

Some scholars call chapters 24-27 “The Little Apocalypse.” It addresses worldwide judgment as described in Revelation followed by the establishment of Messiah’s Kingdom who rules from the throne of David in Israel.

Is. 24:1 Behold, the LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.

This chapter starts without an introduction by Isaiah. Although Isaiah is prophesying to the people of Judah, he seems to be addressing the world in general. He is speaking of a time when God is going to bring about events that will make the earth:

- 1) empty (depopulated) – evidently relative to what it was before these acts of YHWH.
- 2) waste (annihilated)
- 3) turn it upside down (this has a reference to the face of the earth)
- 4) scatter the inhabitants

Obviously, the term *empty* must be relative since there will be inhabitants left to scatter or disperse to different areas.

Is. 24:2 And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him.

The acts of God will affect everyone—no matter what position they have in society. God is no respecter of persons.

Acts 10:34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

Is. 24:3 The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the LORD hath spoken this word.

This seems to be an emphasis that the destruction that will be experienced on planet earth will be extensive and complete. God has spoken it, and it will happen as He says.

Isaiah 14:24 The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:

Is. 24:4 The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish.

“away” = to wilt; generally, to fall away, fail, faint; figuratively, to be foolish or (morally) wicked; causatively, to despise, disgrace:

Again, we see Isaiah’s poetic repetitive style of writing. I thought it was interesting that the word for *away* included the idea of being foolish, wicked and in disgrace. Again, he is emphasizing that even the people in the loftiest

positions will be brought to mourning because of the judgment that comes upon their foolish and wicked ways.

Is. 24:5 The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.

“defiled” = to soil, especially in a moral sense: corrupt, pollute

Even the earth has been polluted because of the actions of the people. The last part of this verse seems to be directed to the nation of Israel in particular. The word for *laws* has reference to the Decalogue, the Ten Commandments. The “everlasting covenant” seems to be a reference to the covenant between God and Abraham and his descendants through Isaac and Jacob.

You could also look at it in light of God’s purpose and plan for man in general as a creation. The root word for *laws* also references teaching and instruction. God endowed Adam and his descendants with a knowledge of right and wrong, what was acceptable to God and what was not. Man is the one that made changes in these instructions to suit his own purposes. Man’s action brought about the resultant decay and death that invaded planet earth.

Is. 24:6 Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.

Eventually, the curse devoured the whole earth as man increased to the point of covering the earth and acted according to what was right in his own eyes. I can’t help but wonder if the last part of this verse is referencing a nuclear holocaust.

Other verses that seem to be relative to this time are found in Malachi and Revelation.

Isaiah 13:12 I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.

Malachi 4:1 For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

Revelation 16:8-9 And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.

Is. 24:7 The new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth, all the merryhearted do sigh.

Is. 24:8 The mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp ceaseth.

Is. 24:9 They shall not drink wine with a song; strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it.

No longer will men be able to find comfort through drunkenness. No longer will they party and make noise or song with strong drink.

Is. 24:10 The city of confusion is broken down: every house is shut up, that no man may come in.

Is. 24:11 *There is* a crying for wine in the streets; all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone.

Is. 24:12 In the city is left desolation, and the gate is smitten with destruction.

“confusion” = from an unused root meaning to lie waste; a desolation (of surface), i.e. desert; figuratively, a worthless thing

The message seems to be directed to a particular city, i.e., Jerusalem, at this point. Maybe it is also representative of all the other cities on earth.

The people are locked inside their houses for protection. The desperate are out in the streets looking for wine. Joy and happiness are not to be found. The city has become a ruin and the gate of protection is useless.

Is. 24:13 When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, *there shall be* as the shaking of an olive tree, *and* as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done.

Is. 24:14 They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the LORD, they shall cry aloud from the sea.

The prophet seems to be saying that when the situation finally reaches the point that men are few and the future looks hopeless, the people will finally lift up their voice in praise of the Lord. No one will doubt that it has been His mighty hand at work. This would seem to apply most appropriately to the remnant of Israel that God always preserves, some of which are in nations beyond the sea (usually referencing the Mediterranean).

Is. 24:15 Wherefore glorify ye the LORD in the fires, *even* the name of the LORD God of Israel in the isles of the sea.

It was interesting that the word for *fires* made reference to the East. That seems to be the bookend to the isles of the sea, which would be West. Scripture gives direction from the perspective of Israel.

Is. 24:16 From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, *even* glory to the righteous. But I said, My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me! the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.

Is. 24:17 Fear, and the pit, and the snare, *are* upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth.

It would seem that the righteous have not lost their faith in God. On the contrary, they are singing His praise because of His righteous acts. It would seem that Isaiah isn't comforted by the response of the people. He is well aware of how deceitful man is and that there is more judgment to come.

Is. 24:18 And it shall come to pass, *that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake.*

Isaiah seems to be saying that no matter how you may try, there is no escape.

This judgment will involve the forces of nature. It would appear to be hail and earthquakes. This would match with the description of the 7th vial judgment in the tribulation.

Revelation 16:18-21 And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was **a great earthquake**, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And **there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven**, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

Is. 24:19 The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly.

Is. 24:20 The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again.

“down” = properly, to spoil (literally, by breaking to pieces); figuratively, to make (or be) good for nothing, i.e. bad (physically, socially or morally)

“dissolved” = to break up (usually figuratively, i.e. to violate, frustrate), make void

“moved” = to waver; by implication, to slip, shake, fall...be out of course, be fallen in decay

Even though we are seeing different words in the English, the Hebrew word is being repeated for emphasis in these phrases:

- Utterly - (broken) down
- Clean - dissolved
- Moved - exceedingly
- Reel - to and fro

After looking at the Hebrew, I think I would word it like this: The earth is spoiled, made void (of people in particular) and fallen in decay. The earth will

be quite shaken because of the impact of an overwhelming rule of sin. This rule of sin will be cast down/overthrown, never to rise again to that position of influence on planet earth.

Is. 24:21 And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones *that are on high*, and the kings of the earth upon the earth.

Is. 24:22 And they shall be gathered together, *as* prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited.

This seems to be talking of the time when Satan and his legions of fallen angels, as well as the kings of the earth that were in league with him, will face judgment/punishment at the hand of God. The day will come when those souls are gathered together to wait in hell until the great white throne judgment, the final judgment.

Is. 24:23 Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.

Because the Lord is going to assume his throne after these events, it would seem that the previous verses are talking about the judgments that will be exacted on planet earth during the tribulation and at the final battle of Armageddon. How can the moon and sun be put to shame? By the shekinah glory of the LORD as He reigns on planet earth.

Isaiah 60:19 The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.

Ezekiel 43:2 And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory.

Revelation 21:23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

“before His ancients” – This makes me think of the verse in Hebrews regarding the fathers of faith who died without seeing their promise fulfilled. They will get to see a glorious fulfillment when Christ establishes His earthly Kingdom from the throne of David.

Hebrews 11:13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.