

CHAPTER 25

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 25

This chapter contains a thanksgiving, or a triumphant song, upon the destruction of antichrist, and the antichristian states, for benefits and blessings bestowed upon the church, and for the setting up of the glorious kingdom of Christ in the Jerusalem state. It begins with a form of praise, and the reason of it in general, (²³⁷¹Isaiah 25:1) the particular instances of wonderful things are, the ruin of a certain city described, (²³⁷²Isaiah 25:2) which will issue in the fear and glory of God, (²³⁷³Isaiah 25:3) the great appearance of the Lord for his poor people, in being strength, refuge, and a shadow to them, (²³⁷⁴Isaiah 25:4,5) a rich feast made for them, (²³⁷⁵Isaiah 25:6) the removal of the veil from all people, (²³⁷⁶Isaiah 25:7) the abolition of death, and every affliction, (²³⁷⁷Isaiah 25:8) the personal appearance of Christ unto salvation, (²³⁷⁸Isaiah 25:9) the protection of the church, and the certain and utter destruction of her enemies, under the name of Moab, (²³⁷⁹Isaiah 25:10-12)

Ver. 1. *O Lord, thou [art] my God,* &c.] Not by creation and providence only, but by covenant and grace. This is the first and foundation blessing of grace, and secures all the rest; in this true happiness consists, and is preferable to every other enjoyment; the knowledge of it is come at in effectual calling, and by the witnessing of the Spirit; it is the highest attainment of grace to be assured of it; and though it is not always seen and known, it will always remain, and will be the glory of the New Jerusalem state, (⁶¹¹⁸Revelation 21:3,7). These are the words, Aben Ezra says, either of the prophet, or of the ancients, before whom the Lord will reign, (²³²³Isaiah 24:23). Kimchi says of the latter, which seems very probable, these are the elders and representatives of the church; (see ⁶¹¹⁶Revelation 11:16,17 19:1,2,4):

I will exalt thee; the Lord God, Father, Son, and Spirit; the Father, by attributing the whole of salvation to his love and free favour; the Son, by ascribing deity to him, by making use of him in all his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, and by giving him the glory of salvation wrought out by him; the Spirit, in his person, and the operations of his grace. Christ, in

particular, will be exalted in this state as King of saints, and because of his having taken to himself his reigning power, (~~66115~~ Revelation 11:15,17 15:4):

I will praise thy name; celebrate his perfections, confess him before men, praise him for all his benefits; this is one way of exalting him, and is the great work of New Testament saints, and especially in the latter day; (see ~~6601~~ Revelation 19:1-6):

for thou hast done wonderful [things]; this respects not so much the wonderful things in nature and grace, either in creation and providence, or in redemption and effectual calling; but what will be done in the latter day; as the conversion of the Jews and Gentiles, the destruction of antichrist, and the glorious appearing of the kingdom of Christ:

[thy] counsels of old [are] faithfulness [and] truth; the decrees and purposes of God, which are from eternity, are all truly and faithfully performed; this is an amplification of the wonderful things which are done according to the counsel of the divine will; not only the choice of men to salvation, the redemption of them by Christ, and their effectual calling; but the calling of the Jews and Gentiles, in particular, in the latter day, and all things relating to the church to the end of time; which, as they were fixed in the eternal purpose of God, they are punctually and exactly brought about in time; these are the true and faithful sayings of God, (~~6630~~ Revelation 19:9 21:5).

Ver. 2. *For thou hast made of a city an heap*, &c.] Which is to be understood, not of Samaria, nor of Jerusalem; rather of Babylon; though it is best to interpret it of the city of Rome, as Jerom says the Jews do; though they generally explain it of many cities, which shall be destroyed in the times of Gog and Magog, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi; and so the Targum has it in the plural number; perhaps not only the city of Rome, but all the antichristian states, the cities of the nations, all within the Romish jurisdiction are meant; which shall all fall by the earthquake, sooner or later, and become a heap:

[of] a defenced city, a ruin; or, “for a fall”^{f490}; the same thing is meant as before: it designs the fall of mystical Babylon or Rome, called the great and mighty city, (~~668D~~ Revelation 18:2,10):

a palace of strangers; which Kimchi interprets of Babylon, which, he says, was a palace to the cities of the Gentiles, who are called strangers; and it is said, that that city was originally built for strangers, that dwelt in tents, in

Arabia Deserts; but it is best to understand it of Rome, as before, which is the palace of such who are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, who have introduced a strange religion, and are the worshippers of strange gods, (²⁷¹³Daniel 11:38,39). The Targum renders it,

“the house of the gods of the people in the city of Jerusalem;”

and this will be made

to be no city, it shall never be built; any more, when once it is destroyed, signified by the angels casting a millstone into the sea, which shall never be taken up again, or found more, (⁶⁸⁰¹Revelation 18:21).

Ver. 3. *Therefore shall the strong people glorify thee*, &c.] To whom the Lord is strength, as in the following verse (²³⁷⁴Isaiah 25:4); who are strong in the Lord, in the power of his might, and in the grace that is in him; or such of the antichristian party as shall be awakened and convinced by the judgments of God on antichrist, and shall be converted, these shall give glory to the God of heaven, (⁶¹¹³Revelation 11:13):

the city of the terrible nations shall fear thee; or such who have belonged to the city or jurisdiction of Rome, and have been terrible to the people of God, yet now shall be frightened themselves, and shall fear the Lord, either with a servile fear, or some, at least, with a truly filial fear; (see ⁶¹¹³Revelation 11:13 15:4).

Ver. 4. *For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress*, &c.] The people of God, who are poor and needy, both in a literal and in a spiritual sense; and especially when under afflicted circumstances, in times of desertion, temptation, bodily affliction, and persecution from men, which may be here chiefly intended; to whom the Lord is a strength: he strengthens their hearts, and his own grace in them; he sheds abroad his love in their hearts, which makes their mountain to stand strong; he directs them to Christ, in whom is strength, as well as righteousness; he strengthens them by his Spirit, his promises, word, and ordinances. Christ may be more especially meant; and it may refer to the strength and power he will give to his people in the latter day; when a small one shall be a strong nation; when the feeble shall be as David, and the house of David as the angel of the Lord; when they shall have got the victory over the beast, his mark and image, (²⁴⁰¹Isaiah 60:21 ³¹⁰⁸Zechariah 12:8 ⁶¹¹²Revelation 15:2):

a refuge from the storm; or tempestuous rain, or overflowing flood; as Christ is a refuge from the tempest and storm of divine wrath and vengeance, by his satisfaction and righteousness, (²³³¹Isaiah 32:2) so from the flood of persecution, by his power and providence, (⁶⁶²¹⁵Revelation 12:15):

a shadow from the heat; which gives refreshment and rest, and is a protection from the scorching beams of the sun. Christ, as he is the shadow from the heat of a fiery law, from the flaming sword of justice, from the wrath of God, and the fiery darts of Satan's temptations; so from the violence of persecution, which heat shall now be no more, antichrist being destroyed, (⁶⁶⁷¹⁵Revelation 7:15,16):

when blast of the terrible ones [is] as a storm [against] the wall; these terrible ones are either Satan and his principalities, who are very terrible to the Lord's people; and whose temptations are like a strong wind, which beat against them as against a wall, but they stand, the Lord being their strength, refuge, and shadow; (see ²³⁴²⁴Isaiah 49:24) or rather antichrist and his persecuting princes, the kings of the earth, that have joined him, and persecuted the saints, and have been terrible to them; and whose persecutions have been like a blustering strong wind, threatening to carry all before them; but the Lord has been their protection, and made them to stand as a wall, firm and immovable, against them. The Targum is,

“so the words of the wicked are to the righteous, as a storm that dasheth against a wall.”

Ver. 5. *Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers, &c.*] Such as are strangers to God and godliness, to Christ, his Gospel, and truths, to the Spirit and his operations of grace; the clamour and noise of such against true religion, and the professors of it, their persecuting rage and fury, this the Lord in his own time will bring down, and cause to cease, and it shall be heard no more:

as the heat in a dry place: which parches the earth, and burns and dries up the grass and fruits of it; to which persecution is compared:

[even] the heat with the shadow of a cloud; as that is brought down, and caused to cease by the shadow of a cloud, sheltering from the scorching beams of the sun, and by letting down rain, which moistens the earth; so the Lord protects his people from the fury of persecution, and abates it by the interposition of his power and providence; and at last puts an end to it:

the branch of the terrible ones shall be made low; meaning the most eminent of them; a branch being put for a most eminent person, (^{<230D>}Isaiah 4:2 ^{<490E>}Psalms 80:15) perhaps the pope of Rome is meant, the head of the antichristian party, the principal of the terrible persecutors, who shall be brought low and destroyed by Christ, at his coming. Some render it, “the song of the terrible ones shall be brought low”^{<F491>}; it will be brought a note lower; their triumphing will be at an end; the voice of harpers and musicians, of pipers and trumpeters, will be heard no more among them; but instead thereof weeping and howling, (^{<68D>}Revelation 18:9,11,18,22,23).

Ver. 6. *And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, &c.]* Which is to be understood, not of the ultimate glory of the saints in heaven; which is sometimes represented by a feast; and the participation of it, by sitting down with the saints at a table in the kingdom of God, and by drinking wine there, to which state the best things are reserved, (^{<408E>}Matthew 8:11 26:29), but rather of the Gospel dispensation, which lies in the ministration of the word and ordinances; and which are compared to a feast, which consists of the richest dainties, for the entertainment of the faith of God’s people; and this is made by the Lord himself, who is sovereign Lord of all, the King of kings; who sits at table himself, and welcomes his guests, and is the sum and substance of the feast: and this is made in his “mountain”; the church, comparable to one for its visibility and immovableness; and for “all” his “people”, Jews and Gentiles; for all that are made spiritually alive, and have a spiritual taste, and true faith in Christ, (^{<420E>}Matthew 22:4 ^{<214E>}Luke 14:16,17) particularly the Lord’s supper itself is a feast, and a feast of love, comparable to wine; and which is better than wine, and in which wine, in a literal sense, is made use of; and in which the choicest and richest food is presented to faith; the flesh and blood of Christ, which are meat and drink indeed; here the saints are fed as with marrow and fatness, (^{<407E>}1 Corinthians 5:7,8) (^{<230D>}Song of Solomon 1:2,4 ^{<405E>}John 6:55 ^{<68D>}Psalms 36:8 63:5) but it seems rather to respect the marriage supper of the Lamb, in the latter day, when antichrist shall be destroyed, and Jews and Gentiles be converted, and shall join together in the participation of divine blessings, (^{<68D>}Revelation 19:1,2,8,9) or, best of all, the glories, joys, and pleasures of the New Jerusalem state; in which the saints shall drink of the water of life freely, and eat of the fruit of the tree of life, the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations, (^{<620E>}Revelation 21:6 22:1,2)

a feast of wines on the lees; that has been long kept on the lees, but now drawn off, and both strong and fine; of a banquet of wine, (see ^{<1700>}Esther 7:2) this refers to the wine of the kingdom, (^{<400>}Matthew 26:29):

of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined: this heap of words, and repetition of them, show the plenty of the provisions, and the richness and excellency of them; and “fat” being mentioned is a proof that the words must respect the times of the Messiah, since, under the law, fat was not to be eaten^{f492}.

Ver. 7. *And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, &c.*] Or, “the covering of the face”^{f493}; that which has covered the face of all people; that darkness which has been spread over them, partly by Mahomet, and his Alcoran, and partly by the pope of Rome, and his party; the covering of human doctrines and traditions seems chiefly intended, which now will be removed, as well as all Pagan and Mahometan darkness, through the clear ministration of the everlasting Gospel, which will be spread with power, and in its purity, throughout the whole world; (see ^{<2300>}Isaiah 60:1-3) more especially this may respect the light and glory of the New Jerusalem state, in which Christ will be the light thereof, and the nations of them that are saved shall walk in it, and Satan will be bound a thousand years, that he may not deceive the nations any more, (^{<6023>}Revelation 21:23-25 20:3)

and the veil that is spread over all nations; meaning the same as before; the veil or covering of darkness and ignorance, with which the nations are covered, either Papal, Pagan, and Mahometan; particularly, respect may be had to the veil that is upon the Jewish nation, which remains to this day, and will be taken off when it shall turn to the Lord, (^{<4013>}2 Corinthians 3:13-15) this may be said in allusion to the veil on Moses’s face, when he spake to the people, (^{<0343>}Exodus 34:33) as the former expression may be to the covering or wrapper about the face of dead men, (^{<6144>}John 11:44) for they that sit in spiritual darkness, are in the region of the shadow of death.

Ver. 8. *He will swallow up death in victory, &c.*] Or, “for ever”^{f494}. This is to be understood, not of a spiritual death, which is swallowed up in conversion, and of which those that are quickened shall never die more; nor of the conversion of the Jews, which will be as life from the dead; nor of the civil death of the witnesses, and of their rising, who afterwards will never die more, in that sense; but of a corporeal death: this Christ has swallowed up in victory, by dying on the cross, both with respect to

himself, who will never die more, and with respect to his people, from whom he has abolished it as a penal evil; but it chiefly respects the resurrection state, or the personal coming of Christ, when the dead in him shall rise first, and shall never die more, there will be no more death, neither corporeal, spiritual, nor eternal to them; on them death shall have no power, in any shape: and then will this saying be brought about or fulfilled, as the apostle has interpreted it, (~~4654~~ 1 Corinthians 15:54 ~~6204~~ Revelation 21:4 20:6) so the Jews^{f495} interpret it of the future state, when those that live again shall die no more, and there will be no death; and of the days of the Messiah, when the dead will be raised^{f496}:

and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; there are many things now that cause tears to fall from the saints, as their own sins, indwelling sin, unbelief, carnality, leanness, backslidings, &c. and the sins of others, the temptations of Satan, the hiding of God's face, afflictions of various sorts, and the persecutions of men; but these will be no more in the New Jerusalem state; and therefore God is said to wipe them away, having removed the cause of them, (~~6177~~ Revelation 7:17) (~~6204~~ Revelation 21:4) the allusion is to a tender parent, that takes a handkerchief, and wipes the face of its child, when it has been crying, and quiets and comforts it:

and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth; all the reproaches and calumnies which have been cast upon them, and all misrepresentations of them, shall be taken away from them everywhere, and they will no longer lie under them, but stand clear of all false charges and accusations: or all persecution shall now cease; there shall be none to hurt them in all the holy mountain, (~~2310~~ Isaiah 11:9):

for the Lord hath spoken [it]; and it shall be done. The Targum is,

“for by the word of the Lord it is so decreed.”

Ver. 9. *And it shall be said in that day*, &c.] When the feast will be made for all the Lord's people; when the veil and covering shall be removed; when death will be swallowed up in victory; when all tears shall be wiped away from the saints; when their rebuke shall be taken away from them; all which will be at the glorious appearing of Christ.

Lo, this [is] our God; and not the idols of the Gentiles, or the works of their hands; but Christ, who is God over all, blessed for ever; Immanuel, God with us: the phrase is expressive of his true and proper deity, of faith of interest in him, and of the joy of it:

we have waited for him, and he will save us: as the Old Testament saints waited for his first coming, and for his salvation, believing that he would be the author of it: so New Testament saints are waiting for his second coming; and to them that look for him, and expect his glorious appearing, who have their loins girt, and their lights burning, and wait for their Lord's coming, will he appear a second time without sin unto salvation; to put them into the possession of salvation he has obtained for them, for which they are heirs, and is nearer than when they believed:

this [is] the Lord, we have waited for him; looking, longing, and hasting to the day of his coming; this they will say, when they shall see him coming in the clouds of heaven; whither the living saints being changed, will be caught up to meet him, and upon meeting him shall thus greet him, and one another:

we will be glad, and rejoice in his salvation; so suitable to them, so full, complete, and perfect, and so much for the glory of God; which was wrought out by him before, and now possessed by them; and is what is called the "joy" of their "Lord", they now "enter" into, (^{4152b}Matthew 25:21).

Ver. 10. *For in this mountain shall the hand of the Lord rest, &c.]* Where he will make the feast of fat things, (²²²¹⁶Isaiah 25:6) even in his church, which is his resting place, and where he delights to dwell; and over whom his hand is, and abides for their protection and safeguard; and where he gives rest, as the Septuagint^{f497} render it; even spiritual rest to the souls of his people; and where, as the Targum has it,

“the power of the Lord is revealed;”

namely, in the preservation of his church, and in the destruction of its enemies; as follows:

and Moab shall be trodden down under him: under the Lord, and his mighty hand of power; or “under it”; under the mountain, the church; under the feet of the saints; (see ^{301P}Malachi 4:2) or, “in his place”^{f498}, as Jarchi and Kimchi explain it; wherever he is, or shall be found, where he lies there shall he be trodden upon. By Moab the enemies of the church are meant, and is put for them all, even all the antichristian powers, both Turks and Papists; their ruin is expressed by treading down or threshing, in allusion to the threshing of corn, as the word used mostly signifies, when

the straw is bruised by the cartwheel, or the feet of oxen; or to the treading of straw in the mire, as follows:

even as straw is trodden down for the dunghill; or in “it”^{f499}; or “in the waters of the dunghill”^{f500}, as the Cetib; where being cast and trodden, it rots, and becomes dung; and so the Targum,

“as straw is trodden in the clay;”

Jarchi interprets it to this sense. R. Joseph Kimchi takes it to be the name of a place, Madmenah, which was one of the cities of Moab, (²⁴⁸⁰Jeremiah 48:2).

Ver. 11. *And he shall spread forth his hands in the midst of them*, &c.] In the midst of Moab, in the midst of the enemies of the church of God; and so it denotes the utter destruction of them; for the spreading forth of the hands is to be understood of the Lord, that should do so:

as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth [his hands] to swim; signifying, that as he should exert the power of his might, in the midst of them, he should strike on both sides, as a swimmer does; and as easily and utterly destroy them as the swimmer parts the waters, and has the command of them; though some interpret this of Moab stretching out his hands as the swimmer, either in a way of submission and supplication, or as catching, as men drowning do, at anything, to save them. But the former sense agrees best with what follows:

and he shall bring down their pride; that is, God shall bring down the pride of Moab, which was notorious in them, and hateful to God, and was the cause of their ruin, (²³⁶⁶Isaiah 16:6) with this compare the pride of the Romish antichrist, which God will humble, (⁶⁶⁷⁰Revelation 17:7,8):

together with the spoils of their hands; which their hands are full of; and which they have spoiled or robbed others of; or, “with the wiles of their hands”^{f501}, as some, which they had by craft and insidious methods taken from others; these shall be taken from them, and they be stripped of them; or the words may, be rendered, “with the elbows”, or “armholes of his hands”^{f502}; as the swimmer with his arms keeps the water under him, and himself above it, so the Lord with the strength of his arm would bring down and destroy those enemies of his.

Ver. 12. *And the fortress of the high fort of thy walls shall he bring down,* &c.] That is, their high and, fenced walls, which were about their cities, the fortifications of them; these should be destroyed by the Lord, be battered and brought down, not being able to stand against his mighty power. The Targum renders it,

“the mighty city, the cities of the nations;”

and may design the city of Rome, and the cities of the nations that shall fall at the pouring out of the seventh and last vial, (~~6666~~ Revelation 16:19) it follows,

lay low, [and] bring to the ground, [even] to the dust; which variety of words without any copulative are used to express the sudden, quick, certain, and irrecoverable destruction of such fortified city, or cities, and their fortifications.