

In the chapters that preceded those we will look at today, we saw that God is sovereign over nations. He judges each nation in history. Each nation rises and falls, which shows us that man is incapable of building anything that endures. In the end, every system of man resists God, which means their inevitable decline to and final demise.

The cycle of nations rising and falling shows us two biblical truths. The first is that man needs government and leadership. It is a gift from God. But soon the second truth becomes obvious. Man has an evil heart (Jeremiah 17:9). Power gives opportunity for corrupt hearts to express what already lies within. We quote that phrase "power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely," but in reality **power simply gives the corrupt heart of man opportunity to expose itself.** How many times have we seen leaders think they were above the boundaries placed on them by their government's own rules? It happens in the church too. That is why equal and accountable eldership is so important, and why multiple branches of government are important. These checks and balances limit the opportunity for man to get away with his selfish tendencies.

Our chapters today do not speak of specific nations, but of the end of the reign of man, or as we saw in previous chapters, the fall of Babylon. This is a parallel to Daniel chapter two when the stone cut out of the mountain smashes the image of man and becomes a mountain that fills the whole earth (Daniel 2:44-45). Isaiah is seeing the grand conclusion of man's kingdoms.

¹ Behold, the LORD will empty the earth and make it desolate, and he will twist its surface and scatter its inhabitants. ² And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the slave, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the creditor, so with the debtor. Isaiah 24:1-2 We saw a little twisting of the earth during our recent earthquake. I've seen the ground roll like waves, but this sounds like all the plates of the earth shifting at once. The book of Revelation mentions an earthquake in six passages (Revelation 6:13; 8:5; 11:13, 19; 16:18). The last reference is mentioned in conjunction with the fall of Babylon.

Towards the end of this chapter in Isaiah God makes it clear that this is a physical earthquake. *¹⁹ The earth is utterly broken, the earth is split apart, the earth is violently shaken.* Isaiah 24:19 The result is the end of man's classifications and a great equalization. This great equalizing of men is something socialism and communism has tried to bring about, only to find their efforts resulted in loss of individual initiative. The only time this equality can be realized is in a body of Christ followers. Even then, we find weeds among the wheat (Matthew 13:24-25). Only the reign of Christ on earth will bring about true equality that maintains individual enthusiasm. That is because God will justly reward godly effort. While our heavenly rewards will vary, our standing before God is equal because we are all recipients of the righteousness of God (2 Peter 1:1).

Commented [PW1]: Jeremiah 17:9 (ESV)

⁹ The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

Commented [PW2]: Daniel 2:44-45 (ESV)

⁴⁴ And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever,

⁴⁵ just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure."

Commented [PW3]: Revelation 6:12 (ESV)

¹² When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood,

Commented [PW4]: Revelation 8:5 (ESV)

⁵ Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.

Commented [PW5]: Revelation 11:13 (ESV)

¹³ And at that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

Commented [PW6]: Revelation 11:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail.

Commented [PW7]: Revelation 16:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ And there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and a great earthquake such as there had never been since man was on the earth, so great was that earthquake.

Commented [PW8]: Matthew 13:24-25 (ESV)

²⁴ He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field,

²⁵ but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away.

Commented [PW9]: 2 Peter 1:1 (ESV)

¹ Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

The destruction will be so complete that few men will be left. ⁵ *The earth lies defiled under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant.* ⁶ *Therefore a curse devours the earth, and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt; therefore the inhabitants of the earth are scorched, and few men are left.* Isaiah 24:5-6 The Bible teaches us that God has nature respond to the sin of man (Numbers 35:33; Psalm 106:38). We are always looking for the empirical explanation for every natural disaster, but rarely do we do as the ancients and look for a spiritual cause. While pagans used natural disasters as an excuse to punish those they opposed, Christians have seen disasters as being allowed by God to bring us to repentance. There will be no doubt in the days of God's wrath on the earth that it is from the hand of God. Again we find a parallel in Revelation in the fourth bowl of wrath. ⁸ *The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was allowed to scorch people with fire.* ⁹ *They were scorched by the fierce heat, and they cursed the name of God who had power over these plagues. They did not repent and give him glory.* Revelation 16:8-9

Our chapter in Isaiah goes on to speak of the end of all the things that man delights in. All the things the carnal person lives for will be taken away. But strangely in the midst of all this devastation there are songs of praise rising from the earth. ¹⁴ *They lift up their voices, they sing for joy; over the majesty of the LORD they shout from the west.* ¹⁵ *Therefore in the east give glory to the LORD; in the coastlands of the sea, give glory to the name of the LORD, the God of Israel.* ^{16a} *From the ends of the earth we hear songs of praise, of glory to the Righteous One.* Isaiah 24:14-16 These who are praising God are the great number who have turned to the Lord and recognized that this judgment on the earth is the end of Babylon the great (Revelation 7:9, 13-14). That means Christ is coming to reign and righteousness and justice will prevail. The devastating results of sin will be removed for a thousand years. The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord (Isaiah 11:9).

²¹ *On that day the LORD will punish the host of heaven, in heaven, and the kings of the earth, on the earth.* ²² *They will be gathered together as prisoners in a pit; they will be shut up in a prison, and after many days they will be punished.* Isaiah 24:21-22 Revelation chapters nineteen and twenty tell of the details of this event. The kings who lead the nations in the battle of Armageddon are killed. Hebrew people referred to the grave as the pit, because they kept the bones of ancestors in a pit for the day of resurrection (Psalm 28:1). Thus gathered in a pit means to die, but also may mean a place of confinement. Satan will be bound for a thousand years after which time the dead will be judged and punished. That is the "many days" referred to in verse twenty-two.

²³ *Then the moon will be confounded and the sun ashamed, for the LORD of hosts reigns on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and his glory will be before his elders.* Isaiah 24:23 The glory of the sun and moon will be nothing compared to the glory of the Lord reigning on Mount Zion (Revelation 21:23). Again we see the parallel in Revelation where the twenty-four elders are described as being around the throne (Revelation 4:4). This is the climactic end of man's governments and the beginning of the eternal

Commented [PW10]: Numbers 35:33 (ESV)
³³ You shall not pollute the land in which you live, for blood pollutes the land, and no atonement can be made for the land for the blood that is shed in it, except by the blood of the one who shed it.

Commented [PW11]: Psalm 106:38 (ESV)
³⁸ they poured out innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan, and the land was polluted with blood. a

Commented [PW12]: Revelation 7:9 (ESV)
⁹ After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands,

Commented [PW13]: Revelation 7:13-14 (ESV)
¹³ Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?"
¹⁴ I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Commented [PW14]: Isaiah 11:9 (ESV)
⁹ They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

Commented [PW15]: Psalm 28:1 (ESV)
¹ To you, O LORD, I call; my rock, be not deaf to me, lest, if you be silent to me, I become like those who go down to the pit.

Commented [PW16]: Revelation 21:23 (ESV)
²³ And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.

Commented [PW17]: Revelation 4:4 (ESV)
⁴ Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clothed in white garments, with golden crowns on their heads.

reign of Jesus on the throne of David (Isaiah 9:7). While Isaiah will go on to prophecy to nations and tell of Jesus' suffering, he has already given us a glimpse of where it is all headed.

Chapter twenty-five begins with Isaiah joining the redeemed in praising God. *¹ O LORD, you are my God; I will exalt you; I will praise your name, for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure.* Isaiah 25:1 Isaiah can see that this end of man's kingdoms means the end of suffering and oppression. But He also sees that this was God's plan all along. God allowed man to see how depraved and helpless he is to bring about any good. How many thousands of years have we been striving for the perfect government. Even when we plan for checks and balances there is abuse and corruption and the real needs of the people are neglected.

God allowed man to try everything his imagination could conjure, and yet we refuse to learn from our experiences. We need God. That is the message of history. We need a Savior. **We need a holy Leader who will reign in righteousness.** The wonderful, faithful, sure, and ancient plans of God will come to pass. Man will reach the end of himself, as in the days of Noah (Matthew 24:37). Then Christ will come and put an end to our suffering and receive His own. That is why Isaiah is praising God in the midst of all the destruction he envisions. Before he was crying at the fall of nations (Isaiah 15:5a), but that is not the case at this final judgment. We cry when we see others reject the chance to turn to God. But during the pouring out of God's wrath, the choice will be so clear that we will know that those who face His wrath would never turn from evil. (See Revelation 16:9 on page 2.)

Isaiah foresees the feast of the Word that God will prepare for all those are willing to come into His presence. *⁶ On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.* Isaiah 25:6 The rabbis saw in the prophecy to Judah that the Messiah's kingdom would have an abundance of wine (Genesis 49:11). That is why Jesus' first sign was turning water into wine (John 2:11). If you can make water into fine wine, you certainly could have an abundance of it. But the spiritual significance is the joy that wine represents. Isaiah will speak again of the wine and food that is rich, meaning joy in the Holy Spirit and spiritual nourishment (Isaiah 55:1-2; Psalm 22:26). We taste it now when we come to know Jesus as our Lord and feast on His Word, but our present experience is just the appetizer for what is to come (Revelation 19:9).

⁸ He will swallow up death forever; 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. Isaiah 25:8 The Victor over death has taken away the power of our greatest fear. That means He conquered the one who had the power over death. That is why Christians have such hope. We don't mourn for our loved ones like the world does, because we know in a short time we will see them again (1 Thessalonians 4:13). Sorrow and crying will be no more. Don't you long for the hands of Jesus to wipe away forever the tears from your eyes? Every hurt will be gone. Every scar healed over (Revelation 7:17). Death is the result of sin, and sin will be no more!

Commented [PW18]: Isaiah 9:7 (ESV)

⁷ Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Commented [PW19]: Matthew 24:37 (ESV)

³⁷ For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

Commented [PW20]: Isaiah 15:5a (ESV)

⁵ My heart cries out for Moab; her fugitives flee to Zoar, to Eglath-shelishiyah.

Commented [PW21]: Genesis 49:11 (ESV)

¹¹ Binding his foal to the vine and his donkey's colt to the choice vine, he has washed his garments in wine and his vesture in the blood of grapes.

Commented [PW22]: John 2:11 (ESV)

¹¹ This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

Commented [PW23]: Isaiah 55:1-2 (ESV)

¹ "Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.
² Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.

Commented [PW24]: Psalm 22:26 (ESV)

²⁶ The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the LORD! May your hearts live forever!

Commented [PW25]: Revelation 19:9 (ESV)

⁹ And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."

Commented [PW26]: 1 Thessalonians 4:13 (ESV)

¹³ But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.

Commented [PW27]: Revelation 7:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

The verse also speaks of the reproach of His people. The Jews have been and are still a reproach in the eyes of much of the world. Christians, in many countries such as Pakistan, are only allowed to have the most menial of occupations. In our own country, Christians are increasingly insulted and marginalized. We are mocked by the entertainment industry, but we haven't seen anything like that which many of our brothers and sisters around the world face. We will increasingly find we are the reproach of this world until Jesus reigns.

⁹ It will be said on that day, "Behold, 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." Isaiah 25:9 The intermediate fulfillment of this verse came when Jesus was incarnated. The ultimate fulfillment will come when we meet Him in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17). Everything we have longed for as believers will be realized. Every promise of God will be fulfilled. Those promises we did not receive in this life will be ours then. We will be like Him for we will see Him as He is (1John 3:2). That is our reason to be glad and rejoice with super-abounding joy.

The prophecy turns next to the old enemy of Israel, Moab.^{11b} *but the LORD will lay low his pompous pride together with the skill of his hands.* Isaiah 25:11b Those same gentle hands that wiped the tears from our eyes will powerfully lay low the pompous prideful ones who resist Him. This is what we have been reading about to this point in Isaiah. The prideful nations and individuals that have rejected the Lord, those who refuse to listen to His invitation to come to Him and find peace, will be brought low.

Chapter twenty-six is a song that will be sung in Zion. It welcomes the righteous nations that bring their tribute into the city (Isaiah 18:7; Revelation 21:24-27). The song also has a number of proverbs. Verse three is one everyone should memorize.

³ You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. Isaiah 26:3 This has been a refuge for me personally. We will face times of difficulty when our mind is whirling with all the possible outcomes of a situation. That can bring on a lot of anxiety. But this promise is the antidote for all anxiety. Instead of worrying, we should fix our mind on the Lord, on all He has done for us, on how much He loves us, and on how we can trust Him. When our mind is on Jesus, the peace comes in like a warm blanket. We'll be tempted to shift our thoughts to the worries, but that is why the verse says our minds must stay there. This is not just any peace that is promised. It is perfect peace. To know God is all-powerful and more than sufficient to see you through anything is the source of this perfect peace. This peace puts an end to fear and worry. Whenever you start to be anxious again, you can know your mind needs to be pulled back to Jesus.

One reason for that perfect peace is found in the next verse. *⁴ Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD GOD is an everlasting rock.* Isaiah 26:4 Our God is strong, secure, and eternal. He will never change. Everything else will change. The governments of man will come and go, but His reign will endure forever.

Commented [PW28]: 1 Thessalonians 4:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

Commented [PW29]: 1 John 3:2 (ESV)

² Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

Commented [PW30]: Isaiah 18:7 (ESV)

⁷ At that time tribute will be brought to the LORD of hosts from a people tall and smooth, from a people feared near and far, a nation mighty and conquering, whose land the rivers divide, to Mount Zion, the place of the name of the LORD of hosts.

Commented [PW31]: Isaiah 18:7 (ESV)

⁷ At that time tribute will be brought to the LORD of hosts from a people tall and smooth, from a people feared near and far, a nation mighty and conquering, whose land the rivers divide, to Mount Zion, the place of the name of the LORD of hosts.

⁸ In the path of your judgments, O LORD, we wait for you; your name and remembrance are the desire of our soul. Isaiah 26:8 The path of the Lord's judgments is not only His punishment of evil, but walking in His will. We should live in a way that is pleasing to God while we wait for Him to fulfill His promises. His name is the sum of His attributes. Remembering His great deeds and help in the past, along with reminding ourselves of His character, should be the desire of our soul (Psalm 73:25). What does your soul desire? If your first answer is anything other than a deeper walk with Jesus, you'll have a difficult time being at peace.

Commented [PW32]: Psalm 73:25 (ESV)

²⁵ Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you.

¹⁹ Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a dew of light, and the earth will give birth to the dead. Isaiah 26:19 Many theologians tell us that the Old Testament did not teach of an afterlife. I'm not sure which Bible they are reading. Mine sure teaches it (Daniel 12:2; Hosea 13:14)! Keep in mind how this fits in with previous chapter. Isaiah is still speaking of the end of the systems of man and the reign of Christ on the earth. Death is not the end. For us it is graduation day.

Commented [PW33]: Daniel 12:2 (ESV)

² And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Commented [PW34]: Hosea 13:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ Shall I ransom them from the power of Sheol? Shall I redeem them from Death? O Death, where are your plagues? O Sheol, where is your sting? Compassion is hidden from my eyes.

Chapter twenty-seven again speaks of Israel as God's choice vineyard (Isaiah 5:7). God tells of His faithful care of it, and how He would contend with nations that would come against it (thorns and briars). God would rather those nations laid hold of Him for their protection. He would rather they made peace with Him. His love and favor is not only for Israel, but for all, as we often see throughout Isaiah.

Commented [PW35]: Isaiah 5:7 (ESV)

⁷ For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting; and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry!

This chapter tells of how God will deal with Israel through captivity and how they would respond by destroying their idols. We have an amazing promise in verse 6.

⁶ In days to come Jacob shall take root, Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots and fill the whole world with fruit. Isaiah 27:6 This is obviously speaking of physical descendants as well as spiritual fruit. However, it has been literally fulfilled as well. Israel has indeed been taken root again a second time. They are now the largest source of citrus fruit for all of Europe. If you go to Israel today you can see the large banana, orange, and grapefruit groves all over the land. In another sense, the entire world uses medicine manufactured in Israel. But the greater fulfillment is yet to come.

In these four chapters we've seen the end of the governments of man that comes about through the wrath of God on the earth. We've seen the great multitude that are saved during that period, and the eternal reign of Christ. We've been invited to God's great banquet, seen the end of death and how all tears will be wiped from our eyes. We learned that peace comes from keeping our mind on Jesus and trusting Him. He is the desire of our soul. And this last chapter showed us that God would indeed take Israel through captivity, but would restore them as a people purged of idolatry.

This is real life. We know that trials purge us of worldly distractions. We know God has good plans for us and desires for us to be fruitful. We experience His peace when we keep our mind on our unshakable Rock. We rest in the promise of resurrection, knowing that Jesus is the Victor over death and has a victory meal prepared for us. I'm going! Are you?

Questions

- 1 How will God equalize all mankind?
- 2 Why will God use nature to punish man?
- 3 Why do people praise God in 24:14-16?
- 4 What prompts the praise of 25:1?
- 5 What is the victory feast of God?
- 6 What happens to death?
- 7 What will be the fruit of waiting on the Lord?
- 8 How can you stay in perfect peace?
- 9 What should our soul desire?
- 10 Does the O.T. teach resurrection?