

• *A larger and glorified Israel*

1. All demonic powers will be finally defeated

• *God will conquer and destroy supernatural forces that rise up against Him*

2. God's people will become a fruitful vineyard

• *Before, vineyard of Judah – worthless*

• *Now, God's people - fruitful*

• *'Sparkling wine' of power and spirituality*

• *God will guard day and night*

• *God's anger will disappear*

• *God will be a mighty warrior*

• *God's enemies had best make their peace with God*

• *Christ's church will be fruitful*

The last picture within Isaiah 24–27 is of an altogether new Israel that fills the earth. One day 'Israel' (a term that includes believing gentiles) will be enlarged and glorified.

1. All demonic powers will be finally defeated.

¹*In that day,
Yahweh will punish with his sword,
his fierce, great and powerful sword,
Leviathan the swift serpent,
Leviathan the coiling serpent;
he will slay the monster of the sea.*

In Canaanite mythology there were fierce serpents and sea-monsters who were the enemies of the gods. Isaiah uses well-known stories to make the point that God will conquer and destroy all supernatural forces that rise up against him.

2. God's people will become a fruitful vineyard. We remember that when Isaiah was giving a general description of the spiritual condition of Judah he sang a song about a useless vineyard – Judah. 'My loved one had a vineyard', he said, and went on to sing of its worthlessness¹. But now the picture is the exact opposite. God's people will become a worldwide people, and a fruitful vineyard.

²*In that day! A vineyard of sparkling wine!
Sing of it!*
³*I, Yahweh, guard it.
I water it continually,
so that no one may harm it.
I guard it day and night.*
⁴*have no anger at all.
If only there were briars and thorns confronting me!
I would march against them in battle;
I would set them all on fire.*
⁵*Or let them take refuge in me as their Stronghold.
Let them make peace with me.
Yes, let them make peace with me!*
⁶*In days to come Jacob will take root,
Israel will bud and blossom
and fill all the world with fruit.*

God's people will produce the fresh 'sparkling wine' of power and spirituality². God will guard them day and night³. God will be 'propitiated'⁴. That is, his anger will totally disappear because his people's sins have been covered by a sacrifice for sin (see Romans 3:25; 1 John 2:2; Isaiah 12:1, 'Let your angry turn away . . .'). God will be a mighty warrior with a sword eager and ready to slash down any weed that might appear in his vineyard⁵. The enemies of God's people had best make their peace with God⁶. The church of the Lord Jesus Christ will come to a period of worldwide fruitfulness⁷.

1 5:1-7

2 27:2

3 27:3

4 27:4a

5 27:4b

6 27:5

7 27:6

3. In the final glory of `Israel', God's people are chastised, but God's enemies are destroyed

• God deals severely with His people but does not destroy them

• An atonement for sin available

• Everything associated with idolatry will be destroyed

• Spiritual maturity is in the distant future

• Trees die

• The reason – God's people have fallen so badly they have lost all spiritual discernment

3. In the final glory of `Israel', God's people are chastised, but God's enemies are destroyed. The prophet asks:

*⁷Has Yahweh struck Jacob
as he struck down those who struck him?
Has he been killed
as those were killed who killed Jacob?*

The answer to the question is 'No!' God deals severely with his people, but he does not destroy them. There are times when God shouts severely to his people.

*⁸By scaring him with shouts and by sending people away you state your case against him.
With his fierce blast he drives him out, as on a day the east wind blows.*

God sets limits to the severity with which he deals with us. The east wind could be biting, but it would come and go. Its sharpness did not last for ever. God's severity with his people is the same. And he makes provision for sin to be atoned for.

⁹So by this Jacob's iniquity is be atoned for.

By God's restraint and compassion as he punishes his people, the way is left open for an atonement for sin. The result will be the final purification of his people.

And this will be the fruit of the removal of his sin: when he makes all the altar stones to be like crushed limestone broken to pieces.

Everything that is associated with idolatry will be destroyed.

*The Asherah poles will never rise again
or the incense altars.*

But this spiritual maturity will only come in the distant future. The destiny immediately ahead of Judah is desolation. 'Jerusalem' – the people of God in Isaiah's day and for many centuries to come – will be like an abandoned settlement.

*¹⁰The fortified city stands desolate,
an abandoned settlement, forsaken like the desert;
there the calves graze,
there they lie down;
they strip its branches bare.*

The trees die and become easily broken, dry wood.

*¹¹When its twigs are dry, they are broken off
and women come and make fires with them.*

Verse 11b gives the reason for the desolation that will come upon Israel before God's people reach their final maturity.

*For this is not a people with discernment;
so their Maker has no compassion on them,
and their Creator, the One who shaped them, shows them no favour.*

• *Eventually, a day of restoration and maturity*

God's people – in the days of Isaiah – have fallen so badly they have lost all spiritual discernment. But a day of great restoration and maturity will come for the whole people of God eventually.

¹²In that day Yahweh will harvest his fruit from the streams of the River to the Wadi of Egypt, and you, O Israelites, will be gathered up one by one.

¹³And in that day a great trumpet will sound.

Those who were perishing in Assyria and those who were straying in Egypt will come and worship Yahweh on the holy mountain in Jerusalem.

• *New worldwide 'Israel' – fruitful, even from Israel's enemies*

In the new worldwide 'Israel' that is to come, God harvests fruit from his people (the picture language is of a vine or fruitful tree). It is a worldwide 'Israel' that is in mind. The fruit comes even from Israel's enemies. Assyria was the most powerful pagan land in Isaiah's time, and Egypt was the land from which Israel was redeemed at the beginning of its history. This is Isaiah's way of picturing a worldwide people of God, with people in it from every nation, even those which have shown great hostility towards the God of the Bible. They all come (in Isaiah's vision) to the temple in Jerusalem. The Christian remembers, of course, that it was on a hill in Jerusalem that Jesus was crucified. The fulfilment of Isaiah's vision is to be found in the coming of the Son of David, our Lord Jesus Christ. It was his being 'lifted up' on the hill of crucifixion that began to draw all nations to God's people.

• *Fulfilment of Isaiah's vision found in the coming of Christ and His crucifixion*

 <p>slices.org.uk</p>	<p>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 <i>Preaching Through The Bible (PTTB)</i> 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.</p>	
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