

Session 25

Isaiah 26:20-27:13 | Preserved Through Judgment, Gathered to Worship

Isaiah Oracle by Oracle / Dr. Randy White

Session 24 ended with the promise that God's dead would live (26:19). The next words, **"Come, my people,"** begin a fresh address: God's people are called to shelter while the LORD judges the earth. The chapter division does not interrupt the movement. **"In that day"** in 27:1 connects the defeat of hostile power with the judgment announced in 26:21.

This session concludes Isaiah 24-27, the segment entitled "Judgment, Deliverance, and God's Sovereignty" in our outline. The segment began with the earth emptied and ends with the children of Israel gathered to worship the LORD at Jerusalem. Between those scenes, Isaiah announces the LORD's reign in Zion, the defeat of death, resurrection hope, preservation through indignation, and the restoration of His vineyard.

The passage moves through five scenes: shelter from indignation (26:20-21), the defeat of leviathan (27:1), the LORD's fruitful vineyard (27:2-6), Jacob's chastening and the removal of idolatry (27:7-11), and Israel's gathering (27:12-13). The historical experiences of judgment and scattering form its background, while the worldwide setting and final restoration carry the prophecy beyond a single ancient invasion.

A. Shelter until the indignation passes (vv.26:20-21)

- **Verse 20 - The LORD calls His people to shelter while His indignation passes.** The voice shifts from the preceding prayer to a summons addressed to God's people.
 - **"Come, my people"** expresses God's claim upon them amid judgment. In the surrounding references to Judah, the nation, Jacob, and Israel, these people are the people of Israel. Their identity should remain attached to that setting.
 - **"Enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee"** pictures withdrawal into a protected place. The language recalls the Israelites remaining inside their houses during the Passover judgment (Ex. 12:22-23), although Isaiah does not repeat that event's instructions about blood on the doorposts.
 - **"Hide thyself as it were for a little moment"** portrays a limited period under God's direction. The phrase does not specify a number of days or years. The

restraint of indignation stands alongside the enduring salvation promised in the surrounding chapters.

- **“Until the indignation be overpast”** gives the reason and the limit of the hiding. God’s judgment has a course to complete. His people are called to depend upon His provision while that judgment unfolds. Compare Zephaniah 2:3, which speaks of being hidden in the day of the LORD’s anger.
- The verse describes shelter during indignation; it does not describe an ascent into heaven, a catching away, or the transformation of living believers. Those details belong to 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and 1 Corinthians 15:51-52. This verse alone cannot establish the timing or manner of the Body of Christ’s gathering.
- **Verse 21 - The LORD comes to punish iniquity and expose concealed bloodshed.** The opening **“For, behold”** explains why the people must shelter.
 - **“The LORD cometh out of his place”** announces His intervention as Judge. Micah 1:3-4 uses similar language of the LORD coming forth and descending in judgment. God’s apparent distance from injustice must not be mistaken for indifference.
 - **“The inhabitants of the earth”** recalls the worldwide scope of chapter 24. The announced punishment concerns **“their iniquity.”** The judgment is a moral reckoning with human evil.
 - **“The earth also shall disclose her blood”** presents the ground as revealing the violence it has received. Genesis 4:10 supplies a close parallel: Abel’s blood cries to God from the ground.
 - **“Shall no more cover her slain”** means concealed killing will no longer remain hidden. The statement emphasizes exposure and accountability. It should not simply be equated with the resurrection promise of verse 19, although both declarations portray God’s authority over what the earth holds.

B. The LORD defeats leviathan (v.27:1)

- **Verse 1 - The LORD’s sword overthrows the serpent and dragon.** The repeated **“In that day”** carries the judgment of 26:21 into this scene.
 - **“His sore and great and strong sword”** emphasizes the severity and irresistible strength of the LORD’s action. *Sore* here means grievous or severe. No creature or hostile power can withstand the weapon He brings against it.
 - **“Leviathan the piercing serpent”** and **“leviathan that crooked serpent”** present a terrifying adversary. The KJV’s *piercing* is commonly rendered *fleeing* in other translations. *Crooked* describes a twisting or winding serpent. These expressions portray the adversary’s character; they do not supply names of modern nations.
- **“He shall slay the dragon that is in the sea”** completes the announcement of victory. Isaiah employs serpent and sea-monster imagery elsewhere to describe the defeat of hostile power. Isaiah 51:9-10 joins the cutting of Rahab and wounding of the dragon with the drying of the sea and the passage of the redeemed.
- Leviathan appears in Job 41 and Psalm 74:13-14, but those contexts should retain their own purposes. Isaiah’s emphasis here is God’s defeat of the threatening power standing against His rule and His people.
- Revelation 12:9 and 20:2 explicitly identify their dragon and old serpent as the Devil and Satan. That later revelation gives strong support for recognizing a satanic

dimension in Isaiah's serpent imagery. Isaiah 27:1 itself does not name Satan or map its descriptions onto separate empires. Identifications with Assyria, Babylon, or Egypt are interpretive proposals rather than stated names.

- The scene fits the wider overthrow of hostile heavenly and earthly powers in 24:21-23. Isaiah announces their defeat without supplying every stage of the sequence later described in Revelation 20.

C. The vineyard the LORD keeps (vv.27:2-6)

- **Verse 2 - A new vineyard song announces a changed future.** The scene moves from the defeated dragon to the vineyard under the LORD's care.
 - **"In that day sing ye unto her"** calls for a song concerning the vineyard. The KJV names **"A vineyard of red wine,"** presenting a vineyard associated with desirable produce.
 - Isaiah 5:1-7 provides the central comparison. There the LORD's vineyard is expressly **"the house of Israel,"** and His care is answered with wild grapes, injustice, and oppression. Here the vineyard's future is secured by His keeping, and verse 6 identifies Jacob and Israel as the people who will bear fruit.
- **Verse 3 - The LORD personally sustains and guards His vineyard.** The promise begins with the emphatic declaration **"I the LORD do keep it."**
 - **"I will water it every moment"** describes continual provision. The vineyard's flourishing depends upon the One who supplies its life.
 - **"Lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day"** describes continual protection. Isaiah 5:5-6 announced removal of the hedge and withholding of rain; Isaiah 27:3 promises keeping and watering. The contrast reveals the difference between judgment upon the failed vineyard and the vineyard's restored future.
- **Verses 4-5 - Opposition faces burning, while peace is offered through the LORD's strength.** The vineyard's Keeper explains His disposition and power.
 - **"Fury is not in me"** must be read within this vineyard promise. It expresses His favorable disposition toward the vineyard under His care. It does not cancel the indignation of 26:20 or announce that God will never again judge wickedness.
 - **"The briers and thorns"** picture resistance set against Him **"in battle."** Such opposition cannot frustrate His purpose: **"I would go through them, I would burn them together."** The imagery recalls the briers and thorns in the abandoned vineyard of 5:6.
 - **"Or let him take hold of my strength"** offers an alternative to hostile resistance. The contender may seek refuge in the very One whose strength he cannot defeat.
 - **"That he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me"** repeats the offer of peace. The assurance rests upon the LORD's provision. Neither warfare against Him nor reliance upon independent strength can secure the vineyard's future.
- **Verse 6 - Jacob takes root and Israel fills the world with fruit.** The vineyard image receives an explicit national identification.
 - **"Them that come of Jacob"** identifies Jacob's descendants. **"Israel shall blossom and bud"** names the nation rather than leaving the vineyard an undefined community.
 - **"Take root," "blossom," "bud," and "fruit"** describe a progression from establishment to abundant productivity.

The people once compared to a failed vineyard have a fruitful future through God's work.

- **“Fill the face of the world with fruit”** extends the result beyond Israel's borders. Israel's restoration brings blessing with worldwide reach. Compare Isaiah 2:2-4, where the nations receive instruction from Zion, and Genesis 12:3, which places

blessing for the families of the earth within God's promise to Abraham.

- This promise does not require replacing Israel with the church. Its national identity is explicit. It also does not imply that every descendant of Jacob enters blessing regardless of unbelief; the next verses address purging, judgment, and lack of understanding.

D. Jacob chastened, idolatry removed (vv.27:7-11)

- **Verse 7 - Jacob's chastening is distinguished from the overthrow of his smiters.** The questions compare God's dealings with His people and with those who strike them.
 - **“Hath he smitten him, as he smote those that smote him?”** asks whether Jacob's treatment is the same as the treatment of his oppressors. The context supports the distinction: God chastens Jacob while preserving the promised national future.
 - The verse's pronouns are compressed, especially in its second question. The main point follows from verses 6-9: Israel is disciplined and purged, rather than discarded as a nation. Compare Jeremiah 30:11, where God promises correction **“in measure”** and distinguishes it from making a full end of the nations.
- **Verse 8 - The LORD's dealing is measured, even amid a devastating wind.** The imagery continues the contrast in the preceding question.
 - The KJV reads **“In measure, when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it.”** *Debate* here carries the sense of contending or dealing judicially. The wording is difficult, and other translations understand the clause in terms of sending away or exile. The exact image should be handled with care.
- **“He stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind”** describes restraint in the KJV wording. Other translations describe removal by a fierce wind. Both the scattering imagery and the opening **“In measure”** belong to God's controlled dealing; neither reading gives Israel's enemies unlimited authority over His purpose.
- **Verse 9 - The purging of Jacob is accompanied by the dismantling of idolatry.** The discipline has an intended result.
 - **“By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged”** connects the judgment with the removal of the nation's sin. The following altar imagery makes the particular problem concrete: idolatrous worship must be broken down.
 - **“This is all the fruit to take away his sin”** points to the outcome described next. The stones of the altar become **“chalkstones that are beaten in sunder,”** and the **“groves and images shall not stand up.”** Pulverized stones cannot continue to support the former worship.
 - *Groves* here refers to idolatrous cult objects associated with Asherah worship, rather than a condemnation of ordinary trees. The accompanying images likewise belong to the illicit worship being removed.

- The passage concerns national purging and the destruction of idolatry. It does not teach that suffering earns forgiveness or that smashing an altar substitutes for Christ's atoning sacrifice. Compare Isaiah 53:5-6 for the LORD's provision concerning iniquity.
- **Verses 10-11 - The desolate city shows the seriousness of judgment upon an uncomprehending people.** The promise of fruitfulness does not remove the warning.
 - **"The defenced city shall be desolate"** presents a fortified habitation reduced to wilderness. The calf feeds and lies down where human strength once appeared secure. Animals consuming its branches continue the imagery of abandonment.
 - The city is unnamed. A connection with Jerusalem under judgment is possible, but the wording does not independently identify it. Its ruined defenses and its people's spiritual condition are the stated emphasis.
- **"When the boughs thereof are withered"** announces loss of life and usefulness. The branches are broken off and used for fuel. This scene should not be flattened into the flourishing of verse 6; the contrast displays the cost of judgment on the way to the promised restoration.
- **"A people of no understanding"** identifies the moral cause. Compare Isaiah 1:3: Israel does not know, and God's people do not consider. The deficiency concerns recognition of God and response to Him.
- **"He that made them will not have mercy on them"** and **"he that formed them will shew them no favour"** deny immunity based upon their origin or identity. God's creation and election of a people do not exempt unbelief from judgment. The following gathering promise shows that this severe sentence does not cancel His future for Israel.

E. Israel gathered to worship at Jerusalem (vv.27:12-13)

- **Verse 12 - The LORD gathers the children of Israel one by one.** "In that day" introduces the segment's closing restoration scene.
 - **"The LORD shall beat off"** uses harvesting language: produce is beaten from a tree or crop and collected. In verse 6 Israel bears fruit; here the LORD gathers His scattered people. The image also recalls the olive shaking and gleaning in 24:13.
 - **"From the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt"** describes the extent of the gathering. "The river" is naturally understood as the Euphrates in this regional setting. The *stream of Egypt* is commonly understood as the border watercourse or brook of Egypt; the verse does not require identifying it with the Nile.
- **"Ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel"** supplies both the recipients and the personal care of the gathering. A national restoration is accomplished through the gathering of actual people, rather than merely a change in political terminology.
- **Verse 13 - The great trumpet summons the scattered to worship the LORD.** The destination completes the prophecy.
 - **"The great trumpet shall be blown"** announces a summons. Those **"ready to perish in the land of Assyria"** and **"the outcasts in the land of Egypt"** come from places of danger and displacement. Their circumstances do not put them beyond the LORD's reach.
 - **"Shall worship the LORD in the holy**

mount at Jerusalem” names the result and location. The gathering restores the people to worship, and Jerusalem remains the geographical center. Isaiah 24:23 announced the LORD’s reign in Zion and Jerusalem; 27:13 closes with worship there.

- **Matthew 24:31** likewise joins a great trumpet with the gathering of the elect.

The thematic relationship is strong, but Isaiah does not independently specify every detail of that later description. The mere occurrence of a trumpet also does not make this event identical with the Body of Christ’s catching away in 1 Thessalonians 4.

F. The conclusion of Isaiah 24-27

Isaiah 24-27 concludes here. Its movement is from worldwide judgment to the LORD’s reign and the restoration of His people. The repeated references to **“in that day”** connect its songs, judgments, and promises, without requiring every scene to occur at one instant.

- **Chapter 24:** The earth comes under judgment, hostile powers are punished, and the LORD reigns in Mount Zion and Jerusalem.
- **Chapter 25:** The LORD is praised as refuge, prepares a feast for the peoples, defeats death, and humbles pride.
- **Chapter 26:** Judah sings of salvation and peace, waits amid chastening, receives resurrection hope, and is called to shelter from indignation.
- **Chapter 27:** The LORD defeats the serpent, keeps His vineyard, purges Jacob’s idolatry, and gathers Israel to worship at Jerusalem.

The promises preserve the identity of Jacob and Israel while reaching outward to the

world. Judgment exposes evil; chastening addresses the nation’s sin; divine keeping secures the vineyard’s future. Human power cannot accomplish the deliverance, fruitfulness, or gathering that the LORD Himself supplies.

Chapter 28 begins the next major segment, **“Warnings, Promises, and Calls to Righteousness” (28:1-35:10)**, with a woe against the proud crown of Ephraim. The restored future announced here becomes the backdrop for renewed warnings against the pride and misplaced confidence of Isaiah’s hearers.

One-sentence summary: The LORD preserves His people through indignation, defeats hostile power, purges Jacob’s idolatry, and gathers Israel to worship Him at Jerusalem, bringing Isaiah 24-27 to its promised conclusion.

Scripture wording follows the King James Version, Isaiah 26:20-27:13. Closely related passages include Exodus 12:22-23; Isaiah 5:1-7; 24:21-23; 51:9-10; Jeremiah 30:11; Matthew 24:31; and Revelation 12:9; 20:2.