

**Isa 24:1-23**  
**July 18, 2021**

**God's judgment on the earth and the coming Kingdom of God (Isa 24 - 27)**

**Introduction**

24:1-23 The oracles against the nations culminate in a pronouncement of cosmic judgment against the whole earth. Worldwide disaster, sitting in the background of the oracles presented in chapters 13 - 23, now comes to the fore in chapters 24 - 27. The scene of judgment evokes imagery from the ancient stories of Gen 1 - 11 especially the flood story and the Tower of Babel incident (from Faith life Study Bible).

**Three schools of thoughts of interpretation:**

1. The prophecy is fulfilled in Sennacherib's Assyrian army that would soon work havoc in many nations.
2. This prophecy points to the destruction of Judah by Babylon 100 years later.
3. Most believe that it is eschatological, fulfilled in the end times.

**Prophecy against the whole earth 24:1-23**

1 Behold, the LORD lays the earth waste, devastates it, distorts its surface and scatters its inhabitants. 2 And the people will be like the priest, the servant like his master, the maid like her mistress, the buyer like the seller, the lender like the borrower, the creditor like the debtor. 3 The earth will be completely laid waste and completely despoiled, for the LORD has spoken this word. 4 The earth mourns and withers, the world fades and withers, the exalted of the people of the earth fade away. 5 The earth is also polluted by its inhabitants, for they transgressed laws, violated statutes, broke the everlasting covenant. 6 Therefore, a curse devours the earth, and those who live in it are held guilty. Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left. 7 The new wine mourns, The vine decays, All the merry-hearted sigh. 8 The gaiety of tambourines ceases, The noise of revelers stops, The gaiety of the harp ceases. 9 They do not drink wine with song; Strong drink is bitter to those who drink it. 10 The city of chaos is broken down; Every house is shut up so that none may enter. 11 There is an outcry in the streets concerning the wine; All joy turns to gloom. The gaiety of the earth is banished. 12 Desolation is left in the city And the gate is battered to ruins. 13 For thus it will be in the midst of the earth among the peoples, As the shaking of an olive tree, As the gleanings when the grape harvest is over. 14 They raise their voices, they shout for joy; They cry out from the west concerning the majesty of the LORD. 15 Therefore glorify the LORD in the east, The name of the LORD, the God of Israel, In the coastlands of the sea. 16 From the ends of the earth we hear songs, "Glory to the Righteous One," But I say, "Woe to me! Woe to me! Alas for me! The treacherous deal treacherously, And the treacherous deal very treacherously." 17 Terror and pit and snare Confront you, O inhabitant of the earth. 18 Then it will be that he who flees the report of disaster will fall into the pit, And he who climbs out of the pit will be caught in the snare; For the windows above are opened, and the foundations of the earth shake. 19 The earth is broken asunder, The earth is split through, The earth is shaken violently. 20 The earth reels to and fro like a drunkard And it totters like a shack, For its transgression is heavy upon it, And it will fall, never to rise again. 21 So it will happen in that day, That the LORD will punish the host of heaven on high, And the kings of the earth on earth. 22 They will be gathered together Like prisoners in the dungeon, And will be confined in prison; And after many days they will be punished. 23 Then the moon will be abashed and the sun ashamed, For the LORD of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, And His glory will be before His elders.

**It is against the earth.**

1. The earth is laid to waste, its surface distorted and devastated (v. 1).  
In the oracles against the nations, other nations often serve as the agents of God's judgment
2. The earth is completely laid waste, despoiled (v. 2).  
The result of the cosmic judgment. May resemble the empty earth awaiting God's creative word (Gen 1:3), or the empty post-flood world in Gen 9:1.

3. The earth mourns, withers, fades (v. 4).  
Echoes the localized judgment against Moab in Isa 16:8 or the mourning of the land in Hos 4:3.
4. The earth is polluted (v. 5).  
The Law also included warnings about polluting or defiling the land (see Num 35:33).
5. A curse devours the earth (v. 6).  
Formal covenants in ancient Near Eastern history were solemnized by a list of the curses that fell on whichever party broke the agreement (see Dt 28:15-68).
6. The foundations of the earth shakes (v. 18).
7. The earth is broken asunder, split through, shaking violently (v. 19).
8. The earth reels to and fro, totters, falls never to rise again (v. 20).

#### **It is against the people.**

1. The inhabitants are scattered (v. 1).  
The same Hebrew word for scattering is also used in Gen 11:9, where God judges the people for building the Tower of Babel
2. All people are made alike (v. 2).  
All levels of society—weak to powerful, rich to poor—will be affected by this judgment. In an invasion, the upper classes often had the most to lose. The average person simply exchanged one overlord for another.
3. People fade away (v. 4).
4. Inhabitants are burned - few men are left (v. 6).  
Judgment leaves only a small remnant—just as in the flood story, where only Noah and seven others survived on the ark (Isa 1:9).
5. People stop celebrating (v. 7-9).
6. Cities are destroyed (v. 10-13).  
The city of chaos - is unclear. The nameless city can symbolically represent urban human civilization. The image contrasts with the “faithful city” of 1:21 or the future “city of righteousness” in 1:26, which use the same Hebrew term for city or town.
7. Inhabitants are confronted by terror, pit, and snare (v. 17).
8. he who flees the report of disaster will fall into the pit, caught in the snare (v. 18).

#### **This judgment is from God.**

1. The Lord lays the earth waste (v. 1).
2. It is the Lord who has spoken this word, and He will do the work (v. 3).
3. The windows above are opened (v. 18).  
In Gen 7:11, the flood begins when the windows (or floodgates) of heaven are opened. The flood itself and the image of water as a destructive force allude to the chaotic conditions of creation before God brought order by dividing the waters in Gen 1:6.

4. The foundations of the earth shake (v. 18).

God's creative power also set the earth on its foundations (Prov 8:29). Cosmic judgment is presented as an undoing of creation (Jer 4:23-24).

Heb 12:25-29 See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven. 26 And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, "YET ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO THE HEAVEN." 27 This expression, "Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; 29 for our God is a consuming fire.

5. "In "that day" (v. 21)

Alludes to the coming day of Yahweh in total judgment over first earth, then heaven. The phrase is common in Isaiah, giving a repetitive cadence to oracles of judgment. The phrase is used seven times in Isa 24 - 27 (25:9; 26:1; 27:1-2, 12-13).

The hosts of heaven are judged.

Possibly a reference to fallen angels or to the idolatrous worship of celestial bodies outlawed in Dt 17:3.

The Kings of the earth are judged, confined in prison and punished. (Rev 20)

6. The moon is abased and the sun ashamed (v. 23).

(See Isa 13:10; 50:3; Ac 2:20; Joel 2:28-32; Rev 6:12)

**It is sin that brings these calamities upon the earth.**

The earth is polluted because of transgressions (v. 5).

God brought about the flood in Gen 6:5-7 because of the general wickedness infecting the entire creation.

The earth reels to and fro ... its transgression is heavy upon it (v. 20).

**A remnant will be saved in the earth (v.14-16).**

There is joy over the majesty of the Lord (v. 14).

They glorify the Lord (v. 15).

The scene shifts to a future time when all the world worships Yahweh, a familiar theme for Isaiah (see 2:2-4; 19:19-25).

Songs saying "Glory to the Righteous One". (v. 16).

**The treacherous still deal treacherously (v. 16).** [Isa 21:2-4; 33:1]

Rev 22:11 "Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy."

Woe to me - Isaiah similarly expresses dismay during his vision of God in 6:5. His reaction here seems linked to the immensity of the coming destruction of the cosmic judgment.