

(Isaiah) How to Have Perfect Peace

by David Guzik

David Guzik's sermon explores how to attain perfect peace through trust in God and the significance of community in His kingdom.

Duration: 43:46

Scripture: Psalm 46:10, Isaiah 26:20 - 27:1, Isaiah 27:3, Isaiah 27:6, Matthew 6:33, Philippians 4:7

Topics: "Trusting God", "Spiritual Peace"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of trusting in the Lord and keeping our minds stayed on Him. He encourages the audience to spend time with God and allow Him to take care of them. The speaker highlights the glorious result of trusting in the Lord, which is the blossoming and fruitfulness of our lives. The sermon also mentions the destiny of the city of man, which will be brought down by the Lord, while the way of the upright is one of uprightness. Additionally, the sermon mentions a prophecy from Isaiah about God's people finding refuge in secure chambers during a time of indignation.

Transcript

Isaiah chapter 26 continues a four-chapter section spanning from Isaiah chapter 24 through Isaiah chapter 27, which really has its focus on the Kingdom of the Lord and its ultimate fulfillment. The Messianic Kingdom, that which precedes it. We talked a lot about the Great Tribulation in the last two chapters.

And then now in chapter 26 and 27, we're going to focus a lot on the ultimate establishing of the Kingdom of the Lord. What the Bible, or what some people refer to in the Bible as the Millennium. The thousand-year reign of Christ over this earth.

Isaiah chapter 26, beginning at verse 1. In that day, this song will be sung in the land of Judah. We have a strong city. God will appoint salvation for walls and bulwarks.

Open the gates that the righteous nation which keeps the truth may enter in. Now again, the context from Isaiah chapter 24 and 25 points to the day of the Messiah's ultimate triumph. The day when the Messiah reigns over Israel and over all the world.

In that day, there's going to be a lot of joyful singing, such as this song. This song that will be sung in the land of Judah. Notice how the song goes in verse 1. It starts out, we have a strong city.

I want you to think for a few moments now about the whole concept of a city. Cities only came into being after the fall. Before the fall, there was only Adam and Eve.

That's not much of a city. Population of two. So cities, as we know them, have always been affected, have always been influenced by the fallenness of man.

By the world, the flesh, and the devil. Man has never really truly known a godly city. The city of God on earth.

And in that day, as it says here, all will know the strength and the glory of the city of God. I can't help but make sort of a historical connection here. In the 5th century, that's the 400s AD, the city of Rome and the empire of Rome was conquered by less civilized tribes from the north in Europe.

They called them the barbarians, these Germanic tribes that swept down from the north and invaded the city of Rome and sacked the city and overthrew it. The mighty Roman Empire, at least in the west, was no more. It still remained a viable force in the eastern part of the empire for a few more centuries.

But since the mighty Roman Empire was no more, many people blamed the fall of Rome on the new religion that she had officially accepted in the last hundred years or so. And that new religion was Christianity. After the fall of Rome, people said, Well, look, I know what the problem is, is we forsook all those great patriotic Roman gods and people started going after that newfangled religion, Christianity.

Of course, Christianity had been around for several hundred years by then, but it replaced the even more ancient pagan religions of Rome. Well, in this time of confusion, this time of blaming Christians for the fall of Rome, the greatest Christian theologian of the time, a man named Augustine, wrote a book titled The City of God. It's one of the most famous and influential Christian books ever written.

And in The City of God, Augustine tried to explain how the fall of the Roman Empire related to the kingdom of God. And he made the contrast between the city of man, which was ultimately represented by Rome and the mighty Roman Empire. You have on one side the city of man, and on the other side you have the city of God, which is the kingdom of God.

And Augustine pointed out that although the fall of Rome was tragic for the city of man, it really hastened the coming of the city of God, of the kingdom of God. Now, the reason why I bring that up is because I think this really relates. We can easily think in this kind of terminology with Isaiah's writing.

When he says, verse 1 of chapter 26, we have a strong city. The strong city is the city of God, the kingdom of God. The city of man, that's the world system.

Now, in Augustine's day, the city of man sort of had a capital. It was Rome. I wonder where the capital of the city of man would be today.

The world system. I think you can make a very persuasive argument that it's Los Angeles, California. I mean, culture is influenced more probably from the entertainment industry right here in Los Angeles, California, over the entire world than probably any other thing.

And just as Rome was ripe for judgment in its day, we look at the city of man in our own day and say that it's ripe for judgment. Now, we also look at this idea of we have a strong city and think of another way that it relates to us. I think this is an important and often neglected idea.

We often disapprove of the idea of a city. There are a lot of people who aren't city people. Their idea of the great place to live isn't downtown in a bustling urban place.

I've never lived in that. I like visiting cities. I like cities.

I mean, I also like the country, but a lot of people, they don't like cities. Too much traffic, too much noise, too much whatever. And so for a lot of people, their idea of the ideal kind of place to live has nothing to do with the city.

They want an isolated cabin, you know, out overlooking the lake. And that's where they want to be. And we often romanticize the idea of man in isolation, of man in a rural or primitive setting.

But friends, we need to understand that the kingdom of Jesus Christ on this earth, in that kingdom, there's going to be cities, redeemed cities, glorious communities organized under the strength and salvation and righteousness and truth of the Lord, but cities nonetheless. God's supreme ideal is no escape from all community into some private communion with nature. The kingdom of God will be realized in a strong city.

Friends, the kingdom of God is not realized, is not really made true, is not really made evident when you've got one guy perfectly enjoying himself out in a cabin out in the middle of the woods. That guy might be happy, but that's not the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is community.

The kingdom of God is people together, loving one another, helping one another, growing with each other. The kingdom of God is community. And so it's very appropriate for Isaiah to be talking about in that day, we have a strong city and God will appoint salvation for walls and bulwarks.

This is some city. The city of God from beginning to end is all about salvation. Even the walls, even the bulwarks are saved.

And he says, You can find the same principle expressed in Revelation chapter 21, where it speaks of the new Jerusalem being a city filled with glory and which excludes the unrighteous. Now, we need to make a distinction here. And I hope in this I'm not raising more terminology that's going to confuse you rather than instruct you.

But we should make a distinction between the kingdom of the Messiah, which is the millennial reign of Jesus. It's described here in Isaiah 26. And make a distinction between that and the coming of the new Jerusalem, which comes when this earth passes away.

Now, the cities are similar, right? The kingdom of God, the city of God and the new Jerusalem. Those two are similar, but yet they're distinct because they come at different times in God's plan of the ages. We come to verse 3 where he keeps talking about the glory of the Messiah's reign.

What a beautiful two-verse passage right there. Isn't that glorious? Isn't that a gem? Don't you want to make that your memory verse for this week? Meditate on it? You will keep him in perfect peace. What a promise.

Perfect peace. God promises that we can have perfect peace. And listen, and be kept in a place of perfect peace.

Now, what is perfect peace? The Hebrew term is actually shalom. You know what shalom is, right? It's peace. The Hebrew term here is shalom, shalom.

Peace, peace. And in Hebrew, as it is character in some other languages, if you want to intensify something, if you want to show something to a higher degree or to a higher level, you repeat it. And so it says, you will keep him in shalom, shalom.

In peace, peace. And it's an entirely inappropriate translation to say perfect peace. In the Hebrew language, repetition communicates intensity.

It isn't just shalom. It's shalom, shalom. It's perfect peace.

I like how it's stated twice there. F.B. Meyer says, Understand, dear soul, that it is thy privilege to live inside the double doors of God's love and care. He says to thee, peace, peace.

If one assurance is not enough, he'll follow it with a second and a third. Now notice this. It says here, Thou or you will keep him in perfect peace.

Now friends, some people can have this perfect peace, but it's fleeting. And they're never kept there. God wants to keep us in perfect peace.

And other people can be kept in peace, but it's not a perfect peace. It's the peace of the wicked. The peace of spiritual sleep and ultimate destruction.

Oh, I've met some people and they're plenty peaceful in their life. They need to get a little less peaceful. Because they're not right with God.

But they're at peace with it. Oh yeah, it's the peace of sleep. It's the peace of a guy who's on a boat.

And the boat's on a river and it's drifting towards a huge waterfall. It's drifting all over Niagara Falls. And he's asleep on the boat, sunning himself.

Oh, he's in peace. How peaceful he is sleeping on the boat. But he better wake up.

That's not perfect peace, my friends. You better wake up. So God wants to keep us.

And he wants to keep us in perfect peace. Well, what's the key? Does anybody in this room not want that tonight? Anybody say, oh no, I don't want that perfect peace. I don't want to be kept in that.

Of course you want it. Well, how do you get it? Look at it, verse 3. You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind has stayed on you. This is the place of perfect peace and the source of it.

When we keep our minds stayed, settled upon, established upon the Lord himself, then we can be kept in this perfect peace. Very simple. Not easy, but very simple.

Now, to be kept in this perfect peace is a matter of our mind. That's what he says here, right? It isn't so much a matter of our spirit or of our soul or of our heart. It's a matter of our mind.

Remember what Jesus said in Matthew chapter 22? That we're supposed to love the Lord our God with all of our mind. Romans chapter 12 verse 2 says that we're transformed by the renewing of our mind. 1 Corinthians chapter 2 says that we can have the mind of Christ.

Philippians chapter 3 says that we're not to set our mind on earthly things. Colossians chapter 3 says that we're to set our mind on things above. My friends, the Christian life is not an unthinking life.

It's not a life of just doing or just experiencing, but it's also about thinking. And where we set our mind is essential in our walk before the Lord. So, to be kept in this perfect peace, our mind must be stayed.

Look at it there in verse 3. Whose mind is stayed. What does that mean? The Hebrew word samach means or comes from the root to prop up something. And it has the idea of to lean upon or to take hold.

To bear up, to establish, to uphold, to lay, lean, lie hard, put, rest yourself or set yourself or stand fast or to stay yourself or to sustain. The same Hebrew word in other places in the Old Testament, sometimes it's translated sustained. Sometimes it's the most significant word used to describe the high priest laying his hands on the head of a sacrificial animal.

His hands are resting on that head. That's where the hands are resting. That's what it means.

They're stayed on there. Other places it's translated being upheld or to stand fast or to be established or of leaning upon. That's what it means.

Your mind has to be established on something. Your mind is leaning on something. Your mind is sustained by something.

And so here's the question. What sustains your mind? What do you lay your mind upon? What upholds your mind? What does your mind stand fast upon? What is your mind established upon? What does your mind lean upon? My friends, to have this perfect peace, your mind cannot occasionally come to the Lord. It has to be stayed on Him.

I know that every single person in this room, your minds at least occasionally come to the Lord. You wouldn't be here tonight if your minds didn't at least occasionally come to the Lord. But here's the question.

You can be here tonight and you can have perfect peace. Right now, that might be one of the reasons you like coming to church. Because maybe for an hour and a half on Wednesday nights or an hour and a half on Sunday mornings, your mind is stayed on Him and such a peace comes over you.

You can't explain it. You feel so good when you come to church. You feel so good when you leave here.

And then a half hour later, an hour later, the next day you're in turmoil. And that perfect peace seems a million miles away. Do you know why? Your mind isn't stayed on Him.

It was for a little while, but it's not established. You visited the Lord. It's occasional with Him.

But if your mind will be stayed on Him, look at it there in verse 3, you will be kept in perfect peace. I imagine that every single person in this room has experienced that perfect peace at some time or another. But are you kept there? You want to be kept there, don't you? Well, your being kept there is in direct proportion to how much your mind is stayed on Him.

See, my friends, to be kept in this perfect peace, our mind must be stayed on the Lord. Our mind is stayed on ourselves. If our mind is stayed on our problems or the problem people in our lives or on anything else, we can't have this perfect peace.

This is the heart that says with the Apostle Paul what he said in Philippians chapter 3, that I may know Him. Your mind stayed on the Lord. Satan loves to get our minds on anything except the Lord.

Anything. You'll get your minds on your own problem. You'll get your minds on your own success.

You'll get your minds on this, on that. It doesn't matter. He doesn't care.

Do you think He cares what side of the boat He throws you out on? Right, left, front, back? He doesn't care. Just as long as your mind is not stayed on the Lord. So look at it, verse 3 again.

You will keep Him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you because He trusts you. This is another way of expressing the idea of keeping our minds stayed on Him. My friends, I want to relate to you a spiritual principle here.

Almost always what you keep your mind stayed on, that's what you're trusting. When you trust the Lord, you keep your mind stayed on Him. If you're not trusting the Lord, your mind is stayed on something else.

Proverbs chapter 3, verse 5 expresses this same idea. Listen, trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. Now, the word for lean in Proverbs 3, 5, lean not on your own understanding.

It's the same root as the word stayed in Isaiah chapter 26, verse 3. When we trust in the Lord, we are not leaning on our own understanding. To lean on the Lord is to trust Him. To be sustained by the Lord is to trust Him.

To be established by the Lord is to trust Him. To be upheld by the Lord, that's all to trust Him. And so you see, when He says this in verse 3, because He trusts in you, He says following the same thought.

There's not a difference between trusting in the Lord and having your mind stayed on Him. It's all connected. It's all the same thing.

The battle for trust in our lives begins in our minds. If we trust the Lord, it'll show in our actions. But it will begin in our mind.

So He says here in verse 4, exhorting us now, trust in the Lord forever. Don't you see? Don't you see what He's doing? He said, I want you to have this perfect peace. Trust in the Lord forever.

Do it. If you trust in the Lord forever, you're keeping your mind stayed on Him, aren't you? And then you're going to have the perfect peace. Why? I love this.

You know, the Bible is so thrilling. Look at verse 4. Trust in the Lord forever, for in Yah the Lord is everlasting strength. If the Lord calls us to trust on Him completely, to rely on Him completely with your mind.

Isn't that what the Lord's calling you to do tonight? Is there any question about that from the text that we studied? The Lord wants you to trust Him completely. Do you see how glorious it is how the Lord speaks to us about this? He appeals to our mind with a rational reason why we should trust the Lord. God doesn't want your unthinking obedience.

God says, do you want to know why you should trust Me completely? Why you should keep your mind stayed on Me? I'll tell you why. He says, because in the Lord is everlasting strength. Or actually, the Lord is everlasting strength.

It isn't that the Lord has everlasting strength. He is everlasting strength. So you know what? You can trust Him.

Makes sense to me. All we have to do is live it. And keep our lives, our minds stayed on Him.

Verse 5 speaks about the destiny of the city of man. For He brings down those who dwell on high. The lofty city, He lays it low.

He lays it low to the ground. He brings it to the dust. The foot shall tread it down.

The feet of the poor and the steps of the needy. The city of man is lofty. And its exalted ones dwell on high.

But the Lord will bring them down nonetheless. The city of man, the world system is nothing to the Lord. He lays it low.

But look at the way of the upright in verse 7. The way of the upright, the way of the just is uprightness. Almost upright. You weigh the path of the just.

Yes, in the way of your judgments. Oh Lord, we've waited for you. The desire of our soul is on your name, is for your name.

And for the remembrance of you. With my soul, I have desired you in the night. Yes, by my spirit within me, I will seek you early.

For when your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. You see that in verse 7? The way of the just is uprightness. In the kingdom of God, His just people walk in a way.

The way of uprightness. Not uptightness. That should be written over some Christian's lives, huh? That would be some people's lifetime Bible verse.

If it were a verse in the Bible. The way of the just is uptightness. No.

Uprightness. You see, Isaiah accurately gives the sense of order in this. The Lord makes His people just by a relationship of faith and trust in Him.

And then they walk in the way of uprightness. Why do they walk in uprightness? Because they serve the Lord God, and the Lord Himself is most upright. As they trust the Lord, they're declared just by the Lord.

And then they walk in His own way. And then he says, and this is exciting here. Notice here, verse 8. The desire of our soul is for your name.

In the kingdom of God, His just people love Him. And they desire Him. My friends, isn't this a glorious indication of the work of God in your life? Tonight.

Tonight. Do you desire the Lord? Do you want Him? Do you realize that that right there proves that God has done something glorious in your life? Can I tell you something? We are not born wanting God. We are not born desiring Him.

We're born children of Adam. And when Adam had sinned, when Adam had fallen, did he desire God? He wanted to hide from Him. He wanted to run from Him.

And we're born with this. Somehow there's an attraction to God, but there's also a desire to hide from Him. Friends, if you desire the Lord tonight, you should praise God for that.

God's done a work in your life. Then desire is displayed in many ways. It's desired by waiting.

It says, oh Lord, we have waited for you. You know, when you desire something or someone, you'll wait for them. And you'll do it gladly because of your desire.

The desire is displayed in seeking. He says, with my soul, I've desired you in the night. Yes, by my spirit within me, I will seek you early.

When you desire something or someone, you'll seek them all the time, both early and at night. Isn't that glorious how He says that there in verse 9? With my soul, I've desired you in the night. Yes, by my spirit within me, I will seek you early.

But wait a minute, Isaiah, are you a day person? Are you a morning person or a night person? It doesn't matter. I'll be both those people for the Lord. It's amazing, isn't it? Isaiah's just gloriously seeking the Lord here.

The way of the upright will one day be vindicated. It says, one day the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. Now, this is not the way it is for the wicked.

Look at verse 10. Let grace be shown to the wicked, yet he will not learn righteousness. In the land of uprightness, he will deal unjustly and will not behold the majesty of the Lord.

Lord, when your hand is lifted up, they will not see. But they will see and be ashamed for the envy of people. Yes, the fire of your enemies shall devour them.

You see, the wicked are ungrateful for God's goodness. Grace is shown to the wicked, but they don't learn righteousness. The wicked end in disaster.

Yet the Lord has precious promises to the humble heart. Look at it here, beginning in verse 12. Lord, you will establish peace for us, for you have also done all our works in us.

O Lord God, other masters besides you have had dominion over us, but by you only we make mention of your name. They are dead, they will not live. They are deceased, they will not rise.

Therefore, you punished them and destroyed them and made their memory to perish. You've increased the nation, O Lord. You've increased the nation.

You are glorified. You have expanded all the borders of the land. Lord, in trouble they visited you.

They poured out a prayer when your chastening was upon them. As a woman with child is in pain and cries out in her pangs when she draws near the time of her delivery, so we have been in your sight, O Lord. We have been with child.

We have been in pain. We have, as it were, brought forth wind. We have not accomplished any deliverance in the earth, nor have the inhabitants of the world fallen.

I think it's amazing here in verse 12. It says, Lord, you will establish our peace for us, for you also have done all our works in us. Sounds funny to me.

I think Isaiah has been reading the letter to the Ephesians. I mean, how about that? For by grace you've been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. That's what Isaiah is talking about. You've also done all our works in us.

It's not a matter of you doing good works. It's a matter of God doing them in you. So he says, listen, the past idolatry we've had, we repent of it, Lord.

And we know that what we do on our own is futile. It's like we've been in the birth pains of labor, but brought forth nothing. Yet, Lord, you've increased, you've blessed, you've done good for us.

We look to you, God. Notice here verse 19, the promise of resurrection to this humble heart. Your dead shall live.

Together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in the dust. For your dew is like the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

I think it's amazing here in verse 19 of Isaiah 26. Isaiah makes the confident and the triumphant proclamation. Your dead shall live.

You know, the Old Testament has a shadowy understanding of the life to come. If you don't want to understand the principles of resurrection, and the world to come, and the life to come, and the life beyond, my friends, don't rely on the Old Testament. Do you know why? I'll tell you why from 2 Timothy chapter 1, verse 10.

That passage of scripture reads that the secrets of the life to come have now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. Life and immortality were not brought to light until the ministry of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Old Testament has no inaccurate statements about the life to come.

No, please don't take that idea. But it has a shadowy understanding of it. Sometimes you find David saying, can I praise you from the grave? He's wondering, you know, I don't really know for sure.

He says, I don't know what's beyond. But here there's these flashes of brilliance, these flashes of insight, and Isaiah gives one of them here in verse 19, where he says, Your dead shall live. This is a confident expectation of resurrection and glory for the Lord's righteous ones.

Again, these are just some of the heritage aspects of the kingdom of the Lord and the lives of His people. Look at verses 20 and 21. It says, Come, my people, enter your chambers and shut your doors behind you.

Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment until the indignation is passed. For behold, the Lord comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity. The earth will also disclose her blood and will no more cover her slain.

That's something, isn't it? Come, my people, enter your chambers. Isaiah, speaking for the Lord, prophesies a time when God's people are invited to come and find refuge until the time of indignation from the Lord is passed. And the refuge is secure.

God's people are secure in the chambers with the doors shut behind them. They're hidden securely. He says, Hide yourself.

Anyway, Charles Spurgeon has a marvelous sonnet where he says, God's people can find refuge in the chambers of the Lord. He says, Come, let me show you the different chambers you can find refuge in. Here's the chamber of God's great power.

Here's the chamber of God's great love. Here's the chamber of God's great foreknowledge. Here's the chamber of God's great forgiveness.

And he goes through this marvelous description. And then he adds on the other point. It says in verse 20, And shut your doors behind you.

There's some things you need to shut out. Shut out all doubt. And then he says, And shut yourself in to the Lord.

Beautiful message. You see, in the larger picture, Isaiah is talking about a very specific time and place where God's indignation is going to come upon this Earth and God will shelter his people from it. The indignation God's people are hidden from is from the Lord itself.

Notice it says, The Lord comes out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the Earth for their iniquity. This is not persecution from the wicked. This is judgment from the Lord.

And by the way, also we should say that this is not a local judgment, but it's something that the Lord brings upon the inhabitants of the Earth in general. That's what it says here. And so the devastation of the indignation of the Lord is seen all over the Earth.

It says, The Earth will also disclose her blood and will no more cover her slain. So here's my question for you. When is this time when God's people are carried away securely hidden from a time of great indignation that the Lord brings upon the Earth? This must refer to the refuge, the safety, the security of God's people when they are caught up together with the Lord in the air, according to 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. And thereby they escape the horrific indignation of the Lord that he pours out upon the world in the great tribulation, which will immediately precede the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Might I say that this is a powerful passage supporting the teaching of the pre-tribulation rapture, which says that Jesus Christ will remove his people from this Earth before the time of great tribulation, coming upon the Earth immediately before his great return. My friends, let me ask you a question. If this precious promise of Isaiah chapter 26, verses 20 and 21, that's precious promise, right? If this is not fulfilled by a pre-tribulation rapture, then when is it fulfilled? When is there a time of God's indignation coming upon the whole Earth? That's what it says here.

Coming upon the whole Earth that he rescues his people from and sets them securely apart from so that they're not touched by it. If you notice here, it says, hide yourself as it were. Nobody on the Earth is going to be hidden from the terrors of the great tribulation.

But we, we won't be on the Earth. We'll be caught up together with the Lord in the air. All right, let's make our way kind of quickly here through Isaiah chapter 27.

In that day the Lord with his severe sword, great and strong, will punish Leviathan, the fleeing serpent, Leviathan, that twisted serpent, and he will slay the reptile that is in the sea. Now again, this brings us back to the theme of Isaiah 24 through 27 in general. In that day is the day when the kingdom of the Messiah ultimately triumphs and rules.

And you say, Leviathan? Who's Leviathan? Well, the ultimate triumph of the Lord in the day of the Messiah is expressed in victory over Leviathan, the fleeing serpent. Now, Leviathan, what do we know about it from this passage? Well, first of all, we know that it's identified with a serpent, right? No doubt about that. We know that Leviathan is resisting God.

He's resisting God. He's fleeing. He's twisting.

By the way, twisting there? It has the idea of coiling as if it's ready to strike. And we know that Leviathan is connected with the sea. And we know that Leviathan's ultimate destiny is to be destroyed by the Lord.

So what you have is some serpent-like creature associated with the sea that's going to be judged by the Lord. It's resisting the Lord and trying to attack Him or fight against the Lord. By the way, Leviathan is also mentioned in other passages of Scripture, like Job chapter 3, Job chapter 41, Psalm 74, and Psalm 104.

And these passages reinforce the idea of Leviathan as a mighty serpent-like creature connected with the sea who resists God's will and is crushed by the Lord. Now, some people take Leviathan as just a picture, just a representation of obviously Satan. We're familiar with the reference to Satan as a serpent, right? Genesis chapter 3, the book of Revelation.

But here the picture is a little bit different. It's of a sea serpent, or perhaps what we would know as a dragon. And this reference may be a literal reference, and at some point in history, either past or present, Satan may manifest himself as a monster connected with the sea.

By the way, in the book of Revelation, chapter 13, when the Antichrist emerges upon the earth, he comes as a beast from the sea. And so, in God's ultimate triumph, he slays Leviathan. And so, you could go forth and argue back and forth whether this is just a vivid image of Satan's defeat, or at some time and place, whether it'll be more literally fulfilled than we can even imagine.

That specific aspect doesn't really matter. We know what it's trying to communicate to us. In the great day of the Lord, Satan's going down.

He'll be destroyed by God. That's not enough. It's not enough for evil to be destroyed.

The righteous will be blessed. Look at verse 2. In that day, sing to her. The vineyard of red wine, I, the Lord, keep it.

I water it every moment. Lest any hurt it, I keep it night and day. Fury is not in me.

Who would set briars and thorns against me in battle? I'd go through them. I'd burn them together. Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me.

Those who come, he shall cause to take root in Jacob. Israel shall blossom and bud and fill the face of the world with fruit. Isn't that glorious? You know, it's as if Israel, Lord, God's people are his vineyard.

And what does he say about it in verse 3? I, the Lord, keep it. I water it every moment. Lest any hurt it, I keep it night and day.

Don't you want the Lord to take care of you that way? That's how he wants to take care of you. So, if you don't feel taken care of by the Lord that way, I don't think it's his fault. I wonder if you're coming to him.

I wonder if you're letting him do it. I wonder if you're spending enough time. To water something takes a little bit of time, doesn't it? To keep it takes a little time.

To protect it takes some time. I guess we're back to the idea of keeping your mind stayed on him again. But look at the glorious result.

Verse 6, Israel shall blossom and bud and fill the face of the world with fruit. Remember the parable of the sower? And Jesus talked about in that parable some bearing 30 and 60 or 100 fold and all of this great fruit that comes forth. What is it? It's because they've been taken well care of.

And they've been blessed and they've been fruitful. That's what God wants to happen in your life. Verse 7. Has he struck Israel as he struck those who struck him? Or has he been slain according to the slaughter of those who were slain by him? In measure by sending it away you contended with it.

He removes it by his rough wind in the day of the east wind. Therefore by this the iniquity of Jacob will be covered. And this is all the fruit of taking away his sin.

When he makes all the stones of the altar like chalk stones that are beaten to dust when wooden images and incense altars do not stand up. You see the Lord shows his mercy to Israel in two ways. Really first by it says there in verse 7. Has he struck Israel as he struck those who struck him? That's a lot of striking.

What's the Lord talking about? The Lord's showing his mercy to Israel in that even though the Lord struck Israel when Israel went astray he didn't strike Israel as severely as he did the other nations who went astray. So he's saying I'm showing my mercy to you. But secondly did you notice this? It's just glorious.

Verse 9. Therefore by this the iniquity of Jacob will be covered. Isn't that the mercy of the Lord? Covering our iniquity. This is ultimately fulfilled in the kingdom of the Messiah.

If you notice here it says he makes all the stones of the altar like chalk stones that are beaten to dust. The Lord shows his mercy to Israel in that he destroys their idolatrous altars and images forcing them to worship the Lord only. Coming now the Lord shows his goodness to the nations too.

Verse 10. Yet the fortified city will be desolate. The habitation forsaken and left like a wilderness.

There the calf will feed and there it will lie down and consume its branches. When its boughs are withered they will be broken off. The women will come and set them on fire for it is a people of no understanding.

Therefore he who made them will not have mercy on them and he who formed them will show them no favor. We're back here to the picture of the city of man. What's God going to do with the city of man? Judge it.

Wipe it out. The city of man representing the world system will be made desolate by the judgment of the Lord. Knowing this why would we put our hope, our confidence, our expectation in the world system? The city of man, the world system is going to be made so desolate that it will resemble a wilderness with bare

branches useful only for fire.

If you notice here too at the verse 11 at the end of it, it says, and he who formed them will show them no favor. This is the terrible judgment against the city of man and against the world system. We want the favor of the Lord, don't we? The city of man will never find it.

If we long for the favor of the Lord, then we shouldn't long for the city of man as well. The world system, the citizens of the city of man, they'll be shown no favor. And finally wrapping up verses 12 and 13.

It shall come to pass in that day that the Lord will thresh from the channel of the river to the brook of Egypt and you will be gathered one by one, O you children of Israel. So it shall be in that day that the great trumpet will be blown. They will come who are about to perish in the land of Assyria and they who are outcasts in the land of Egypt and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount of Jerusalem.

Oh, the Lord will be worshiped by his own regathered people. They'll be regathered one by one, O you children of Israel. They'll come from the nations and they'll come to worship the Lord in the holy mount of Jerusalem.

My friends, God's plan is going to be fulfilled. It's going to succeed. There's no doubt about this from beginning to end.

So our job isn't to question the plan of the Lord or doubt it or fear it. Just get in line with it. I guess that all comes back to trusting in the Lord.

Keeping our minds staid on him. You want that perfect peace tonight, don't you? The Lord has it for you. He really does.

It's a precious gift that he wants to give you as you trust him, as you keep your mind staid, fixed, established on him. Let's pray together and just take that together as a promise from the Lord for our lives. Father, we do come before you tonight and we want it, Lord.

We want that perfect peace. And we don't want it just when we're here at church. We want to be kept in it, Lord.

We want to be established in it, secure in it. So, Father, keep our minds established and secure and settled upon you. Lord, not upon the things you give us.

Not upon the things even you've promised us.

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