

God Saves

God's sovereign plan includes providing a way of salvation for those who believe in Him.

ISAIAH 25:1-10A



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What is the importance of having a plan to address a need?

People who have a plan for success and implement that plan are admirable. The Bible teaches that God has a plan. His plan includes redeeming creation and assembling a people out of every nation. Every nation will be represented when God prepares His inaugural feast, and everyone in attendance will be there because of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone. Isaiah emphasized this truth as he anticipated the destruction of death and the celebration of the Lord's salvation before His throne.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Isaiah 24:1–27:13 serves as the climax to the previous chapters describing God's judgment of individual nations. Once Isaiah finished addressing the nations, his focus moved from regional judgment to universal reckoning, from the immediate time frame to a distant future, and from what is temporal to what is eternal. The section is distinctly eschatological, speaking of end times. After describing what God would do to the entire earth, Isaiah's main emphasis was on how it would affect the people of God. His message serves as a word of comfort to people as they face turbulent times.

Chapter 24 declares no one will escape the Lord's judgment. It is an apocalyptic picture of total destruction with the earth utterly laid waste and every inhabitant completely plundered. Isaiah indicates the reason for this cataclysmic judgment is that all the people have broken God's laws, overstepping God's decrees by making their own laws, and by disregarding every gracious act of God to make Himself known to humanity (24:5). Since humanity's sin brought the

curse to earth, the earth will become a curse to humanity, and everyone but a small remnant will perish as the earth shakes and fails to provide for people's needs. In that day, the Lord will destroy all earthly and heavenly opposition.

The people of God, however, will celebrate the Lord's judgment on the nations and declare Him their faithful stronghold. God will prepare a victory feast celebrating His rule and will include His faithful people from every nation. The victory the people celebrate will be the victory they anticipated for ages as they see God's intervention against the wicked and His vindication of those who trusted in Him. The bodies of the faithful who were dead will rise (26:19), and God's people will come and "worship the Lord on the holy mountain at Jerusalem" (27:13).

ISAIAH 25:1-10A

1 LORD, you are my God; I will exalt you. I will praise your name, for you have accomplished **wonders** **A**, plans formed long ago, with perfect faithfulness. **2** For you have turned the city into a pile of rocks, a fortified city, into ruins; the fortress of barbarians is no longer a city; it will never be rebuilt. **3** Therefore, a strong people will honor you. The cities of violent nations will **fear** **B** you. **4** For you have been a stronghold for the poor person, a stronghold for the needy in his distress, **a refuge** **C** from storms and a shade from heat. When the breath of the violent is like a storm against a wall, **5** like heat in a dry land, you will subdue the uproar of barbarians. As the shade of a cloud cools the heat of the day, so he will **silence** **D** the song of the violent. **6** On this mountain, the **LORD of Armies** **E** will prepare for all the peoples a feast of choice meat, a feast with aged wine, prime cuts of choice meat, fine vintage wine. **7** On this mountain he will destroy the burial shroud, the shroud over all the peoples, the sheet covering all the nations; **8** he will destroy death forever. The Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from every face and remove his people's disgrace from the whole earth, for the LORD has spoken. **9** On that day it will be said, "Look, this is our God; we have **waited for** **F** him, and he has **saved** **G** us. This is the LORD; we have waited for him. Let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation."
10 For the LORD's power will rest on this mountain.

Passage Outline

Singing Praise
(Isa. 25:1-5)

Feasting Together
(Isa. 25:6-8)

Trusting God
(Isa. 25:9-10a)

Key Words

- A. When this word is used it predominantly refers to God's works.
- B. There are five aspects of fear: (1) emotional fear; (2) anticipation of something bad; (3) to "revere" (NASB, NIV); (4) behavior, or to "obey and glorify" (TLB); or (5) religious worship.
- C. Taking shelter reveals humanity's vulnerability.
- D. Receiving punishment is sometimes needed to humble people toward repentance (Deut. 7:23).
- E. Yahweh is the mighty Warrior King (1 Sam. 17:45), who is over all things.
- F. To look for something with great anticipation.
- G. A "saved" person is delivered by the Savior (Jesus Christ) from great distress (sin) so that he or she is completely free.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

Isaiah 25:1-5 presents a hymn of thanksgiving that celebrates God and His salvation. From a human perspective, many of the nations God would lay low appeared invincible. The city represents the arrogant notion that humans can save themselves in their own self-sufficiency. They have concluded they do not need God. The fact that this city is fortified and called a fortress shows their resolve to defend their way of life. However, every attempt at salvation apart from the mercy and saving grace of God is doomed to fail. Isaiah was declaring that people who were once adamant enemies of God will become part of the saved people of God.

What is the importance of knowing that powerful cities come and go? What is the benefit of believers being mindful of their inadequacies?

DID YOU KNOW?: The word *honor* in Isaiah 25:3 comes from a Hebrew word (*kaved*) that means “heavy” or “weighty.” It carries the sense of “assign weightiness or importance,” thus “to honor” or “to glorify.”

Isaiah pits the hollow, counterfeit strength of the wicked against the strong wall of protection afforded the poor and needy by the Lord. The Lord is opposed to the proud but a champion of the weak. Thus, Isaiah shows how the Lord receives glory in two ways. First, He receives glory by showing Himself strong for the weak. Second, the Lord receives glory by opposing those who are arrogantly self-willed and self-assured of their own power with no need for God.

KEY DOCTRINE: Last Things

The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in heaven with the Lord (1 Thess. 4:14-18).

In verse 6, the prophet continued declaring what the *LORD of Armies* would do. The Lord’s reign would begin with a coronation feast. In addition to preparing a feast for His people from every nation, God would do something even more spectacular: He would destroy death.

How does the defeat of death point to the peace God offers to His people?

Not only does Isaiah depict the Lord’s dwelling with His people, but we also get a glimpse of what it will be like for the people of God to dwell in the presence of God.

How is the hope of salvation realized in the phrases used by Isaiah? What role does faith play in waiting for God?

BIBLE SKILL: Use a Bible

concordance. Use a Bible concordance to identify instances in Isaiah where he referred to a vineyard. How does the metaphor of a vineyard develop in the book? What are the elements in the imagery and how do they connect with God and His people?

APPLY THE TEXT

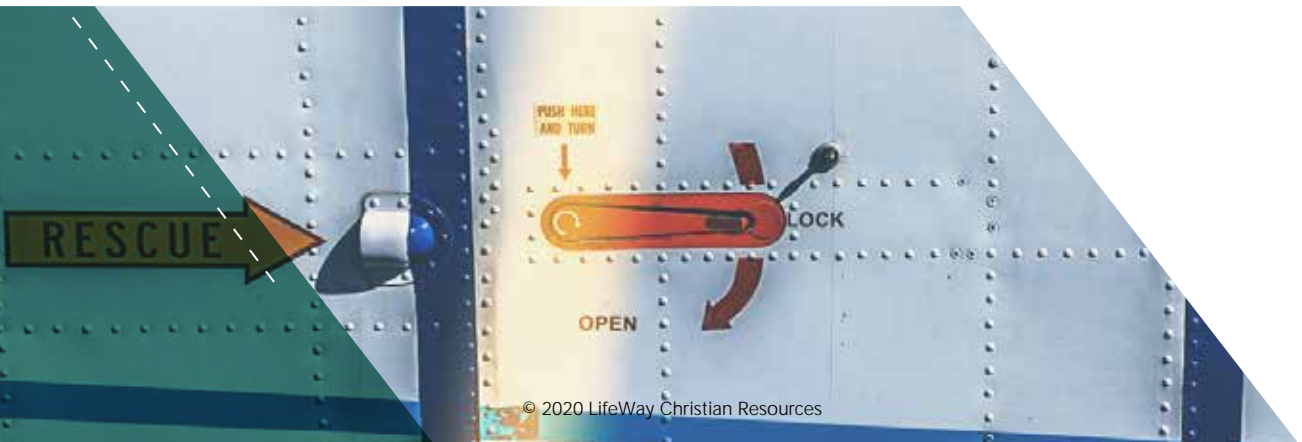
- God’s salvation leads to praise of Him.
- God’s peace will be enjoyed by all who trust in Him.
- God’s salvation comes through faith in Him.

Reflect on the salvation God provides through faith in His Son. Write a prayer thanking God for His salvation.

Discuss as a group ways of enjoying God’s peace today. How does the promise of a future complete with peace impact how your Bible study group functions? What changes need to be made to make your group a more peaceful place?

How would you rate your ability to whole-heartedly proclaim “look this is our God”? What needs to change in your life to more confidently make this declaration?

Prayer Requests



DAILY EXPLORATION

Day 1: People are not equal to God.

Read Isaiah 25: 1-2, examining why Isaiah is praising God.

Isaiah began his hymn with a short but very profound declaration: *LORD, you are my God.* In chapter 27, the prophet clearly indicated the nations of the earth would undergo terrible judgment because they had rejected the Lord as their God. However, the Lord will save those who can truthfully proclaim, “Yahweh is my God.” Personal knowledge of the Lord is the characteristic of those who will be saved. Next, Isaiah declared he would exalt the Lord and praise His name because of what He has done. *Wonders* speaks of things only God can do. From a human perspective, many of the nations God would lay low appeared invincible. But God is in perfect control; He methodically and faithfully carries out His purposes.

Isaiah elaborated on the wonders God accomplished. The *city* to which he referred is “the city of chaos” in Isaiah 24:10. It is not a specific city but a metaphor to represent human strongholds of wickedness. Just as the Lord came down and rendered impotent the people at the Tower of Babel as they attempted to elevate themselves to be equal with God, He will bring down this arrogant city. As invulnerable as the wicked city of human self-sufficiency and self-will may appear, God Almighty easily lays it to waste.

Why is it beneficial for you to be aware of your own inadequacies?

Day 2: God’s plan is salvation.

Read Isaiah 25:3, underlining the word honor.

Isaiah described the salvation of the *nations*, known as the Gentiles in the New Testament. He mentioned this in Isaiah 24:16 when he stated: “from the ends of the earth we hear songs: The Splendor of the Righteous One.” Part of the Lord’s “plans formed long ago” (v. 1) was to save for Himself a people from every nation. God revealed this plan to Abraham when He chose Abraham and his descendants for the purpose of blessing all the peoples on earth (Gen. 12:2-3; 18:18-19). Paul made this clear when he wrote, “Now the Scripture saw in advance that God would justify the Gentiles by faith and proclaimed the gospel ahead of time to Abraham, saying, ‘All the nations will be blessed through you’” (Gal. 3:8). Isaiah was declaring that people who were once adamant enemies of God will become part of God’s people.

Why should you honor God?

Day 3: We find security in God's strength.

Read Isaiah 25:4-5, identifying where true strength is found.

The *poor* and the *needy* are the opposites of the strong and self-sufficient citizens of the city of chaos and meaninglessness which the Lord has destroyed. Yet, the poor and needy are better off because the Lord is a *stronghold* for the poor and needy and a *refuge* from the storms and heat of the violently wicked who seek to harm the weak. Those who thought they were strong have become weak, but those who are weak are secure because the Lord is their refuge and strength. Thus, Isaiah shows how the Lord receives glory in two ways. First, He receives glory by showing Himself strong for the weak. Second, the Lord receives glory by opposing those who are arrogantly self-willed and self-assured of their own power with no need for God. This is a motif throughout the Scriptures. One witnesses this motif in the lives of people like the Israelites whom God saved from Egypt; one of the greatest and most powerful nations ever known. The Book of Judges demonstrates it in the life of Gideon who was the least in his tribe and yet led 300 men to victory over 135,000 Midianites. Also, David was but a boy and yet defeated the mighty Goliath.

Why is it appropriate for believers to praise God in advance of seeing His promises fulfilled?

Day 4: God will defeat death.

Read Isaiah 25:6-8, considering what the feast is celebrating.

In addition to preparing a feast for His people from every nation, God would do something even more spectacular: He would destroy death. *The burial shroud* covers every person of every nation. We have a 100 percent death rate. However, the Lord *will destroy death forever*—not just death per se but the cause of death. Adam and Eve incurred the curse of death on themselves and their descendants as consequences for their sin. Nevertheless, the apostle Paul revealed that just as death came to all through Adam, the resurrection of the dead comes through faith in Christ. What's more, the last enemy Christ will abolish is death (1 Cor. 15:23-26). Jesus bore the curse and conquered the grave by His death and resurrection. As Paul wrote, "Death has been swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15:54). Such a statement is fitting for Isaiah's message as he anticipated the celebration feast of this victory over death. The Lord personally will do for His people what they cannot do for themselves. The new nature of God's people will be given full expression in Christlikeness and holiness. Isaiah declared it will not be a time of sorrow but a time of rejoicing, *for the LORD has spoken*. Isaiah comforted God's people with the assurance that God will defeat all of their enemies when He begins His reign in Zion, and that they will then experience blessings like those that the world has never known.

How does the defeat of death point to the peace God offers you?

Day 5: God will reward those who trust Him.

Read Isaiah 25:9-10a, underlining the phrase “we have waited for Him, and He has saved us.”

Not only does Isaiah depict the Lord’s dwelling with His people, but we also get a glimpse of what it will be like for the people of God to dwell in the presence of God. What a glorious day it will be when the people of God see Him face to face and exclaim, “Look, this is our God.” God will reward those who trust in Him and patiently wait on Him. Those who trust in the Lord will be saved, and the natural response of people who have been saved is to rejoice and sing the praises of the One who has saved them. On Mount Zion, the place where the Lord resides, rests the power of God unto salvation because He alone is the Savior. Salvation comes from God alone through faith alone.

What role does your faith play in how you wait for God?

TALK IT OUT

Reflect on the truths found in Isaiah 25, sharing with other members of your Bible study group.

What hymn or song is especially meaningful as we consider God’s faithfulness?

How does waiting for God to act reflect trust in Him?

How should the knowledge that Christ will return motivate us to share our faith in the Lord with unbelievers?



For additional context, read “Banqueting in the Ancient Near East” in the Fall 2020 issue of *Biblical Illustrator*. Available at LifeWay.com/BiblicalIllustrator.