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Isaiah 24 - 27



Isaiah - Steve Gregg

Isaiah 24-27 contains prophecies about the end of the world and the coming of a new messianic age. The chapter is often referred to as Isaiah's apocalypse, with scholars noting its pre-millennialist themes. The speaker discusses how Isaiah sees the passing of the old age and the incoming of a newer messianic age, with a new Jerusalem and spiritual Jerusalem replacing the old. The punishment for the earth's inhabitants is described in detail, with the land being violently broken and the inhabitants being scattered abroad. Ultimately, the downfall of the old system leads to the establishment of a new Jerusalem and a new system.

Transcript

In our last session, we covered most of the chapters that are devoted to burdens, we might say, as the term is used in the New King James. Burdens on the nations. The chapters 13-23, actually we had covered chapters 13 and 14 of that section in the previous lecture.

And then in our last lecture, we covered, in a manner, 15-23. That's a lot of chapters to cover. We didn't really cover them very thoroughly.

But that is, in my opinion, the most difficult section of Isaiah to cover. Partly because it's hard, in some cases, to identify the meaning of the prophecies and also to know exactly what happened to Moab or Edom or some of these nations that very little is said, first of all, in the prophecy itself, that can be discerned as to what's been implied. And also very little is known, relatively little is known, about some of these nations that are ancient and have been extinct for centuries or millennia.

And whose histories have not left us extensive records of what took place. And therefore, that section of Isaiah is, to my mind, the most difficult and perhaps the least favorite for a Bible teacher who's trying to make sense of the text. Since there is so much of it that is elusive and out of reach.

However, we now come to a very fascinating section, which is chapters 24-27. That's four chapters. And it's not difficult, especially having had our introductory topical surveys

of the topics or the themes or the motifs that recur in Isaiah earlier in this series.

It's not difficult at all to recognize in chapters 25, 26, and 27 an extended reference to the Messianic Age. There are many giveaways. I mean, many of the standard themes of the Messianic Age are found in these chapters.

So, Isaiah is looking at the age which, at least in my lectures, I've identified as the present age. The age that was inaugurated by Jesus at his first coming. But which, of course, many would identify with a future age that they expect he will inaugurate at his second coming.

That would be, of course, the millennium to the premillennial viewpoint. But to us, it would be the Church Age if we were seeing it the way that I've suggested. Now, having those three chapters, 25, 26, and 27, devoted to the Kingdom Age, it's obvious that chapter 24 essentially blends into it.

We could call it Matthew 24 because, actually, this chapter, scholars call it Isaiah's Apocalypse. And, of course, Matthew 24, the Olivet Discourse, is sometimes called the Little Apocalypse of Jesus. So, there is the Apocalypse, the Book of Revelation.

That's the Big Apocalypse. Matthew 24 and 25, the Olivet Discourse, is sometimes called the Smaller Apocalypse, the Little Apocalypse. And this chapter is often referred to by scholars as Isaiah's Apocalypse.

An apocalypse is, of course, a revelation, an unveiling of something in the future. And apocalyptic style of writing is notoriously flamboyant, sensationalistic, hyperbolic, figurative, disastrous. Basically, things that happen to nations, if they are disasters in those nations, if they're described in an apocalyptic genre, sounds like the end of the world.

Now, I believe that's what we have in Isaiah 24, though virtually every commentator I'm aware of. Now, I haven't read any preterist commentators on Isaiah. I don't know if they exist.

Maybe we should write one, but I don't think I'm going to do that right away. Maybe someone else will. But every ordinary commentary on Isaiah says that this chapter now looks to the end of the world.

And I don't think so. You see, actually, pre-millennialists would have no problem seeing chapter 24 as the end of the world, or at least the second coming of Christ and the judgment on the world. Because then it blends into the kingdom age, which they would see as coming after the second coming of Christ.

They would see that as the millennium. So a pre-millennialist would probably see Isaiah 24 as things associated with the second coming of Christ, and then the following three

chapters as things associated with the millennium, which they believe Christ will establish after his coming. But I have indicated throughout this series that I believe the strong evidence, especially from the New Testament, is that the apostles and Christ viewed these passages about the messianic age as inaugurated as his first coming.

So if that is true, then what is Matthew 24? Because I believe it's about the same subject. And we talk much more about Matthew 24 than about Isaiah 24, generally speaking. Isaiah 24, I believe, is on the same subject as Matthew 24.

Now, Matthew 24 began with Jesus predicting that the temple would be destroyed. And the disciples asked him when it would be, and in the course of his answer, he said, this generation will not pass until all these things are fulfilled. And he was therefore referring to what historically is remembered as the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 at the hands of the Romans.

That was, of course, something that took place at the beginning of what we also call the church age or the messianic age. In the first generation, there was a transition from the old age to the newer age. I have to say newer age.

Old commentators would just say the new age. Commentators in the 1800s and 1900s would sometimes refer to the messianic age as the new age. But since we now have in our culture a movement called the new age movement, we can't use that term anymore.

It's a Christian term, but the new ages took it over. So we'll call it the newer age, the age of the Messiah. And I believe that in Isaiah, not just here, but many places we have prophecies that that kind of blend the passing of the old age with the incoming of the newer messianic age.

Sometimes, even as in this section, we will see there is the destruction of a city and the establishment of another city. We have talked about Jerusalem being destroyed as the ultimate, the epitome of the destruction of the old order. Jerusalem is where the temple was.

The temple was where the old order was carried out. The law, the sacrificial system, the old covenant requirements, they were carried out at the temple. That was destroyed in A.D. 70 when the city was destroyed.

But there was a new city established. Jesus said to his own disciples in the Sermon on the Mount, You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid.

And that city set on a hill, which was his disciples, is throughout the New Testament referred to as the new Jerusalem. I shouldn't say throughout, but multiple times, called the new Jerusalem. So there's a new Jerusalem, a new city, a spiritual Jerusalem that has replaced the old.

And the transition from the old to the new is seen as the destruction of the old city and the building of the new city. And that is so in chapters 24 through 27, as we shall see. Now, the language of chapter 24 is, as all commentators acknowledge, apocalyptic.

The word, in our translation, the word earth appears a very large number of times. You'll see it in verse 1, Behold, the Lord makes the earth empty. Verse 3, well, that's the same word as translated land in verse 3. The land shall be entirely emptied and utterly plundered.

Verse 4, The earth mourns and fades away. The world languishes and fades away. The haughty people of the earth languish.

Verse 5, The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants. Verse 6, The curse has devoured the earth. And before the verse is finished, it says, Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned.

If you look down to verse 11, the end of verse 11 says, The mirth of the land, same word in the Hebrew, is gone. And verse 13, It shall be as thus when in the midst of the land, same word as earth elsewhere. Verse 16, From the ends of the earth we have heard songs.

Verse 17, Fear and the pit and the snare are upon you, O inhabitant of the earth. And then in the end of verse 18, And the foundations of the earth are shaken. Verse 19 has the word earth three times.

The earth is violently broken. The earth is split open. The earth is shaken exceedingly.

The earth, verse 20, Shall reel to and fro like a drunkard and totter like a hut. And then verse 21 has the occurrence of the word twice at the end of verse 21. And on the earth, the kings of the earth will be gathered together, etc.

So there's hardly, there's certainly no other word in this chapter that occurs more often than the word Eretz. The Hebrew word Eretz, E-R-E-T-S. This word in Hebrew is the word for earth and the word for land.

It can mean either one. And therefore it is always kind of a toss up or not always, but many times it's quite a toss up to know whether the translation should be the land or whether it should be the earth. You can see already in the examples we gave in the New King James.

And this follows kind of the same language as the King James. I don't know what other translations may be doing here. I haven't checked them all, but in verses 3 and 11 and 13, it's translated land.

The rest of the time, the translators have translated it earth. This is somewhat arbitrary.

They could have translated earth every time or land every time.

Or they could have translated earth half the time and land half the time, depending on what seemed sensible in the context. In my mind, it is sensible almost every time to translate it as the land. And that makes a difference.

Because we at least, when we hear the word earth, are thinking of the earth, the planet earth. Now, Frank has pointed out that he has doubts that the word earth in the Old Testament ever means the planet earth. And there is some question about that.

Because they didn't think of planets like we think of planets. They thought of earth as opposed to sea in many cases. That is land and sea.

Although you do find places where it's heaven and earth, so the earth is contrasted from heaven. In that case, it may be that the planet earth is in mind. But it's not always clear.

In fact, in many cases, it's not clear. And here, likewise. Because of the traditional translation of Eretz as earth, most of the time in this chapter, most people who read it just say, oh, this is the end of the world.

And yet, there are reasons to question whether this is the correct translation. I believe that land is what is intended. And the word land is shorthand for the land of Israel.

That's common in scripture for them to refer to Israel or the promised land as simply the land. And there are specifics that are said about the Eretz, the land, in this chapter, that to me make it impossible to make it the earth and very appropriate for it to be the land. For one thing, it says in verse 1 that he scatters abroad its inhabitants.

Whose inhabitants? The earth or the land? Now, you can scatter the inhabitants of one land into other parts of the world. But it's not easy to say where inhabitants of the planet would be scattered to. If you're scattered from the planet to somewhere else, what is this? Are they going out to space stations or out to Mars? I mean, how is it that he scatters abroad the inhabitants of the earth? Abroad means away from the earth, away from the land.

It could speak of the exile or the driving out of the diaspora of a people from a certain land. But from the earth, much more difficult to understand. In verse 3, the land, which is also the Eretz, and there's no reason to translate it differently in verse 1 or in verse 3, is entirely emptied and utterly plundered.

So, if this is the earth, then it's basically devoid of life. If you look down at verse 5, it says the Eretz, or the land, also is defiled under its inhabitants. Now, I think land is better than earth here, although a Christian might have no trouble seeing that the whole earth, because of the universal sinfulness of man, has been defiled.

But the word defiled is especially associated with what God told Israel not to do to their land, the land of Israel, when he was giving it to them. In Leviticus chapter 18, for example, they have not yet taken the land, but he's telling them about the fact that he's going to be giving them the land and how they must behave if they hope to continue in it. In Leviticus 18, it says, in verse 25, it's talking about the present state of the land before Israel took it, while the Canaanites contained it, were in it.

It says, verse 25, for the land is defiled. Therefore I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the land vomits out at its inhabitants. You shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations, either any of your own nation or any stranger who sojourns with you.

For all these abominations the men of the land, that is the Canaanites who are there now, have done who were before you, and thus the land is defiled. Lest the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that were there before you. Now God says, if you defile your promised land that I'm giving you, it will vomit you out.

You'll be expelled from it, just like the Canaanites defiled it and they're expelled from it. In Isaiah 24, they've defiled the land. The land is defiled under its inhabitants.

And what happens? Well, they get scattered. They get thrust out. They get vomited out of the land, so to speak.

And so in Isaiah 24, 5, we have this specific language of the land being defiled. And by the way, there's other Old Testament references. I just gave you one because we don't have time to pursue that thread very far.

But also it says of the people who have defiled it, in verse 5, they've transgressed the laws, changed the ordinances, and broken the everlasting covenant. Now, the planet Earth, to my knowledge, has not really been under an everlasting covenant with God. God, when he made his covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai, I told them this would be essentially forever unless they violated it.

It was a covenant that was, you know, they'd be his people forever. He'd give them the land forever and so forth, but it was always conditioned upon their obedience to the covenant and the laws. It says they've broken the laws.

They've trashed the covenant. Now, God's laws were given to Israel. We do not read of God's laws being given to other nations, at least not before the time of Christ, where Christ tells us to go and teach people to keep his commandments.

But that's not generally called the law. But the point here is the language would be particularly relevant to Israel, who was given laws, who was in a covenant, and they'd broken the covenant, they defiled the land under them, and it says in verse 6, therefore the curse has devoured the earth. Not a curse, the curse.

What is the curse? Well, if you look at Malachi, the last prophet in the Old Testament, the last book in the Old Testament, Malachi predicts the coming of John the Baptist. And in the last verses of Malachi, that's chapter 4, verse 5 and 6, he says, Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet. Now, Jesus said if you can receive it, John is Elijah who is to come.

So Jesus identified this prophecy as being fulfilled in John the Baptist, at least for those capable of receiving it. Apparently Jesus could. If he can, I will.

I'll agree with him on this. That John is Elijah who is to come. This prophecy is what Jesus is alluding to.

I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, and he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse. Now, let's strike the what? The Eretz with a curse. Now, John the Baptist came, and actually the angel who met with John's father in the temple, Gabriel, appeared to Zacharias before John was born, and said of John prior to his birth, that he will be great, he will go before the Lord, and he will be in the spirit of Elijah.

And he said he'll turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and something like the foolish to the wisdom of the wise, or something like that. The disobedient to the wisdom of the wise. Anyway, he partially quotes this verse.

The angel partially quotes this verse about turning the hearts of the fathers to the children, and says that John will come in the spirit and power of Elijah. Obviously, the angel is referring to John as the fulfillment of this passage. So, John is sent, as Jesus said, and as the angel Gabriel said, as the fulfillment of this prophecy, in the spirit of Elijah to turn people around.

Now, the threat of the prophecy is, if they don't turn around, I'm going to have to strike the land with the curse. The land was threatened with a specific curse, if Israel remained disobedient. And you can look at Deuteronomy 28, as a classic example of this threat.

God made it very clear to Israel that they would be cursed, in a major way, if they were disobedient. In Deuteronomy 28, the opening verses say, Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all his commandments, which I command you today, that the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. This is Israel, being blessed and exalted, if they're obedient.

He says, all these blessings shall come upon you, and then he gives you a long list of blessings. This is the ways that Israel, as a nation, will be blessed above all other nations. And the list goes through verse 14.

And then verse 15 says, But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the

Lord your God, to observe carefully all his commandments, and his statutes, which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you, and overtake you. Cursed shall you be in the city, cursed shall you be in the country, cursed shall your basket and your kneading bowl be, cursed shall be the fruit of your body, your children that is, and the produce of your land, the increase of your cattle, and the offspring of your flocks. Cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out.

And then it says in verse 20, The Lord will send on you cursing, confusion, and rebuke in all that you set your hand to do, until you are destroyed, and until you perish quickly, because of the wickedness of your doings in which you have forsaken me. The Lord will make the plague cling to you until he has consumed you from the land, which you are going to possess. Now the curse that is threatened is that God would consume them from the land.

Just like he said to them in Leviticus 18, If you do the same things that the Canaanites did, which caused the land to vomit them out, well, the land is indiscriminating. If you do the same things, it nauseates the land as much when you do it as when they did it. And so the land will vomit you out too.

There is no unconditional land lease here. It is entirely conditional on obedience to God. And he says, if you don't obey, the curse will come upon you, and the result will be you will be expelled from the land.

Common threats. John the Baptist came at a time when that threat was near to being fulfilled. He came to give one last chance to turn the hearts of the fathers back and the children's hearts back and to turn them to God, lest God should strike the land with a curse.

That is the final words of the Old Testament, the final threat. And the opening words of the New Testament prophet are John came preaching repentance. John came preaching the kingdom.

John came saying, the axe is laid to the root of the trees. He is about ready to judge right now. He is going to cut down those fruitless trees and throw them into the fire.

His fan is in his hand. He is going to purge his threshing floor. He is going to throw the chaff into unquenchable fire.

John came warning that that judgment upon Israel was imminent and they needed to turn quickly. And so, in other words, the curse was a well-established threat that God made way back in the days of Moses and said that threat would be that Israel would be thrown out of their land. Well, in chapter 24, the land is empty.

It is empty of its inhabitants. The inhabitants have been scattered abroad. Why? Because the curse has come upon them.

They defiled the land as he told them not to do. They broke the laws. They broke the covenant.

The curse has devoured the land and all who dwell in it are desolate. Now, wait a minute. All who dwell in it? I thought it was entirely empty of its inhabitants.

That's what verse 3 says. The land shall be entirely emptied and utterly plundered. Now, here we see again the hyperbole that is so common.

We've seen that it was said about Babylon. It was said about Tyre in the prophecies earlier in the book of Isaiah that it would be desolate forever. No one would ever dwell there.

It would be totally uninhabited. But it's not entirely true. And it's not that the prophecy was untrue.

It's that the prophecy uses hyperbole. It's speaking of utter devastation, utter ruin, never rising to the condition it was once in previously. And in speaking of it poetically, the phrases are heaped up one after another to emphasize destruction without necessarily, I mean, it's poetic, and poetry by nature tends to be flowery, use hyperbole and so forth, and that is true.

Here also, the land is not completely empty. It says it is, but there are inhabitants still, a few. And we'll see that there are references to them in verse 13 also.

It says it'll be like the shaking of an olive tree, like the gleaning of grapes when the vintage is done. That is, most of the olives, most of the grapes are gone, but there's a few stragglers still stuck to the branches, the gleanings. And so it is with the people when the land is emptied, not completely, of course, not every last man is gone.

It says few men are left at the end of verse 6. Well, are there many, or few, or none? Obviously few is what we're specifically told. Now, other things that make me think this is talking about Israel rather than the whole world is verse 10, says the city of confusion is broken down. Every house is shut up so that none may go in.

And in verse 12, in the city, desolation is left. So there's still a city, but it's desolate. It's broken down.

The society is essentially dissolved. All the houses are shut up, no one goes into them. The language is not even self-consistent.

Because it's apocalyptic, it just goes wherever the feeling goes and expresses it in an exaggerated way in some cases. But other times it comes down and says, well, there are a few left. And I believe that the best way to understand this is that it's the judgment on the land.

Isaiah is saying that the judgment is indeed going to come on the land. The very judgment that Moses warned them about. The very judgment that John the Baptist will come and try to avert by turning them around if they would be turned around.

And this, I believe, is a description of that thing. It says in verse 14, They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing, for the majesty of the Lord they shall cry aloud from the sea. Therefore glorify the Lord in the dawning light, the name of the Lord God of Israel in the coastlines of the sea.

Now notice, who's this singing? Who's lifting up their voice? It's the gleanings. It's the few olives that are left after the shaking. It's the few grapes that are left after the general vintage.

This is the remnant. And though the city of confusion is destroyed, is broken down, that's Jerusalem, and the land is evacuated of its inhabitants, generally speaking, there's a remnant who have survived. As the prophets always say there will be.

The faithful remnant. This is the church. This is the Jews who believed in Christ and followed him.

And who did escape, in fact. And they are glorifying God. They're singing out loud.

The city has gone down, but there's a remnant who still worshiped God. He still has his few. And in verse 15 where it says glorify the Lord in the dawning light, that means in the east.

The rising of the sun is a poetic expression for the east. And in the coastlines of the sea is a reference to the west. That is from Israel's point of view, east and west.

And this too suggests that we're talking about a geographical place, not the whole earth. We're not talking about the end of the world, where the world is dissolved and fallen down. But there's still a remnant there singing.

And there's still a remnant there to the east and the west singing. But rather when Jerusalem fell and the land of Israel was judged, people from the east and the west joined in with the remnant of Israel. That is Gentiles from all over the world joined in to worship God.

And that's what this is, I believe, talking about. Now it says in verse 17, Fear in the pit and the snare are upon you, O inhabitant of the land. This is again talking about the judgment coming upon them.

And it shall be that he who flees from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit. And he who comes up from the midst of the pit shall be caught in the snare, for the windows from on high are open. There will be no escape.

If you run from one danger, you fall into another danger. You get out of that danger, you go fall into another danger. I mean, God is relentless.

He's going to punish. And no man can escape that punishment. If he's slated to go down, God's going to catch him.

No matter how many aspects of it he may escape, it's going to catch up with him. This is very much like what Amos said. And he was talking about Israel, the northern kingdom in his case, but very similar thoughts in Amos chapter 5, verses 18 and 19.

Amos 5, 18 and 19 says, Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord! For what good is the day of the Lord to you? It will be darkness and not light. It will be as though a man fled from a lion and a bear met him, or as though he went into a house and leaned his hand on the wall and a serpent bit him. Is not the day of the Lord darkness and not light? Is it not very dark, with no brightness in it? Here in Amos we see what I said earlier, that the term day of the Lord is used rather generically of the time when God shows up and does what he's going to do.

And the people of Israel apparently thought that God was on their side unconditionally, and so they looked forward to the Lord showing up, apparently thinking that he'd vindicate them against the Assyrians or whatever. And Amos says, no, he's not on your side. When the Lord shows up, it's not going to be good for you, it's going to be bad for you.

You're in no condition to meet him. He's going to destroy you. And you're not going to escape it.

It's as if you could escape from a lion and fall into a cave where a bear is sleeping. Or you go into a house to get away from the dangers outdoors, and you lean against the wall and there's a serpent there that bites you. It's like you just can't escape the wrath of God.

It's a little bit like what the pagans on the island of Malta thought about Paul when he got ashore from the storm, the ship had broken up, and then he was gathering sticks for a fire and a snake bit him. And the people thought, whoa, he must really be the target of the gods. He escaped the storm, but he ran into other dangers that'll kill him.

Of course, he shook the snake off, he was unharmed, and then they thought he was a god and wanted to worship him. But the point here is, and you see it multiple times, the idea is that if you are targeted for destruction, you may escape the first phases, but you'll run into another thing that'll kill you. Something's going to get you.

And that is, I believe, what that means in verse 18 of Isaiah 24. Now it says at the end of verse 18, the windows from on high are open, which is reminiscent of the flood, of course. In Genesis, it says that when God sent the flood, the windows of heaven were

open and poured out.

So he's got reminiscent language of the flood. And the foundations of the earth are shaken, or of the land. Now it says the land is violently broken, the land is split open, the land is shaken exceedingly, the land shall reel to and fro like a drunkard.

We know we're using poetic language here, because whether you translate it earth or land, for it to reel to and fro and totter like a hut is not literal. Although I must say, my early teachers taught this as a literal thing and applied it to the end of the world. My teachers said, you know, it's an interesting thing.

Astronomers have noted that every 5,000 years or so, there's a shift on the earth's axis. They were usually talking about this with reference to the flood of Noah. They thought that maybe the flood had been accompanied with a shift on the axis.

And they said, scientists say this happens every 5,000 years or so. And scientists say that the earth right now looks like it may be ready to shift because it's begun to wobble a little bit like a top that's slowing down before it topples over, it begins to wobble. It kind of spins real smoothly until it starts to lose momentum, and then it begins to wobble, and then it's over.

And my teachers told me that scientists have said that the earth has developed this kind of a wobble, and that it's like a top about ready to fall over. And that was usually used as a newspaper exegesis of this passage. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and she'll totter like a hut.

Its transgression shall be heavy upon it, and it will fall and not rise again. Now, this reference to it falling and not rising again would be strange if it's really talking about the earth, because the Bible talks about the earth will come to an end. The new heavens, new earth will replace it, though.

Paul said in Romans 8 that the creation itself will be redeemed from the effects of the curse, from the bondage of decay at the time of the manifestation of the sons of God. In Romans 8, Paul talks about this. Peter says in 2 Peter 3 that in the day of the Lord, the earth will be burned up and the heavens will be dissolved, and the elements will melt with fervent heat.

But he says, but we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and new earth. And therefore, in a sense, if this is talking about the end of the world, why would it say it won't rise again? What happened to the new earth? Yes, there's a judgment. Yes, there's a burning that will happen at the end of this present world, but that's not the permanent end.

But the fall of Jerusalem could be seen as the permanent end of that society. Now, of course, some might say, but today there's a city of Jerusalem. It's been rebuilt.

Well, it's been inhabited off and on through the entire time since A.D. 70, but it is not really rebuilt. There's no temple there. Jerusalem is just a secular city.

It's not God's city. It's not like God has restored Jerusalem. It hasn't risen again.

People have built buildings there. People have built, you know, businesses there. There's people who live there, but it's not the golden city of God anymore.

There's no temple in the midst. It's just a secular city. Israel is a secular country.

We think of Israel and Jews as a world religion. Well, Judaism is a world religion, but Israel isn't Judaistic. The government insists that they are a secular nation.

There are, of course, Jews who are religious in the nation, just like there are Jews who are religious in our country, but it's a secular nation. And so Jerusalem, as the city of God, having some significance, has never risen again. And Jesus said, No one will ever eat fruit from it again, like that fig tree that withered.

And we have sort of a confirmation that when we get to chapter 25, we're not done with chapter 24, but in chapter 25, verse 2, it talks about the destruction, apparently, of the city of Jerusalem, and it says, For you have made a city a ruin, a fortified city a ruin, a palace of foreigners to be a city no more. It will never be rebuilt. So very clearly, this prophecy is predicting that a city will go down, and the city will never be rebuilt or never restored.

It will never rise again. Cities sometimes are rebuilt. It was said the same thing about Babylon.

It'll never be rebuilt. Back in chapter 13, it's going to fall and never be rebuilt. But it has been rebuilt, at least in measure.

There have been buildings put there in modern times in Babylon, but it's never been restored. To be rebuilt speaks of it, you know, regaining something of its former status, and it does not. So in saying that the land will fall and not rise again, to me, that's not any different than chapter 25, too, saying the city will never be rebuilt.

That is, it's the end of a city. It's the end of a land. It's the end of an era, but it's not the end of the world.

Now, chapter 24, 21. It shall come to pass in that day that the Lord will punish on high the host of exalted ones, and on the land the kings of the land, or of the earth. The term kings of the earth, as we have it here, is found many, many times in the book of Revelation.

It's also found in the book of Acts. It is used, it's from Psalm 2, where it says the kings of the earth have tried to cast off the bonds of the Lord and his anointed. Kings of the

earth.

The Greek rendering of that in the Septuagint is used by the apostles in their prayer in Acts. We'll look at this when we're studying Revelation. This is a side issue.

We won't get into it now, but they apply this phrase in Psalm 2. When they're quoting Psalm 2 in the book of Acts, they apply the kings of the earth to Herod and Pilate, and the Jews. In other words, the rulers of the land of Israel. True, Eretz can be earth, but the way that that phrase is used in Psalm 2 is quoted and applied by the apostles in Acts when they're praying.

And they apply the kings of the earth phrase to Pilate and Herod. Obviously, the local rulers of the land of Israel is what is in view here. We'll look at that as we study Revelation.

Not now. They will be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit. They will be shut up in the prison, and after many days they will be punished.

I have been very strongly tempted. I don't know if it's right, and therefore I just mention I'm tempted to see this as parallel to Revelation 20, where at the cross of Christ, the judgment that came upon the world. Jesus said, now is the judgment of the world.

Now shall the prince of this world, the ruler of this world, be cast out? In Revelation 20, he's depicted as a dragon being put in a pit as a prisoner. And then after many days or after a thousand years, being let out and then punished in the lake of fire. And certainly there is precedent in the book of Isaiah to see physical enemies as having their actual fulfillment in spiritual enemies and spiritual warfare and so forth.

So I say I'm tempted. I don't know that I don't know that I would be authorized by any New Testament passage to make this application, but it sounds very fitting to see it as the binding of Satan and of the demons. The demons expected to be put into the pit.

They said to Jesus when they saw him, hey, isn't it too early? Have you come to torment us before the time? Please don't send us into the abyss, the pit. They knew they were going there, but they thought it seemed too early to them. And so this binding of the rulers, the evil rulers, it could very well have a meaning like that.

And in verse 23, it says the moon will be disgraced and the sun ashamed for the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem before his elders gloriously. That'd be, of course, the spiritual Jerusalem. And the moon being disgraced and the sun being ashamed, it's hard to know exactly what to think of that.

It could be talking similarly to what Jesus said when he's talking about the same thing. He said the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light. The stars of the heavens will be darkened.

It's a that'd be an apocalyptic image of destruction. However, this verse seems to be talking about something positive. The upshot of the downfall of the old system is the establishment of a new Jerusalem, a new system.

And to say the moon will be disgraced and the sun ashamed might simply be saying they will be outshined by a greater light than themselves. Again, figurative entirely. But in Revelation 21, it says the city had no need of the sun or the moon to lighten it for the glory of the Lord and of the Lamb was the light of it.

And therefore, perhaps suggesting the moon and the sun can retire now. They I mean, they are they've been upstaged by a brighter light, a brighter glory. And so it may well be that that's how we're to understand that.

But if you look further up to a messianic age passage in chapter 30, Isaiah 30, verse 26. This is in a pass a passage that's talked about the messianic age. And it says Isaiah 30, 26.

Moreover, the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun. The light of the sun will be sevenfold as the light of seven days in the day that the Lord binds up the bruise of his people and heals the stroke of their wound. Now, the moon being as bright as the sun and the sun being seven times as bright as it is obviously is figurative.

It's not talking about depletion of the ozone layer or anything like that. As futurists like to suggest, it's it's figurative, just like the sun and moon being ashamed or the sun and moon being darkened. The changes with the sun and the moon's light, the imagery is different ways in different passages.

But it's it is not to be taken literally, in my opinion. And it is describing an age where there's you know, the light is excessive in throughout Isaiah. Darkness is often used as an image, not only of, you know, being something being kept from your sight, but also of calamity.

You know, darkness and gloom and calamity are terms that seem to be used throughout Isaiah. And so light would be the opposite of that would be blessing and salvation. Now, verse chapter 25 continues, but now it's talking about the new Jerusalem, which it probably was at the end of chapter 24.

Also, oh, Lord, you are my God. I will exalt you. I will praise your name for you have done wonderful things.

Your councils of old are faithfulness and truth. And you have made a city a ruin, a fortified city, a ruin, a palace of foreigners to be a city no more. It will never be rebuilt.

Therefore, the strong people will glorify you. The city of the terrible nations will fear you. This new city is inhabited by people who were regarded by the Jews as terrible nations.

Assyrians, Babylonians, pagans now are part of the city of God. The new Jerusalem is international, and it's not a city of apostates, but it's a city made up of people from nations outside of Israel. Once regarded as terrible nations, says you have been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress.

A refuge from the storm, a shade from the heat for the blast of the terrible ones is a storm against the wall. Now, this God having become a refuge from the storm is reminiscent of what we find in chapter 32, where a man, a king is said to be all those things. Chapter 32, verse 1 and 2, behold, a king will reign in righteousness and princes will rule with justice.

A man will be as a hiding place from the wind and a cover from the tempest. And so Jesus, I believe, is that king in chapter 32, that he is the Lord. And therefore, the Lord spoken of here in chapter 25, I think, is Jesus.

It's not about his kingdom. Now, verse 5, 25, 5, you will reduce the noise of the aliens as heat in a dry place, as heat in the shadow of a cloud. The song of the terrible ones will be diminished.

Apparently, this means that the enemies of God's people will be silenced, although the language is poetic. Now, it says in this mountain, verse 6, but we're also going to see in verse 10 on this mountain. And this mountain apparently is the mountain of the house of the house of the Lord, which was mentioned in the first Messianic era.

Prophecy in chapter 2, verse 2, Isaiah 2, 2 said, Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on top of the hills and so forth. And this is the church. The Gentiles flow into it to be taught God's ways and to walk in his ways.

It's that mountain here. Also, Mount Zion, the new Mount Zion. That is spoken of as such in Hebrews, chapter 12.

We have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem. Isaiah 25, 6. And in this mountain, the Lord of hosts will make for all people, that be all nations, of course, as opposed to just Israel, a feast of choice pieces, a feast of wines on the leaves, of fat things, full of marrow, of well-refined wines on the leaves. And what this means is he's inviting everybody to his feast.

Remember, Jesus said in Matthew 22, The kingdom of God is like a king who would make a feast, a wedding for his son. And he invited his friends. That'd be the Jews.

They didn't come. He burned down their city, it says. And Jesus said that he, the king was angry at their spurning his invitation.

He sent forth his armies and burned down their city, just like in this chapter. The city's

been destroyed. But then he sent out his messengers far and wide to the highways and byways.

And that was outside of Israel. And he said, Bring in anyone who'll come in. And the feast was filled with people.

Now, the king had to visit and kind of purge the group that came in, too. Some didn't have wedding garments. But the point here is it's a wedding feast.

The kingdom of God is compared to a feast. And this is for all people. Verse 27, I mean, verse seven, excuse me.

And he will destroy on this mountain that we have the expression three times in this in this chapter, in this mountain or on this mountain, on this mountain. He will destroy the surface of the covering cast over all peoples and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever.

And the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces. The rebuke of his people he will take away from all the land or the earth, one or the other. And the Lord has spoken.

Now here, taking away the veil that is over all nations, the covering seems to be a reference to death. Verse eight says he'll swallow up death. When a person was dead, their corpse was covered over with a sheet or a veil.

And he says he's going to pull away that veil. There's going to be life. There's going to be resurrection.

Paul, when he when it says here, he will swallow up death. Paul uses an expression very much like that. In First Corinthians, 15:54, when he's talking about the resurrection, death is swallowed up in victory.

And so this seems to be talking about giving life and overcoming death, which is, of course, what Jesus does for us. Verse nine, and it will be said in that day, behold, this is our God. We have waited for him and he will save us.

This is Yahweh. We have waited for him and he will be glad and we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation. For on this mountain, the hand of the Lord will rest and Moab, which no doubt here is another instance we've seen before of some pagan nation, some present enemy of Israel being used as an emblem or representative of Gentiles in general or enemies in general.

And Moab shall be trampled down under him as straw is trampled down for the refuse heap. And he will spread out his hands. He is usually taken to be God.

It's capitalized in the New King James. Will spread out his hands in their midst as he who swims spreads out his hands to swim. And he will bring down their pride together with

the trickery of their hands.

The fortress of the high fort of your walls, apparently probably Jerusalem, old Jerusalem. He will bring down, lay low and bring to the ground down to the dust. So we have this intermixing of establishing a new city and taking down the old city.

In fact, chapter 26 begins with the new city. We've got the old city going down in chapter 25, verse 12 and the new city again in verse 26, chapter 26, verse one. In that day, this song will be sung in the land of Judah.

We have a strong city. Well, we just heard of the city going down. Well, we still have a strong city.

This is the city that God has made for strong ones back in verse chapter 25, verse three. Therefore, the strong people will glorify you. A city of the terrible nations will fear you.

Now, who are the strong people? Well, they're not people who are strong in themselves. Note in chapter 25, verse four, for you have been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy and distressed. These strong people are not strong in their own strength.

God has been their strength. And we have a strong city now. We're strong in the Lord.

As as Paul so often says, be strong in the Lord and the power of his might. And it seems that the end of chapter 25 is talking then again about the destruction of the old order. So that this whole section, 24 through 27, is bouncing back and forth to the twin ideas.

They really overlap because this did happen. God established the new Jerusalem before he destroyed the old Jerusalem, but it was within a single generation. So it's like a transitional generation.

Both these things are happening. New Jerusalem is being built. Old Jerusalem is being torn down.

And that is the transition from the old order to the new that is so, I think, frequently mentioned in Isaiah. And throughout this section, we see him coming back to one or the other. So God spreading out his hands as if he is swimming.

I don't know exactly how people swam in those days. There are various strokes and therefore the motion of the hands might be envisaged in different ways. I'm thinking of a breaststroke where God moving his hands, you know, to either side.

And in the motion of God's hands is likened to someone who swims moving their hands that way. It's almost like he's coming to the land just sweeping away, out of his way, all the trash, all the wicked, all the obstacles. It's like, you know, his hands departing from a middle point and spreading to each side and just wiping clean the landscape.

That's how I picture it. It's peculiar language and we don't really know if that's the way they swam in those days. Maybe they did the backstroke.

Who knows? Or the butterfly. But anyway, chapter 26. In that day, this song will be sung in the land of Judah.

That'd be the spiritual Israel. We have a strong city. God will appoint salvation for walls and bulwarks.

This is not made of physical stone. The walls are not physical. They're spiritual.

Salvation are the walls. Open the gates that the righteous nation, which keeps the truth, may enter in. The new nation, the holy nation, the church, gets to be a part of this city.

You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you because he trusts in you. That verse has been lifted by itself. It actually provides the chorus of one of my very favorite hymns.

Like a river glorious is God's perfect peace. And of course, it was stayed upon Jehovah. Hearts are fully blessed, finding as he promised perfect peace and rest.

So this is the promise that's based on. But it's just, again, another one of the references to peace as a feature of the kingdom age. But notice it is a personal peace.

It's not a political peace. You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you. And later on in the passage of chapter in verse 12, he says, Lord, you will establish peace for us.

For you also have done all our works in us. So God establishes peace as a feature of the messianic order, of course. And we've seen that times enough.

Trust in the Lord forever. For in Yah, which is an abbreviation for Yahweh, and then the name Yahweh appears afterwards. In Yah, in Yahweh is everlasting strength.

That's like saying in Bob, in Robert. Same name, or Rob, Robert. Yah, Yahweh, it's God's shorter form of his name, followed by the whole name.

Verse five says, he brings down those who dwell on high. He's talking about Jerusalem going down again. The lofty city, he lays it low.

He lays it low to the ground. He brings it down to the dust. The foot shall tread it down.

The feet of the poor, the steps of the needy. That is, Jerusalem has gone down and so reduced that it can be walked on. As if it wasn't there at all before.

It's a little bit like saying not one stone will be left standing on another. There's no structure there. Again, it's a hyperbole here, but it doesn't become entirely dust.

But that's the way the prophets speak, the poets. The way of the just is uprightness. Oh, most upright, you weigh the path of the just.

Yes, in the way of your judgments, oh Lord, we have waited for you. The desire of our soul is for your name and for the remembrance of you. With my soul, the prophet says, I have desired you in the night.

Yes, by my spirit within me, I will seek you early. For when your judgments are in the earth or in the land, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. When God judged Jerusalem, this scattered the gospel out to all the land so that they would learn God's ways.

And this is again a result of the destruction of Jerusalem that is mentioned sometimes in the New Testament. Namely, that when the vineyard owners killed the king's son, he comes and miserably destroys those wicked men, A.D. 70. And he gives out his vineyard to others who bring forth the fruits.

The church outside of Israel. In the story of the king's banquet for his son, the wedding banquet, the king is angry because the original guests did not come and so he burns down their city. Then he sends out the messengers to the whole world.

When God's judgments come on the land, then the world gets their chance. Israel's had theirs. Verse 10.

Let grace be shown to the wicked, yet he will not learn righteousness. This would be the obstinate Jews in Jerusalem who have not learned their lesson and who have to be judged. We need to skip over some verses, unfortunately.

What do we want to include? In verse 13. 13. O Lord, our God, other masters beside you have had dominion over us.

We've been slaves of sin and slaves of Satan, but by you only we make mention of your name. They are dead. They will not live.

They are deceased. They will not rise. Therefore, you have punished and destroyed them and made all their memory to perish.

You have increased the nation, O Lord. You have increased the nation and you are glorified. You've expanded all the borders of the land.

We have more discussion of that concept in chapters 49 and 54. Both places talk about Israel expanding by the inclusion of Gentiles. The nation becomes larger.

The true Israel is bigger than the old Israel and the borders of the old land cannot contain it because it includes Gentiles from all over the world coming in and therefore he's expanded the borders of the land. You'll see this same concept in chapter 49 verses

19 and 20 and in chapter 54 verses 2 and 3. Verses 16 through 18. Lord, in trouble they have visited you.

They poured out their prayer when your chasing was upon them. Now, by the way, these people are apparently the Jews who have come under judgment. Their prayers were shallow.

They were just praying because they were in trouble and they were not turning genuinely to God because he says, as a woman with child is in pain and cries out in her pangs when she draws near the time of her delivery. So have we been in your sight, O Lord. We have been with child.

We have been in pain. We have been, as it were, brought forth wind. We have not accomplished any deliverance in the earth nor have the inhabitants of the world fallen.

They were expected to produce fruit. They went through all the sufferings that should have justified the production of a baby, the fruit that God was looking for. There was no baby, just wind.

And what they didn't do is apparently what they were supposed to do. That is bring salvation to the world. Accomplish deliverance in the earth and see the inhabitants of the world fallen, bowing before Jesus.

The Jews never accomplished this because they didn't obey even the laws they had, much less the Messiah when he came. Your dead shall live together with my dead body. They shall arise, awake and sing.

You who dwell in the dust for your do is like the dew of herbs and the earth shall cast out the dead. Some feel like this is a reference to the resurrection. It could be ultimately at the end of this age, there will be a resurrection.

Although further, it says, come, my people, enter your chambers and shut your doors behind you. Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment until the indignation is passed. For behold, the Lord comes out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the land for their iniquity.

The land also will disclose her blood, will no more cover her slain. This last statement, the land will not disclose her blood or cover her stain. Slain means that they've been hiding the results of their crimes.

The telltale heart is going to beat loudly under the floor and expose their murderous past. Therefore, when it says, the earth shall cast out its dead in verse 19, it might be simply saying that the evidence of the slain will be thrown out for public viewing. Although it does say, your dead shall live.

Together with my dead body, they shall arise, verse 19, which almost certainly is a reference to Christ's resurrection and we are raised with him. Together with Christ, we are raised and we have come to life spiritually through his resurrection. Real quickly, chapter 27, 1, In that day the Lord with his severe sword, great and strong, will punish Leviathan, the fleeing serpent, Leviathan, the twisted serpent, and he will slay the reptile that is in the sea.

Of course, we are inclined to see this as Satan. Probably it is. He is likened to a serpent in Revelation and this is probably a reference to Christ's victory at the cross, which is, of course, the transition between the two orders that we are describing here.

In that day sing to her a vineyard of red wine. Oh, the vineyard of Israel in chapter 5 did not produce much wine, but this is a nation that will bring forth the fruits of it. The vineyard now is producing.

I, the Lord, keep it. I water it every moment, lest any hurt it. Keep it night and day.

I keep it night and day. If fury is not in me, who would set briars and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them. I would burn them together.

Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me. I have enemies. If they resist me, I'll burn them up like briars.

If they want to surrender, that's cool. I'll reconcile with them. The gospel is a message of reconciliation to God's enemies.

When we were enemies, Christ died for us and we were reconciled to God. But if enemies continue to resist, they can look forward to being burned up like briars. Those who come, he shall cause to take root in Jacob.

Israel, the true Israel, of course, shall blossom and bud and fill the face of the world with its fruit. Like the vineyard of red wine there in verse 2, this true Israel is producing fruit. Has he struck Israel as he struck those who struck him? Or has he been slain according to the slaughter of those who were slain by him? In measure, by sending it away, you contended with it.

He removes it by his rough wind in the day of the east wind. Therefore, by this, the iniquity of Jacob will be covered. And this is all the fruit of taking away his sin.

When he makes all the stones of the altar like chalk stones that are beaten to dust, when wooden images and incense altars do not stand up. Has Israel been struck the way the heathen have been struck? No, only in measure. Because the heathen were judged entirely, but God kept a faithful remnant out of Israel.

And he took away their sins. The rest of Israel was beaten down. All their altars and so

forth were beaten down to dust.

Verse 10, yet the fortified city will be desolate. Again, old Jerusalem. The habitation forsaken and left like wilderness.

There the calf will feed and there it will lie down and consume its branches. When its boughs are withered, they will be broken off. And women come and set them on fire.

It's interesting how the boughs being broken off is an image that Paul used of the Jews who don't believe in Christ and they have been broken off. The branches have been broken off of the olive tree. And yet there's also this image that Jesus used when he said, I am the true vine.

And of course, in this context, it's not about the true vine, the true vineyard, filling the earth with its fruit. It's Jesus that's the true vine. And Jesus mentioned in John 15, 6, that there will be branches that could be broken off.

If anyone does not abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch and withered. And they gather them and burn them. This is language directly from this verse.

They're withered. They're broken off. They're collected and burned.

And this, therefore, would speak of those who are not of the remnant of Israel, the Jews who did not abide in Christ. He was the true vine. They were cut off.

They were cut off of the olive tree, off the vine. And, of course, their end is withered and burned. For it is a people of no understanding.

Therefore, he who made them will not have mercy on them. And he who formed them will show them no favor. And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord will thresh.

Threshing is separating wheat from chaff. From the channel of the river, Euphrates, to the brook of Egypt. This is no doubt the dimensions of the land of Israel that are intended here, the northern and southern boundaries.

And you will be gathered one by one, O you children of Israel. That is, he's going to separate the wheat from the chaff throughout the whole land of Israel. And he's going to gather out the wheat one by one.

This is a small remnant. The chaff is going to be burned wholesale, but he's first going to take individually from Israel, those who are the true remnant, the true faithful ones, and save them. So it shall be in that day that the great trumpet will be blown.

They will come who are about to perish in the land of Assyria. They who are the outcasts in the land of Egypt. And they shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem, the new city.

Now, of course, it's saying he's going to destroy the old city. He's going to separate the wheat from the chaff throughout Israel. He's going to collect out the remnant to himself.

And then he's going to sound a trumpet, the gospel call, to nations far and wide to come and be part of this, as is, again, a normal feature of the Kingdom Age prophecies. And thus we reach the end of this particular section.