
Observations from Isaiah

LESSON XXI : THE END OF THE WORLD — PART 3 (26:1-27:1)

General outline (from Young's *Isaiah*):

- I. The Crisis and the Messiah (1:1-12:6)
 - A. Introduction to the Entire Prophecy (1:1-31)
 - B. Early Messages of Isaiah (2:1-5:30)
 - C. Judah's True Hope: The Messianic King (6:1-12:6)
- II. The Theocracy and the Nations (13:1-39:8)
 - A. Judah and the World Power (13:1-27:13)
 - B. God's Sovereignty Manifested in Salvation and Judgement (24:1-27:13)

“The chapter moves from contemplation of the glorious future and the kind of steadfast trust necessary to participate in that future (v1-6) to a sober view of the present in which the people are not delivered (v7-19). Nevertheless, in this sober view ***there is the repeated affirmation that God can and will keep his word.*** This train of thought is then met by the promise that God will punish the sinful earth and triumph over it for his people's sake (26:20-27:1). ***This movement from future to present to future has the function of assuring the reader that the promises are not merely rosy daydreams which ignore the contradictory present.*** In fact, these promises are made more convincing because they are made in the full light of the present. The book of Revelation served a similar purpose in NT times. It assured the people that God was aware of the present but was not defeated by it, and it called them to continued steadfast trust (cp Rev 2:10,11; etc). ***We are called to the same kind of confidence today. We do not deny the present, nor do we know of any power to help ourselves. But we know a God whose strength is as limitless as his love and whose purposes remain steadfast: to bless all those who will commit themselves to him.***” [Oswalt, *Isaiah*] As I thought of the glorious prospects which await those who belong to God, then returning my thoughts to this present world, one of the things that struck me is that this world can be difficult at times. Is this world a friend of grace? — no, and the longer I live the better heaven becomes. *Therefore don't be too hard on your parents — they've lived a lot longer than you and have experienced much of which you probably know little about. The old joke is true: “Confucius say, Man who goes out to set world on fire soon returns for more matches.” Love your parents. Pray for them. Support them. Obey them. Thank the Lord for them. The thing they want more than anything is for you to grow up to be pleasing in the eyes of the Lord.*

Song of the Glorious Future (26:1-6)

<i>In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; God makes salvation its walls and ramparts. Open the gates that the righteous nation may enter, the nation that keeps</i>	<i>In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.</i>	<i>In that day sung is this song in the land of Judah: ‘We have a strong city, Salvation He doth make walls and bulwark. Open ye the gates, that enter may a righteous nation, Preserving</i>
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faith. You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you. Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD, is the Rock eternal. He humbles those who dwell on high, he lays the lofty city low; he levels it to the ground and casts it down to the dust. Feet trample it down — the feet of the oppressed, the footsteps of the poor. (NIV)

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength: For he bringeth down them that dwell on high; the lofty city, he layeth it low; he layeth it low, even to the ground; he bringeth it even to the dust. The foot shall tread it down, even the feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy. (KJV)

steadfastness. An imagination supported Thou fortifiest peace — peace! For in Thee it is confident. Trust ye in Jehovah for ever, For in Jah Jehovah [is] a rock of ages, For He bowed down the dwellers on high, A city set on high He maketh low, He maketh it low unto the earth, He causeth it to come unto the dust, Tread it down doth a foot, Feet of the poor — steps of the weak. (YLT)

OUR SALVATION IS OUR RESTING PLACE — The walls, ramparts and gates are probably not literal but a picture of the surety we have in our faith. “Walls of stone and earth can hardly save us from that which most threatens our existence. The only true defense is the deliverance which comes from God.... The Christian will want to add the insight which is not foreign to the OT (witness 32:14; Jer 31:33; Ezek 36:26,27) but which comes to its most explicit statement in the NT: no merely human righteousness can stand in the blaze of God’s holiness (Rom 3:20-26; Phil 3:9; Gal 3:10-14; cp also Isa 57:12; 64:6). What the Christian knows, the OT prophets knew: *to expect to impress God with my righteousness is simply to indulge in another species of pride. The only genuinely ‘right’ person is one who admits that no good thing dwells in him (Rom 7:18) but trusts God’s promise of deliverance and cleansing.* This trust and the thirst for God-likeness which flows from that trust are the true righteousness.” [Oswalt, *Isaiah*]

THE PEACE WHICH COMES FROM SALVATION — Having the righteousness that God alone imparts brings perfect peace, resting in the salvation wrought in the cross. *Only one resting in the cross can find this peace, knowing that regardless of what the world might throw at us, ultimately the greatest decision in our life has been taken care of and we are at peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* This peace is the opposite of James’s “double-minded man” (James 1:6-8) or the one trying to please two masters (Matt 6:24). “*The mind* is the whole attitude and habit of a man as inwardly constituted, i.e., as a being capable of thought and will.... This is the mind of the new Israel, and Jehovah keeps it, shâlom, shâlom (peace, peace), i.e., so that deep and constant peace abides therein (Phil 4:7). Such a mind is thus kept by Jehovah, because its trust is placed in Jehovah.... *To hang on God, or to be thoroughly devoted to Him, secures both stability and peace.*” [K & D, *Isaiah*]

THE ADMONITION THEREFORE: TRUST THE LORD — “ ‘Hang confidently on Jehovah for ever: for in Jah, Jehovah, is an everlasting rock.’ *The combination Jah Jehovah is only met with here and in Isa 12:2. It is the proper name of God the Redeemer in the most emphatic form.*” [K & D, *Isaiah*] “If it is true that trust in God results in a steadfast mind which is kept in peace, then all persons should be urged to trust in him, and that is exactly what the singers in this passage do.... *The Rock is a favorite OT description of the Lord. It describes a rocky crag upon which a harassed person could climb, sheltering himself in one of its crannies and there being able to beat off all attackers. In a world of uncertainty, the confidence that such a personality is at the center of all being is a priceless possession. That confidence is only enhanced by the recognition that this Rock is the Eternal One.*” [Oswalt, *Isaiah*]

REASONS FOR TRUSTING THE LORD — Isaiah give a reason for our trust in the Lord: He has brought down the proud oppressive city. This is both an encouragement and a warning. *For the believer, we can trust the Lord because of his power over sin and it is worth waiting for His victory. For the non-believer however, the warning is not to be a part of that city. It is better to be what in this world might be the humble, the oppressed and the poor than to be a part of the proud in the city of destruction.* “So often an ancient city was built on raised ground so as to gain the maximum military advantage from its physical elevation, which then became the basis for walls, battlements, and other means of defense. This stress on the vertical dimension became part of the typical image of the city for most people. When God judges the pride of the city, he lays it low. In 25:10 the feet of the Lord trample in judgment on Moab; here it is the people who have suffered oppression from it, presumably the people of God, who tread it under foot. This suggests that they share in his victory (cf. Ps 110:2-3; 2 Cor 2:14).” [Grogan, *Isaiah*]

Present Spiritual Reality for both the Saved and Lost (26:7-15)

The path of the righteous is level; O upright One, you make the way of the righteous smooth. Yes, LORD, walking in the way of your laws, we wait for you; your name and renown are the desire of our hearts. My soul yearns for you in the night; in the morning my spirit longs for you. When your judgments come upon the earth, the people of the world learn righteousness. Though grace is shown to the wicked, they do not learn righteousness; even in a land of uprightness they go on doing evil and regard not the majesty of the LORD. O LORD, your hand is lifted high, but they do not see it. Let them see your zeal for your people and be put to shame; let the fire reserved for your enemies consume them. LORD, you establish peace for us; all that we have accomplished you have done for us. O LORD, our God, other lords besides you have ruled over us, but your name

The way of the just is uprightness: thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just. Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O LORD, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee. With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. Let favor be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the LORD. LORD, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them. LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us. O LORD our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of

The path for the righteous [is] uprightness, O upright One, The path of the righteous Thou dost ponder. Also, [in] the path of Thy judgments, O Jehovah, we have waited [for] Thee, To Thy name and to Thy remembrance [Is] the desire of the soul. [With] my soul I desired Thee in the night, Also, [with] my spirit within me I seek Thee earnestly, For when Thy judgments [are] on the earth, The inhabitants of the world have learned righteousness. The wicked findeth favour, He hath not learned righteousness, In a land of straightforwardness he dealeth perversely, And seeth not the excellency of Jehovah. O Jehovah, high [is] Thy hand — they see not, They see the zeal of the people, and are ashamed, Also, the fire — Thine adversaries, consumeth them. O Jehovah, Thou appointest peace to us, For, all our works also Thou hast wrought for us. O Jehovah our God, lords have ruled us besides Thee, Only, by Thee we

alone do we honor. They are now dead, they live no more; those departed spirits do not rise. You punished them and brought them to ruin; you wiped out all memory of them. You have enlarged the nation, O LORD; you have enlarged the nation. You have gained glory for yourself; you have extended all the borders of the land.

(NIV)

thy name. They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish. Thou hast increased the nation, O LORD, thou hast increased the nation: thou art glorified: thou hadst removed it far unto all the ends of the earth. (KJV)

make mention of Thy name. Dead — they live not, Rephaim, they rise not, Therefore Thou hast inspected and dost destroy them, Yea, thou destroyest all their memory. Thou hast added to the nation, O Jehovah, Thou hast added to the nation, Thou hast been honoured, Thou hast put far off all the ends of earth. (YLT)

THE STRAIGHT PATH OF THE CHRISTIAN — “The poem now moves from thanksgiving to an expression of dependence.... As is typical of this entire piece, this verse builds on the preceding thought. The image of the feet of the poor and needy naturally leads to a discussion of the road on which they walk. *In a land where roadways went up and down with grueling regularity, the most delightful thought was of a road which was level and straight. It was that way because of the character of the One who formed it* (40:3-5).” [Oswalt, Isaiah]

MEETING THE LORD IN RIGHTEOUSNESS — “‘We wait’ is the biblical expression of confident hope. It expresses the believer’s expectation that God will demonstrate his faithfulness at the most appropriate moment. *Waiting is very difficult for most people, for it is an admission that there is nothing we can do at the moment to achieve our ends. Yet that admission is the first requirement for spiritual blessing.*” [Oswalt, Isaiah] *The righteousness is not an end in itself but is rather a path whose goal is the Lord. It is by walking in obedience that we wait and meet with the Lord.* “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:3 KJV) The opposite of that is also discussed: “*Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.*” (Isa 59:1,2 KJV) *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me* (Ps 66:18 KJV) There is a great confusion on the part of some when speaking of righteousness. Some things to consider:

- **the unsaved have no righteousness before the Lord, therefore apart from Christ there is no salvation** — ‘Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.’ (Rom 8:7,8 KJV)
- **upon trusting Christ for our salvation, the perfect righteousness of the Son of God is imputed to our account and we are declared righteous in the sight of God** — This is a judicial act and not one of practical experience, but one of which is so because the Lord Jesus took our penalty for sin. ‘But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.’ (Rom 4:5-7 KJV)
- **once saved, even our ‘works of righteousness’ is not what is pleasing in the sight of God** — By that I mean our works in and of itself is not the goal of our sanctification. This

surprises many believers and is a stumbling block in many of our modern churches where 'busy-ness' is confused for spirituality. *'I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?'* (Gal 3:2,3 NIV) *'As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him'* (Col 2:6 KJV)

● **the goal of sanctification is for the Holy Spirit to reveal more and more of our hearts to ourselves, more and more of our weakness, and more and more of the holiness of the Lord** — *'But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.'* (1 Jn 1:7 KJV) Someone might respond when considering this verse as follows: *if we're walking in the light and in true fellowship with the Lord, why does John immediately continue with the blood of Christ cleaning our sin? Isn't the modern interpretation of sanctification that of a Christian getting better and better, therefore sinning less and less? I would think confession of sin would become less as we become better!* The answer to this is the misconception concerning the process of sanctification. The best illustration I've heard is that of an intense light at a distance. While lost we're blind to the light and ignorant of our sinful, dirty condition. The Lord opens our eyes and for the first time we realize we're dirty. Sanctification is getting closer to the light and out of the darkness; but while doing so we see more and more 'dirt' on us. We are seeing ourselves as sinful and the Lord in His holiness. Instead of becoming 'better' we are realizing our sinfulness and therefore confess more, depend upon the Lord more and trust Him more to work in our life. In this process sins do drop away and we do become 'better' (in the eyes of the world), but not in our eyes and that is not our 'goal'. Our 'goal' is fellowship with Christ in the Spirit, not activity. There will be activity and there will be practical holiness, but that is not the goal.

● **the results of true sanctification is true humility; a walk of faith, trust, and dependance; a yearning for more practical righteousness ('thirsting after God'); fellowship and time spent with the Lord in His word and prayer; and yes, a good outward lifestyle.**

● **Christ demands full obedience** — prior to leaving these thoughts, we should consider a couple errors of sanctification. The first is this: *'And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.'* (Jer 29 13 KJV) A mistake I made early in my Christianity is I would 'weigh' my works of righteousness. By that I mean the Lord would prick my heart concerning some area of disobedience but I would find comfort by reminding myself of areas of which I *did* obey (at least outwardly). It took several years but the Lord showed me He never 'winks' at disobedience, even if there are areas in which we do obey.

● **spiritual pride relating to spiritual service** — the second error might be considered a trap more than an error: the tendency among people (saved or lost) to compare oneself with another. The trap is when one does grow spiritually and develops to where there is service for the Lord. Then Satan comes alongside and points out others who are not as 'spiritual'. From there the Adamic pride takes over and soon we are quite pleased with ourselves. It's a gradual development and often has taken place prior to our even realizing it, but soon we're 'patting ourselves on the back' because of our good works. At that point we're no longer looking to the light of God's holiness (as illustrated above) and our spiritual eyesight is

growing dimmer and dimmer. Instead of true humility in the presence of a holy God, we are proud that we are ‘better’ than another (do not be mistaken; there are many areas of Christian service in which we can maintain the activity without the power of the Lord behind the efforts). The remedy for that is Paul’s admonition: *‘For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?’* (1 Cor 4:7).

“MY SOUL YEARNs FOR YOU, MY SPIRIT LONGS FOR YOU” — this is the proper fruit of sanctification: a deep emptiness filled only by the presence of the Lord. *Note the stress is not upon waiting for God’s salvation but waiting for the Lord Himself.* Truly Isaiah was waiting for the Lord’s judgment and deliverance but he does not fall into the trap of separating the Deliverer and the deliverance. *“Above all, then, the prophet cries out for God as a Person, a Person of consistency, life, and hope. It is not different today. The human soul longs for fellowship with its Creator. In that fellowship are deliverance and empowerment, but these are only by-products of the central reality, the relationship (cp 1 Jn 1:1-4).”* [Oswalt, *Isaiah*] “The whole expectation is personal. It is God the prophet longs for (cf. Pss 42:1-4; 63:1; 84:2). This longing possesses him night and day. In a similar way, godly men and women of the church age have yearned for the second advent of Christ.” [Grogan, *Isaiah*] *“The ‘name’ and ‘remembrance’ are the nature of God, that has become nameable and memorable through self-assertion and self-manifestation* (Ex 3:15). They desired that God should present Himself again to the consciousness and memory of man, by such an act as should break through His concealment and silence.” [K & D, *Isaiah*]

THE WICKED LEARN THROUGH JUDGMENTS — *v9b-11 introduces a shift in emphasis, a further explanation as to why Isaiah is looking to God so earnestly.* “It is not merely that God’s people may be delivered from oppression, but that the wicked may learn righteousness. He is convinced that only divine retribution for their sins will ever bring the wicked to recognize the folly of their way.... ‘Judgments’ conveys not only the negative connotation usually applied to it, but also the more positive aspect of ‘government’.... When God’s governance is recognized in the world, when the laws of cause and effect, of justice, are seen to operate, then the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.” [Oswalt, *Isaiah*]

THE BLINDNESS OF A SIN-HARDENED HEART — *“ ‘Shown favor’ expresses one of the oddities of human behavior. We tend to interpret grace as weakness and to take advantage of it.... So here Isaiah says that the wicked can live in the very midst of righteousness but not learn its lessons so long as their sins remain unpunished. God’s majesty can be all about them, yet their own undisturbed pride prevents them from seeing that majesty....* The author is troubled by this situation in which the wicked are not responding. They do not see the hand which he sees. His solution is for them to see God’s concern for his people. That is the positive side. Let them look with envy at the faithfulness of Israel’s God. The negative side is the destruction that will fall on the wicked as God wrests his people from their hands.” [Oswalt, *Isaiah*] *‘Your hand is lifted up’* is an expression of God’s authority and imminent judgement. *‘Be ashamed’* expresses the result of the wicked as they see God’s passion for his people; when they see the Lord’s care for His people they will be ashamed and realize their foolishness in all the things they trusted — especially their pride. *‘Fire of your enemies’* is the fire reserved for your enemies

BUT FOR HIS OWN, GOD PROVES HIMSELF FAITHFUL EVEN IF WE FAIL IN FAITH — *v12-15 returns from a petition to the Lord to an expression of confidence in Him, a confidence which rested on God’s past works for his people. But in looking at Israel’s past, one might question why they’re trusting the Lord since there were frequent times of hardship and*

barrenness. Isaiah's answer is similar to a believer's: yes there were troubles in my past but these were brought forth by my own disobedience and is not a reflection upon the faithfulness of God; in fact the judgements themselves represent God's faithfulness to judge sin in the hearts of his people. Isaiah makes two observations: first, Israel never fully accepted foreign gods although at times their loyalty was divided; secondly, their continued existence after all the foreign nations had dissolved shows the faithfulness of God.

IDOLS ARE TRANSIENT WHILE THE LORD IS ETERNAL — as proof of what was previously stated: the Lord is better because ... now the oppressors are dead and we are enlarged.

THE FUTURE GLORY OF ISRAEL — “The verbs are in the perfect form so that it is legitimate to translate them with the past tense, but it seems unlikely that past time is intended.... Rather, it seems more likely that the prophet speaks from the point of view of the final restoration and that these are to be taken as prophetic perfects.” [Oswalt, *Isaiah*] “In a later passage in the book (54:1-3), Isaiah foretells the expansion of the nation. It was also promised in 9:3, in a context where the coming of the messianic Child is proclaimed.... It is worth remembering that the land promised to Israel in Ex 23:31 was never fully occupied, even in the days of David and Solomon, but that the bounds of the messianic kingdom are to be wider still (cf. Ps 72:8). All this will bring glory to God because it is his act, not theirs, and because it will result in the showing forth of his glory in areas where paganism formerly held sway.” [Grogan, *Isaiah*]

God's People are Helpless in Themselves (26:16-19)

LORD, they came to you in their distress; when you disciplined them, they could barely whisper a prayer. As a woman with child and about to give birth writhes and cries out in her pain, so were we in your presence, O LORD. We were with child, we writhed in pain, but we gave birth to wind. We have not brought salvation to the earth; we have not given birth to people of the world. But your dead will live; their bodies will rise. You who dwell in the dust, wake up and shout for joy. Your dew is like the dew of the morning; the earth will give birth to her dead. (NIV)

LORD, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them. Like as a woman with child, that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in thy sight, O LORD. We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen. Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. (KJV)

O Jehovah, in distress they missed Thee, They have poured out a whisper, Thy chastisement [is] on them. When a pregnant woman cometh near to the birth, She is pained — she crieth in her pangs, So we have been from Thy face, O Jehovah. We have conceived, we have been pained. We have brought forth as it were wind, Salvation we do not work in the earth, Nor do the inhabitants of the world fall. ‘Thy dead live — My dead body they rise. Awake and sing, ye dwellers in the dust, For the dew of herbs [is] thy dew, And the land of Rephaim thou causest to fall. (YLT)

OUR ‘PART’ IN THE SALVATION IS PRAYER, DEPENDENCE UPON GOD, OBEDIENCE — in v16-19 Isaiah returns to the present as in v7-11. “*However strong the conviction of God's ultimate triumph, there comes those moments when the believer is brought face to face with the contradictions which the present sets over against that conviction. And*

perhaps the most painful of all those contradictions is the recurring, humiliating evidence of one's own inability to do the work of salvation.... The passage continues the train of thought begun in v7. This thought has to do with the ***total dependency of humanity upon God***. Here that dependency is set out in its strongest terms. We cannot save ourselves or anyone else. We labor and struggle, but nothing comes to birth. We are not able to demonstrate God's power to the wicked. The final proof of our helplessness is death, which stalks every person with the same quiet, relentless tread." [Oswalt, *Isaiah*] "The words '*they could barely whisper a prayer*' may be more literally rendered as '*they poured out a whisper*.' The verb pertains to the heart, the noun to the lips. Hannah prayed with exceptional earnestness (1 Sam 1:12-16), but it was inaudible to men. ***Fervor and noise are not necessarily spiritual companions***. The phrase '*when you discipline them*' suggests that the prayer was motivated not only by distress because of foreign oppression but also by sorrow for sin. Perhaps it was the national conversion mentioned in Rom 11:23-32 that was in view." [Grogan, *Isaiah*]

THE BEAUTY OF SEEING THAT WHAT WE CANNOT DO, GOD CAN! — "To some who loudly proclaim human potential, this is a counsel of despair. But it should not be so. For just as v19 ends the segment on a note of triumph, so ***the recognition of human helplessness paves the way for the receiving of God's power. So the gloom here is not a hopeless one, but productive. It illustrates what the entire first thirty-nine chapters of the book are about: trust in human potential must bring disaster, but an awareness of human weakness which results in trust in God will bring life forevermore.***" [Oswalt, *Isaiah*]

THE WORK OF THE LORD OFTEN APPEARS FRUITLESS — v17,18 speaks of a woman in labor, conveying Israel's situation. "***But the one thing which helps a woman through her labor is the expectation that the pain will end in joy — the birth of the child. Not so in this case, says Isaiah. After all the grief and struggle, what has Israel produced? Nothing. It is as though they had given birth to wind.***" [Oswalt, *Isaiah*] 'Fall' (v18) is difficult in this context; in the Aramaic it is used in connection with birth which would fit the context. If that is the sense, Isaiah is saying it would have made it worthwhile if they had been involved in a re-birth of the world, the deliverance of the world. To 'drop' a baby would be appropriate terminology in a society where women gave birth in a kneeling or squatting position.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD — "It is fine to believe that God will one day be crowned on Mount Zion and invite all his saints to feast with him in the presence of their enemies, but what about all those saints who have lived and struggled and died in the meantime with no apparent result? Verse 19 is the answer to that implicit question.... It asserts that ***the dead will be revived with shouts of joy to partake in the festivities of God's final triumph. This conviction was to become the anchor point of the Christian faith, in the light of Christ's resurrection. Without denying the reality or the goodness of this world (unlike some medieval theology), the NT continually calls persons not to live as though this world is the end. Again and again the appeal is to endure hardship, contradictions, and unanswered questions because of what is laid up for us beyond death*** (e.g. Rom 8:18-25; 1 Cor 15:20-28; Heb 12:1,2; Rev 2:7,10,11,26-29; 14:13; etc.)." [Oswalt, *Isaiah*] "It is quite true that the Book of Isaiah is replete with forceful and graphic imagery, but everything here leads the mind toward a literal interpretation. Certainly there are metaphors here, for the prophet calls the dead to awake and asserts that the earth will give birth to her dead. The metaphorical, however, must always rest on the literal; and it is with the literal that this verse commences: 'But your dead will live; their bodies will rise.' " [Grogan, *Isaiah*] '*Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame*

and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.’ (Dan 12:2,3) ‘I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes — I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!’ (Job 19:25-27)

The Promise that God will Act (26:20-27:1)

Go, my people, enter your rooms and shut the doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until his wrath has passed by. See, the LORD is coming out of his dwelling to punish the people of the earth for their sins. The earth will disclose the blood shed upon her; she will conceal her slain no longer. In that day, the LORD will punish with his sword, his fierce, great and powerful sword, Leviathan the gliding serpent, Leviathan the coiling serpent; he will slay the monster of the sea. (NIV)

Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain. In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea. (KJV)

Come, My people, enter into thy inner chambers, And shut thy doors behind thee, Hide thyself shortly a moment till the indignation pass over. For, lo, Jehovah is coming out of His place, To charge the iniquity of the inhabitant of the earth upon him, And revealed hath the earth her blood, Nor doth she cover any more her slain!’ In that day lay a charge doth Jehovah, With his sword — the sharp, and the great, and the strong, On leviathan — a fleeing serpent, And on leviathan — a crooked serpent, And He hath slain the dragon that [is] in the sea. (YLT)

GOD PROTECTS HIS OWN — “The resurrection is not yet; it is still necessary to exercise that confident waiting (26:8), but the outcome is sure. The dead who have suffered at the hands of the city of chaos (24:10; 25:2; 27:10) will be restored to life and their blood avenged.... ‘Go, my people, enter your rooms’ is ***an expression of that compassion of God which has always made possible an escape from his wrath for those who would avail themselves of it.*** So Noah escaped the flood, Lot escaped Sodom, and the Hebrew people escaped the death of the firstborn.” [Oswalt, *Isaiah*]

THE IMMANENT RETURN OF CHRIST — “‘The Lord is come forth’ is expressed by a particle of imminence, ‘he is just about to.’ This posture of ***anticipation*** is typical of the faith of Israel and the Church and is necessary for a correct perception of existence. We live immersed in time and the succession of days often makes the future appear hopelessly far away. But perceptions change.... ‘To punish’ ... conveys the idea of ***personal visitation***. In the end the master will return to set all things right and to balance all accounts. Then the servants to whom the house has been left in trust will receive their just deserts (Mk 13:34,35; Lk 12:35-48). Again, the personal revelation and intervention of God in the end of all things is the logical conclusion of biblical faith.... The result of that intervention [of the Eternal into time] is here expressed especially in terms of those unjustly killed. The earth which had received their blood now gives a full accounting, and all the murdered are brought to life. This is in keeping with 26:14. The tables are now fully turned: the killers and the killed are alive forevermore.” [Oswalt, *Isaiah*]

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE EVIL ONE — there's disagreement with the chapter divisions at this point. Oswalt (among others) believe 26:20,21 and 27:1 forms a unit, all connected by the Hebrew word for 'to punish' as well as the general picture of judgement. There are several ancient stories of the struggle between a high god and a sea / chaos monster among the different civilizations (e.g. the Babylonian creation epic, the Ugarit texts and the Hittite literature). Some liberal scholars naturally assume the bible writers were mimicking and copying the other civilizations, but Oswalt makes the comment that the more ancient literature is found, the more obvious it is that the biblical writers did not adapt their writings to suit the myths: "This is not the place for a lengthy discussion, but suffice it to say that they were not adopting a mythological world view. The biblical understanding of existence is simply not compatible with such a view. What they were doing was appropriating well-known emotive language into which they could put new meaning.... They knew a God who was in absolute control. So the language of myth could be bent to new purposes, as here, where Isaiah, in need of strong imagery to cap his vision of God's victory over sin, oppression, and death, seizes on the Leviathan story and makes it say something much more profound than it had ever said before.... The book of Job does a similar thing when it makes the terrible Leviathan only a plaything for God (Job 41).... *God is the sole sovereign of the universe, and while evil and destruction now seem to threaten the principles of justice upon which his order is founded, they will not prevail. God will triumph and those who have kept faith with him through dark days will triumph with him. But the true monster which must be destroyed, the one before which God's people find themselves helpless, is not some primordial chaos [as the ancient myths teach]; it is the monster of moral evil. That, too, God will destroy, and his people may await that day with joy.*" [Oswalt, Isaiah]

“Trust ye in Jehovah for ever, For in Jah
Jehovah [is] a rock of ages.”

— Isaiah 26:4 YLT