

# The Millennium Forecast

The Book of Isaiah

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Text  
Isaiah 24:1-23

Topic

The despair unbelievers experience in the Great Tribulation is illustrated by Isaiah saying, "The mirth of the tambourine ceases, The noise of the jubilant ends, They shall not drink wine with a song, All joy is darkened, The mirth of the land is gone."

Title

***"But Why is the Mirth Gone?"***

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**Normally I do not get involved in politics, but this time our state legislators have gone too far: California is going to ban Skittles candy.**

Legislation that passed the assembly and is likely to pass the senate will prohibit the manufacture, sale or distribution of products containing red dye #3, titanium dioxide, potassium bromate, brominated vegetable oil, or propyl paraben in the Golden State.

That will include Skittles. Stock up before you will no longer be able to "Taste the Rainbow."

I found myself thinking of 'rainbows and unicorns' in verse eighteen of chapter twenty-four in Isaiah. We read, "...For **the windows from on high are open**, And the foundations of the earth are shaken."

Does that remind you of anything? In Genesis we read, "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all

the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and **the windows of heaven were opened” (7:11).**

Similar language is used to describe the two global judgements:

- In Genesis, the flood.
- In Isaiah, the future Great Tribulation.

I went back through chapter twenty-four and noticed a few more subtle references to Noah:

- Isaiah speaks of global destruction by “fire.” The LORD promised Noah and his descendants He would never again destroy the Earth by water. The apostle Peter, himself drawing from the account of the global flood, said, “But the heavens and the earth *which* are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men” (Second Peter 3:7).
- Isaiah 24:21 reads, in part, “the LORD will punish on high the host of exalted ones.” These are supernatural beings who deserve special punishment. The days of Noah were marked by supernatural beings, fallen angels, sinning by impregnating human women. They were incarcerated in a special prison (Jude 6&7).

Then there is this: In Isaiah 24:5 we read that the human race has, “Broken the **everlasting covenant.**”

Four-thousand years ago, Noah & his passengers survived the global flood and exited the Ark.

God made a covenant with the human race called, appropriately, the Noahic Covenant:

Gen 9:14 “It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the Earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud;

Gen 9:15 and I will remember My covenant which *is* between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.

Gen 9:16 The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember **the everlasting covenant** between God and every living creature of all flesh that *is* on the earth.”

Isaiah describes the Time of Jacob's Trouble, *but with emphasis on Gentiles*. Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum writes, "[Isaiah] will show the reason that the Great Tribulation will come upon the Gentile world and describes the consequences upon the Gentiles."

The Noahic Covenant will be, in part, the righteous basis for God holding Gentiles accountable for sin.

I'll organize my comments around two points: **#1 You Haven't A Song Without Jesus**, and **#2 You Have Reason To Sing If You Are In Jesus**.

### **#1 - You Haven't A Song Without Jesus (v1-13, 16-23)**

Isaiah was definitely prophesying about the future Great Tribulation. The language he chooses is extreme and global in scope.

Ordinarily we like to use the name Jeremiah gave those seven-years. He called them the "Time of Jacob's Trouble." It captures the primary purpose of those years, which is to bring all surviving Israel to salvation in Jesus Christ.

Having said that, I will today mostly call it the Great Tribulation because the emphasis throughout this chapter is on Gentiles.

Gentiles who suffer during that awful future time are not collateral damage. They will have violated the Noahic Covenant.

Isa 24:1 Behold, the LORD makes the Earth empty and makes it waste, Distorts its surface And scatters abroad its inhabitants.

Isaiah wasted no time setting the tone for his remarks. He is telling us about the terrible time that was coming upon the whole Earth. Jesus said, "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matthew 24:21). Those incredible years are described in detail in chapters six through eighteen in the last book of the Bible.

Isa 24:2 And it shall be: As with the people, so with the priest; As with the servant, so with his master; As with the maid, so with her mistress; As with the buyer, so with the seller; As with the lender, so with the borrower; As with the creditor, so with the debtor.

God's judgement will be universal, having zero respect for socioeconomic status.

Isa 24:3 The land shall be entirely emptied and utterly plundered, For the LORD has spoken this word.

“Depopulated” is what is meant by “entirely emptied and utterly plundered.” The places where depopulation numbers are given are in Revelation 6:7&8, and 9:15&18.

- The first reference indicates that 25% of the world’s population will die.
- The second mentions that 33% of the remaining population will die.

**Over 50% of the world’s population will die before Jesus returns.**

Isa 24:4 The Earth mourns *and* fades away, The world languishes *and* fades away; The haughty people of the earth languish.

Everywhere you look on GOOGLE Maps the inhabited Earth will be “languishing.” It means wilting, weak, feeble.

Isa 24:5 The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, Because they have transgressed the laws, Changed the ordinance, Broken the everlasting covenant.

“The covenant” that all the “inhabitants” of Earth are subject to is the Noahic Covenant. The Jews derive seven universal laws for Gentiles from the Noahic Covenant:

1. Not to worship idols.
2. Not to curse God.
3. Not to commit murder.
4. Not to commit adultery or sexual immorality.
5. Not to steal.
6. Not to eat flesh torn from a living animal.
7. To establish courts of justice.

According to modern Jewish interpreting, non-Jews are not obligated to convert to Judaism. They are required to observe these Seven Laws of Noah.

Is the Noahic Covenant in effect? Well, I guess “Yes,” since it is, after all, “everlasting.”

There was no nation of Israel when Noah exited the Ark. God would choose Abraham to father them. They received four covenants of their own: The Abrahamic Covenant,

the Mosaic Covenant, the Davidic Covenant, and the New Covenant. All the elements of the Noahic Covenant are included in those.

Unsaved Gentiles are subject to the Noahic Covenant as a measure of righteousness.

**Most of the world is guilty of breaking or changing all seven laws.**

Hence the pronouncement in verse five that they have “defiled” Earth, “changed the ordinance, [and] broken the everlasting covenant.”

The Church was born on the Day of Pentecost following Jesus’ resurrection from the grave and the ascension into Heaven. We are a unique group of people in the Lord’s plan for redeeming and restoring all things:

- The Church has not ‘replaced’ Israel. The covenants God made with Abraham’s physical descendants are still in effect toward them.
- The Church is obviously not unsaved Gentiles.

Summing this up over-simply, David Larsen writes, “The great promises of Messiah were given to Israel, and Jesus came through Israel; but Gentile believers have become the joyful beneficiaries of these promises without any loss whatever of the ultimate and final fulfillment of the Kingdom promises to Israel during a literal, thousand-year reign of Christ on Earth.”

Isa 24:6 Therefore the curse has devoured the Earth, And those who dwell in it are desolate. Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, And few men are left.

“Fire” is frequent in the last seven years (e.g., Revelation 8:5; 14:10). “Few men are left” matches nicely with Jesus’ description of the Great Tribulation, “If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive”(Matthew 24:22).

We are not “those who dwell on the Earth.”

**We are the Church - the bride of Christ.**

Jesus promised the church in Philadelphia (the one in Turkey, not Pennsylvania), “Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you **from** [meaning *out of*, not *safe through*] the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth (Revelation 3:10).

This cannot be a promise unique to one first century church. Otherwise, the Philadelphians would be in Heaven, while the rest of the Church was on Earth.

People like to say that the church needs to be purified, made ready. Please listen carefully to these words of Jesus, talking about His bride. "Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:25-27).

**We are purified by Jesus through the Word of God, not the Great Tribulation.**

For sure, every generation of Christians, from the Day of Pentecost forward, has faced *persecution*. Jesus said we would have "tribulation" in the world, but that is tribulation with a little 't', *not the Great Tribulation*.

Isa 24:7 The new wine fails, the vine languishes, All the merry-hearted sigh.

Isa 24:8 The mirth of the tambourine ceases, The noise of the jubilant ends, The joy of the harp ceases.

Isa 24:9 They shall not drink wine with a song; Strong drink is bitter to those who drink it.

This is what I mean when I say, "They haven't a song." No date nights; no clubbing; no save the date; no parting like it's the end of the world. *No karaoke*. The unsaved will have an impending sense of doom.

You find out your source of joy pretty quickly when some great trouble comes upon you. Death, disease, disaster, and the like - they reveal what is in the heart. You prepare by cultivating your relationship with Jesus so that, when "IT" happens, the joy of the Lord is like a spiritual adrenaline as you rush to Jesus first and foremost.

Isa 24:10 The city of confusion [the desolate city] is broken down; Every house is shut up, so that none may go in.

Isa 24:11 *There is* a cry for wine in the streets, All joy is darkened, The mirth of the land is gone.

Isa 24:12 In the city desolation is left, And the gate is stricken with destruction.

Babylon makes the most sense in the context. We know future Babylon will be utterly destroyed and inhabited only by demons.

Isa 24:13 When it shall be thus in the midst of the land among the people, *It shall be* like the shaking of an olive tree, Like the gleaning of grapes when the vintage is done. "The people," meaning the surviving Gentiles, the Gentile nations. Gentiles will be held accountable under the everlasting Noahic Covenant.

We often mention that God has a testimony of Himself to everyone on Earth, both in creation, and in our conscience. We need to add to that list the Noahic Covenant. Creation scientists tell us that every culture has a flood story. Thus they would have known what God told Noah about righteousness.

Skip to the end of verse sixteen:

Isa 24:16 ... But I said, "I am ruined, ruined! Woe to me! The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously, Indeed, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously."

The inhabitants of Tribulation Earth worship the antichrist - which is essentially worshipping Satan. They took on his characteristics, like "treachery." You tend to become like whatever it is you idolize.

Isa 24:17 Fear and the pit and the snare *Are* upon you, O inhabitant of the earth.

"Inhabitant of the Earth." The Revelation in several places calls these "those who dwell on the Earth." It is *not* something you would say to describe Jews or the Church.

Isa 24:18 And it shall be *That* he who flees from the noise of the fear Shall fall into the pit, And he who comes up from the midst of the pit Shall be caught in the snare; For the windows from on high are open, And the foundations of the earth are shaken.

Isa 24:19 The earth is violently broken, The earth is split open, The earth is shaken exceedingly.

Isa 24:20 The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, And shall totter like a hut; Its transgression shall be heavy upon it, And it will fall, and not rise again.

A disaster film about the Tsunami from a few years ago showed one family just standing there, waiting for it. Survivalists are making plans to endure whatever might come. You hear about the wealthy elite having an escape plan, with long-term shelters. That might work for localized disasters. But in the Great Tribulation, you may as well stay put. You won't be better off anywhere.

There will be one exception: The Jews fleeing from the wrath of the antichrist will be safe, supernaturally protected. We think they will go to the rock fortress city of Petra.

Isa 24:21 It shall come to pass in that day *That* the LORD will punish on high the host of exalted ones, And on the earth the kings of the earth.

Isa 24:22 They will be gathered together, As prisoners are gathered in the pit, And will be shut up in the prison; After many days they will be punished.

The “host of exalted ones” are supernatural. They are involved with “the kings of the Earth.”

The Bible describes evil, malevolent, fallen, satanic supernatural angels that seek to influence the Gentile nations of Earth. We must keep that in mind as we survey the chaos in the world that he is ruling over.

Isaiah says they will be punished by being incarcerated. Jude wrote, “And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day” (v6).

The rise of Adolf Hitler, the Third Reich, all of that Nazi stuff, only makes some kind of spiritual sense when we factor for satanic influence behind the nations. Any murderous dictator, or genocidal maniac. It isn’t to say, “Satan made me do it.” But His influence cannot be overlooked or underestimated.

**L**et’s pause to remember that the Time of Jacob’s Trouble will feature the greatest global evangelistic movement ever:

- God will provide and protect 144,000 Jewish evangelists to preach the Gospel to the whole Earth.
- God will provide and protect, for a time, two special witnesses to preach the Gospel to the whole Earth.
- A mighty angel will fly through the Heavens preaching the Gospel to the whole Earth.

You know who *isn’t* named preaching the Gospel to the whole Earth? The Church. Odd, isn’t it, since we were given the Great Commission? *We won’t be on Earth.*

The evangelism will produce multitudes of genuine conversions to Jesus. Believers will, for the most part, be martyred.

## **#2 - You Have Reason To Sing If You Are In Jesus (v14-16 & 23)**



No joy... No wine... No mirth... But wait; Do you hear something???

Isa 24:14 They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing; For the majesty of the LORD  
They shall cry aloud from the sea.

We know this is not in eternity, because the Revelation tells us that, then, "there will be no more sea" (21:1). This isn't praise in Heaven, but on Earth. This is praise during that dark, deadly hour.

Isa 24:15 Therefore glorify the LORD in the dawning light, The name of the LORD  
God of Israel in the coastlands of the sea.

Charles Spurgeon wrote,

*Doth not all nature around me praise God? If I were silent, I should be an exception to the universe. Doth not the thunder praise Him as it rolls like drums in the march of the God of armies? Do not the mountains praise Him when the woods upon their summits wave in adoration? Doth not the lightning write His name in letters of fire? Hath not the whole earth a voice? And shall I, can I, silent be?*

Isa 24:16 From the ends of the Earth we have heard songs: "Glory to the righteous!"

I have a piece of advice for you, whenever you find yourself in trouble, in the midst of a trial, with everything closing in upon you, where there is no way out and you feel paralyzed.

### **Sing; sing praise songs.**

We tell believers to read the Word, and to pray. You need to sing, too. The apostle Paul commanded, "speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:19).

Paul 'walked the walk.' In Philippi, falsely imprisoned deep in the dank, dreary, dark, disagreeable, daunting, depressing, disheartening, disgusting dungeon, we read of Paul and Silas that "at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them" (Acts 16:25).

Isa 24:23 Then the moon will be disgraced And the sun ashamed; For the LORD of hosts will reign On Mount Zion and in Jerusalem And before His elders, gloriously.

“Elders” are in Heaven, mentioned no less than twelve times. There are twenty-four of them. Pre-Trib commentators go to great lengths to ‘prove’ they are the resurrected and raptured Church in Heaven. I can’t think of anyplace where the Church is synonymous with Elders. Churches on Earth have Pastors, Elders, and Deacons. Israel, too, had Elders. But there is nothing to help us identify these guys as the Church. The Revelation often tells us what is meant by certain signs or names, but not here.

The Church most assuredly *is* resurrected and raptured before God’s wrath falls upon Earth. The twenty-four Elders, however, are most likely supernaturals who have their own ministry to God and to His throne.

**H**ave you ever been chastised by a pastor or worship leader about not ‘worshipping’ with enough exuberance? It’s ugly. I don’t know what is in a person’s heart. We want to reveal to believers what the Bible teaches, then give opportunity to participate in it.

Having said that... We read that the glory of Jesus will **outshine** the moon and the sun.

*I've got a home in gloryland that outshines the sun,  
I've got a home in gloryland that outshines the sun,  
I've got a home in gloryland that outshines the sun,  
way beyond the blue.*

*Do Lord, oh do Lord, oh do remember me,  
Do Lord, oh do Lord, oh do remember me,  
Do Lord, oh do Lord, oh do remember me,  
way beyond the blue.*