

than the President has sent you a special invitation. The invitation of King Jesus is not to a select few. The invitation is printed, "Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely."

The only requirement is that you put on the festive garment. In the parable Jesus told (Mt. 22) one was found at the king's feast without the proper garment and he was banished from the feast. But thanks be to God, our King has provided not only the feast but also the white robe to wear. You may put on this garment by faith and obedience to Christ, for it is through faith and obedience that we are "united with His death," and there have our robes washed white in the blood of the Lamb.

All things are ready, come to the feast! R.S.V.P.!

C. JUSTICE AT LAST FOR JUDAH, CHAPTER 26

1. JUSTICE'S ORIGIN

TEXT: 26:1-6

- 1 In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah:
We have a strong city; salvation will he appoint for wells and bulwarks.
- 2 Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth faith may enter in.
- 3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee.
- 4 Trust ye in Jehovah forever; for in Jehovah, even Jehovah, is an everlasting rock.
- 5 For he hath brought down them that dwell on high, the lofty city; he layeth it low, he layeth it low even to the ground; he bringeth it even to the dust.
- 6 The foot shall tread it down; even the feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy.

QUERIES

- a. What "day" is referred to in verse 1?
- b. What two cities are contrasted (v. 1 and v. 5)?

PARAPHRASE

In that day when Jehovah makes a feast and removes the covering spread over all nations and swallows up death forever, this jubilant song of praise to Jehovah will be sung by Jehovah's people: Zion, our everlasting city, is strong; her strength is in the salvation He has made. Those of you in the city already, open the gates that all who are righteous and those who keep faith may enter in. Thou, O Jehovah, will keep in complete peace the man who bases his thinking on Thy will, because such a man has put all his reliance on Thee. Rely totally and eternally on Jehovah; for it is the Covenant-God, Jehovah, who is exclusively the eternal rock-of-hiding. He humbles the proud and brings the haughty, antagonistic world of opposition down to dust and oblivion. The poor and lowly, once scoffed at by the world and the lofty city, will walk on the ruins of the enemies of God.

COMMENTS

v. 1-2 **STRONG CITY:** "That day" has as its antecedent the day of 25:9. On the day when God makes a feast for all nations, removes the covering from all nations, swallows up death forever, and when those who waited on Him rejoice in His salvation—they will sing this song! The "land of Judah" then must be symbolic of the covenant people of God, the church, in the Messianic age. The "new Zion," the "Jerusalem that is preeminent," (cf. Heb. 12:22-24; Gal. 4:26-27), the Church, will be God's city of divine strength and power. Her strength and power will be in the divine salvation God

and walk across the rubble-heaps of the once haughty enemies of God. A remnant of faithful ones endured the Babylonian captivity and walked upon the ruins of once proud, powerful, pagan Babylon. Christians today may go to Rome and walk among the ruins of the once cruel, calculating, Roman empire which vowed to exterminate Christianity from the face of the earth.

So the contrast in this section is between the "city of God" which we take to be the righteous, faithful covenant-keeping people of God, especially those of that day when God makes them a feast, removes their veil and swallows up death forever—the church—and the "high and lofty city" representing all that is Satanic and human and stands in opposition to the redemptive purposes of God. Justice, salvation and peace will come to the remnant in the new order to be brought by the Messiah. When it comes, the messianic people will sing about it.

QUIZ

1. What does the "land of Judah" probably symbolize considering the context in which it is used?
2. What makes the "city" "strong"?
3. What character is possessed by those invited to enter the city?
4. Where does "perfect peace" originate?
5. How are we to get "perfect peace"?
6. Why use "rock" as a figure to represent God?
7. What is meant by the "poor" treading down the high and lofty city?

2. JUSTICE'S OBJECTIVE

TEXT: 26:7-15

- 7 The way of the just is uprightness: thou that art upright dost direct the path of the just.
- 8 Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Jehovah, have we waited for thee; to thy name, even to thy memorial name, is the desire of our soul.
- 9 With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee earnestly: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.
- 10 Let favor be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness will he deal wrongfully, and will not behold the majesty of Jehovah.
- 11 Jehovah, thy hand is lifted up, yet they see not: but they shall see thy zeal for the people, and be put to shame; yea, fire shall devour thine adversaries.
- 12 Jehovah, thou wilt ordain peace for us; for thou hast also wrought all our works for us.
- 13 O Jehovah our God, other lords besides thee have had dominion over us; but by thee only will we make mention of thy name.
- 14 They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all remembrance of them to perish.
- 15 Thou hast increased the nation, O Jehovah, thou hast increased the nation; thou art glorified; thou hast enlarged all the borders of the land.

QUERIES

- a. What is the "memorial name" of Jehovah?
- b. How has Jehovah wrought all their works for them?
- c. Who are the "other lords" v. 13?

PARAPHRASE

The way of the righteous is straight and smooth because the Righteous Jehovah smooths the righteous man's way. Indeed, in Your divine judgments have we waited hopefully to see You. To see Your name glorified in judgment upon Your enemies, as in ages past, is the earnest desire of our soul. With my soul I have longed for You in the night. Indeed, in the depths of my being I am earnestly seeking You because when Your judgments descend upon the earth the world learns what is right. When Your goodness is enjoyed by the wicked man he does not learn to do right—he only keeps on doing wickedness because he does not become aware of the omnipotence of Jehovah. Although You have raised Your hand threatening them, they refused to give heed. Show them Your zealous protection for Your covenant people and they will be humiliated. Indeed, Jehovah, let them be consumed by the fire You reserve for Your enemies. Jehovah, You will establish peace for us. You alone are the source of everything good that has ever come to us. Jehovah, You alone are our God. Other lords we have allowed to have dominion over us, but we acknowledge only Your name as sovereign. Those other lords we served before are dead and shall not come again because they are like the deceased. You came against them and destroyed them, causing us to forget them completely. You have made our nation great, O Jehovah. You, indeed, have made our nation great! You receive the glory for it! You extended the borders of our land by Your judgments!

COMMENTS

v. 7-10 GOVERN: The first objective of Jehovah's justice is to govern His creation. He governs the earth and mankind through His providential and revelational manifestations of justice. This passage very evidently relates to all that has been said thus far in chapters 24, 25, and 26. Jehovah is

going to bring in a new order (the Messianic order) by judging the old order and establishing justice which was so glaringly absent from the covenant people in Isaiah's day. God will reign in justice in His new order, and citizens of His new order will be men of justice. All this will redound to His glory.

The true Israelite will be a man of righteousness and justice. He will long for God's justice to be manifested because that will be his way of life. Changing men into just men is the purpose of God's just judgments. So, God makes the believer's way *upright* (Hebrew, *meysbareem*, meaning; *even, level, smooth*). God's justice works for the good of the believer and makes him the kind of man God can govern in God's new-order-kingdom.

In ages past God showed Himself to be just and the justifier of him who believes. He punished rebels and delivered believers. That was the very essence of His character. He always acted faithfully, consistently and as He said He would, He established a *memorial* name (reputation) of absolute justice. Memorial is the Hebrew word *zekreka*. It is translated simply *name* in Ex. 3:15; Psa. 30:4; 135:13; Hosea 12:5. It is the same Hebrew word from which the name *Zechariah* ("whom the Lord remembers") comes. The true man of God desires with all his heart to see the God of justice act justly in the affairs of men, not for some selfish end but that all men might learn righteousness and justice.

The true man of God must have a deep and abiding desire to see justice done in order that men might learn righteousness. The true man of God cannot condone lawlessness and injustice in the name of indulgent mercy. Of course, every man of God must learn to be merciful, but he must also learn that justice is often the most merciful thing that can happen to a lawless man. The collapse of justice and punishment for evil was precisely the major cause of the downfall of the Hebrew people in the days of the divided kingdom! (Read Amos, Hosea, Micah and Isaiah.) The man who does not eagerly and passionately search for truth, honesty, justice and fairness is not the kind of man God calls into His kingdom.

So, you see, this entire context is related to the new order that is being prophesied, (cf. Rev. 6:9-11; 15:2-4; 16:4-7; 19:1-3). God's saints praise Him for His justice and judgment.

If the Lord resorted only to kind treatment of the wicked, indulging them in their self-destructive rebellion, such men would never learn righteousness. Severity and punishment is often times the only warning some men will heed. Even then, some will never repent (cf. Rev. 9:20-21; 16:9, 11). Pampering and indulging wicked men will only intensify their appetite for wickedness, (cf. Hosea 4:1-3; 4:12; 5:3-4; 7:1-7; 10:3-4, etc.).

The greatest manifestation of God's hatred for sin and the divine extent to which he would go to judge sin and accomplish divine justice is when He punished man's sin in His Sinless Son. At the cross God was both "just and the justifier of Him who believes" in Christ (cf. Rom. 3:21-26). That tremendous revelation of God's judgment and justice should "draw all men to Him," to be governed by Him as He rules their hearts.

v. 11-15 GLORIFY: The second important objective of God's judgments is to glorify His name. *To exalt the name of Jehovah is the most fundamental need of man!* If the name of Jehovah is not supreme, nothing is safe! If God's integrity and faithfulness can be successfully impugned, man is lost! So, all of God's actions are "for the sake of His name" (cf. Ezek. 20:9, 14, 22, 44, etc.). All that man holds to be true, real, valuable, right or wrong, good or bad, depends upon the integrity of God and His Word. If God is not Absolute, everything is false! God's most factual, arresting method of proving His Absoluteness is in His just judgments.

So, the true man of God prays for God's justice to be done. The true man of God waits upon the Lord to carry out His judgments in His own time and in His own way (cf. Rom. 12:14-21). And the true man of God does all within his own power to support God's ordained structures of human government through which God executes some of His judgments (cf. Rom. 13:1-10).

God's zealous deliverances of His people and His judgments

upon His enemies so glorify His name His people are moved to praise His name over and over.

God's people praise Him expressing their absolute faith in Him to establish peace for them. They willingly confess that He has "worked all their works for them." They, like David, realize that even their offerings to God came from Him (cf. I Chron. 29:10-19). All the good that any man has done is possible only as that man allows God to work in him and through him.

Verse 13 is interesting because it contains the three major Hebrew names for God: *Yaweh*, *Elohim*, *Adonai*. In this verse *Yaweh* and *Elohim* denote God while *Adonai* denotes "other lords." *Adonai* is parallel to the Greek word *kurios* (lord). Whether the "other lords" are human masters or idol-gods is uncertain. The Israelites allowed both human masters and idols to have dominion over them. When Jehovah has demonstrated once and for all His sovereign majesty in divine judgment and justice, and when He has brought in His new order men will never again call idols or human masters "lord." While the church is in the world it will, of course, be subject to every human ordinance (not disobedient to God) for the Lord's sake. But no human or idol will be called "Father" by a citizen of God's new-order-kingdom.

God purged Israel of its idolatry once and for all through the Babylonian captivity. Israel, so enamored of idolatry during the time of the divided kingdom, was cast into a veritable sea of paganism and idolatry in Babylon and Persia. There they saw the cruelty and corruption that idolatry results in, and they cried out for deliverance. God erased every desire for idolatry from the true heart of the man of God. All over the world in this age when the gospel is preached and men love Christ and obey Him they throw away their false gods. The gospel has power to cast down "strongholds and every imagination that exalts itself against God and to bring every thought into captivity to Christ" (II Cor. 10:3-5).

God took a comparatively small and disorganized mass of nomadic slaves known as Hebrews, delivered them from the

world-powerful hand of the Egyptian emperor, established a "beachhead" for them in the land of the Canaanites, and enlarged them numerically and geographically at the very center of world commerce and politics until their influence was felt all over the world. Miracles and providence were so evident in all this, the true believer had to acknowledge God's working as the source of it all.

The establishment of God's new-order-kingdom, the church, is even more spectacular and demonstrably divine in origin. One despised Galilean took twelve assorted fishermen and tax-collectors plus a tent-maker and conquered men from every tribe and tongue and nation on the earth.

In the days of Samuel, the people of God cried out for "a king like the nations." Many "lords" came and went, exercising dominion over God's people. For the most part, they led God's people into idolatry and captivity. Through it all the Lord, Jehovah, was seeking to bring His people back to His own dominion over them. After long centuries of "troublesome times" (cf. Dan. 9:24-27, our comments in *Daniel*, by Paul T. Butler, College Press), God came to earth incarnate in human flesh, in His Son, and re-established His rule and His kingdom among men. So, now, God has "increased the nation" and "enlarged all the borders of the land" to include all who have and all who will believe Jesus and obey His commandments. And it all redounds to His glory!

QUIZ

1. What is the first purpose of God's judgments?
2. How does this work for the smoothing of the righteous man's way?
3. Why should the true man of God earnestly desire God to judge in justice?
4. Where is the apex of God's justice and judgment shown?
5. How does God work all man's works for him?
6. How may the release from idolatry and the increasing of the nation have a fulfillment today?

3. JUSTICE'S OPERATION

TEXT: 26:16-21

- 16 Jehovah, in trouble have they visited thee; they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them.
- 17 Like as a woman with child, that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain and crieth out in her pangs; so have we been before thee, O Jehovah.
- 18 We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen.
- 19 Thy dead shall live; my dead bodies shall arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast forth the dead.
- 20 Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.
- 21 For, behold, Jehovah cometh forth 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.

QUERIES

- a. Why were God's people in such agony? v. 16-18
- b. What "dead" are going to be made to live?

PARAPHRASE

O Jehovah, during their distress and oppression, your faithful remnant visited You, pouring out their hearts in prayer when your correcting discipline was upon them. As a pregnant woman writhes and cries out in her pain as her time to deliver draws near, so were we when we came to You, O Lord, in our

prayers for deliverance. We too were in labor; we writhed in pain, but we brought forth wind—nothing! No deliverance has come from all our pain; no inhabitants of the earth have come to birth through our agony. But, O remnant, those who account themselves dead and cast off will live—they will rise again from oblivion. Those who dwell in dust shall awake and sing, for God's light of life will fall like refreshing dew upon them. Come, my remnant, enter your rooms and shut your doors behind you. Hide yourselves for a little while until the anger of God is satisfied in the captivities. The Lord is going to come down from his place in heaven to punish your captors and those who oppose you because of their rebellions. The earth cannot hide their guilt—their murderous deeds will be revealed—and all those they have slain will be accounted for.

COMMENTS

v. 16-18 JUSTICE IS SLOW: *Batsar* is the Hebrew for *in trouble* and primarily means to *bind up, distressed, oppressed*. In verse 16 also is the Hebrew word *musareka*, translated *chastening*, which literally means, *correction* or *discipline*. We conclude then that verse 16 is speaking of the corrective discipline by which the Lord had oppressed the Israelites in the past and would afflict them with in the future (the Babylonian captivity). This latter affliction is apparent when one compares the term "indignation" in Isa. 26:20 with Daniel 8:19, 11:36, which we shall do later.

These verses represent the prayers of the faithful remnant, in all its history, making known its frustration of looking for justice and deliverance in the midst of its trials and unable to deliver itself. The remnant is driven to hope in God's justice. God's justice seems to walk with leaden feet (cf. Hab. 1:1-4; Isa. 59:14; Ezek. 9:9; Rev. 6:9-11). So the saints of God cry out, but God is trying them, purging them, building endurance and character, if they will believe

and hold fast their hope.

Like a pregnant woman, Israel had endured pain, much anxiety and now, trouble like a woman in the pangs of labor was upon Israel, and she had produced nothing. She knew from her prophets and patriarchs she was to bring to birth a new order, but now all she has is pain and in her anxiety she cries out again. Facing the captivity of the northern kingdom (Israel) and the disintegration of the southern kingdom (Judah) and its inevitable captivity, the faithful remnant (Isaiah, their spokesman) was gripped with frustration and anxiety about its Messianic destiny through which it was to bring deliverance to mankind.

Verse 18 contains the Hebrew word *naphal* which means *birth*, or as Leupold says, "is used of beasts *dropping* their young in birth." A better translation of the phrase, "... neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen" would be, "... no inhabitants of the world came to birth through us." This is better word usage and contextual harmony. The remnant's agonized concern was that God's covenant people had experienced nothing but pain and sorrow when their destiny was to produce a Messianic new-world-order. Thus far they had given birth to nothing at all!

v. 19-21 **JUSTICE IS SURE:** But the answer from God through His prophet is, slow as His justice may seem, absolutely and divinely certain. What they think is dead shall live. God's remnant is a living kingdom, not a dead one. There is some disagreement as to whether verse 19 refers to personal, individual, physical resurrection from the dead or to a resurrection of the redemptive program of God through the deliverance of the covenant people from the captivities and its subsequent Messianic fulfillment. We tend to accept the latter view. We feel it fits the context more clearly, and such figure is used elsewhere (cf. Hosea 6:1-3; Ezekiel chapter 37; and see our comments, *Daniel*, College Press, Dan. 12:1ff). Those who dwell in the dust of death (in captivity) shall awake and sing. English translators translated the Hebrew *'oroth* as *herbs*, but it would better be, *light*. Thus we have paraphrased

it: “. . . for God's *light* of life will fall like refreshing dew upon them.” See Hosea 14:4-7 for the life-giving refreshment of dew.

It is specifically God's people, the remnant, who are promised more than warned to hide themselves for a little while until the “indignation” is past. God *invites* them, Come, enter into thy chambers. He will protect them during the indignation. The Hebrew word used here for indignation is *zaam* and is the same word used in Daniel 8:19; 11:36; and also Dan. 11:30 where it is translated “enraged” (RSV). See our comments on Daniel 8:19, *Daniel*, College Press, pg. 313. The time of the *indignation* is the same as the “troublesome time” of Daniel 9:24-27—the time for God's accomplishing through the Jewish nation all that He is going to accomplish which will come to a culmination at the birth and death of the Messiah. In other words, the faithful remnant is going to have to endure a time of indignation/trouble from the time of the Babylonian captivities, through Persian domination, Greek domination, Seleucid domination, Roman domination until Christ is born. At His birth comes the long sought for deliverance (cf. Lk. 1:67-79; 2:25-38). At His birth comes the “resurrection” of the remnant's Messianic destiny—its very life. The indignation, though it will last some 600 years, is only a “little while” with God. All during that time God is chastening, delivering, preparing them to become a people through which He can bring to birth His new order, His new covenant, the church.

God is going to do it. The guilty world cannot hide itself or its guilt. It cannot forego Jehovah's deliverance of the remnant. God's word is sure!

QUIZ

1. What kind of trouble were these people suffering?
2. How intense was their trouble?
3. Why were they perturbed that they “had brought forth