

## Isaiah 25 (8-9) – He Will Swallow Up Death

Isaiah 25 is a prophecy written hundreds of years before Jesus about what Jesus would accomplish in both his first coming, in the first century, and in his second coming, which we are still looking forward to. And vs.8-9 gives us the big picture, and the title of our message; Jesus will swallow up death forever. It is a glorious truth. But it is a truth that will apply to you in one of two ways. And you will have a choice to make, today.

For a bit of context to Isaiah 25, Isaiah 24 talks about the judgment that is coming upon the whole earth. God is coming to undo everything, all of creation, as consequence of the sin of this world. Isaiah uses the imagery of a city as a symbol of all the wickedness in human history. And the judgment of God, described in detail, leaves the city, the people, the planets, everything that is destined to remain wicked, all of it is destroyed.

Now, as we come to Isaiah 25 and vs.1-2, you see what many people want to deny. It is praise for God because of the judgment of God. Why do God's people praise God? Because he puts an end to the wickedness of the earth. The rebels have been brought to ruin. The injustice has been made insignificant. God's enemies will be gone. As vs.2 proclaims as praise – *For you have made the city a heap. A smoldering, disgusting, ash heap.* Today, we call it hell. God's judgment is coming. And the person and work of Jesus Christ proves it. And Jesus will make it happen. Praise be to God.

In vs.1-2, we see that this judgment of God leads to the praise of God. And in vs.3, we see that the judgment of God makes people glorify God. The judgment of God leads to the fear of God, which means faith in God. In other words, the judgment of God leads to salvation. And notice, this is deliverance despite destruction. A remnant taken from the ruins. God's people saved by, and through, and from God's judgment.

In vs.4-5, you see how deliverance, how salvation, comes out of this judgment. God is a stronghold, God is a shelter, God is a shade, and God is

a wall. And this idea of a storm takes on two powerful manifestations. God is our protection from the storm of the ruthless. And God is the storm that is wiping out the ruthless. In the judgment of God, the people of God are kept safe. God is both a raging storm as well as the shelter from the storm.

How can this be? Think of Jesus on the cross. He was being mocked, tortured, and killed by the wickedness of men. The wrath of man came upon the Son of God. But the wrath of God against the sin of man came upon Jesus, too. Jesus suffered the sin of men. And Jesus suffered the wrath of God against the sin of men. God's judgment must come. And the full weight of his wrath did come. But on Calvary's Mountain, Jesus became our strong shelter from the storms of this world and the storm of God's wrath against sin.

In vs.1-5, you see that God's judgment will bring salvation for God's people. Now, in vs.6-9, you see Isaiah speak of a mountain. This is not Calvary's Mountain, outside of Jerusalem. This is referring to Mt. Zion, inside of Jerusalem, where King Jesus will reign. And on Calvary's Mountain, Jesus paid for our sin. But, what about death? It is still here. It comes for us all. We all must face it. Vs.7 speaks of death like a covering. It is the shroud, the veil that every person and every nation must contend with. And everyone loses. But Jesus will give his people the victory. As vs.7 says, Jesus will destroy this covering. Vs.8 says Jesus will swallow up this covering, he will swallow up death, forever. Death will not hover like a cover over God's people. As vs.8 declares and 1 Corinthians 15:54 repeats – *Death is swallowed up in victory.*

In vs.6, you see King Jesus making a feast for all his people in all the world. This feast, where God feasts with his people on a mountain, was seen hundreds of years before Isaiah's prophecy. It was in Exodus 24, on Mt. Sinai, as Moses was about to receive the Ten Commandments. Moses, Aaron, Aaron's sons, and 70 of the elders of Israel were there. And they saw what is known as a Christophany, an appearance of Jesus before he was born as a man. They saw the Son of God, King Jesus, and they had a feast with him there. Exodus 24:11 says – *they beheld God, and ate and drank.* That feast foreshadowed the great feast that God's people would enjoy with him. And

what Isaiah sees is not a few people feasting as representatives. He pictures it as a feast for all God's people from all times and from everywhere.

Here we are on the mountain of God with all God's people, and this feast is the coronation celebration of King Jesus. What a party this will be! The Bible talks of death swallowing us all up. But now death itself has been swallowed up! All the wickedness, all the injustice, all the heartache and pain, these are all symptoms of the real danger, and that danger is death. But here, we see that Jesus is swallowing up death forever. Death makes us all sad. But Jesus is wiping away all those tears. He is taking away our shame, and our sorrow, forever. And look again at vs.6-8. All people, all people, all nations, all the faces, all the earth. This is what you see in Revelation 5:9 – Jesus has *ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation*. And as Isaiah 25:9 says, God's people, with one voice, will realize that their wait was worth it, and they will rejoice and praise God for salvation.

Vs.9 says – *It will be said on that day*. And I want you to realize that what we celebrate on Easter, Resurrection Sunday, is not just one event. Indeed, we do celebrate the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. But because of his resurrection, there will be another resurrection. It is a single harvest. It started with Jesus, and then later, it concludes with God's children, those who place their faith in Jesus and his resurrection, when Jesus returns for his people. The ingathering of the harvest started with Jesus, who is called the firstfruits of this harvest. And as 1 Corinthians 15:23 says – *Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ*. It is one harvest, in two parts. His resurrection is our resurrection. As 2 Corinthians 4:14 says – *knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence*. Hallelujah!

So, in vs.1-5, we see God's people praising God's judgment. And we see God's people being delivered through God's judgment. And in vs.6-9 we see Jesus destroying the power of death, and his coronation as King, and the greatest party the people have ever known. But then, we see vs.10-12. And the other side of the story.

Vs.10-12 tell us plainly that not all people will be at this party. All God's people will be at this party. But not all people are God's people. All people have not surrendered to King Jesus. Some people are not protected. They are not on Mt. Zion, where Jesus reigns. Isaiah pictures them as Moab, the enemies of God, and God's people. And what a contrast to the celebration of the coronation. Mt. Zion, and God's salvation. Or Mount Nebo, in Moab, which will become like a filthy, smelly, disgusting pile of waste, a dunghill. Moab was a nation who arrogantly stood against Israel. But this mention is not about Moab alone. Moab represents any other kingdom, anything other than the way, the truth, and the life that is found in Jesus Christ alone.

People, religions, systems, ideas, and other things operate as if there is some other way than Jesus. But it is all pride against God. It is all, "I can do it myself" or "We can do it ourselves." It is what all other religions and systems of belief are at their core: it is the worship of human potential. We call it humanism. As if we have the power to save ourselves. But no human can crawl their way out of their own heart. And look at what happens in vs.11-12. They try and swim against the tide of the storm that is Jesus. But they will meet with utter futility as Jesus meets their pride with his judgment. It is a just sentence for rebellion against the King of the Universe.

Mt. Zion, King Jesus, and his people. There is no other way to deal with death. You don't have an answer for death. You don't have the power. God will let you do things your way if you want. But we have seen the end of all that. You're either going to be celebrating at the greatest party, forever. Or you're going to be swimming in a dunghill, forever.

Come to Jesus as your King. Because he is coming for his people, and he is coming to judge the wicked rebels who have resisted his reign and his rule. It is going to happen. His resurrection proves it. And as it says in vs.9 – *It will be said on that day, "Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation."* I pray that you will celebrate his victory, which we will share, in a forever feast. Because Jesus came to swallow up death, forever.