

## Isaiah 26 We Have a Strong City

The City of God sings through present suffering in light of our future hope.

The Righteous: Isaiah's term for those chosen by God to live in the willing bonds of the covenant, though they do so imperfectly. The "righteous nation" is not defined by ethnicity, since the Lord has welcomed "all peoples" to His feast and swallowed the veil over "all nations" (25:6, 7). The righteous are received as such by God's grace through faith (26:3), and are trained in practical righteousness by God's fatherly discipline (26:16). "That they thus designate themselves is not a mark of pride but of deepest humility. Their boast is in the righteousness that comes from God" (E. J. Young).

1. Hope: The righteous will triumph over the wicked because they trust in the LORD (vv. 1-6).
  - a. God guards the one who trusts Him (v. 3); therefore, trust Him forever (v. 4).
  - b. God lays low the self-exalted wicked who seem invincible in this life (v. 5).
  - c. God triumphs over the proud through the meek (v. 6).
2. Waiting: The righteous wait for the LORD's judgments against the wicked because they revere the LORD (vv. 7-11).
  - a. The righteous suffer because the wicked reject righteousness and deal corruptly (v. 10).
  - b. Yet, the righteous confess that God's ways are right even if they suffer in His paths; therefore, they will take their stand in God's ways and "wait" upon Him—that is, they will hope in His promise of peace (vv. 7-9).
  - c. The righteous are provoked because God's majesty is not acknowledged (v. 10). The weakness of the righteous emboldens the wicked to despise God. So, the righteous long for God's glory to be displayed in the vindication of His people (v. 11).
3. Hope: The righteous will enjoy peace because they rest in the LORD (vv. 12-15).
  - a. Peace comes from knowing both that we cannot save ourselves, and that God has done all for our salvation (v. 12).
  - b. The wicked tried to define and structure their lives, but God's covenant has been their constant (vv. 13-14).
  - c. God's increasing the nation and enlarging the borders of the land, in light of the larger context of Isaiah, doubtless has in view the inclusion of the Gentiles and their lands—ultimately a New Heavens and New Earth (Isa. 65:17-25).
  - d. Such a future cannot be achieved by human effort. God has ordained it. God will do it.
4. Waiting: The righteous are distressed under the LORD's discipline because they rebel against the LORD (vv. 16-18).
  - a. All of Judah's (and our) efforts at self-salvation have failed (vv. 17-18).
  - b. God exercises fatherly discipline to turn us away from false hopes (v. 16).
5. Hope: The righteous will live in joy because they belong to the Lord (vv. 19-21).
  - a. God will raise His people from the dead to live in light and joy (v. 19).
  - b. God will shelter His people when His fury purges the creation (v. 20).
  - c. God will disclose all the wickedness of the wicked and punish them righteously (v. 21)

Are you willing to be "the meek"? Will you wait on the LORD through your suffering? Is your mind stayed on the LORD? Do you need to repent of pride and rebellion in attempts to fix life on your own terms? Do you need to repent of despair and put your hope in the LORD?