

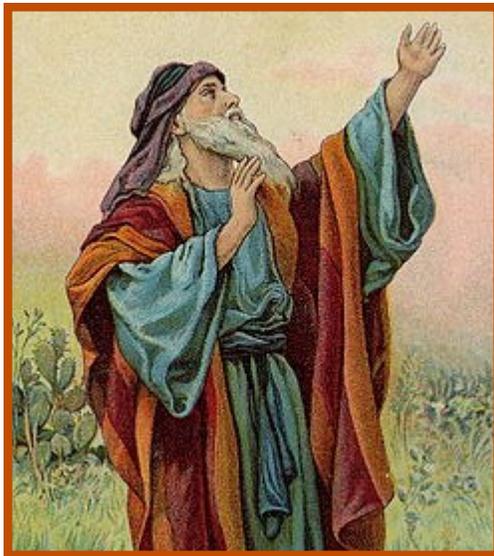
The prophet says that we were in labor, like a woman about to give birth, but brought forth only wind, nothing worth while.

However he tells God: "Your dead [the righteous] will live, their bodies will rise." He tells the dead to wake up and shout for joy, for the morning dew is upon them, and the earth will give birth to its dead."

Some commentators here try to deny that Isaiah speaks of a resurrection of the dead, saying such a belief was not found that early in the history of the Jews. But the argument is a vicious circle: it means we cannot find any early text, because this is not one. It is undeniable that Daniel 12:2 (much later, in all probability) also speaks of a resurrection. Much earlier, Psalm 17:15 seems to speak of being with God after death. Psalm 49:16 probably has the same sense, and perhaps Psalm 73:23. Isaiah 53:20 seems to speak of a resurrection of the suffering servant. And the debated text of Job 19:25-27 seems to mean survival too.

Finally in verses 20-21 he tells the people to hide in their rooms until God's wrath has passed by. This is remarkable: no one could really hide from God. That is only a poetic fancy. But it is like the poetic fancy found in Job 14:13 where Job wishes he could hide in Sheol until God's anger had passed - a passage which one unperceptive commentator thinks must mean a denial of survival.

End of Chapter 26



"THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME"
ISAIAH 61:1

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THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

CHAPTER 26

AND HIS NAME
WILL BE CALLED
WONDERFUL COUNSELOR,
MIGHTY GOD,
EVERLASTING FATHER,
PRINCE OF
PEACE.
ISAIAH 9:6

Isaiah is called "The Book of Salvation." The name *Isaiah* means "the salvation of the Lord" or "the Lord is salvation." Isaiah is the first book containing the writings of the prophets of the Bible. And the author, Isaiah, who is called the Prince of Prophets, shines above all the other writers and prophets of Scripture. His mastery of the language, his rich and vast vocabulary, and his poetic skill have earned him the title, "Shakespeare of the Bible." He was educated, distinguished, and privileged, yet remained a deeply spiritual man. He was committed to obedience over the long haul of his 55-60 year ministry as a prophet of God. He was a true patriot who loved his country and his people. Strong tradition suggests that he died a martyr's death under the reign of King Manasseh by being placed within the hollow of a tree trunk and sawed in two.

Isaiah's calling as a prophet was primarily to the nation of Judah (the southern kingdom) and to Jerusalem, urging the people to repent from their sins and return to God. He also foretold the coming of the Messiah and the salvation of the Lord. Many of his prophecies predicted events that occurred in Isaiah's near future, yet at the same time they foretold the events of the distant future (such as the coming of the Messiah), and even some events still to come in the last days (such as the second coming of Christ).

In summary, the message of Isaiah is that salvation comes from God—not man. God alone is Savior, Ruler and King.

Commentary on the book of Isaiah is by noted theologian Rev. William G. Most (1914-1999). His contributions to theology have been recognized all over the world. He published 12 books and a host of articles on topics ranging from biblical studies to Mariology and Latin grammar.

Book of Isaiah

Summary of Chapter 26

Thanksgiving of Judah. Summary and Comments. Chapter 26

The redeemed, typified by the land of Judah, will sing then: we have a strong city. It does not mean Jerusalem, but God Himself is their Rock - a frequent name for Him in the Old Testament (OT) -- and their strength. So they can open the gates without fear to let the righteous enter.

The righteous are those who keep <faith>. That means: who keep the covenant. It does not mean the unfortunate mistake of Luther who thought that confidence was the merits of Christ applied to him as the needed faith. In the OT, fidelity always means fidelity to the covenant. We think of Hosea 6:6, so often mistranslated: "For I desire <hesed>, that is, fidelity to the covenant, not [the mere externals of] sacrifice,

and love of God, rather than burnt offerings." Hebrew <hesed> is often mistranslated as <mercy>, since the Septuagint used <eleos>, not having any real word for <hesed>, fidelity to the covenant bond. And we rendered Hebrew <da'ath> as love. For it is the same root as <yada> which means not only intellectual acknowledgement, but complete adherence in mind and will. Those who do this, God will keep in "perfect peace" --which is really <shalom>, which means general well-being, not only peace.

So Isaiah tells them to trust in the Lord, for He is the Rock-- which we noted above. He levels the proud city to the dust, so that the feet of the poor can trample upon it.

Therefore the way on which the righteous walk is level, they walk in the way of God's laws - again, fidelity to the covenant.

He adds that even if favor or grace is shown to the wicked, they learn nothing - for they are hardened. The word we rendered by <grace or favor> - is Hebrew <hen> which has both meanings. But if we render it as favor, we must keep in mind that it does not mean only that God sits there and smiles on people, but gives them nothing, so that they would do good by their own power. That would be Pelagian heresy. So it is really better to say grace, which expresses what He gives. Isaiah adds that even when they live among the righteous, they still are evil - even though the kind of company one keeps tends to pull him in to the same level. These wicked people do not see that the hand of the Lord is raised on high, ready to strike them.

Then he prays that fire may consume them. We must not take this as a desire for revenge, which is immoral. No, he is asking that the objective order be observed, which calls for punishment of the wicked.

He even says: "All that we have done, you have done for us." This expresses our total dependence upon God. A meditation on Philippians 2:13 would help here.

He adds that those who once ruled them - probably thinking of Assyria-- are dead, and they will not return, their very memory will be forgotten.

In enlarging the nation, the Lord has gained glory for Himself. We must not misunderstand this. The First Vatican Council defined that God created for His own glory. But the head of the theological committee there, Bishop Gasser, explained that those words did not mean God was seeking to gain something - He cannot gain anything, and glory does Him no good - but merely that the fact that He does good to His creatures, is a glory to him. We think of the saying of St. Irenaeus (4. 14. 1): "In the beginning God formed Adam, not because He stood in need of man, but that He might have someone to receive His benefits. "