



Isaiah 25:8; 26:19

When God Wipes Away the Tears

Isaiah gives a song of praise for God's grace following on the heels of the account of universal judgment in chapter twenty-four. In chapter twenty-five Isaiah pictures the Lord throwing a lavish banquet for the worshippers who have come to Mt. Zion for that purpose (v. 6). It will be a time of full enjoyment in the perfected Kingdom. God will have removed the spiritual blindness of the people and they worship Him (v. 7). The Lord will achieve His eternal purpose in salvation and judgment. He is faithful and true.

The Veil of Unbelief is Removed

The apostle Paul speaks of God removing the veil of blindness and unbelief in Second Corinthians 3:12-18. The Holy Spirit removes the veil so we can "behold as in a mirror the glory of the Lord." We are "being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit" (v. 18). The Lord will swallow up the covering that is over all peoples. He removes the spiritual blindness so we can see Jesus.

Death is Swallowed Up

But He does even more because He gets to the heart of our problem. It is interesting to observe the removal of the spiritual veil of ignorance and unbelief and the swallowing up of death. Isaiah reaches the height of understanding of the resurrection in the Old Testament. "He will swallow up death for all time, and the Lord God will wipe tears away from all faces, and He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth; for the LORD has spoken" (Isaiah 25:8). With boldness Isaiah says, "He will swallow up death for all time." He uses a word for "swallow" that is equivalent to making a thing disappear. He destroys it so thoroughly that there is no trace left of it. God doesn't merely remove it, but completely wipes it out, including all footprints of it. All evidence of it is gone when He removes it.

Paul paraphrases this great promise and adds part of Hosea 13:14 in his great chapter on the resurrection of the believer. He says, "But when this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, 'DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY. O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?' The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:53-57, cf. vv. 12-57; 1 Thessalonians 4:14; Revelation 1:17-18; Daniel 12:2).

12:2).

Romans 5:12 tells us the source and cause of death is sin. Death entered into the world by sin (Genesis 2:17), and it came to its ignoble end when sin was dealt its final blow at the cross.

The apostle John sees in his vision the same thing Isaiah sees in God's compassion, grace and power over death. He sees God among His people, "and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away" (Revelation 21:4). God deals with death and the cause of death –sin. The final conqueror is conquered!

No More Tears

Not only do we see His awesome power in dealing with sin and death, but also His tender compassionate touch that removes all traces of sin and death. Just as a tender mother, He removes the tearstains from a child's face.

Isaiah resounds his note in 26:19

Your dead will live;
Their corpses will rise.
You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy,
For your dew is as the dew of the dawn,
And the earth will give birth to the departed spirits.

This new insight is startling and fresh in the Old Testament. Those who have died belong to the Lord and for that reason they shall live. This is the same message we hear in the New Testament. God's dead are those who in His Name have actually died physically. Though they were dead, they still were *his* dead. Isaiah "clearly introduces the doctrine of the resurrection of the body." The "dead" are "corpses" and these "will rise." They will receive eternal life. **Thy** dead shall live. This is a rare note in the Old Testament but here it sounds forth clearly.

Here is a clear indication of the resurrection hope in the Old Testament.

"You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy. . . "Dust" of death is a reminder of the dead bodies in the parallel. "For your dew is as the dew of the dawn (lit. "lights"), and the earth will give birth to the departed spirits." The "dew" is figurative of the invigorating life giving dew in a desert. The invigorating life that God alone can give causes the "departed spirits," literally "shades" (shade like existence) to return to full life. God raises the dead. The one true living God sends a refreshing dew to give newness of life to those who have been reduced to the dust of the earth.

Only the Gospel of Jesus Christ gives hope against the Grim Reaper. Death will no longer be a terror for humanity. By His death Jesus Christ swallowed up death in victory. When He returns He will make it disappear. He will abolish it to the extent that there will be no longer any trace of it. Jesus advances the thought when He said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear shall live. . . Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in

voice of the Son of God; and those who hear shall live. . . Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds, to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment" (John 5:25, 28-29).

Our understanding of this truth effects what we believe about suffering (Romans 8:18-28), the spiritual world (8:31-39), our resurrection body (1 Corinthians 15:20-28), our spiritual victory (Hebrews 12:1-2), our faithfulness to Christ (Revelation 2:10-11), rewards in heaven (2:17), etc.

Yes, let your imaginations leap with joy! Jesus is risen from the dead! Death has been defeated once-and-for all in the resurrection of Jesus.

If you need help in becoming a Christian here is [A Free Gift for You](#).

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