



ISAIAH 26

SONG OF JUDAH'S TRIUMPH

The prophet Isaiah wrote a song that will be sung by the redeemed when the Messiah establishes his millennial kingdom. In Chapter 26, Isaiah is picturing himself standing in the redeemed land with the remnant listening to the people express their thanks to and confidence in God. It's a beautiful picture where we find some truly stunning verses of scripture like, "Perfect, absolute peace surrounds those whose imaginations are consumed with you; they confidently trust in you."

The song continues by expressing the certainty that deliverance has come to the remnant, not because of their own efforts, but because of God's work on their behalf. Therefore, they continue to trust in Him. They will continue to position themselves to have their hearts changed by him and reflect the righteousness of God. What a time of renewal! What a season of awakening!

English Standard (ESV)	Passion Notes	Passion Translation (TPT)
<p>Isaiah 26:1 In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: "We have a strong city; he sets up salvation as walls and bulwarks. ² Open the gates, that the righteous nation that keeps faith may enter in. ³ You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. ⁴ Trust in the LORD forever, or the LORD GOD is an everlasting rock. ⁵ For he has humbled the inhabitants of the height, the lofty city. He lays it low, lays it low to the ground, casts it to the dust. ⁶ The foot tramples it, the feet of the poor, the steps of the needy."</p>	<p>a 26:1 The Lord's salvation is the Hebrew word yāshuw'ah, almost identical to Yeshua. Jesus is our salvation that saves us and delivers us inside and out.</p> <p>b 26:3 Or "watches over."</p> <p>c 26:3 Or "steadfast mind." The Hebrew is yêts'er. According to the Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon, the Hebrew word yêts'er means "imagination" that forms and frames up. Imagination frames up one's reality. It is unfortunate that many today have rejected the God-created imagination that each of us possess. Our imagination must be set apart for God and continually made holy. The imagination, both good and evil, is a frequent concept in the Bible. The Hebrew word yêts'er is found nine times in the Old Testament (Gen. 6:5; 8:21; Deut. 31:21; 1 Chron. 28:9; 29:18; Ps. 103:14; Isa. 26:3; 29:16; Hab. 2:18).</p> <p>d 26:4 The concept of God being our Rock speaks of the enduring protection, safety, and security we have in him. We plant our feet on the Rock and find boldness and confidence. Throughout every age and season of our lives, God remains our faithful Rock of all Ages.</p>	<p>Song of Judah's Triumph</p> <p>Isaiah 26:1 A day is coming when this song will be sung in the land of Judah: "The city is a stronghold for us! The Lord's salvation, a like inner and outer walls, makes it secure. ² Open the gates and let a righteous, faith-filled people enter in. ³ Perfect, absolute peace surrounds b those whose imaginations c are consumed with you; they confidently trust in you. ⁴ Yes, trust in the Lord Yahweh forever and ever! For Yah, the Lord God, is your Rock of Ages! d ⁵ He knocks down the high and mighty, and the lofty city he humbles and levels down to the dust, ⁶ to be trampled down by the feet of the poor and exploited.</p>

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<p>7 The path of the righteous is level; you make level the way of the righteous. 8 In the path of your judgments, O LORD, we wait for you; your name and remembrance are the desire of our soul. 9 My soul yearns for you in the night; my spirit within me earnestly seeks you. For when your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness. 10 If favor is shown to the wicked, he does not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness he deals corruptly and does not see the majesty of the LORD. 11 O LORD, your hand is lifted up, but they do not see it. Let them see your zeal for your people, and be ashamed. Let the fire for your adversaries consume them. 12 O LORD, you will ordain peace for us, for you have indeed done for us all our works. 13 O LORD our God, other lords besides you have ruled over us, but your name alone we bring to remembrance. 14 They are dead, they will not live; they are shades, they will not arise; to that end you have visited them with destruction and wiped out all remembrance of them. 15 But you have increased the nation, O LORD, you have increased the nation; you are glorified; you have enlarged all the borders of the land.</p> <p>16 O LORD, in distress they sought you; they poured out a whispered prayer when your discipline was upon them. 17 Like a pregnant woman who writhes and cries out in her pangs when she is near to giving birth, so were we because of you, O LORD; 18 we were pregnant, we writhed, but we have given birth to wind. We have accomplished no deliverance in the earth, and the inhabitants of the world have not fallen. 19 Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a dew of light, and the earth will give birth to the dead.</p> <p>20 Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until the fury has passed by. 21 For behold, the LORD is coming out from his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, and the earth will disclose the blood shed on it, and will no more cover its slain.</p>	<p>e 26:8 The Hebrew word <i>qavah</i> (the root word for “rope”) means “to wait, to entwine.” Waiting on God means binding and connecting our hearts to who God is and to his promise. The Hebrew concept of waiting on the Lord is never a passive thing but active, full of hope and expectation.</p> <p>f 26:18 Or “salvation” or “victory.”</p> <p>g 26:18 See Rom. 8:19–21.</p> <p>h 26:18 “its inhabitants have not fallen out,” an idiom for birthing or bringing to life.</p> <p>i 26:19 See Ps. 110:3.</p> <p>j 26:20 Or “curse.”</p>	<p>7 The path of the righteous is smooth and level; God, the Just One, you make a clear path for them. 8 Yes, we will follow your ways, Lord Yahweh, and entwine our hearts with yours, e for the fame of your name is all that we desire. 9 At night I yearn for you with all my heart; in the morning my spirit reaches out to you. When you display your judgments on the earth, people learn the ways of righteousness. 10 But when mercy is shown to scoundrels, they still aren’t able to learn righteousness. Even in a land of integrity, they still do wrong, for they ignore the great majesty of the Lord Yahweh. 11 Lord Yahweh, you lift your mighty hand, but they do not see it. Let them witness how much you love your people and be ashamed. Let the fire reserved for your enemies consume them. 12 Lord Yahweh, you will establish peace and prosperity for us, for all we have accomplished is the result of what you work through us. 13 Lord Yahweh, our God, other lords have ruled over us, but we praise your name alone. 14 Their dead don’t come back to life; their ghosts do not rise for you have punished and destroyed them, wiping out even the memory of them. 15 You have made our nation grow! Lord Yahweh, you have made our nation grow; you have revealed your glory, and you have extended all the borders of the land.</p> <p>16 Lord Yahweh, in their distress, they reached out to you. When you chastened them, they poured out prayer to you. 17 Lord Yahweh, we were like a pregnant woman going into labor pains—writhing, screaming, and ready to deliver, all because of you. 18 We were full term. We pushed and strained, but we gave birth only to wind! We accomplished nothing and have not brought deliverance f into the world, g nor its inhabitants new life. h 19 But your dead will live again! Their bodies will rise from the dead! It’s time to awaken and sing for joy, you dwellers in the dust! As the glistening, radiant dew refreshes the earth, i so the Lord will awaken those dwelling among the dead.</p> <p>20 Go, my people, into your inner chambers and close the doors behind you. Hide for a little while, until his indignation j is over. 21 For the Lord is coming out from his heavenly place to punish people for their sins. The earth itself will expose the blood spilled upon it, and the ground will no longer hide it s slain.</p>

BIBLE KNOWLEDGE COMMENTARY

JOHN A. MARTIN

- The redeemed to praise the lord (chap. 26)

• The Humble to Be Exalted (26:1-6).

- **26:1.** This song, to be sung in ... Judah, first emphasizes the reversal of fortunes (cf. 25:1-5): the humble will be exalted and the oppressors vanquished. In contrast with “the city” that will be destroyed (24:12-13; 25:2), the redeemed will have a strong city. Throughout the world the redeemed will live in cities and towns, but the strong city (Jerusalem) where the Messiah will reign pictures the security of the world’s redeemed inhabitants. Because of the Messiah’s presence there, that city is figuratively said to have salvation for its walls and ramparts.
- **26:2-4.** This city will be opened for the righteous nation, a reference to the remnant of Israel. Other nations will have places in the kingdom, but believers in Israel will have special positions. People who trust in the LORD enjoy perfect (i.e., complete, genuine) peace (cf. Phil. 4:7), now as well as in the Millennium. This availability of inner tranquility encourages believers to continue trusting the LORD (Isa. 26:4) because He is firm like a Rock (cf. 17:10; 44:8; see comments on Ps. 18:2) and He is eternal.
- **26:5-6.** In contrast with the righteous who enter this special city of God, people who try to dwell in the lofty city (i.e., who persist in their pride) will be abased (cf. 25:12) because they did not trust in Him (26:3-4). The oppressed and the poor will trample those wicked people (v. 6). This was a reversal of fortunes, an act of God’s justice against the proud who had taken advantage of the poor. Isaiah was not implying that some special merit was given the poor. He was reflecting the scriptural principle that God has special concern for the poor who seek Him (see, e.g., 25:4).

• Deliverance to Come from God (26:7-21).

- **26:7-9.** In a confession of trust the prophet affirmed that it is good for people to live righteously, because God smooths out their path. That does not mean righteous people never have any problems. Isaiah was reflecting the truth that certain consequences follow one’s actions so that if a person lives according to God’s rules he will have favorable consequences, but if he disregards God’s Word he will experience dire consequences. The remnant walk according to Scripture (God’s laws, v. 8a) and yearn for God (vv. 8b-9a). Those who refuse to heed God’s ways learn of God’s righteousness when they are eventually judged.
- **26:10-11.** Many wicked people do not learn righteousness when God bestows His grace (v. 10); they learn it only when He judges them (cf. v. 9). Living where the righteousness of God is revealed (in a land of uprightness, i.e., Judah), many people still did not live righteously. A favorable environment is not enough; there must be a change of heart. Though chapter 26 is a song of the redeemed, verses 10-11 indicate that Isaiah was writing for the people of his day, many of whom were spiritually insensitive, unconcerned about God’s majesty and works (His hand). Isaiah asked the Lord to put them to shame (v. 11) and to take vengeance on them. In this way God’s character would be vindicated. Isaiah was not asking this for his own sake but for the sake of God who desires that His people lead holy lives.
- **26:12-15.** In the kingdom believers will enjoy the peace God gives and will recognize God’s work on their behalf (v. 12). They will affirm that they remained true to God (Your name [character] alone do we honor) even though they will have been under the domination of others (v. 13). Those who will seek to

dominate the remnant will be dead, under God's judgment. Departed spirits translates as in the last line of v. 19 (see comments on 14:9). In contrast the remnant will endure in the land God promised the patriarchs and their descendants (26:15).

- **26:16-18.** The Lord's discipline on His people will not be easy to bear; it will be a time of great distress, a time when they will barely whisper a prayer either because of thirst or because of terror. Isaiah then compared their distress to the painful experience of childbirth (cf. comments on 13:8). Childbirth, once it begins, must continue until it is finished. However, the nation of Israel will seem to give birth to wind, that is, her travail will continue but will avail nothing; it will not result in deliverance. Unbelievers in Israel will be judged and will not enter the Millennium.
- **26:19.** Even though Israel's travail will not be efficacious, Isaiah was confident that her believing dead will be resurrected. This resurrection of Old Testament saints will occur at Christ's second coming (Dan. 12:2). When they wake up (i.e., when their bodies are resurrected) they will shout for joy. They will be refreshed in the way morning dew refreshes the grass (cf. Hosea 14:5), that is, they will experience God's blessings in the Millennium
- **26:20-21.** Isaiah wrote that the future remnant should hide during the time of distress (God's wrath in the Tribulation), knowing that deliverance from the Lord will come. Eventually the Lord will set matters right by punishing people ... for their sins. All sins will be made known (the earth will disclose the blood shed upon her), whether they have been done in secret or in public. These words would have encouraged the remnant in Isaiah's day to remain true to the LORD, knowing that He will eventually judge sin. After that judgment is accomplished, believers will be able to sing the song recorded in chapter 26.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. There are two paths to righteousness; God's grace and his judgement. Both are actually a choice. Describe a time when you knew judgement was coming for you and God opened a pathway of grace for you to walk in.
2. Simply choosing to live with and around people who are righteous is not typically enough to cause change in us. We don't become righteous people "by osmosis." We still need to take steps to let God change our hearts. What do those steps look like for you?
3. When we are under outside pressure, most of us kick into "survival mode." We'll hunker down, try not to sin blatantly, and hope that the threat passes sooner than later. What would it look like if we would actually position ourselves to have God defeat our enemies? Is there anything we can do to "welcome" his help?
4. In the millennium kingdom, the redeemed of the Lord will actually sing this song in Isaiah 26. What would be the best song for the people of God to sing during the Tribulation?