

## Review

In our study of the book of Isaiah, we saw in chapter 24 just what would be happening to the entire earth during the Great Tribulation: worldwide devastation. But in chapters 25 and 26, we were reminded that there will be those who trust in God who will be defended. In tonight's study, we're going to see how God will preserve His people...

### **26:14 The Dead Will Not Live**

Those who die separated from God have no hope of anything but death. They have died the first death, and will also suffer the second death (Rev. 21:8). The life that they lived on earth will be the only life they ever enjoy or experience.

Make no mistake: God will punish people who reject Him. And even the memory of them will one day be blotted out. In the book of Ezekiel, we read of God saying to the Ammonites,

**Ezek. 21:31-32 "I will pour out My indignation on you; I will blow on you with the fire of My wrath, and I will give you into the hand of brutal men, skilled in destruction. You will be fuel for the fire; your blood will be in the midst of the land. You will not be remembered, for I, the LORD, have spoken."**

And so people have a choice. They can choose whether God will say, "Your sins will not be remembered," or, "You will not be remembered."

### **26:15-18 The Nation Increased**

Many of Isaiah's writings zoom up and down the timeline, making it difficult at times to identify the time period he's writing about. His verb tenses don't help either, since he often writes of future occurrences in past tense.

I believe that these verses fall into that category. It would seem that Isaiah is either quoting the Jews in the Millennial Kingdom, or speaking from that time period himself. Either way, God is being glorified for increasing the nation, for extending the borders of the land of Israel.

We know that the covenant God made with Abraham in Genesis 15

stated,

**Gen. 15:18 ...“To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates”**

This was repeated in the days of Moses,

**Ex. 23:31 “I will fix your boundary from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the River Euphrates...”**

Israel's borders have never reached that far, but they shall when Christ returns.

### **They Sought You In Distress**

But remember, Christ's return will only come after a period of terrible suffering. The Jews will be persecuted world-wide in a way the Jesus described,

**Matt. 24:21 “... such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.”**

It will only be after the Jews cry out to Jesus for help that He will return. He said,

**Matt. 23:39 “For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, ‘BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!’”**

Isaiah describes this tribulation and rescue as being like a woman in labor. She goes through the most intense pain she will ever endure, but at the end of it there is joy

### **26:19 Your Dead Will Live**

There are a lot of so-called authorities on religion. Declared experts by their degrees, the often get interviewed for TV specials, or are quoted in newspaper and magazine articles. I have heard many of these "scholars" waxing eloquent about how the resurrection of the dead is a purely New Testament concept. "The Jews did not believe in life after death, and certainly not of a bodily resurrection," they stolidly state.

Well, these learned men have shown themselves ignorant of the

true facts. Clearly, verse 19 nullifies their argument:

**Is. 26:19 Your dead will live; Their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, for your dew is as the dew of the dawn, and the earth will give birth to the departed spirits.**

Is this an isolated verse which stands alone? Not at all. The prophet Daniel has also told us of the resurrection.

**Dan. 12:2 "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt."**

As a matter of fact, the book of the Bible purported to be the oldest of all quotes Job as saying,

**Job 19:26 "Even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall see God"**

And so we see that the resurrection of the dead is clearly portrayed in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament, dating back to the earliest of writings.

## **26:20-21 Hide For A Little While**

There is a lot of debate as to whether verse 20 depicts the Lord speaking or Isaiah. Either way, it gives us occasion to look at how God defends and preserves His people during the outpouring of judgment upon the earth. This is called "Tribulation" in New Testament terms, and "Indignation" in Old Testament terms. Whatever you call it, it is the final period of man's rule on earth, when God pours out His judgment to punish a sinful, Christ-rejecting world. It is what the book of Revelation describes throughout most of its chapters, as well as being a frequent topic of the books of the prophets.

## **Isaiah's People**

First, let's make the assumption that "my people" refers to Isaiah's people, the Jews.

In Revelation 12, Daniel 9, and 2Thessalonians 2, we read of a terrible persecution that will break out against the Jews on the day that the

Antichrist enters the Holy of Holies and proclaims himself to be God.

Of that day, Jesus warned,

**Matt. 24:15-18** “Therefore when you see the **ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION** which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house. Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak.”

The outbreak of persecution will be instantaneous and world-wide. Those who are in Judea will flee to the mountains. Revelation 12 describes in symbolic language a supernatural protection for those fleeing to the wilderness, and a place which will protect them for three and a half years:

**Rev. 12:13-16** And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child. But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she \*was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood. But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth.

Many believe that this place of protection will be the ancient city of Petra, which in the Bible is called Sela. It is a city about 90 miles south of Jerusalem, built inside a mile-wide volcanic crater. To enter it, you must pass through a narrow canyon that ranges between just 12 and 40 feet wide. It is only accessible on horseback, and easily defended against attacking enemies.

Personally, I'm not certain that Petra will be the place, but it is a commonly held theory among Bible teachers.

Whether it is Petra or some other location, we know that God will

protect those who flee, and hide them for the last 3 1/2 years of the tribulation. It is then that many of them will turn to Christ and call out to Him for deliverance.

The Lord told Hosea that this was His plan to win back His adulterous wife, the nation of Israel.

**Hos. 2:14 "Therefore, behold, I will allure her, bring her into the wilderness and speak kindly to her."**

As God protects, nourishes, and cares for the Jews in the wilderness during the Great Tribulation, their hearts will be turned back to the Lord.

The time of Jacob's distress (Jer 30:7) will change the heart of the Jews, ultimately resulting in the return of their Deliverer, when all Israel will be saved (Rom. 11:26).

## **God's People**

Having looked at the first possibility, now let's make the other assumption: that "My people" refers to God's people, the Christians. (Frankly, the context leads me to believe this is the accurate view.)

How will they be hidden during the Great Tribulation? Jesus promised all of His disciples,

**John 14:1-3 "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also."**

Jesus is going to come again and will call us to Himself. Paul described how quickly this will happen:

**1Cor. 15:52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.**

This event has come to be called "the Rapture of the Church," when **1Th. 4:17 ...we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the**

**air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.**

This is actually where the word "rapture" came from. When Paul wrote "caught up," he used the Greek word "har-PAD-zo." It means "to seize, carry off by force, to snatch out or away." When the Bible was translated from Greek into Latin, the Greek word "har-PAD-zo" was translated into the Latin word "raptus." So we get the English word "rapture" from the Latin word "raptus."

The rapture was symbolized in the apostle John being caught up after the Lord's discussion of the church age ended in Revelation:

**Rev. 4:1 After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things."**

"Come up here," God said, in the same way Isaiah quotes,

**Is. 26:20 "Come, my people, enter into your rooms and close your doors behind you..."**

Those rooms Jesus has been preparing for us will be our hiding place during the Tribulation. During that time, the Lord will be pouring out His wrath upon the earth, but we will be hidden...

**1Th. 5:9 For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ**