people failed to be the strong witnesses to the world that the LORD had planned for them to be. Sadly, Israel had failed to give birth to righteousness.

Thought 1. God disciplines His people when they sin and fail to be witnesses for Him. But remember why God disciplines us: to correct us, to stir us up to live as we should.

John 15:2 "He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful."

1 Cor 11:30-31 *That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment.*

Heb 12:5-6 *And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.*

Rev 3:19 *Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent.*

Deu 8:5 *Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you.*

Psa 94:12 *Blessed is the man you discipline, O Lord, the man you teach from your law.*

Prov 3:11-12 *My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.*

Jer 10:23-24 *I know, O LORD, that a man's life is not his own; it is not for man to direct his steps. Correct me, LORD, but only with justice — not in your anger, lest you reduce me to nothing.*

9. One of the most astounding works of God will be the raising of the dead from the dust of the ground (v. 19). Amazingly Isaiah predicted that the dead followers of the Lord will live; their bodies will rise from the dust of the ground. Some commentators apply this to the restoration of Israel as a nation (see Eze. 36-37). But the reference to *body* or *bodies* is just too personal, too individualistic to apply to a national group of people. It is the bodies of people, of genuine believers to whom Isaiah is referring. Through the inspiration of God's Spirit he is predicting the resurrection of believers when the Lord returns. In that glorious day the *rapture* of believers will take place: their dead bodies will arise from the dust of the earth. Therefore, all believers should wake up and shout for joy because of this wonderful promise. "As dew gives life to the herbs of the earth, so *in that day* the dead will be given life by God."

John 5:28-29 *"Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out — those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.*

John 6:40 *"For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."*

John 11:25-26 *Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"*

Acts 24:14-15 *However, I admit that I worship the God of our fathers as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect. I believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in the Prophets, and I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.*

1 Cor 15:20-24 *But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the first fruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.*

1 Cor 15:50-53 *I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed — 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.*

2 Cor 4:14 *Because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence.*

Phil 3:21 *Who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.*

1 Th 4:13-18 *Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope.*

1 Th 4:14-18 *We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.*

Job 19:26 *And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God.*

Psa 16:10 *Because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.*

Psa 49:15 *But God will redeem my life from the grave; he will surely take me to himself.*

Psa 71:20 *Though you have made me see troubles, many and bitter, you will restore my life again; from the depths of the earth you will again bring me up.*

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 ransom them 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.”*

10. One of the significant works of God is to warn people to prepare for the coming day of wrath (26:20-27:1). Isaiah and His people needed to prepare for the Assyrian oppression, and then later generations needed to prepare for the Babylonian invasion (see notes, 2 Kng. 25:1-30). The Lord encouraged them to enter their rooms and shut the doors. Most likely, this referred to finding their refuge in Him, for He was their only hope of security. No matter what the trial or its potential threat, the LORD is the true refuge for believers.

In the present Scripture, the primary reference is to a day of future judgment and *great tribulation* that is coming upon the earth (see notes, Mt. 24:15-28). Believers of all generations must prepare themselves for *that day* of terrifying judgment. Although the judgment will last for only a little while, they must secure themselves. Isaiah gave three reasons why believers must be prepared.

- a. Believers must be prepared because the Lord is coming to punish the people of the earth for their sins. The implication is that believers must not be participating in the wicked behaviour of unbelievers.
- b. Believers must be prepared because the earth will no longer hide murderers, no longer conceal the sins of those who attempt to hide their wicked deeds. *In that day* no sin will be hidden from God, no matter how long it has been kept secret. The blazing purity of God's holiness will expose all sin, whether major or minor. All believers who are committing secret sin will have their sin exposed.
- c. Believers must be prepared because the Lord will punish the serpent Leviathan; that is, the nations who oppose God and His people (27:1; 30:7; 51:9; Eze. 29:3). Mentioned in the myths of that day, Leviathan was probably a sea monster that became a symbol of cruel, wicked nations. Thus *in that day* of God's terrible judgment, the Lord's sword (His Word, Eph. 6:17) will slay all the monsters of the earth and its seas — all the nations who have opposed God and His people.

Thought 1. We must heed the warning of the Lord: He is returning to judge the earth. He has given us strong and sufficient warning to turn our lives around. Listen to what God's Holy Word says:

Mat 24:42-44 “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house to be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”

Mat 25:1-13 “At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’ Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’ ‘No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’ But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. Later the others also came. ‘Sir! Sir!’ they said. ‘Open the door for us!’ But he replied, ‘I tell you the truth, I don’t know you.’ Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.”

Mat 26:41 “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”

Mark 13:35 “Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back — whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows or at dawn.”

Luke 12:35-36 “Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him.”

1 Cor 16:13 Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong.

1 Th 5:5-6 You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.

1 Pet 5:8-9 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

Rev 3:11 I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.

Rev 16:15 “Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed.”

Rev 19:7-9 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.” ■