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We Have a Strong City; God Makes Salvation It's Walls 26: 1-6

We have a strong city, God makes salvation it's walls DIG: How does this city of God contrast with the cities of the world mentioned in 24:10-12 and 25:2-3? What characterizes the inhabitants of God's city (see verses 3-4 and 7-9)? What qualities mark those upon whom judgment comes (see verses 5 and 10-11)? What makes the LORD worthy of our trust? Does this reversal of human fortune underscore, or undermine either God's justice or His love? What do you learn about faith from the images of the ramparts (26:1), the gates (26:2), a steadfast mind (26:3), the Rock (26:4), level paths (26:7), walking, waiting, and yearning (26:8-9)? With these images in mind, is faith active, passive or both? How so?

REFLECT: Of the qualities of God's people (26:3-4 and 7-9), what one or two do you yearn for now? How might you go about having them? What would it be like to always be a credit to God's name and reputation? What things do you do that you'd just as soon not have the LORD's name dragged into? What are some current examples of the reversal in 26:5-6? Why are these examples of ADONAI's judgment ultimately a cause for joy? How might this prophecy serve as a model for how you could pray for oppressive governments today? When you pray the Lord's Prayer, do such judgments come to mind? Why or why not? How would you feel about God if He did *not* answer prayer in that way?



What will this victory in **the far eschatological future** mean for **Isra'el**? In a sense, the Little Apocalypse of **Isaiah (24:1 to 27:13)**, is like a tale of two cities: the millennial **Jerusalem** and mystery **Babylon (Revelation 17:5)**. In place of **the city** of confusion, **God** has another **City**, whose walls are **salvation**, one whose **gates** are **open** to all who will **enter**, a **City** whose might is not arrogant (**24:10, 25:2**) but humble (**26:5**). As always, **ADONAI** destroys the false, only to rase up the true. **The first city that the Holy Spirit describes is the millennial Jerusalem.**

In that day, a new **song will be sung in the land of Judah (26:1a)**, and rejoicing over the **strong city** that the righteous will enter in. Throughout the world the redeemed will live in cities and towns, but the **strong city** of **Jerusalem** is where the **Messiah** will live and reign during the thousand years of **His** millennial reign (**to see link click Db - The Nine Missing Articles in the Messiah's Coming Temple**). The **city** is so strong that **Isaiah** says that **salvation** actually protects it, and in fact, because of **Messiah's** presence there, the **city** is figuratively said to have **salvation** for **its walls and ramparts (26:1b)**. **Millennial Jerusalem will need no material defenses, for God will be its guardian and protector.**

Open the gates that the righteous nation may enter, the nation that keeps faith (26:2). The inhabitants of the **city** are **the righteous nation** that has kept the **faith**. Because the millennial **Jerusalem** first has to be built before it can be occupied, it is initially empty. But **the Jews** who survive the Great Tribulation eventually inhabit it. The **strong city** pictured here has now been opened up so that the remnant of **Isra'el** can inhabit it. The Gentiles will have their nations to live in during the Messianic Kingdom, but **Jews** will live in the land of **Isra'el** (see **Ge - Your Eyes Will See the King in His Beauty**).

The means of **their** living in this **strong city** is their **trust in the LORD**. **Isaiah** says: **You will keep the believing remnant in perfect peace, those whose mind is steadfast, because the steadfast person trusts in You (26:3)**. The phrase **perfect peace** is just a doubling, *shalom, shalom*. And because **the faithful remnant** trusted in **the LORD**, and the mind of **the remnant** focused on **Him** in spite of what was happening around them, **they** will enter the millennial **Jerusalem**. Principles can be taken out of this verse and applied to us today, but the context dictates that **Isaiah** has **the Jewish remnant** in mind here.

Since it is true that trust in **God** results in a **steadfast mind** that is kept **in perfect peace**, then everyone should be urged to trust in **Him**. **Isaiah** says: **Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD** (again a doubling to emphasize the point), **is the Rock (26:4a)**.

Here **Isaiah** uses the proper name in its most emphatic form. Many times in the TaNaKh, the use of the word **the Rock** is a picture of the **Messiah (Genesis 49:24; Exodus 17:6; Numbers 20:8; Deuteronomy 32:4 and 13; Second Samuel 22:2; Psalm 18:2, 10:14, 40:2, 61:2, 92:15; Isaiah 8:14)**. And **the Rock** is **eternal (26:4b)**. The Bible teaches that **Messiah Yeshua is at the right hand of God and is actually pleading on our behalf (Romans 8:34 CJB)**.

The contrasting city is **Babylon**. In contrast with **Jerusalem, the City** that *will* be rebuilt, **Babylon** will *not* be rebuilt. **He humbles those who dwell on high, He lays the lofty city of Babylon low; He levels it to the ground and casts it down to the dust (26:5)**. It will be leveled **to the ground and cast down to the dust** never to rise again (see the commentary on **Revelation Er - Babylon Will Never Be Found Again**). This is the third time **Isaiah** has made reference to **a city that will not be rebuilt again (24:10-12, 25:2-3, and here)**.

The very ones that **Babylon** sought to destroy, **the faithful remnant**, are the ones that will end up trampling **her** down (see **Di - I Have Commanded My Holy Ones**). **The sages teach that the poor in 25:6 is an allusion to the Messiah. Feet trample it down - the feet of the oppressed the footsteps of the poor (25:6)**. Therefore, in words that remind us of the Beatitudes (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Da - The Sermon on the Mount**), **Isaiah** reminds us that it is better to be among **the poor and the needy** believers that will triumph (see **Fa - You Have Been a Refuge for the Poor and the Needy**), than to be among the mighty unbelievers who will be thrown **down to the dust**. This is contrary to all human wisdom, but it is true wisdom nonetheless (**James 3:13-18 and 5:1-11**).

Here is a true story of a woman and her sister that exemplifies the difference. I squirmed a bit as I forced myself to listen to my friend cataloging her problems. After three hours, I interrupted her gently to ask, "If you were to draw a circle to represent your life, what would be in the center?" She thought a moment, and then said, "My problems." My friend spoke the truth. A week later, I sat across the hospital bed on which lay my younger sister, Joye, who had just been diagnosed with acute leukemia. Gray and perspiring, with a swath of bandages encasing her throat from a biopsy, Joye talked to a student nurse who was interviewing terminally ill people to see if there was any way she could help them. "Oh, I'm a bit fearful of the pain and process of dying - but I'm not afraid of death! It'll just be a change of residence for me," I heard my sister, her face radiant from within, say this to this student nurse. And for forty-five minutes, Joye explained the good news of **Jesus Christ** to the student nurse. Afterward, I thought, both my friend and sister have serious problems. Yet one's walking in despair, and the other in joy. What was the difference in their state of



mind? Then I realized what it was. My friend's heart was occupied with her problems; my sister's heart was occupied with the Living **God**.