

Is. 26:1 In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.

“In that day” = The day when the Lord is ruling from Mount Zion, the people of Israel have been restored in fellowship to God, and His hand is at rest in Jerusalem.

Isaiah is foreseeing a time when all Israel will be singing the praise of God for making Jerusalem a place of security and provision for His people.

Is. 26:2 Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.

Jerusalem will be a city of open gates, ready to welcome those from other nations who are righteous before God and who safeguard His truth. The “righteous nation” could also be a reference to the returning Jews who are coming home to enjoy the blessings of the Kingdom as promised to Abraham. Israel will be the one righteous nation on earth that will be composed entirely of the “saved.”

Romans 11:26–27 “And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.”

Is. 26:3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

This has been my life verse for a long time. I was drawn to this verse initially because of the godly example of my mother-in-law who claimed this verse as her life verse. If this was the verse that motivated and encouraged her to become the woman of God that she was, that was the verse I wanted. Through the years the Lord has impressed upon me the significance and power of the truth of this verse in growing in faith and continuing to strive to become the woman of God He would have me be.

I think the key phrase is “whose mind is stayed on thee.” When our mind is focused on the LORD, the enemy has no room for attack and the flesh is in submission. It’s when we take our focus off the LORD, that the door is opened to the attack of the enemy, and we experience battle with our sin nature. This promise is a statement of fact—If you keep your mind on Jesus, you will have perfect peace. I thought the Hebrew for the word “mind” was quite enlightening:

3336. יָצַר **yetser**, *yay'-tser*; from 3335; a form; figuratively, conception (i.e. purpose):—frame, thing framed, imagination, mind, work.

3335. יָצַר **yatsar**, *yaw-tsar'*...to mould into a form; especially as a potter; figuratively, to determine (i.e. form a resolution)...

And from good old Webster:

The intellectual or rational faculty in man; the understanding; the intellect; the power that conceives, judges, or reasons; also, the entire spiritual nature; the soul; — often in distinction from the *body*.

“stayed” = to lean upon or take hold of, lay, lean, lie hard, rest self, set self, sustain.

As I look at these different definitions, it makes a powerful word picture. Our mind, our imagination, should be in a position comparable to clay in the hands of a potter. Our ideas, judgments and logic should have their foundation in the person and character of God and in His word. We should be resting in confidence and sustained by our faith in God and His word. This mindset is a position of choice and determination that results in action.

When we act on that choice and determination, God gives us “perfect peace.” The Hebrew for this phrase includes “safety, happiness, health, prosperity, restoration and reward.” This is not a formula to apply to our physical condition or circumstances. The importance of this investment is in our spiritual condition and well-being. The culture of today has been so trained and conditioned to think in terms of the physical/material, that we have lost sight of the fact that it is spiritual/eternal preparation and provision that is most important, most valuable. I had never thought of the word *restoration* in connection with this peace before. The truth is that the “emptiness” in our life caused by sin is an evidence for the need and desire of *restored* fellowship with our Creator.

As I look at the Hebrew, I think the better translation would be—“whose mind is stayed on and trusteth in thee.” The Hebrew for *trust* includes confidence, boldness and security. We place ourselves in a position of clay with confidence in the Potter. We are secure in our position because of His character, Who He is. That confidence and security will produce a bold testimony before the world.

The more I meditate on this verse, the more powerfully it speaks to me.

Is. 26:4 Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:

How long are we to trust in God? Forever—time without end. When we choose to place our trust in the LORD, we will find the strength and energy we need to do the things He would have us do—to meet the trials of life without fear, to gain victory over sin, to serve Him by serving others. The Hebrew for the word “strength” includes the idea of God as our refuge, our protection in danger and distress. That describes a position of strength—not fear.

Is. 26:5 For he bringeth 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.

Is. 26:6 The foot shall tread it down, *even* the feet of the poor, *and* the steps of the needy.

The reference to those that dwell on high has been referencing those who are proud—those who feel they are self-sufficient.

“The lofty city” – The last city we referenced was Babylon and the last nation referenced was Moab. I don’t think it is important to be able to identify the particular city. The point is that God hates pride, and He is the one that is sovereign and is the ultimate authority regarding the destiny of a man, a city, or a nation. When He chooses to humble or bring down, He does so completely.

“the poor...the needy” – This seems to be referencing verse 4 of chapter 25 in reference to the conquered Jews and on into the future to men of faith in the kingdom of Antichrist. They will one day be in a position to exalt in the defeat of their enemies.

Is. 26:7 The way of the just is uprightness: thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just.

The way (path, manner) of the just (lawful, righteous, clean) man is uprightness (evenness, prosperity, straightness, pleasant). The word “weigh” indicates “prepares.” There are two verses from Psalms that apply here I think.

Psalm 37:23 The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD....

Psalm 18:36 Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip.

God is *the most upright*; He sets the standard against which we judge what is just and righteous. Those who choose to walk/live a clean life according to His standards will find that his path in life has been prepared by the Lord. The prosperity experienced may include material blessing and honor from men, but it most assuredly applies to spiritual blessings for eternity. When God orders the steps of those who are His, it is to accomplish His purposes. When he enlarges the steps of a man, He is empowering that man not to fall—to be an overcomer.

There was an interesting article from Aish.com by Rabbi David Aaron entitled “Discovering Your Unique Path.” In it he made a thought-provoking comparison between a “way” and a “path,” that fits right in with the Hebrew for this verse.

“....Vilna Gaon, one of the greatest Jewish sages of the 18th century.... quotes Ecclesiastes: "In all your ways know God, and He will straighten your path." Then Vilna Gaon explains the difference between a "way" and a "path": A "way" is known to everyone. Everyone knows where the highway is. It's the highway, a public thoroughfare. But a "path" is off the beaten track. A path is not public. It is the private and unique way for the individual.

There are certain ways that we serve God that are common to us all. These ways are not unique to any of us. They are the highways of life. You can't get anywhere unless you get on those highways. However, once you get on the public highway, suddenly you will see a sign that says, ‘David --

exit 3 miles left.' That is where David turns off to continue his journey to fulfill his mission. Now Jan who was also on the highway sees David get off and feels a little jealous. "Lucky guy! He found his path." But with some patience Jan plods forward until she discovers her path. And sure enough there's a sign for her too. 'Jan, 5 miles exit left.'"

Is. 26:8 Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O LORD, have we waited for thee; the desire of *our* soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.

After looking up the main words in Hebrew, Isaiah seems to be expressing that God's people waited with expectation for God's decreed punishment/judgment to be completed. They looked forward to again being in a position of fellowship with their God. They knew that that time of restoration would come based upon His character and His word. God's name represents His character and authority and uniqueness.

Is. 26:9 With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments *are* in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

As he so often does, Isaiah's message becomes personal. It reflects the thoughts and feelings of all those who truly love the Lord and honor Him as their God. He is basically saying that with his whole being he desires fellowship and connection with the Lord in the night (including the times when evil seems to have sway), the early hours just before dawn. The dawn is sure, and God's victory over evil just as sure. He realizes that it is through God's judgments on Israel in particular, that the people of the world are made to understand righteousness.

God set Israel apart as a nation to demonstrate Who He Is and the blessings that accompany submission to and fellowship with Him. When they chose to rebel and turn away from Him, they were the object lesson to the world of the consequences of rejecting Him. Mankind needs to understand that as a holy and righteous God, He must punish sin. A loving God does so with the intent to draw the sinner to a position of repentance and renewed fellowship. A merciful and gracious God is longsuffering and patient as He allows us to learn and grow in our relationship to and experience with Him.

Is. 26:10 Let favour be shewed to the wicked, *yet* will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the LORD.

In context with verse 9, this verse seems to be saying that it takes the judgment of God to produce righteousness in man. If God were to only exhibit kindness and mercy, man would never learn right living; he would continue selfishly in his sin and would never discern the person of God or experience the excellent things that accompany a right relationship to Him.

I think any parent could confirm that principle. A child left undisciplined will only become more selfish and hurtful to others; he will become more and more sinful. He won't learn to love his parents, but to disdain and ridicule them. I believe that just as we have a sin nature that makes us more apt to choose sinful things based on the desires of the flesh, we also have an inner desire to experience love that is proved through nurture, admonition and correction.

Is. 26:11 LORD, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them.

The reference to God's hand being lifted up is a reference to His getting in position to bring it down in judgment. I think that is a true statement in reference to the enemies of God's people, as well as in reference to those of God's people who have turned away from Him and are rejecting Him. Somehow, we always seem to think that we are going to get away with sin. In the case of those who don't accept God as GOD, they don't even consider the possibility that they are acting in such a way that would call for judgment; they just don't acknowledge their sin as sin.

"they shall see...." – This phrase is a statement that sinful, rebellious man will be brought to a position of envy / jealousy when they see God's blessing upon those who choose to follow Him in submission and obedience.

"the fire..." – This phrase seems to be a statement of the principle of sowing and reaping. This principle is often emphasized in scripture, and presented itself recently in my studies of Habakkuk and Obadiah.

Job 4:8 Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.

Galatians 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

God is not going to let sin go unpunished.

Is. 26:12 LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us.

God's plan for His people is to establish them in peace / safety / prosperity. That will happen when God's people follow Him in submission and obedience. When we submit to Him and acknowledge Him as God, He empowers us to overcome the enemy and do the things that give Him pleasure—works of love, righteousness, mercy, and sacrifice. I am reminded of some other scriptures.

*John 15:5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: **for without me ye can do nothing.***

Matthew 11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Is. 26:13 O LORD our God, *other* lords beside thee have had dominion over us: *but* by thee only will we make mention of thy name.

Is. 26:14 *They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish.*

Here Isaiah is expressing the acknowledgement of the people that they had allowed other lords and masters to rule them. I thought it was interesting that the Hebrew for *dominion* included marriage. Basically, this was a statement of admission of spiritual adultery on their part. The second part of verse 13 seems to be a statement of renewed commitment to use God's name with reverence in reference to YHWH, the self-existent, eternal God; the covenant God of Israel; the one true God.

Regarding the false gods they had served, God's people are declaring them dead. They had only *lived* because of their servitude to them. God's people are declaring here that they will not again give them life through rebellion and disobedience to God. Through the power of His judgment, God has made the people realize the uselessness of serving false gods, gods with no power to protect or provide. As far as His people are concerned, they want a new start; they want to forget about the past.

Boy do I identify with those thoughts. It's a wonderful thing to know that as far as the Lord is concerned, our sins are forgiven and forgotten.

Psalm 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

1John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

*Hebrews 8:10-12 For this is the covenant that I will make **with the house of Israel** after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and **their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.***

*Hebrews 10:14-17 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever **them that are sanctified**. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And **their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.***

Is. 26:15 Thou hast increased the nation, O LORD, thou hast increased the nation: thou art glorified: thou hadst removed *it* far *unto* all the ends of the earth.

Comparing translations helped on this verse. This seems to be talking of a time yet future when the borders of Israel will finally encompass the area promised by God to Abraham and the children of Israel.

Genesis 15:18 In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:

Deuteronomy 11:24 Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be.

When this time comes, it will be a time of great praise and glory to YHWH, the covenant God of Israel. Isaiah is speaking with the boldness and faith of one who knows that God's plans will come to pass. There are no *ifs* or *maybes* concerning God's promises. The promise to Abraham was unconditional. The promise to the people of Israel in Deuteronomy was conditional:

Deuteronomy 11:22 For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him....

At the time when God increases the nation of Israel, the people will be following Him according to the conditions He established. Scripture tells us that the Lord will not return until Israel calls upon Him in faith as their Messiah; He also tells us that at that time ALL Israel will be saved and will turn away from ungodliness.

Matthew 23:37-39 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Ezekiel 36:24-28 For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.

Romans 11:26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

Is. 26:16 LORD, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them.

When God's people are being disciplined through trouble/tribulation, it is natural for them to turn to God in prayer. The word for *prayer* indicates a whisper, a private prayer. This could be a reference to being so weak that they barely have the strength to call out to God in prayer.

Is. 26:17 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 in thy sight, O LORD.*

Is. 26:18 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.

Now the Lord, through Isaiah, makes a comparison of Israel to a woman in childbirth that has not been able to deliver. She has gone through much pain and struggle, but has not accomplished delivery—in other words she has not been the example before the nations that God intended her to be. She was to teach the nations about God's faithfulness and love to provoke them to seek His salvation deliverance.

Israel knew she had a responsibility before the other nations of the world as God's chosen people. It was generally stated in God's promise to Abram.

Genesis 12:2-3 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and ***in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.***

They were aware that the people of other nations would learn about God through His dealings with His people. Moses used this argument with God when pleading for God's mercy after the people had made and erected a golden calf to worship during the time that Moses was receiving the commandments of God.

Exodus 32:11-12 And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? ***Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people.***

The Psalmist knew it:

Psalm 67:1 God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; ***Selah. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.***

Many years after the prophecy of Isaiah, the prophet Ezekiel declared this same truth.

Ezekiel 36:20-24 And when they entered unto the heathen, whither they went, they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These are the people of the LORD, and

*are gone forth out of his land. But I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, **but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. And the heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity:** because they trespassed against me, therefore hid I my face from them, and gave them into the hand of their enemies: so fell they all by the sword. According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions have I done unto them, and hid my face from them.*

The interesting thing is that the Lord has provided for His rebellious people by establishing a relationship with the Gentiles/heathen through the church to provoke His chosen people to jealousy to turn back to Him in faith. (church = all true believers in Christ from the time of His resurrection until He comes again at the time of the Rapture)

Romans 11:11 I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.

Is. 26:19 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.

It seems that Isaiah is identifying with the dead of history who lived their lives following God in faith. He is confident that they will live again to sing the praises of God. This is the same faith expressed by Job:

Job 19:25-27 For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.

Is. 26:20 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.

Is. 26:21 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.

These are very thought-provoking verses. I would have to say that in context it seems to be addressing the people of Israel in particular regarding the day of the Lord, the 70th week of Daniel, the tribulation. This was first introduced in Chapter 2. Along with bringing the nation of Israel to a position of repentance and acknowledgement of Jesus as Savior, that time will be a time of God's wrath and vengeance against His enemies.

*Jeremiah 46:10 For this is the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of vengeance, **that he may avenge him of his adversaries:** and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate*

and made drunk with their blood: for the Lord GOD of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates.

*Nahum 1:2 God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; **the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reseroveth wrath for his enemies.***

*Joel 2:30-32 And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: **for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance**, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.*

In that regard it would seem to apply to the remnant of Israel being preserved in the wilderness during the last half of the tribulation as described in Revelation 12.

Revelation 12:14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

I have also heard these verses taught as a possible application to the believers who will be raptured before the tribulation starts. As I think about it, it could have a double application. Jesus spoke of going to prepare a place for those who trust in Him.

John 14:2-3 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

Jesus also spoke of keeping believers from the time of temptation that is scheduled for those who dwell on earth.

Revelation 3:10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

God has revealed through the apostle Paul that believers are not appointed to wrath.

1Thessalonians 5:9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ...

I was reading an article by Jack Kelley at Gracethrufaith.com stating an interesting perspective on these verses.

“Notice how the pronouns change from second person when God speaks of His people to third person when He speaks of the people of the Earth. It means the

two groups are different. One is told to hide because the other is going to be punished. (Note: The Hebrew word translated "Come" recalls the command to John in Revelation 4, "Come up here!" But the word has another primary meaning, and it is my favorite. It means vanish. "Vanish, my people!" Yes we will.)"

I was in this section in my Bible reading one morning, and all of a sudden a connection between verses 19-21 and 1Corinthians 15:52 and 1Thessalonians 4:16-17 jumped out at me. It was in connection with the Rapture and the "day of the Lord," the time of God's wrath on planet earth as referenced in 1Thessalonians 5:9 above and Matthew 24.

1Corinthians 15:52 ...and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

1Thessalonians 4:16-17 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Matthew 24:21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

Verse 19 references "Thy" dead men, in other words, men of faith. It speaks of the dead bodies of these men of faith being cast out of the earth. (Cf with the above verses in 1Corinthians and 1Thessalonians.) Immediately after that these people of faith enter "their" chambers (cf with John 14 above – "I will go and prepare a place for you.") until the indignation is past. That indignation is defined in verse 26 and described in detail in Revelation. The thought of a possible connection to the Rapture was not new to me (as shown by previous comments), but I had not made the direct connection to 1Corinthians 15 and 1Thessalonians 4 with verse 19 in particular.

Come Lord Jesus!!