

“The City of God” Isaiah 26:1-19

Context: Isaiah 24-27, referred to as “Isaiah’s Apocalypse,” mirrors Revelation 4-21. In the previous studies, we have considered parallels such as the judgment of the earth, the exaltation of God’s name, and the Marriage Feast of the Lamb. Today, we reflect on Isaiah’s revelation of the city of God. The apocalypse section will conclude with the following study addressing the deliverance of the remnant and a warning of impending destruction of the rebellious on the Day of Judgment. **Life Principle:** The wicked will not learn righteousness when favor is shown them; they will rather continue in their perversity, never perceiving God’s merciful nature (Isaiah 26:10).

1. Nature of God’s City – Isaiah 26:1-6

Those who have guarded the faith by the grace worked in them sing of their state of glorification in the New Jerusalem. The content of the song includes the promise of perfect peace for those leaning on God, who forms and sustains them. Isaiah urges the Remnant to keep trusting in God in light of this blessed promised eternity. God is trustworthy because He is steady and unchanging like a solid rock. In contrast, the thugs of Babylon will be crushed into dust by God and trampled under foot by those they once oppressed.

2. Path to God’s City – Isaiah 26:7-14

The pathway to God’s city is made level through His work of righteousness. This work in the souls of the remnant surfaces their longing for Christ’s return and judgment. Corrective discipline as merciful favor is neither recognized nor regarded by the wicked. Rather, they continue in their deviance, neglecting God’s presence. The song continues with a call for God’s fiery judgment of the wicked like in the time of Sodom, which is answered in Revelation 20:9.

3. Waiting for God’s City – Isaiah 26:15-21 (cp. 1 Chr. 4:10; Rev. 21:4)

Isaiah reveals that the border of the new city is not extended without earth’s final judgment by God. The Remnant cannot revive the fallen creation or remove the pollution of its blood stained ground. Indeed, most of the Remnant dies. The few living during the time of Tribulation are counseled to withdraw and conceal themselves until the curse of God’s final judgment passes.

Study questions:

- We teach that salvation has four facets: (1) justification, (2) regeneration, (3) sanctification, and (4) glorification (see footnotes 7, 13, 14, 16 ‘On Salvation’ in our **doctrinal statement** under **what we believe** at www.gracepointfellowship.org). What does salvation mean when expressed as glorification (cf. 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Corinthians 15:49ff; Romans 8:29-30)? What is our part in this aspect of salvation? Do you find comfort in it? Why or why not?

- Historical context takes the bland and makes it living. As a **Bible study method**, study the abuse of the Jewish people deported to Babylon and the persecution of the remnant of Babylon in John’s apocalypse (cf. 2 Chronicles 33:10ff; Daniel 3:14ff; Esther 3:1ff; Revelation 6:9ff; 13:15ff; 14:11ff; Revelation 17:6ff). Why was and is Isaiah’s exhortation to “trust God” in Isaiah 26:4-6 so important? In what sense and by what criteria do the oppressed judge their oppressor (cf. Revelation 20:4; John 12:48; Luke 19:22ff)?

- Compare Isaiah 26:14 with Daniel 12:2, Matthew 25:46, John 5:29, and Revelation 20:12-15. How can the departed spirits “not rise,” yet be raised to be condemned? What are some plausible interpretations that resolve the apparent contradiction (i.e. annihilation or no revivification)?

Transformation exercise:

Compare Isaiah 26:12 with Philippians 2:13. Quiet yourself when you awake each morning and ask the Lord to make you sensitive to opportunities to “name Him,” that is, to testify to His character before others as He gives you occasion.