

When the Lord Comes, the Dead shall Rise!

Isaiah 26:1-21 (vv. 19-21)

Facilitator: Rev. Vera Rhyne

I.

I. Historical Background and Biblical Context

In the conclusion of this chapter, we see the faithfulness of God toward His people. Through the prophecies of Isaiah, we get a glimpse of what is to come for the restoration and resurrection of the people of God. Isaiah 24-27 describes a global judgment that will end with the destruction of God's enemies and the restoration of God's people in their land. This encouragement is given before God does those great deliverances. The prophet encourages God's suffering people by describing blessings that await them in the future.

II. The Lesson: When the Lord Comes, the Dead shall Rise!

1. **vv. 14-15.** "They are now dead, they live no more; their spirits do not rise. You punished them and brought them to ruin; you wiped out all memory of them, You have enlarged the nation, Lord; you have enlarged the nation. You have gained the glory for yourself; you have extended all the borders of the land."

These verses speak of God's glory in crushing those who lord over, persecuted, and oppressed the people of God. They are dead now, all of them. Their spirits will not rise. As a result of their ungodliness and sins, the time of judgment had come. They will never rise again to put Israel under bondage. There's no legacy for them. They would be a thing in the past. The battles they won and name to claim mean absolutely nothing. Psalm 34:16, "but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to blot out their name from the earth." NLT puts it this way, "But the Lord turns His face

against those who do evil, He will erase their memory from the earth.” All through the Word of God, whether as nations or individuals, God’s face is against evil doers. There is no one and no nation greater than God. He is God over all – all nations. He is sovereign, supreme and more sufficient to reign. Rather than Israel dying as a nation, God gave increase as He promised Abraham in Genesis 15:5, “He took him outside and said, “look up at the sky and count the stars – if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” God reestablished His people, showed grace to them and enlarged the borders of their land and gave them great population. This was for the glory of God not the people. God must get the glory for everything He does. He is alone is God. He works all things out for His purpose and plan.

2. **vv. 16-18.** “Lord, they came to you in their distress; when you disciplined them, they could barely whisper a prayer. As a pregnant woman about to give birth writhes and cries out in her pain, so were we in your presence, Lord. We were with child, we writhed in labor, but we gave birth to wind. We have not brought salvation to the earth, and the people of the world have not come to life.”

Isaiah recalls how the people of Israel looked to the Lord in their suffering. He acknowledges that discomfort was brought by the Lord in His discipline for their unfaithfulness to Him. Like a loving parent, God’s discipline was to bring His people back to Him, not to drive them further away. When the pain became too much, they finally turned back to God by pouring a whispered prayer. Isaiah tells us what happens when we work in our own human ability. He uses the image of a woman giving birth. Anyone who has had a child knows that giving birth takes a lot of effort. For nine months this child is growing inside the womb. Then the day arrives and there is agony. This image of a woman struggling to give birth is the strongest image Isaiah could invoke. But nothing comes of all that labor. What he is trying to get across is that we work in our own strength we achieve nothing.

3. **vv. 19.** “But your dead will live, Lord; their bodies will rise – let those who dwell in the dust wake up and shout for joy – your dew is like the dew of the morning; the earth will give birth to her dead.”

This is good news for the redeemed and faithful of God. This is the blessed hope that keeps us humble and obedient to our God. Our final address here on earth is the grave. However, the grave is not the end. This is what we hold on to that that day is coming when the Lord shall come for us. Everyone will die but not everyone will be resurrected. Only the died in Christ be caught up to meet Him. This verse is in contrast to verse 14, the ungodly and wicked, they are now dead, they live no more, their spirits do not rise. Wake up and shout for joy, the grave cannot hold down when the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.(I Corinthians 15:...52) and I Thessalonians 4:16 – 17, “For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.”

Shout for joy for that time will come when the wicked will cease from turmoil, and there the weary will be at rest. The coming day of the Lord will include the restoration of His chosen people and their promised land. Just as dew brings new life to the soil and vegetation, so God will raise the dead out of the earth. The prophet had already announced God’s great victory over death (25:7-8, “On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove his people’s disgrace from all the earth. The Lord has spoken.”

Isaiah compared the resurrection to human birth: “The earth will give birth to her dead.”

4. **vv 20-21.** “Go, my people, enter your rooms and shut the doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until his wrath has passed by. See, the Lord is coming out of his dwelling to punish the people of the earth for their sins. The earth will disclose the blood shed on it; the earth will conceal its slain no longer.”

The people have been praying to God, and now God speak to them and gives them the assurance they need. He promises to shelter His people from the terrible attacks of the enemy. How awesome this that the Lord God Almighty is coming out His dwelling to punish the people of the earth for their sins. God will punish His enemies who slain His people, whose blood cries out from the earth for vengeance. The unjust shedding of blood pollutes the land and invites the judgment of God. To the righteous God is our refuge and strength He is ever present help in trouble. He is our hiding place. He is a Protector of His people for His name's sake. With this word of encouragement and instruction, we can be in peace and have peace knowing God will cover us.

III. Conclusion

God's people should stay focused with our eyes fixed Jesus Who is our Redeemer. Faith people should remain faithful to our faithful God. We should encourage one another that our Lord is soon to come to receive us unto Himself. Soon we will be done with the trouble of this world.