

God's Handbook For Judgment – Isaiah 26, Part 2

December 6, 2020

The Security of the Saints

- *As Christians, we live simultaneously in two realities: the spiritual and the natural, the heavenly and the earthly, the City of God and the city of man.*
- *We experience the worst of the city of man and we also experience the best of the City of God.*
- *No matter how vicious or threatening the evil all around, our God is a mighty fortress surrounding us that no enemy, nor evil, can penetrate.*

Isaiah 26:1-4 RSV

1 In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: "**We have a strong city; he sets up salvation as walls and bulwarks.**

2 Open the gates, that **the righteous nation which keeps faith may enter in.**

3 Thou dost **keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusts in thee.**

4 **Trust in the LORD for ever, for the LORD GOD is an everlasting rock.**

Hebrews 13:14 ESV

14 For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come.

Philippians 3:20 ESV

20 But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 3:13 ESV

13 But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

2 Corinthians 5:1-2 ESV

1 For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

2 For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling.

Hebrews 12:22 ESV

22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering.

Psalms 46:1-3 ESV To the choirmaster. Of the Sons of Korah. According to Alamoth. A Song.

1 God is our refuge and strength, a very [exceeding] present [find, discover, secure, acquire, meet] help in trouble.

2 Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,

3 though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling. Selah

The Destruction of the Unassailable (undefeatable) City

- While the child of God experiences the worst of the sin and judgment of the city of man, he also experiences the best of the City of God.
- The strongest, most prosperous, most undefeatable city will fall, but God's saints will be safe and secure, surrounded by His walls of salvation.

Isaiah 26:5-6 RSV

5 For he has brought low the inhabitants of the height, the lofty city. He lays it low, lays it low to the ground, casts it to the dust.

NASB

"For He has brought low those who dwell on high, the unassailable city; He lays it low, He lays it low to the ground, He casts it to the dust."

6 The foot tramples it, the feet of the poor, the steps of the needy.

Isaiah 24:1-6 ESV

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.

3 The earth shall be utterly empty and utterly plundered; for the LORD has spoken this word.

4 The earth mourns and withers; the world languishes and withers; the highest people of the earth languish.

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.

Revelation 16:8-9 ESV The Seven Bowls of God's 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.

Even in Judgment and Destruction, the Path of the Righteous is Level and Smooth

- In the most difficult of times, when judgment is falling all around us, if we will submit to His yoke and to His plan, His yoke will be easy, His burden will be light, the path of the saint will be level and smooth.

Isaiah 26:7 RSV

7 The way of the righteous is level; thou dost make smooth the path of the righteous.

Proverbs 3:5-6 ESV

5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.

6 In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

Matthew 11:28-30 ESV

28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Isaiah 40:11 ESV

11 He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

The Righteous Wait and Long for God's Judgments and Justice

- *Waiting on the Lord, waiting on His justice to make all things right, without impulsively taking matters and vengeance into our own hands, is one of the most difficult trails for His children.*

Isaiah 26:8-9 RSV

8 In the path of thy judgments, O LORD, we wait for thee; thy memorial name is the desire of our soul.

9 My soul yearns for thee in the night, my spirit within me earnestly seeks thee. For when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.

2 Peter 2:7-8 ESV

7 and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked

8 (for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard);

Habakkuk 1:2-4 ESV

2 O LORD, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear? Or cry to you "Violence!" and you will not save?

3 Why do you make me see iniquity, and why do you idly look at wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise.

4 So the law is paralyzed, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; so justice goes forth perverted.

Psalms 13:1 ESV To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

1 How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?

2 How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

Psalms 37:5-11 ESV

5 Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act.

6 He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday.
7 Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices!
8 Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil.
9 For the evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait for the LORD shall inherit the land.
10 In just a little while, the wicked will be no more; though you look carefully at his place, he will not be there.
11 But the meek shall inherit the land and delight themselves in abundant peace.

Romans 12:19 ESV

19 Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."

The Blindness of the Wicked

- In stark contrast from the righteous who long for God's judgment and justice, the wicked are blind to God's judgment and justice.
- Though the evil ones experience the mercies of God, His goodness only emboldens them further in their sins. Instead of softening their heart in gratitude and humility, their heart actually hardens more in their stubbornness and pride.

Isaiah 26:10-11 RSV

10 If favor is shown to the wicked, he does not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness he deals perversely and does not see the majesty of the LORD.

11 O LORD, thy hand is lifted up, but they see it not. Let them see thy zeal for thy people, and be ashamed. Let the fire for thy adversaries consume them.

Exodus 8:12-15 ESV The Second Plague: Frogs

12 So Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh, and Moses cried to the LORD about the frogs, as he had agreed with Pharaoh.

13 And the LORD did according to the word of Moses. The frogs died out in the houses, the courtyards, and the fields.

14 And they gathered them together in heaps, and the land stank.

15 But when Pharaoh saw that there was a respite, he hardened his heart and would not listen to them, as the LORD had said.

Exodus 8:30-32 ESV The Fourth Plague: Flies

30 So Moses went out from Pharaoh and prayed to the LORD.

31 And the LORD did as Moses asked, and removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; not one remained.

32 But Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also, and did not let the people go.

Romans 2:4-5 ESV

4 Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

5 But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

John 2:23-25 ESV

23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing.

24 But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people

25 and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.

Matthew 10:16 KJV

16 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise [shrewd] as serpents, and harmless [innocent] as doves.

Only God, Not Any Man, is Our Supply, Peace and Prosperity

- *There is no lord, no governor, no president, no king, no boss, who deserves credit for our livelihood, provision or success.*
- *Though He may use men to bless, all the gratitude and all the praise belongs to Him alone.*

Isaiah 26:12-15 RSV

12 O LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us, thou hast wrought for us all our works.

13 O LORD our God, other lords besides thee have ruled over us, but thy name alone we acknowledge.

14 They are dead, they will not live; they are shades, they will not arise; to that end thou hast visited them with destruction and wiped out all remembrance of them.

15 But thou hast increased the nation, O LORD, thou hast increased the nation; thou art glorified; thou hast enlarged all the borders of the land.

Psalms 146:3-9 ESV

3 Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation.

4 When his breath departs, he returns to the earth; on that very day his plans perish.

5 Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God,

6 who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, who keeps faith forever;

7 who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets the prisoners free;

8 the LORD opens the eyes of the blind. The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous.

9 The LORD watches over the sojourners; he upholds the widow and the fatherless, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

The Futility of Our (Man's) Efforts

- *When judgment comes, there can be a strong regret of blaming ourselves, blaming the Church, blaming others. There can be a strong temptation to try to control or salvage what's happening, make up for lost time, fix our past wrongs.*
- *Or, we can be tempted to take matters into our own hands, attempting to bring vengeance by ourselves in our way and time.*
- *We must remember our utter helplessness and absolute dependence upon God. This is God's doing, this is God's work. No matter how valiant or noble our efforts, all we can produce is the wind; nothing.*
- *Let God do His work. His ways are perfect; there is nothing we can add. Don't try to assist. Don't interfere; don't intervene.*
- *Even if we or our loved ones die, God can raise the dead back to life again.*

Isaiah 26:16-19 RSV

16 O LORD, in distress they sought thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them.

17 Like a woman with child, who writhes and cries out in her pangs, when she is near her time, so were we because of thee, O LORD;

18 we were with child, we writhed, we have as it were brought forth wind. We have wrought no deliverance in the earth, and the inhabitants of the world have not fallen.

19 Thy dead shall live, their bodies shall rise. O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For thy dew is a dew of light, and on the land of the shades thou wilt let it fall.

The Hiding Place, the Way of Escape, for God's People

- *Let God have His way as He rules in the affairs of men; rest in peace in the fortress of His presence.*

Isaiah 26:20-21 RSV

20 Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until the wrath is past.

21 For behold, the LORD is coming forth out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, and the earth will disclose the blood shed upon her, and will no more cover her slain.

Psalm 91:1-10 ESV

1 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.

2 I will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."

3 For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence.

4 He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.

5 You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day,

6 nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness, nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.

7 A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you.

8 You will only look with your eyes and see the recompense of the wicked.

9 Because you have made the LORD your dwelling place-- the Most High, who is my refuge--

10 no evil shall be allowed to befall you, no plague come near your tent.