

A Fading Flower

Isaiah 26:19 – 28:5

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XXVI

19 Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

20 Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.

21 For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.

~ Our Spiritual Safari didn't quite conclude chapter twenty-six in the last leg of our expedition through the entire Word of God. What we did learn is that this chapter finds God's chosen people looking back from the Millennial Kingdom and seeing how they went through the Great Tribulation period. They see that what they have endured was like the travail of a woman giving birth. Verse nineteen is the voice of Jehovah breaking into the prophet's past reverie; and since Isaiah is speaking about the nation Israel, and to the nation Israel, I can only interpret the "dead" in verse nineteen to be *the nation Israel*.

Now, I recognize some Bible teachers interpret this passage to exclusively mean the corporate national resurrection of Israel - as found in Ezekiel chapter thirty-seven - where we see the valley of dry bones as the counterpart; but others turn to Daniel chapter twelve verse two where the resurrection is definitely individuals only. Well, I believe it refers to *BOTH*! See, it would be literally impossible to have the resurrection of a nation without having a resurrection of the individuals who constitute said nation. I just don't see how there could be one without the other.

So, these dead are now included in the halleluiah chorus and they are commanded to awake and sing! This earth that we live on today is, in reality, just one great big cemetery. We have dead people everywhere. The statistics I have seen indicate more than six thousand people die every hour of every day. That's over fifty-five million people dying every year. That means not a moment goes by where there isn't a funeral procession on their way to a graveyard somewhere. Naturally, that's not a pretty picture and I don't recommend over-thinking reality; but God says this earth was never intended to be one giant cemetery. God also says that trend will stop one day, and actually be reversed. The saved will be brought back unto salvation in perfection for His glory and the lost will be brought back from the dead unto eternal damnation, torment, and judgment. *IN THAT DAY* this world will never have a body fall dead on it. That will sure make this a better place to be – at least, for believers, that is....

XXVII

1 IN THAT DAY the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.

2 In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine.

~ “*IN THAT DAY*” – as we have re-learned many times on safari – is a technical expression that refers to the Great Tribulation period followed by the Kingdom Age; it projects us immediately into the future where we now have the third wonderful Kingdom Age song, and the establishment of the Kingdom is complete. That brings the end of the three-fold song of the Millennial Kingdom in the prophecy of Isaiah. The sword of the Lord is the Word of God, friends. Out of His mouth goeth a sharp, two-edged sword with which He will smite the nations. Of course, the amillennialist will challenge that by asking if it means a literal sword - because our Spiritual Safari takes the Bible literally. Well, the tongue is like a sharp two-edged sword. The tongue has the power of life and death. The Word of God is, likewise, quick and powerful and *SHARPER* than any two-edged sword. So,

my interpretation is that it means the Word of God. By His Word He created all things and by His Word shall He judge all things.

As a side note, it seems verse one of chapter twenty-seven really belongs at the end of chapter twenty-six as verse twenty-two; but, that is a technical preference. Either way, the one that God is going to judge is Leviathan the serpent. The serpent is always a figure of Satan in Scripture; and we have previously learned from Isaiah that Satan is a *MAN* — chapter fourteen verse sixteen. So, it is *IN THAT DAY* - at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom - that the Lord will bring judgment upon Satan - the serpent. The devil will be cast into the bottomless pit for a thousand years, according to Scripture. Someone is bound to ask why God lets him loose again after a thousand years. Well, if you can tell me why God ever let Satan loose the first time, then I'll tell you why He let's Satan loose the second time. Revelation chapter twelve verse nine makes all of this abundantly clear.

Job 41: 15 *His scales are his pride, shut up together as with a close seal. 16 One is so near to another, that no air can come between them. 17 They are joined one to another, they stick together, that they cannot be sundered ~*

The scales on the serpent are for protection. That sense of security led the devil to erroneously believe he was invulnerable; that he could never be slain — or even harmed in any way. That type of arrogance carries the children of the devil through this present, evil world. It also leads to the pride of so many self-professing believers today who think their lives cannot be touched or affected by Satan. Today, many believers - and Satan himself - think they are beyond the judgment of God; and my friend, that's the most dangerous and deadly state anyone can reside in.

Now, many excellent Bible teachers also believe this refers to the Tigris River, the Euphrates River, and the Nile River – all of which are as crooked as a snake. Babylon was located on the Euphrates River. Assyria was located on the Tigris River and, of course, Egypt is located on the Nile. We have also already learned that the nations of the world all belong to Satan today; and the nations did, in fact, belong to the devil — and were his to offer Jesus in the wilderness. This is a stunning figure and type; at least, it is to me — and I hope it is to you.

Further, “*red wine*” in verse two speaks of abundance, fruitfulness, bounty and joy! This is in total contrast to Isaiah chapter five, where we had the song of the vineyard; it was dirge in chapter five. There, the vineyard was the nation Israel, who was being judged because it only brought forth wild grapes. Here, in the Millennial Kingdom, there is an abundance of perfected fruit. All of this ought to clue us in that God is *NOT* through with the nation Israel. These are passages of Scripture that almost every Bible teacher I know today either simply passes over or is totally and completely ignorant of. I am confident that not a single one of you dear readers have ever heard this section of Scripture taught or preached on – and you likely have never read it more than one time – if you have ever read it at all. Well, there’s no other way to interpret this passage. God is not through with the nation Israel....

3 I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.

4 Fury is not in me: who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together.

5 Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me.

~ Verse five is highly interesting because it reveals that, in the Millennial Kingdom, the enemy will have an opportunity to make peace with God. See, God never ceases to be merciful, friends – and we can thank Him that mercy and grace will be available to those who seek it throughout eternity by trusting Christ. I think we’re going to need it – even in Heaven. Well, maybe not *YOU* – but I’m sure I am going to need it *forever*. Verse five is the *ONLY* place in the entirety of Scripture that even remotely suggests a man can make peace with God. God has made peace with us today through the death, burial and resurrection of His Son the Lord Jesus Christ; but, today, there is *NO POSSIBLE WAY* that you can make peace with God. I hear people say all the time, “.... *make peace with Jesus.*” Saying that is wholly unbiblical, because we already have peace with God through Christ Jesus – and no other way, either, by the way. When we are ready to agree with

God that we are sinners, and trust Him, then we'll have peace – but not until then – and we will not have manufactured that peace. This is all very, very, very important to understand. See, this is the Millennial Kingdom Isaiah is writing about now for us....

6 He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.

7 Hath he smitten him, as he smote those that smote him? or is he slain according to the slaughter of them that are slain by him?

~ God's judgment upon the nation Israel was more severe than it was upon the surrounding nations we have already examined. Israel's judgment was more severe because Israel had the light of the Word of God. Light creates a responsibility. In view of the fact that Israel had the light of the Word of God, her sin was blacker and darker than those who had no light. Therefore, the punishment was greater and more severe. Israel received more stripes than the nations that warred against her. Remember, God said Assyria was a rod in His Hand to punish Israel. Think all of that through and see what you come up with. Amos said, "... hear this word that the LORD hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." That's Amos chapter three, by the way. Well, even though their punishment was greater, God will never allow Israel to be utterly consumed, destroyed, and cut off. The Psalmist says, "...the LORD hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death..." ~

8 In measure, when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it: he stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind.

9 By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin; when he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalkstones that are beaten in sunder, the groves and images shall not stand up.

10 Yet the defenced city shall be desolate, and the habitation forsaken, and left like a wilderness: there shall the calf feed, and there shall he lie down, and consume the branches thereof.

11 When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off: the women come, and set them on fire: for it is a people of no understanding: therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour.

12 And it shall come to pass IN THAT DAY, that the LORD shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel.

~ The sin of Jacob in verse nine was purged by a blood offering in the temple. The sin of the nation Israel will be expiated by the Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ *IN THAT DAY*. The same way you and I were saved as sinners is the way it will happen for the nation Israel *IN THAT DAY*. Those who teach that God is through with the nation Israel will *never* acknowledge this passage of Scripture. Even so, the cities Israel built are to be utterly destroyed; just as any city man builds apart from God will be destroyed. So, today, there is *NO POSSIBLE WAY* we are seeing the fulfillment of prophecy by a few Jews returning to a small portion of the land. If you have ever seen the ruins of Masada in Israel, then you know there has never been anything like that judgment from God in the history of the world.

Israel rejects the light today; because they reject the Person of the Son of God — the Lord Jesus Christ — the Messiah. When God moves Israel into that land, there won't be any guessing about what's happening. It's not a question of whether or not God will restore Israel to the land — the question is: when? If you think that's happening today, then you will have to flatly ignore this passage — which means you do not believe the Bible is the Word of God. See how that works? You cannot spiritualize this away, either. Isaiah has spoken of Assyria, Egypt, Israel, and Jerusalem; all literal places that are to be literally restored. If you take the high view of the inspiration of Scripture, you're going to have to accept this passage at face value and reconcile it accordingly. To reconcile this passage, you'll have to believe what God is saying in it; it simply cannot be otherwise....

13 And it shall come to pass IN THAT DAY, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem.

XXVIII

1 Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine!

2 Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand.

3 The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet:

4 And the glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley, shall be a fading flower, and as the hasty fruit before the summer; which when he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up.

~ So, this leg of our Spiritual Safari through the entire Word of God ends with the immediate invasion of the northern kingdom of Israel by Assyria. This chapter begins an entirely new section of Scripture, too. The eschatological prophecies for the future in chapters twenty-four through twenty-seven now morph into other prophecies that have local fulfillments; and were in the present to Israel in Isaiah's day, but are fulfilled as past history today. Paradoxically, they all come together at this point, and also reach into the future. That makes for some difficult-to-understand Bible study, friends. Only the serious student of Scripture can hold on in this safari now. And God says, "woe" six times; so, it's time to *WOE!* Beginning in this chapter, it will culminate into the War of Armageddon, in chapter thirty-four, which will, once again, be followed by the benefits of the Millennial Kingdom in chapter thirty-five. A lot of people seem to know a

lot about chapter thirty-five – but few know anything about chapter thirty four – and we’re going to get there first.

This is a fine combination of near and far views of prophecy, where that which has been, and that which shall be, are intermingled; and, as I said, this makes for some difficult understanding. In 721 B.C. Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, invaded the northern kingdom of Israel — *Ephraim* — and took them all into captivity. One of the main contributing factors that dictated Ephraim’s demise, and one that has brought down almost every great nation and World Empire of the past, is alcohol and drunkenness. Drugs and alcohol are also the dominating plague in the world’s present nations. We’re talking about literal drunks first — but we’re also talking about spiritual drunks — and when we get a spiritual drunk, they are also filled with pride, and in a stupor regarding discernment.

Well, God is going to trample the drunkard underfoot; and perhaps you don’t like that talk, but God makes no apologies for it – He just tells us that’s what He did — and will do! A high-level of civilization was obtained by Israel that isn’t there anymore. One perfect example is the place where Omri and Ahab built the Palace Jezebel lived in. That is likely the single most beautiful place on earth. I guess the Lord allows Satan to give the wicked and the rich the finest places on earth to live; and I think that happens because it’s all temporary – and the next stop for them isn’t going to be quite so lovely. It’s poetic justice. They will look back on what they had down here, and there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. You can just write that down, my beloved — because God already did. Alright, from here our safari will leave the past and present and move right on into the future....

5 In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people ~

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