

The Triumph of God

1. Consider what life and the universe would be like if there were no consequences to resisting God's purpose. Write your comments here.

As Christians, we understand that life will not continue on forever just as it is. One day God will step in and end the world as we know it. In these chapters, Isaiah sees beyond the rise and fall of individual nations, and even beyond death itself, to a new world—where the final victory of the Righteous One (24:16) is unveiled.

Invitation to Pray: Ask our Great God to deepen your understanding of His ways and His glorious character. Invite Him to show you both the *beauty* and the *terror* of His holy judgments.

2. Chapter 24 sets the scene for this section. **Read this chapter carefully.** Mark the verbs in verses 1, 3, 4, 19, and 20. Notice the vivid poetic descriptions. What are your reactions after the first reading?
3. What truth is powerfully communicated in 24:2?
4. What have the people of the earth done to bring about the total devastation that is to come (vv. 5-6)?
5. The following definitions will help you to understand the charges that are being leveled in verse 5. Read through each definition; then carefully re-read the verse. Remember, in this context the terms are applicable to all humanity. Finish by paraphrasing Isaiah 24:5.
defiled: to pollute
disobeyed: to step over the line God established; cross over the boundary
the laws: the plural denotes law of every sort and law covering every aspect of life
violated: altered; changed the basic moral code into something more acceptable
broken: discarded the whole concept of a covenant relationship with God
everlasting covenant: Many view this as a reference to the covenant God made with Noah after the great flood (Genesis 8:20-9:17). This covenant deals with our care of God's world, our treatment of fellow humans and God's promise never to destroy

all earthly life with a flood. Verse 5 implies that mankind has rejected the covenant by persistently abusing their God-given authority over other living creatures and their responsibilities to the Lord. Although this is probably the primary meaning, the title “everlasting covenant” is applied to several different covenants in the Bible. (See Psalm 105:10-11; Leviticus 24:8; 2 Samuel 23:5). This could be why Isaiah used the plural *laws*, so every period and aspect of law-giving was covered.

After a time of reflection and meditation, write your paraphrase of verse 5.

6. Why is there a connection between human sin and the earth’s curse (Genesis 3:17-19; Numbers 35:33; Jeremiah 3: 2, 9)? See also Romans 8:20-21.

7. In what ways is the godlessness of humanity taking its toll on the physical earth today?

The Scene of Judgment

8. Take time to reflect on the vivid images in Isaiah 24:6-13, 18c-20.
 - a. What reality do these pictures convey? (Compare Revelation 16:18-21)

 - b. How do you account for the shouts of joy in verses 14-16a? (Notice 16a especially.) (Also consider Matthew 24:29-31.)

 - c. What else will happen on the day of destruction (24:21-23)? (See Ephesians 6:11-12 and Matthew 25:41.)

9. **For your own heart:** In the end, the whole worldly fabric of life built by human resources without relying upon God will collapse. How do you personally respond to the idea that the infrastructure of your present way of life in this world is found wanting and will be completely overthrown? Explore in prayer and reflection in what way you need to be ready for the final assessment of the human race at the second coming of Jesus. (See Romans 14: 9-12; Matthew 16:27, 25:31-46; and 1 Corinthians 3: 12-15.) Write your response on a separate sheet of paper.

Isaiah furnishes us with many striking images of what it will be like when God finally and permanently removes evil from the earth. However, God's purpose in judgment is not just to condemn. *By the same act, God will deliver the saints and bring about a glorious new world!* These events will take place at the glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus. When the Lord returns, the whole world will behold the unveiling of the divine presence, the culminating revelation of the majesty and transcendent glory of the triune God. The glory of God that Isaiah witnessed in his vision in chapter six will finally become visible to the whole earth (Isaiah 24:23).

Chapters 25-27 follow with glimpses of the beautiful side of God's wrath—the deliverance of His people from all their enemies. This theme is intertwined with praises from the surviving remnant. **Read** these chapters in one sitting.

10. Consider the expressions of adoration and praise for God's righteous dealings with men (25:1-5, 9-12; 26:1-21; 27:3-11). What makes the Lord worthy of trust? List as many qualities as you can.

The Banquet Scene

Isaiah chapter 25, verses 6-8 provide a fitting climax to our passage. In this breath-taking vision Isaiah witnesses the ultimate triumph of God and His enthronement upon Mount Zion. Take a few minutes to meditate on the scene of God's banquet. This passage is one of the most poignant in the book of Isaiah. Compare these verses with Revelation 19:6-9.

11. a. Who will attend this feast? (See also Isaiah 2:2-4; and Hebrews 12:22-24.)

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- b. What actions will be taken by the Lord on this mountain?

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- c. What do you think the details of food and drink symbolize?

Note: The "shroud" and "sheet" (NIV), "covering" and "veil" (NASB), (verse 7) may have a two-fold meaning. The most obvious is the universal pain and sorrow that the curse of death brought into the world. These terms may also suggest the spiritual blindness of Israel and the nations to the one true God and Savior. (See 2 Corinthians 3:12-14; Zechariah 12:10; and Revelation 1:7-8.)

12. How does this wonderful imagery transform your understanding of death for the believer?

Verse 8 is quoted by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:54 and by the Apostle John in Revelation 7:17 and 21:4.

13. a. Contrast “the city of God” (26:1) with “the cities of the world” mentioned in 24:10-12, 25:2-3 and 26:5-6.

b. What do you think the cities of the world symbolize?

14. Explain in your own words the concept of God’s wrath.

15. Consider the truth that a *holy God is both just and merciful*. How is this truth demonstrated in chapters 24-27? Include references.

16. How have you experienced the justice and mercy of God towards you? Be as specific as possible.

17. One day we will live in an environment where everything that could mar holiness is forever removed. How can this future hope help you grow in trust and purity of heart (1 John 3:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:8; Psalm 25:2)?

Chapters 34 and 35 of Isaiah furnish additional insights into God’s ultimate judgment of the human race and the blessings bestowed on those who inherit eternal life. Finish by reading these chapters meditatively. Ask God to plant these truths deep within your heart. As you read, think about how you want this perspective of God and His kingdom to influence your daily attitudes and habits.

Close by praising God for His hatred of sin and for His gracious solution in Christ!