

ISAIAH 22

Overture to the Song of the Redeemed^a
(Isaiah 25:1-12)

Isaiah 25:1-12 Revised Standard Version (RSV)

Praise for Deliverance from Oppression

25 O Lord, thou art my God;
I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name;
for thou hast done wonderful things,
plans formed of old, faithful and sure.^b
² For thou hast made the city a heap,
the fortified city a ruin;
the palace of aliens is a city no more,
it will never be rebuilt.^c
³ Therefore strong peoples will glorify thee;
cities of ruthless nations will fear thee.^d
⁴ For thou hast been a stronghold to the poor,
a stronghold to the needy in his distress,
a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat;
for the blast of the ruthless is like a storm against a wall,^e
⁵ like heat in a dry place.
Thou dost subdue the noise of the aliens;
as heat by the shade of a cloud,
so the song of the ruthless is stilled.^f
⁶ On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wine on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wine on the lees well refined.^g ⁷ And he will destroy on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations.^h ⁸ He will swallow up death for ever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth; for the Lord has spoken.ⁱ
⁹ It will be said on that day, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation."^j
¹⁰ For the hand of the Lord will rest on this mountain^k, and Moab shall be trodden down in his place, as straw is trodden down in a dung-pit.^l ¹¹ And he will spread out his hands in the midst of it as a swimmer spreads his hands out to swim; but the Lord will lay low his pride together with the skill of his hands.^m ¹² And the high fortifications of his walls he will bring down, lay low, and cast to the ground, even to the dust.ⁿ

Revised Standard Version (RSV)

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^a **Chapter 24** begins a four chapter oracle of judgment upon the whole earth, often called Isaiah's Apocalypse. Much of the imagery in these chapters will reappear in later apocalyptic literature, including Revelation. In the prior chapters Isaiah delivered prophecies first against Judah, then Israel, then the surrounding nations, and now, finally, to all of Mankind. These four chapters describe the last days when God will judge the whole earth and eliminate evil from the world. While Chapter 24 predicts judgment upon everyone, high and low, there are hints that some, a remnant, will be left after the tribulation. **In Chapter 25** the focus shifts to the time after God's judgement, with the surviving remnant from all the nations worshipping the God of Abraham in Jerusalem. The Chapter is primarily in the form of a victory song celebrating the destruction of the City of Chaos, Is 24:10, the worship of the God of Abraham by the Nations (Is 24:15), and a victory over pride and arrogance (24:21-22).

^b (1) Ex 15:2; Ps 31:14-15, 86:2, 107:32, 118:28; Is 49:4-5, 61:10, 9:6; 2Ki 19:25; Ps 40:5, 98:1; Eph 1:11-12. The Song of the Redeemed from Is 24:14-16 is taken up again as the time of Judgement and destruction is now being viewed from a time after it has been fully accomplished. In one sense it is the song of survivors of a world-wide disaster which killed most of humanity, seeking to rebuild the world. Yet in another sense, the people will not need to rebuild the world because God will have already done so. This time was in the future for Isaiah, and remains in the future for us. We are in a period after the Crucifixion but before the final culmination of the victory with the return of the Messiah. God's intervention in the world is not a surprise, but something long predicted and expected. This verse emphasizes the point that there will be a time in the future when the world will experience convulsion through God's intervention bringing an end to the evil and suffering of this present darkness, Eph 6:10-13. The Septuagint reads, "O Lord God, I will glorify You, I will sing to Your name; for You have done wonderful things, *even* an ancient *and* faithful counsel. Amen."

^c (2) Is 17:1, 26:5, 27:10, 32:19; Jr 51:37; Is 17:3, 25:12; Is 13:22, 32:14, 34:13. The **City** referred to in this verse is likely the one referred to in Is 24:10-12, the City of Chaos (see note in lesson 21). This City of Chaos, representing the world system, is often referred to as Babylon in an allegorical sense (Is 21:9; Rv 17-18). In Isaiah's typology, there are only two cities, Jerusalem, the City of God, and Babylon, the city representing the world system. Cities other than Jerusalem have always had a negative connotation, see, e.g. Gn 4:17 (the city built by Cain after he had killed his brother and been cursed by God); Gn 11:1-9 (Babel which was destroyed when it's people sought to be like God); and Jon 1:1 (Nineveh, the great city of wickedness). In the Hebrew Scriptures, God's judgment always has two sides, the one side will be judged and punished, the other vindicated and lifted up. Vindication for God's people must, therefore, include punishment for their enemies. The Septuagint reads, "For You have made cities a heap, *even* cities *made* strong that their foundations should not fall; the city of ungodly men shall not be built forever."

^d (3) Is 24:15; Is 13:11, 18:7. **Strong peoples** likely refers to those who have been humbled as described in Chapters 13-24. At this time, all will acknowledge God as God, though not all will accept and serve Him. The Septuagint reads, with an almost opposite meaning, "Therefore shall the poor people bless You, and cities of injured men shall bless You." The Septuagint for the remainder of the Chapter contains many strong variations in meaning from the Masoretic text.

^e (4) Na 1:7; Is 14:32, 17:10, 27:5, 33:16; Is 4:6, 32:2; 2Ch 32:18; Is 29:5, 29:20, 49:25; Rv 7:15-16. God Himself, and not human efforts, gave refuge to the poor and protection against the strong peoples that surrounded Jerusalem. God is our shelter from those who would scoff at us for our faith and our way of life. The Septuagint reads, "For You have been a helper to every lowly city, and a shelter to them that were disheartened by reason of poverty; You shall deliver them from wicked men; *You have been* a shelter for them that thirst, and a refreshing air to injured men."

^f (5) Jr 51:54-56; Is 32:2; Ps 8:2. God will silence the war cries and victory song of the strong peoples by defeating them. The Septuagint reads, "*We were* as faint-hearted men thirsting in Zion, by reason of ungodly men to whom You delivered us."

^g (6) Is 1:19, 11:9, 24:23; Is 2:2-4, 56:6-8, 60:11-14; Zec 8:20; Ps 63:5; Jn 6:51-14; Pr 9:2; Rv 19:6-10. The Mountain of Zion, Jerusalem, will be the center of worship. The banquet prepared is a particularly luxurious one. The wine described as "on the lees" is one in which the sediment has been allowed to remain for a time during the aging process to enhance the flavor of the wine. A similar feast is described in Ex 24:9-11 when the Elders ate with God and were not destroyed. Jesus the Messiah Himself refers to the feast that God has prepared for His people (Mt 8:11, 22:1-14, 25:10; Lk 14:14-24). All peoples, including the gentiles, will be invited to this feast and will stream into Jerusalem, literally or as a symbol of the acceptance of the God of Abraham. The Septuagint for vs. 6-7 reads, "And the Lord of hosts shall make *a feast* for all the nations; on this mount they shall drink gladness, they shall drink wine; they shall anoint themselves with ointment in this mountain. Impart all these things to the nations; for this is *God's* counsel upon all the nations."

^h (7) 2Co 3:12-18; Eph 4:18; 2Sm 15:30; Jr 14:3. The Hebrew translated as **covering** (לִיט, *lot*) and **veil** (מַצְעָה, *maccekah*) are likely synonyms here and have been variously translated as shroud, sheet, web, mask, gloom, covering or burial clothes. The more common meaning of *maccekah* however is "molten" as in molten image or idol. Some commentators have suggested that this veil or covering is a covering of grief or death which will be taken away. It is more likely, however, a covering, or a veil over the eyes, that prevents people from coming to the Lord (Is 44:18; Mt 27:51; Mk 15:38; Lk 4:18; 23:45; Jn 1:18; 2Co 3:12-

18, 4:4). In this interpretation, God will remove the veil and the gentiles will come to Him just as the veil of the Temple was torn in two when the Messiah breathed his last.

ⁱ (8) Hos 13:14; 1Co 15:26, 15:54-55; Is 30:19, 35:10, 51:11, 65:19; Rv 7:17, 19:9, 21:1-4, 35:10; Ps 69:9, 89:50-51; Is 37:4, 1:20, 51:7, 54:4; Mt 5:11; 1Pt 4:14. Unlike the Canaanite gods who legend has it destroyed death only to see it return after a season, God will destroy death forever. The image here, of God stooping down to wipe the tears from our eyes like a sympathetic parent of a child who has been hurt by the trials of the world, is a very touching one. This great God, who can destroy the world with a word, can also come to each one of us individually and somehow take away all pain and sadness. There is a sense that indeed all the pain will be forgotten. The Septuagint reads, “Death has prevailed and swallowed *men* up; but again the Lord God has taken away every tear from every face. He has taken away the reproach of *His* people from all the earth; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.”

^j (9) Is 35:2, 40:9, 52:10, 26:8; Gn 49:18; Ps 48:14; Is 8:17, 30:18, 33:2, 33:22, 35:4, 49:25-26, 60:16; Ps 9:14, 42:5-11, 20:5; Is 35:1-2, 35:10, 65:18, 66:10; Rv 6:9-11. Isaiah is talking about the God of Abraham, but in the sense that He is the universal God of all peoples. The Septuagint reads, “And in that day they shall say, behold our God in whom we have trusted, and He shall save us; this *is* the Lord; we have waited for Him, and we have exalted, and will rejoice in our salvation.”

^k **Mountain** here ends the inclusio which begins at v. 6.

^l (10) Is 16:14, 15:1; Jr 48:1-47; Ezk 25:8-11; Am 2:1-3; Zep 2:9. There is a contrast between the Mountain of Zion (Heb 12:22-24; Rv 14:1) which will last forever, while Moab (Is 34:5, 63:1) will be trampled down. A **dunghill** is a place for the disposal of excrement, but sometimes translated as “ash heap” (1Sm 2:8; Ps 113:7; Lam 4:5). The image also allows the interpretation of the word as “latrine” which the sinner will attempt to escape by swimming in the waste. The images of the mountain and the latrine are in a sense images of Heaven and Hell, though no human image can truly reflect the wonder of Heaven or the horror of Hell. There is a sense in which each of us is in our own hell until we find the Lord, after which our time in Heaven begins, even though we are not fully there yet. The Septuagint reads, “God will give rest on this mountain, and the country of Moab shall be trodden down, as they tread the floor with wagons.”

^m (11) Is 5:25, 14:26; Jb 40:11; Is 2:10-17, 16:6, 16:12-14. The image here is of one caught in a dung heap and attempting to swim. When we, caught in sin, attempt to keep our heads above the dung through our own efforts, we fail. Our trust and reliance must be in the Lord. The power of Isaiah is that the tomb is empty, the Messiah has risen, the first fruits of the Resurrection. The fruits of the Kingdom have begun, and will come to a final conclusion when the Messiah returns. The Septuagint reads, “God will give rest on this mountain, and the country of Moab shall be trodden down, as they tread the floor with wagons.”

ⁿ (12) Is 15:1, 25:2, 26:5; Mt 16:18. The Septuagint reads, “And He shall bring down the height of the refuge of the wall, and it shall come down, even to the ground.”