

Isaiah Chapter 26

Verses 1-11: Chapter 26 opens up with a great song of praise that will be sung in “Judah” (Literally, “Praise”). The redeemed remnant will sing praise to God over their impregnable city, Jerusalem.

The picture is that of the redeemed who enter the millennial kingdom. Notice that the “wall and bulwarks” are not physical but spiritual. The command “Open ye the gates” may indicate that the city (New Jerusalem), has never before been occupied. In this fixed moral and spiritual state Israel is promised “perfect peace” (shalom, shalom, literal “peace, peace”).

This emphatic expression indicates a peace that goes beyond human comprehension (Phil. 4:7). To have one’s “mind ... stayed” means to lean on God in total confidence and security. “Trust” is the ultimate expression of the confidence. Notice that the object of one’s faith is as important as the act of trust. Here the object of faith is “the Lord Jehovah.”

Isaiah 26:1 "In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will [God] appoint [for] walls and bulwarks."

The song, spoken of here, is the song of the redeemed. “Strong city”: In contrast to the typical city of confusion (24:10; 25:2 and 26:5), that was doomed, God has a future city of prominence, the millennial Jerusalem (Zech. 14:11).

This is a specific time, because it says that day. We see the city will be safe, because of the salvation through Jesus. This is the time of restoration. This is, speaking of the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth.

Revelation 3:12 "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, [which is] new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and [I will write upon him] my new name."

Revelation 21:1 "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea."

There will be no need for walls of defense, because God is the defense. To be exact, the salvation through Christ is the defense. There will be no evil there, so there will be no need of defense.

Isaiah 26:2 "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in."

Isaiah envisions the future Jerusalem, where only righteous Israel (physical and spiritual), may enter. The redeemed remnant from other nations will come periodically to worship. (Zechariah 14:16-19).

This request from God to open the gates for all the believers to come in is given, probably, to angels. Those in right standing with God (the righteous), will enter in and take up habitation in the city. The gates are of pearl.

Revelation 21:21 "And the twelve gates [were] twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city [was] pure gold, as it were transparent glass."

Isaiah 26:3 "Thou wilt keep [him] in perfect peace, [whose] mind [is] stayed [on thee]: because he trusteth in thee."

“Perfect peace ... trusteth in thee”: A fixed disposition of trust in the Lord brings a peace that the wicked can never know (48:22; 57:21). Such reliance precludes double mindedness (James 1:6-8), and serving two masters (Matthew 6:24).

Jesus Christ (as we know Him), is King of Peace. If we have taken on the mind of Christ, we have our mind stayed upon the peace that God provides. To place our faith and trust in Jesus brings perfect peace.

Isaiah 26:4 "Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH [is] everlasting strength:"

“Everlasting strength or Rock”: Literally the expression is “Rock of Ages,” a rocky cliff where the trusting one may find shelter from attackers (12:2).

We see in this that, simple faith and trust on our part brings an eternity of peace. He is our Refuge. He is our very present help. In Him we have our very existence.

Acts 17:28 "For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring."

The LORD is the source of everything that exists. He is the source of all power.

Verses 5-6: “Them that dwell on high ... layeth it low”: The arrogant inhabit the lofty city during its overthrow; the humble inhabit the strong city (verse 1), in its exaltation (James 1:9-10; 1 Peter 5:5).

Isaiah 26:5 "For he bringeth down them that dwell on high; the lofty city, he layeth it low; he layeth it low, [even] to the ground; he bringeth it [even] to the dust."

Isaiah is reminding us here, that God Himself brought down the enemies of the believers. He won the victory for us. In the last lesson, we saw where God destroyed the cities that had been home for the evil.

Isaiah 26:6 "The foot shall tread it down, [even] the feet of the poor, [and] the steps of the needy."

The poor and the needy had been trodden down on the earth, but now they are exalted.

Isaiah 26:7 "The way of the just [is] uprightness: thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just."

“Way of the just”: In a land of hilly, twisting roads, Isaiah spoke of a straight and level path for the feet of the poor and needy (40:3-4; 42:16; 45:13).

My prayer is that God will light the path that He has for us to walk. It is a straight and narrow path that leads to everlasting life with Him. The Light of Jesus guides us on this path. If we are His, we will stay in that path.

Isaiah 26:8 "Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O LORD, have we waited for thee; the desire of [our] soul [is] to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee."

“Waited for thee”: The future remnant divulges the key to its redemption, their complete dependence on the Lord, not humanly devised schemes.

We Christians, are awaiting the coming of Christ now. We do not know just how long the wait will be, but we do know we must not wander off, but wait for His appearing. The desire of our heart should be for His appearing. Only God knows when that time will be. We must trust His judgment on this.

2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

The greatest thing all believers in Christ are waiting for is the time when they can see Jesus.

Isaiah 26:9 " With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments [are] in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."

The pious long for God at all times. “Judgments ... will learn righteousness”: God’s punishing hand benefits sinners in leading them to repentance.

The desire of the Christian, the same as Isaiah, is to see the Lord. This is speaking of those who decide early to come to the Lord. The inhabitants of the earth will learn righteousness through suffering, if they wait.

Every believer desires that everyone they know will come to the knowledge of God.

Isaiah 26:10 "Let favor be showed to the wicked, [yet] will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the LORD."

“Will he not learn righteousness”: God evidences His love and mercy toward other wicked ones, but they turn their back on it.

This is a plea from Isaiah that God will forgive the wicked. In the very next statement he is saying, you cannot force belief upon him. We may desire them to come to Christ with all our heart, but some of them will still live unjustly.

Isaiah 26:11 "LORD, [when] thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: [but] they shall see, and be ashamed for [their] envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them."

“They will not see ... but they shall see”: The wicked, who are blind to God’s authority and imminent judgment upon them, will be conscious of His compassion for His people Israel, to their own shame.

All of the judgments against the rebellious people that God brings are to cause them to repent. Even when God has already raised His hand to judge them, they will not repent. He gives them plenty of time to repent, and He warns them of His judgment, but some will not repent.

Verses 12-21: Next Isaiah predicts that God will “ordain peace” for those who trust in Him. “Other lords” are other gods they may have previously worshiped. Now they must recognize that “they are dead.” Though the people of Israel have been “removed ... unto all the ends of the earth,” their dispersion will be reversed and they will be regathered in their land.

This section also contains one of the strongest promises of physical resurrection in the Old Testament. “Thy dead men shall live ... my dead body shall ... arise.” Those who have previously died are called upon to “awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust.” The prophet further predicts that the “earth shall cast out the dead.”

Isaiah 26:12 "LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us."

Though Israel’s immediate future looks bleak, Isaiah expresses strong confidence that the nation will ultimately prosper.

The works spoken of here, have been done for the Christian by Jesus. He paid the price for our salvation and the peace He brings.

Isaiah 26:13 "O LORD our God, [other] lords beside thee have had dominion over us: [but] by thee only will we make mention of thy name."

Israel’s history was replete with periods of foreign domination by the likes of Egypt and Assyria.

The worldly “lords” is not capitalized. This is speaking of people of the world who rule over us. Their rule is for their own selfish gain.

The name, they are speaking of, is the name of Jesus. At that name, every knee will bow, and every tongue confess.

The worldly lords have nothing to offer their subjects. Our LORD brings everlasting life. He, also, gave us power of attorney to use His name.

Isaiah 26:14 "[They are] dead, they shall not live; [they are] deceased, they shall not rise: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish."

These foreign overlords are to be a thing of the past; they are not to appear again on the earthly scene.

This is speaking of the earthly lords being dead. They did not rise from the grave. Only the Lord Jesus Christ rose from the grave. These earthly lords are not remembered, because they are dead.

Isaiah 26:15 "Thou hast increased the nation, O LORD, thou hast increased the nation: thou art glorified: thou hadst removed [it] far [unto] all the ends of the earth."

With prophetic certainty from the perspective of Israel’s future restoration, Isaiah saw the expansion of Israel’s borders as an accomplished fact.

The nation, spoken of here, is the righteous. This really is speaking of the multitude of Christians too vast to number, who makes up the righteous nation of God. They had been scattered throughout the known world. Now, they have taken up habitation with God.

Isaiah 26:16 "LORD, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer [when] thy chastening [was] upon them."

The hard experience of Israel’s history drove her to call on God.

"Chastening" is for the children to make them come back to God. Perhaps, that is what caused this vast multitude to come back to God. Sometimes, the only thing that will make us come to the LORD is trouble. This is saying, in trouble they cried out to God, and He heard them.

Verses 17-18: Israel’s tumultuous history is compared to a pregnant woman in labor.

Isaiah 26:17 "Like as a woman with child, [that] draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, [and] crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in thy sight, O LORD."

When life comes into existence, it is through much pain. This is true in the physical world and in the spirit, as well. Chastening is always painful, but brings life. In this case, everlasting life.

Isaiah 26:18 "We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen."

All the nation's effort was to no avail because they did not depend on the Lord.

Much of the effort to save everyone in the world never comes to be. A few are brought into this new life with the Lord. The inhabitants of the world are those who are lost. This is of their own free will. Salvation is offered to everyone. Not all accept it.

Isaiah 26:19 "Thy dead [men] shall live, [together with] my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew [is as] the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."

This speaks of the raising of corporate Israel to participate in the great future banquet (Ezekiel 37). Daniel 12:2 speaks of the resurrection of individual Old Testament saints.

This is speaking of the resurrection, when the bodies of the saints rise at the blowing of the trump of God. The graves shall open, and all who belong to Jesus will arise and those who are still alive will meet them in the air. (See 1 Thess. 4:13-17).

The hope of the saints is the resurrection.

Isaiah 26:20 "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast."

"For a little moment": Israel's final restoration was not immediately at hand. Hence she had to continue praying in solitude for that restoration until the time of God's indignation would pass. This could be speaking of the time the saints live in heaven waiting for the wrath of God to be fulfilled on the earth.

Isaiah 26:21 "For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."

The innocent killed by their oppressors are to come to life (verse 19), and testify against their murderers.

The wrath of God falls on those of unbelief. There is nothing hidden from God. God knows of all the murders which were not reported. The wrath of God is not for His children, but for those wicked unbelievers. This is speaking of the 3 1/2 years of the wrath of God upon the earth.

Isaiah Chapter 26 Questions

1. What is the song in verse 1?
2. Why will the city be safe?
3. What does the author think this is speaking of?
4. Who are the gates opened to?
5. Who will open the gates?
6. What are the gates made of?
7. Who is kept in perfect peace?
8. Verse 4 says, in the _____ is everlasting strength.
9. Who brought down the evil cities?
10. What is the way of the just?
11. What guides us on the straight and narrow path that leads to God?
12. What is the true Christian waiting for?
13. How does Isaiah ask God to treat the wicked?
14. Why does the judgment of God come?
15. Who are the other lords in verse 13?
16. Jesus gave us power of attorney to use His _____.
17. Why are the earthly lords not remembered?
18. Who are the "nation" spoken of in verse 15?
19. What is "chastening" for?
20. What is the pain compared to in verse 17?
21. Who is salvation offered to?
22. What is verse 19 speaking of?
23. The hope of the saints is the _____.
24. What time does the author believe verse 20 is speaking of?
25. What can you compare the happening in verse 21 to?