

• *Devastated city followed by a joyful banquet – new heaven and new earth*

After a devastated city and a divine King, we have a picture of a joyful banquet. The entire world is like a devastated city. 'The city of emptiness is broken down'¹. But when God's King comes, Yahweh Almighty will reign and sin will be utterly overthrown. The environment will be healed. A new heavens and new earth will come.

24:10

• *Defeat of sin leads to joy and celebration*

Chapter 25 follows on in close connection with chapter 24. It makes the point that when sin is defeated by the coming of God's King, it will lead to great joy and celebration. There will be great celebration among the people of God, because God has delivered them from their many distresses. When God saves his people he transfers them out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his grace and mercy. Let us look at this principle in Isaiah 25.

1. What are we rescued from?

1. **What are we rescued from?** In Isaiah's vision there is a great banquet on a mountain (Mount Zion presumably). A person who has been rescued from the 'city of the world' is rejoicing. (i) They have been rescued **from the 'city of emptiness'**¹, for that city will be brought to nothingness.

24:10

(i) *'The city of emptiness'*

¹ *Yahweh, you are my God;
I will exalt you and praise your name,
for in perfect faithfulness
you have done marvellous things,
things planned long ago.
² You have made the city a heap of rubble,
the fortified town a ruin,
the foreigners' stronghold a city no
more; it will never be rebuilt.*

(ii) *Poverty and distress*

(ii) They have been rescued **from poverty and distress.**

³ *Therefore a strong people will respect you;
a city of ruthless nations will fear you.
⁴ You have been a fortress for the poor,
a refuge for the needy in his distress,
a shelter from the storm
and a shade from the heat,
when the breath of the ruthless
is like a storm driving against a wall.
⁵ Like the heat in a desert,
you silence the uproar of foreigners.
As heat is reduced by the shadow of a cloud,
the song of the ruthless is humbled.*

• *God's protection*

God has given his people protection. They have discovered in God 'a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat'.

2. What will they be given instead?

2. **What will they be given instead?** Verses 6–8 go on to describe the riches of the party on the mountain.

⁶ *Yahweh Almighty will prepare for all
peoples, on this mountain,*

a feast of rich food, a feast of well-matured wine, the best of meats and the finest of wines.

• *The wonders of the gospel:*

• *Forgiveness of sins*

• *Sonship*

• *Hope of everlasting life*

• *Peace love and joy*

• *God's presence*

Here is a prophecy of the wonders of the gospel. Consider the feast. There is complete and total 'justification', the forgiveness of sins, the righteousness of God given to clothe us in God's sight. There is our sonship. We are adopted into God's family. We enjoy his unchanging love towards us. We are joined on to our Lord Jesus Christ. We have hope of everlasting life, resurrection of the body, the endless joys of the world to come with God's King whom we know to be our Lord Jesus Christ. There are the wines of peace and love and joy. There are the pleasures of feeling God's very presence with us, the Spirit of adoption in whom we cry 'Abba, Father'. There is 'the blessed hope', the expectation of more joys and blessings to come. The banqueting hall is the 'mountain of God', the spiritual Zion, the place where Jesus died and to which God's people come. The One who gives the banquet is the Lord himself. 'Yahweh Almighty will prepare . . . a feast . . .' The Lord has made this banquet 'for all people'. All are invited to it.

3. Death itself will be abolished

3. Death itself will be abolished. Isaiah continues:

*⁷On this mountain he will swallow up the covering that covers all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations;
⁸he will swallow up death for ever.
The Sovereign Lord Yahweh will wipe away the tears from all faces;
he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth.
For Yahweh has spoken.*

• *'Covering' or 'sheet' spread over a dead body*

The 'covering' or 'sheet' is the covering that is spread over a dead body. But this symbol of death will disappear for ever. The full coming of God's kingdom will involve the total abolition of death.

4. Finally the people of God will rejoice in God Himself. Each believer will have something to give thanks for

4. Finally the people of God will rejoice in God himself. Each believer will have something to give thanks for.

*⁹In that day each one will say,
'Look! This is our God;
we trusted in him, and he saved us.
This is Yahweh, we waited in confidence for him;
let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation.
¹⁰For the hand of Yahweh will be at peace on this mountain.'
Moab will be trampled in his place,
as straw is trampled down in the manure.
¹¹They will spread out their hands in it,
as a swimmer spreads out his hands to swim.
God will bring down their pride
despite the cleverness of their hands.
¹²He will bring down the fortification of your highest walls
and lay them low;
he will bring them down to the ground,
to the very dust.*

• A personal relationship with God

• Every enemy will be removed for ever

• A banquet that will last forever for God's people

At the heart of our joy is a personal relationship with God. He will be 'our God'¹. There will be the joy of our having looked in confidence to God, the joy of receiving his answer². There is the peace that comes with our having his protecting hand upon us³. There is the joyful victory that comes when the 'Moabs' of this world (the traditional enemies of Israel) are for ever removed. Every enemy will be 'swallowed up' – removed for ever. The city of emptiness is broken down⁴. Sinners will be like a person who cannot swim, thrashing his hands in a desperate attempt to survive and keep his head above water. But they will fail. They will be like soldiers fighting from behind walls, as the walls are being destroyed.

But for God's people, there will come into being a banquet that will last for ever.

1 25:9
2 25:9
3 25:10

4 24:10



Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His *Preaching Through The Bible (PTTB)* books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.



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