

The Millennium Forecast

The Book of Isaiah

Text

Isaiah 26:1-21

Topic

Jesus promises Jewish & Gentile believers that in the Tribulation, they can know His perfect peace

Title

***“If You’re Livin’ in Trouble,
You Came to the Right Peace”***

“Pizza! Pizza!”

The slogan lets you know Little Caesars was offering two pizzas for the price of one.

“De plane! De plane!”

Each episode of Fantasy Island began with Tattoo spotting the seaplane approaching and excitedly yelling, “De Plane! De Plane!”

Meep! Meep!

We don’t catch it reading an English translation of the Bible, but there is repetition like this in our text. It is in verse three, in the words “perfect peace.” The Hebrew word for peace is *shalom*. If you look this up in, say, Strong’s Concordance, you’ll see that it reads, “*Shalom! Shalom!*” The word “perfect” is not there.

A grammar scholar wrote, "In Semitic languages when you want to emphasize a word **you repeat it two times**. Thus, when your mind stays on God you not only have peace, you have really good peace, or perfect peace."

As far as I could search it, this is the only occurrence of "*Shalom! Shalom!*" in the Bible. Finding it here is humbling. Isaiah wrote about the Time of Jacob's Trouble, the Great Tribulation. It is hands down the worst ever time of tribulation on the Earth and for its inhabitants. Nevertheless, Tribulation believers will experience God's "peace" in a big way.

It is humbling in that since believers in the Tribulation can expect & experience "peace," believers today should expect & experience "peace" in their tribulations.

I'll organize my comments around two questions: **#1 Do You Believe The Lord's Promise Of Peace?**, and **#2 Have You received The Lord Who Promises Peace?**

#1 - Do You Believe The Lord's Promise Of Peace? (v1-9)

Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum writes, "*While the verse clearly pertains to the faithful Jewish remnant of the Tribulation, the principles of peace through trust in God can be applied to other believers as well.*"

Isaiah, inspired, by God the Holy Spirit, taught prophecy. Knowing what the future holds is the Bible way of comforting us. It is the most practical teaching you can receive. The apostle Peter, after discussing the End Times, says to us, "What manner of *persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness?" (Second Peter 3:11). A good paraphrase would be, "The Lord's coming to resurrect & rapture the Church is imminent. What should I be pursuing & doing right now?"

A basic vocabulary of prophecy is always helpful:

- The Bible predicts a seven year period of intense tribulation upon Earth. It is most commonly called The Great Tribulation, although it has many more names. We call it by the name the prophet Jeremiah gave it, The Time of Jacob's Trouble. It reminds us that the primary purpose of those seven years is to bring the nation of Israel to salvation.
- The Second Coming of Jesus ends the Time of Jacob's Trouble. The Lord returns to Earth and establishes the Kingdom promised to the Jews.

- The Kingdom on Earth will last 1000 years. The word millennium is Latin for thousand years, so we call the Kingdom the Millennium, or the Millennial Kingdom.

Isa 26:1 In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: "We have a strong city; *God* will appoint salvation *for* walls and bulwarks.

"That day" is the Time of Jacob's Trouble that Jesus said was The Great Tribulation. Singing a song? You'd think that was the last thing a Jew would do in that time of trouble. This chapter is that song (or songs). It's like the Who's in Whoville on Christmas morning after the Grinch stole their presents.

They're not singing it like a depressing country western song. It's a song of joy and victory.

Jewish life revolved around Jerusalem and their Temple. Tribulation Jews won't "have a strong city" in terms of brick and mortar. The antichrist will control Jerusalem, and defile the Temple. Mid-way through the Tribulation we read that "there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of Heaven" Revelation 11:13).

They will have the LORD's "salvation" protecting them like no "walls" or "bulwarks" could.

In the Revelation, when John described conditions in eternity, he said, "But I saw no Temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its Temple" (21:22).

Isa 26:2 Open the gates, That the righteous nation which keeps the truth may enter in.

These prophets rapidly shifted gears, one minute in the Tribulation, the next in the Millennium that follows the Tribulation, then in the eternity that follows the Kingdom.

Some of you are reading, for your devotions, a chronological Bible. *Nothing wrong with that!* It illustrates the fact we like things more systematized

God gave us the Bible the way it is so that we would have to think a little, dig a little, meditate a lot, upon it. Think of your Bible reading as if you are on a quest of Biblical proportions to discover everything that you need for godly living.

"Open the gates" makes me think of a Grand Opening celebration. Jerusalem will be a ruin when the Lord returns in His Second Coming. Not to worry! Jesus is the king of extreme make-overs.

The OT prophet Daniel was told that there would be a 75 day period following the Lord's return. One thing the Lord will probably be doing is restoring Jerusalem. It will have the grandest Grand Opening.

When those gates swing open wide, we're gonna be by Jesus' side.

"The righteous nation that keeps the truth," that's the remnant of Jews who survive the horrors of the Tribulation and enter the Kingdom promised them.

Isa 26:3 You will keep *him* in perfect peace, *Whose mind is stayed on You*, Because he trusts in You.

This is the money verse, applicable to all, always.

Here is more from the language scholars: "The word "stayed" comes from a Phoenician word used by sailors. They would tie themselves to a sturdy part of the ship, like the mast, so that they would not be swept overboard during a violent storm."

Immediately we ask, "How?" **How** do I keep my mind stayed on the Lord? What are the steps, the discipline?

More-and-more I am adopting Nike's approach to things like this: **Just do it!**

Back up in your thinking for a second. What is the answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?"

"Believe on the Lord, Jesus Christ" (Acts 16:30-31)

The Doctrine of Salvation is three-fold in the Bible. One commentator put it this way: "There is only one salvation, which is a gracious gift of God, and is accessed by faith alone. But salvation is like a beautiful flower that buds, blossoms, and then gives fruits. It's a single concept with differing forms: Justification, Sanctification, and Glorification."

1. When a person believes, God justifies them, declaring them righteous on the basis of faith in Jesus.
2. From that moment on, Jesus is working to sanctify you. He will present you faultless in Heaven. Having begun this work, He is faithful to complete it.
3. I will be glorified when resurrected (or raptured).

Speaking to any believer in any century, the Lord promised that after He ascended into Heaven, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

Dwight L. Moody wrote, *"A great many people are trying to make peace, but that has already been done. God has not left it for us to do; all we have to do is to enter into it."*

The imagery of being tied by a rope lends itself to a devotional application. It would have to be just the right length - not too long, not too short. There is an old expression that we cannot use anymore about giving a person enough rope.

We have lots of freedom as Christians. Beware too short a rope; it renders you legalistic, joyless, fearful. Too much rope, however, and your liberty will first stumble others, then you.

- If you tend toward legalism, give yourself some slack.
- If you tend towards pushing liberty, reduce your slack. Don't push the boundaries, but keep a safe distance.

Isa 26:4 Trust in the LORD forever, For in YAH, the LORD, is everlasting strength.

Albert Barnes wrote, "Let your confidence in God on no occasion fail. Let no calamity, no adversity, no persecution, no poverty, no trial of any kind, prevent your entire confidence in him."

More language stuff. "LORD" is YHWH. He is YHWH YAH YHWH. We don't know for certain how it should be pronounced because we cannot be sure of the original vowels that went with the letters YHWH. Because the Jews were afraid of mispronouncing YHWH, the personal name of God, or writing it incorrectly when copying Scripture scrolls, they eventually stopped pronouncing it and substituted the word *Adonai* (LORD) instead.

That's the tip of a huge theological iceberg that is the study of God's Name.

We sing choruses that feature many names of our God. Each name is a different emphasis upon His nature and character.

Isa 26:5 For He brings down those who dwell on high, The lofty city; He lays it low, He lays it low to the ground, He brings it down to the dust.

Isa 26:6 The foot shall tread it down - The feet of the poor *And* the steps of the needy."

"The lofty city" in prophecy is future Babylon. One of the things the Lord does just prior to His Second Coming is destroy, utterly, end times Babylon. It is recorded in chapters 17 & 18 of the Revelation.

Isa 26:7 The way of the just *is* uprightness; O Most Upright, You weigh the path of the just.

The "just" are believers. The "way" of the "just," their "path," will be fraught with peril in the Time of Jacob's Trouble. Should we blame God? No. Evil is the fault of mankind. God sent Jesus to die, and rise from the dead, to put things right.

God is always "upright." He "weighs" our path. Any trouble a believer experiences in any dispensation is like that of Job. It is weighed, perfectly. It is not lighter or heavier than God permits.

If your path it seems too heavy for you at times, it isn't. He is hoping to teach you to cast your cares upon Him... That His burden is light... To be anxious for nothing. We are to be like Alfred E. Neuman who famously would say, "What? Me worry?"

Isa 26:8 Yes, in the way of Your judgments, O LORD, we have waited for You; The desire of *our* soul *is* for Your name *And* for the remembrance of You.

God's "judgments" is a one-word description of the Great Tribulation. The Jewish remnant "wait" for the Lord to return. In the Revelation we read that at His glorious return, Jesus will have "on His thigh a **name** written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" (19:16). Their "remembrance" sounds like Jews looking upon the One they once crucified.

Isa 26:9 With my soul I have desired You in the night, Yes, by my spirit within me I will seek You early; For when Your judgments *are* in the earth, The inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

There is no bitterness, no accusing God of being unfair or unloving. On top of that, they understand they are living in a unique dispensation. God's "judgments" in the Tribulation have a purpose, and it is to reveal to sinners His righteousness.

Scholars further say this about word repetition:

"Sometimes a word is repeated because there are multiple meanings for the word. For instance, you will have calming peace, or maybe harmonious peace, or compensating peace, or how about prosperous peace, or maybe even healing peace. All these adjectives are definitions of shalom. Of course, translators cannot list all these adjectives in a translation so they sum it up as "perfect peace."

What "Peace! Peace!" in your troubles are you hoping for? Believe God. That doesn't mean He will end the trouble. The Jews, after all, will have to endure great tribulation. You can nonetheless have His peace. It is a gift.

Matthew Henry commented, "When Jesus died, He left a will in which He gave His soul to His Father, His body to Joseph of Arimathea, His clothes to the soldiers, and His mother to John. But to His disciples, who had left all to follow Him, He left not silver or gold, but something far better - His PEACE!"

#2 - Have You Received The Lord Who Promises Peace? (v10-21)

It is easy to forget that the Time of Jacob's Trouble is the greatest season of evangelism that the world will know. His judgments attempt to clarify that there is none righteous, not one, but that all have sinned. The Gospel is made plain and men have a choice to reject or receive the gift of salvation.

Isa 26:10 Let grace be shown to the wicked, Yet he will not learn righteousness; In the land of uprightness he will deal unjustly, And will not behold the majesty of the LORD.
Isa 26:11 LORD, *when* Your hand is lifted up, they will not see. But they will see and be ashamed For *their* envy of people; Yes, the fire of Your enemies shall devour them.

In the Millennium following the Tribulation, the world will experience the most perfect environment and conditions since the Garden of Eden. People's needs will be provided for immediately. There will not be any hard labor. Life will be easy. Many will still not learn righteousness. Even in the best conditions, they refuse to believe Jesus and be saved.

At the end of the Millennium, there will be a substantial revolution against God's authority.

Isa 26:12 LORD, You will establish peace for us, For You have also done all our works in us.

This is an OT way of saying, "all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purposes" (Roman's 8:28). The Lord is working out, in history, the plan He formulated in eternity past to save mankind. He graciously includes us in His plan, giving us "works" to discover and do.

Isa 26:13 O LORD our God, masters besides You Have had dominion over us; *But* by You only we make mention of Your name.

Isa 26:14 *They are* dead, they will not live; *They are* deceased, they will not rise. Therefore You have punished and destroyed them, And made all their memory to perish.

"Masters besides" God refers to Gentile rulers who oppressed the Jews. Nebuchadnezzar; Hitler; guys like that.

Will they not be resurrected, to suffer eternal conscious torment in the Lake of Fire? They will.

William MacDonald explains it this way: *"This verse does not deny the bodily resurrection of the wicked; it merely promises that the Gentile powers will never be restored."*

Isa 26:15 You have increased the nation, O LORD, You have increased the nation; You are glorified; You have expanded all the borders of the land.

Mention of "the land" reminds us that Isaiah was describing physical things, not just spiritual things.

God unconditionally promised Israel land in the Middle East. They are there now, and will be in the future. It isn't an allegory for a spirit realm, or spiritual blessings.

Isa 26:16 LORD, in trouble they have visited You, They poured out a prayer *when* Your chastening was upon them.

Isa 26:17 As a woman with child Is in pain and cries out in her pangs, *When* she draws near the time of her delivery, So have we been in Your sight, O LORD.

Jesus described the future Time of Jacob's Trouble like a woman's pains in childbirth. The judgments of the Great Tribulation are contractions in that they start slow, but then come faster and faster.

Isa 26:18 We have been with child, we have been in pain; We have, as it were, brought forth wind; We have not accomplished any deliverance in the earth, Nor have the inhabitants of the world fallen.

Tribulation Jews admit that the nation of Israel was an epic failure throughout history. Grumbling during their Exodus from Egypt; worshipping a Golden Calf; refusing to enter the Promised Land; that was only the beginning of their failures.

Isa 26:19 Your dead shall live; *Together with* my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; For your dew *is like* the dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead.

Old Testament saints are resurrected at the Second Coming.

Isa 26:20 Come, my people, enter your chambers, And shut your doors behind you; Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, Until the indignation is past.

The "indignation" is the Time of Jacob's Trouble. Jews are instructed to "hide" until it ends. Jesus said,

Mat 24:15 "Therefore when you see the 'ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand),

Mat 24:16 "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

Mat 24:17 Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house.

Mat 24:18 And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.

Mat 24:19 But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!

Mat 24:20 And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.

Mat 24:21 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."

Where will they go? Micah 2:12 reveals that the place of refuge will be ancient Bozrah, modern-day Petra.

Isa 26:21 For behold, the LORD comes out of His place To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; The earth will also disclose her blood, And will no more cover her slain.

When Jesus returns, it will be at the Battle of Armageddon on Earth. All the nations gathered there turn upon Him. It isn't a fair fight. Jesus quickly dispatches them.

There Will be Blood. The Revelation describes the "blood" of that battle. Blood from the human armies Jesus defeats at His Second Coming might be pooled as high as a horse's bridle for about 180 miles.

William Temple said, *"The only thing of our very own which we contribute to our salvation is the sin which makes it necessary."*

Have you received the Lord?