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LORD, You Establish Peace for Us

26: 7-18

Lord, you establish peace for us **DIG: How is God contrasted to the other lords (of Assyria and Egypt)? What image of faith is projected over these foreign powers? Contrast 26:14 to Dani'el 12:12. Are these other lords to be awakened to everlasting contempt, or to everlasting life? Why? What does the imagery of the pain of childbirth add to your understanding of faith - its pain and purpose (Ezeki'el 37:11-12)?**

REFLECT: When has God smoothed your path? While you are waiting on the LORD, who has their hands on the steering wheel of your life? The LORD spoke to Moses as His friend (Exodus 33:11). How does God speak to you? When has the pain in your life caused you to seek the LORD with all your heart? Israel was supposed to be a blessing to the nations around her. Who are you blessing in your sphere of influence?

The poem now moves from thanksgiving to an expression of dependence. **Isaiah** declares that it is only as **ADONAI** demonstrates **His** power on the earth that mankind learns the level path of righteousness. Anticipating the lament in **26:18**, the prophet insists that it is only through **the LORD's** grace that peace and understanding can come. The righteous of the TaNaKh can only wait for **Him**.



The image of the feet of the poor and the needy (25:6) naturally lead to a discussion of

the road **they** walk. **The path of the righteous is level; O upright One, You make the way of the righteous smooth (26:7).** In a land where the roads went up and down with grueling regularity, the most pleasant thought was of a road that was **level** and **smooth**. So here **the righteous** remnant confesses that it is good to live righteously, because **ADONAI smooth's** out their **path**. It is **smooth** because of the character of the **One** who formed it (**40:3-5**). That does not mean that righteous people never have any problems. **Isaiah** was reflecting on the principle that there are eternal consequences for our actions. The possibility of a **Job** like experience always exists, and **Jesus** said: **In this world you will have trouble (John 16:33)**. But if we live according to **God's** Word, we will generally have favorable consequences; however, if **we, like sheep, go our own way (53:6)**, then we will eventually face dire consequences.

Yes, LORD, walking in the way of your commandments, **we wait for You. Your name and renown are the desire of our hearts (26:8).** The remnant will walk according to **God's** commandments, or **God's** Word and yearn for **Him**. Going back to **24:14-16a**, the faithful remnant has been waiting throughout the judgments of the Great Tribulation for **Messiah** to return. They cry out: **Walking in the way of your** commandments, **we wait for you**. On the surface, **walking** and **waiting** seem contradictory. However, the biblical concept of **waiting** is a way of thinking. It is *not* doing nothing, but it *is* doing what you know is right *while* you **wait**. It is refusing to run ahead of **God** to try to solve your problems for yourself. In other words, to trust **God** is to obey **Him** by following **God's** Word. This is what the writer of **Proverbs** is talking about when he says: **Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight (Proverbs 3:5-6).**

My soul yearns for You in the night; in the morning my spirit longs for You (26:9a). The Jewish day begins at sundown. So, **the** believing **remnant** says, "We eagerly **wait** for your return all day long." To **trust the LORD** is to show we know **Him** in our **paths**, that is, by the way we live. We **trust in the LORD** when we are honest in situations where it would be to our advantage to cheat. We **trust in the LORD** when we refuse to break faith with our spouse by flirting with someone who is obviously interested. We **trust in the LORD** when we give valuable time to work for the poor. We **wait** for **the LORD**, believing **He** will act in our behalf in **His** own best time, by obeying **His** Word, and not making up our own to serve ourselves as we go along. This is how the believing remnant will **wait** during the Great Tribulation.

When your judgments come upon the earth, introduces a shift in emphasis. **The Holy Spirit** now gives us another reason why **God** will sometimes send **judgments**. It is by

means of **judgments** that the unbelievers of **the earth learn righteousness (26:9b)**. One of the three purposes of the Great Tribulation is **to make an end of wickedness and wicked ones (13:9, 24:19-20)**. One of the factors that will bring about **God's judgments** is a worldwide revival of the 144,000. Those who are righteous will respond, and those who are not righteous will not. The same sun that hardens clay also softens wax. Only **one third of the Jews**, still alive at the end of the Great Tribulation will respond (**Zechariah 13:8-9**), two-thirds will have been killed by the antichrist. And the Gentiles who refuse to take the mark of the beast will be beheaded (see the commentary on **Revelation, to see link click Fe - I Saw Those Who Had Been Beheaded Because of Their Testimony for Jesus**). But even if **God Himself** shows **grace to the wicked**, the unrighteous do not respond. Even if they were living where everyone else is righteous, they will still live sinfully.

Though grace is shown to the wicked, they do not learn righteousness; even in a land of uprightness they go on doing evil and regard not the majesty of ADONAI (26:10). This will be tested and proven to be true after the Great Tribulation, in the Millennial Kingdom. During that time, Satan will be bound and the living conditions on the earth will be perfect. The world says that people rebel against all authority because of their environment. They say if a murderer had just been raised in a different environment that things would have turned out differently. They do not attribute their sin as being evil. But the Millennial Kingdom will dispel that notion. After a thousand years of perfect environment, they will still rebel against **the LORD's** authority. Individual responsibility will be the basis for judgment in the Kingdom of **God (Ezeki'el Chapter 18)**. If it were true that our environment was the determining factor in the outcome of our actions then we could not have any responsibility for them. People could say, "It wasn't my fault that I was born in this place," or "It isn't my fault I had this father or this mother." But if environment is eliminated as the basis for individual sin, what is left? At the end of the Great Tribulation it will be made clear that it is not environment, but **wickedness** or sin that causes rebellion against **ADONAI, His Word, and His plans**. There is never enough evidence for unbelief.

As **Isaiah** looks into **the far eschatological future** he is troubled. **He** sees that the wicked are not responding during the Great Tribulation. **He** declares: **ADONAI, Your hand is lifted high** against **Isra'el's** enemies (**Isaiah 26:11; 20-21** and **Malachi 3:16-18**). **But they do not see it (26:11a)** because Satan, the Adversary, **has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God (Second Corinthians 4:4)**. The prophet begs: **Let them see Your zeal for Your people and are put to shame**. In other words, "Give the lost a moment of spiritual clarity so **they** can see **their** sin for what it is and be ashamed." But, if they refuse to **see the light of the Gospel, Isaiah** concludes, "Treat them as **Your**

enemies and let the fire reserved for those who hate you **consume them (26:11b)**. For **anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God (James 4:4)**.

And while there is war for **Isra'el's enemies**, there is **peace** for **Isra'el's** people. **LORD, you established peace for us; all that we have accomplished You have done for us (26:12)**. Although **Isra'el's** immediate future was dark, **Isaiah** was certain of the ultimate outcome. **God's** upraised hand would set up holiness and **comfort (40:1-3)** for **His** people. **Comfort** is just as much the product of righteousness as destruction is the result of wickedness (**Psalm 1:1-6**). More than that, **Isaiah** realized that **God** was responsible for everything good that **Isra'el** had, and **He** had not lifted them up, to let them down.

ADONAI, our God, other lords besides You have ruled over us, but Your name alone do we honor (26:13). **Isra'el** has had many **other lords**, or masters, in the times of the Gentiles (see the commentary on **Revelation An - The Times of the Gentiles**). But now **the LORD** will be the only **One** to rule over them and **He** will be the only **One** they will worship. In the past it was **Isra'el's** sins that caused her to be dominated by these other **lords**, but that is over now. **They are now dead, they live no more; those departed spirits do not rise. You punished them and brought them to ruin; you wiped out all memory of them (26:14)**. All these past lords were **now dead** and **they** would not **live** again. The phrase **departed spirits** is the Hebrew word that means *the shades of Sheol*. They have been reduced to mere shadows of existence.

In contrast to this, the nation of **Isra'el** will increase. **You have enlarged the nation, O LORD; You have enlarged the nation. You have gained glory for Yourself; You have extended all the borders of the Land (26:15)**. Because **Isra'el** had worshiped other lords, **her** population had decreased. But when **God** reigns over **her**, this will be reversed. **Isra'el's** new growth involves two things: first, population (anti-Semitism is eliminated) and secondly, *for the first time*, they will live within *all* the borders of the Promised **Land** (see the commentary on **Genesis Eg - I AM the LORD, Who Brought You Out of Ur of the Chaldeans**).

Today all the trouble in Palestine and **Isra'el** revolve around a twisting of **God's** word by Muslim scholars, motivated by Satan. Lucifer did the same thing in the Garden of Eden (**Genesis 3:4**), and tried to do so again with **Christ** in the wilderness after **His** baptism (**Matthew 4:1-11**). If the Bible clearly states that **the Jews** will inherit the Promised **Land** (**Genesis 15:18-19**), how can the Muslims claim that Palestine is theirs? **They do this by substituting Ishmael for Isaac in the Bible. Because they claim that Ishmael was**

really the son of promise, they attribute all the promises God made to Isaac to Ishmael and the Muslims. How could they possibly come to that conclusion?

This is what the Muslims teach: **Isaac** was about two years old when he was weaned. Ishmael was about sixteen years old because **Abraham** was eighty-six years old when **Hagar** bore Ishmael and was a hundred years old when **Isaac** was born according to **Genesis 16:16**. Then according to the Islamic version (of the story), **Abraham** took Ishmael and **Hagar** and made a new settlement in Mecca called Paran in the Bible (**Genesis 21:21**), because of a divine instruction given to **Abraham** as a part of **God's** plan. **Hagar** ran seven times between two hills, Sofa and Marwa, looking for water; this then became an Islamic ritual for the annual Pilgrimage in Mecca by millions of Muslims from all over the world. The well mentioned in **Genesis 21:19** is still present today, now called Zamzam. Both **Abraham** and Ishmael later built the holy stone Ka'bah in Mecca. The spot where **Abraham** used to perform prayers near the Ka'bah is still present, now called Maqom Ibrahim, or the Station of **Abraham**. During the days of pilgrimage, pilgrims in Mecca and Muslims all over the world commemorate the offering of **Abraham** and Ishmael by slaughtering cattle.⁸⁹

There are two problems here. First, they obviously have the ages of the boys wrong. This is crucial to their interpretation. The reason it is wrong is that the Bible clearly states that the birth of **Isaac** happened before **Hagar** and Ishmael were sent away (**Genesis 21**). And in **Genesis 21:9** it says that **Sarah saw that the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham was mocking Isaac**. That is the reason **Abraham** sent **Hagar** and Ishmael away. *Secondly, this entire episode contradicts the Biblical account, because **Genesis 21:14-21** does not mention **Abraham** going with **Hagar** and Ishmael. It says: **Abraham sent her off with the boy. She went on her way and wandered in the desert of Beersheba. Abraham did not go with them; he sent them off.** But even more obvious, it says in **Genesis** that it was Isaac that was sacrificed, not Ishmael. **Then God said: Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about (Genesis 22:2).** With this being so clear, how could this be misinterpreted?*

This is what the Muslims teach: The Islamic version (of the Bible) states that the covenant between **God, Abraham**, and his only son Ishmael was made and sealed when Ishmael was supposed to be sacrificed. But the Bible teaches that on the same day **Abraham**, Ishmael and all men of the household were circumcised while **Isaac** was not even born yet (**Genesis 17:24-27**). Muslims say the descendants of Ishmael, including the Prophet Muhammad [PBUH], and all Muslims remain faithful even today to this covenant of circumcision. In their prayers at least five times a day, the Muslims include the praise of **Abraham** and his

descendants with the praise of Muhammad [PBUH] and his descendants. But if you say **Genesis 22** says Isaac was to be sacrificed, they will say, "I know it, but you will see the contradiction there. It is mentioned there: **your only son, Isaac**. Should it not be written: **your only son**, Ishmael because Ishmael was thirteen years old and Isaac was not yet born? *As I said, they obviously have the ages of the boys wrong. Muslims say that because of chauvinism (or prejudice) the name Ishmael was changed to Isaac in all of Genesis 22! They say that God has preserved the word only to show us that it should have said Ishmael and not Isaac.*⁹⁰

Therefore, the Muslims take all the promises for Isaac, the son of promise, and credit them to Ishmael. And they believe the land of Palestine was promised to Ishmael. This is the basis of the argument that the Jews are on their land. They count on ignorance of the Bible and deception to promote this point of view.

One of the three purposes of the Great Tribulation is **to break the stubbornness of the Jewish nation (Dani'el 11-12; Ezeke'el 20:34-38)**. It is through the crucible of the Great Tribulation, the distress that it brings being compared to **childbirth**, that **Isra'el** will be brought to repentance. **LORD, Isra'el came to you in their distress; when You disciplined them, they could barely whisper a prayer (26:16).**

As a woman with child and about to give birth writhes and cries out in her pain, so were we in Your presence, O LORD (26:17). It is **Isra'el's** prayer at the end of the Great Tribulation that brings about the Second Coming of **Christ**. The actual words of this prayer are found in four key passages of Scripture, first in **Psalms 79**, secondly in **Psalms 80**, thirdly in **Isaiah 53:1-9**, and lastly in **Isaiah 63:7 to 64:12**. **The agony of the times is compared with the agonizing pains of a woman in travail. Other prophets also use this comparison (Hosea 8:13 and Micah 4:10).**

In the past, **Isra'el** has failed to produce a delivery. **We were with child, we writhed in pain, but we gave birth to wind. We have not brought salvation to the earth; we have not given birth to people of the world (26:18)**. **ADONAI** had told **Abram** that **all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you (Genesis 12:3b)**. She has had **birth pains**, and **birth pains** and **birth pains** (see the commentary on **Revelation, to see the first of ten birth pains, click Bq - For Seven Months the house of Isra'el Will Bury Them in Order to Cleanse the Land**), but has failed to produce what **God** had intended for **her**. But that would change in **the far eschatological future**.

The hearers of **Isaiah's** message centuries before the coming of **the Messiah** might have thought to themselves, "That's great for those **Jews** living then. But what hope is there for



me and my loved ones today?" That question is answered next.