



^{ESV} **Isaiah 25:6-9** *On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined. ⁷ And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. ⁸ He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. 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."*

Are you one of those forward thinking people that likes to “meal prep”? Meal prepping is where you take a block of time at the beginning of each week to batch-cook ingredients and prepare full meals for the week ahead. It can be as simple as chopping a bunch of veggies for salads or browning some beef or stirring together some sauces, or as involved as cooking and carefully portioning full recipes. Then, on Thursday when you get home late from work, rather than having to throw together an entire meal, you already have everything ready in the freezer. It’s not only beneficial for the convenience, but also because it can keep you away from the fatty fast food joints when you are in a rush.

The trouble with meal prepping is, for most people, it’s hard to keep up. Maybe you can faithfully follow a meal prep plan for a few months, but then you have one super busy week when you end up eating out for lunch every day and now your whole schedule is thrown off. As is so often the case, we’re usually good at making plans, but not always so good at keeping plans.

In God’s Word for this morning, the Old Testament Prophet Isaiah paints a poetic picture of a future feast on the mountain of the Lord. A feast so rich, so plentiful, so well-prepped that your mouth may well have been watering just from reading the text. It’s an eternal feast that awaits all those who put their trust in the LORD and in His salvation. And the best part is—we don’t have to worry about God not following through with His plan to serve us the meal. That’s because, in the words of our theme:

The Final Meal is Already Prepped

- I. All are invited to the fatty feast (6)
- II. The LORD takes the first bite (7-8)
- III. We savor His salvation forever (9)

The four short verses in our text for today lie at the heart of a section of the book that is often referred to as “The Isaiah Apocalypse.” And that’s because a lot of the themes of Chapters 24-27 of Isaiah contain prophecies about the Apocalypse (or the Last Day, which we call Judgment Day). The beginning of this apocalyptic section is pretty dreary; it’s a dismal fortelling of what God will do on that day, ***“Behold, the LORD will empty the earth and make it desolate, and he will twist its surface and scatter its inhabitants... On that day the LORD will punish the host of heaven, in heaven, and the kings of the earth, on the earth... Then the moon will be confounded and the sun ashamed, for the LORD of hosts reigns on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem...”*** (Isaiah 24:1, 21,23) Isaiah is looking into the future, and for the unbelieving world, the picture isn’t pretty. It’s terrifying. It’s no exaggeration; the Lord will destroy the entire earth. And with the destruction comes God’s righteous judgment for both the fallen angels and fallen humankind.

And that's when our text pops into the prophecy. Like an oasis in the middle of an apocalyptic wasteland, our text announces that a different destiny awaits God's people. Here we have being described an eternal banquet—a final, everlasting meal which is already prepped and to which all are invited. Isaiah says, ***“On this mountain (that is, Mount Zion, the city of the living God) the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.”***

Usually, if you're into meal prepping, it's because you want to force yourself to stay away from high calorie, fatty foods—that's not the case at this feast! The banquet that Isaiah describes is one of the richest the ancient world could imagine. The wine was aged to increase its color and quality. A slab of bone-in red meat—fatty and rich. It's a great picture for us, because there's almost nothing more satisfying than an incredibly rich, hearty meal; and this particular meal is symbolizing the grace of God. To answer our hunger for righteousness, He offers the very best: His all-satisfying love. And he says in this text, this meal isn't only prepared for us, it's also for all people of the world.

But then we have to ask, if this fatty feast is really meant for all people, what's with all the prior talk of righteous judgment and destruction? Why is God planning on scattering the inhabitants of the earth? Is that apocalyptic vision in conflict with this glorious vision of a final future feast? Well, you all know the answer: despite the free invitation to the LORD's eternal feast of grace, not everyone is going to RSVP—not everyone will be showing up.

In our Gospel reading this morning, Jesus used a similar picture, the picture of a wedding feast, to illustrate this exact point. At first those who were invited by the King's servants simply refused to come. So the King sent different servants who proclaimed the richness and fattiness of the feast of grace. But that time, they ignored the invitation altogether, some opting instead to focus on their farms and businesses, while the rest persecuted and killed the servants. Finally, the King sent the invitation out to ALL people—anyone who wanted to attend was welcome! Jesus summed it up by stating: ***“Many are called, but few are chosen.”*** (Matthew 22:14)

Everyone is invited to the fatty feast of God's grace! After all, he declares that He ***“desires all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.”*** (1 Timothy 2:4) But, as much as God desires the salvation of all; even though Christ died not for our sins only but also for the sins of the whole world—there are those who reject the invitation. This is what happens when a person hears the word of God and refuses to believe. He excludes himself from the feast, even though he was on the invite list. And that's where the judgment comes in that surrounds the four verses of our text

Now, lest we get that haughty attitude that says, *“Serves them right! I received and I answered the call! What's their excuse?”* We must be ever vigilant, that we do not start to respond like all those people who had something better to do—because in our sinful minds, we can always find something better to do. Think of the excuses in the parable—one went to his farm, “there was some time sensitive work that needed to be done!” One went to his business, “Gotta provide for the family!” What about all the times when we make those excuses: “Can't have devotion tonight, I'm too tired from a busy day”; “can't go to church this morning, there's too much to get done around the house and only one day to do it”; “Hey, I've got to work, God doesn't want my family to starve!”

Yeah, we get distracted too. So many times when the Lord has sent out the invitation of His grace into our hearts, we respond by saying, “Maybe tomorrow, maybe next week, maybe next time, Lord.” Taking stock of the reality of our response, how do we know that we won't be bound hand and foot and cast into the outer darkness? Well, in short, it's because of what God declares about Himself in our reading

from Revelation. ***“Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.”*** (Revelation 3:19-20) When God rebukes our luke-warmness towards His Word, let’s be zealous and repent. For the Lord desires to keep our spot at the table, He desires that we would feast on His grace. So let’s not allow ourselves to be distracted by the things that don’t satisfy. Instead, keep your eyes heavenward on that feast of grace prepared for you that will satisfy all hunger and quench all thirst.

As for the feast itself, our text tells us that when it’s finally served on the Last Day, the LORD will take the first bite. That’s good table manners, isn’t it? When I grew up it was drilled into me that I was never allowed to touch my food until everyone had been served. So you were at the restaurant, four plates would reach the table, but we’d all sit on our hands until the fifth was served. Especially when we were guests in someone’s home, we were never to take a bite until the host took a bite first.

The final meal is already prepped and when it comes on the last day, the LORD our Host will be the first one to take a bite; although He won’t be eating the same rich foods that Christians will. Our text tells us that: ***“He will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever.”***

In the ancient world, when a person died, they would lay a covering over the body, a shroud of some kind, and those who were mourning would cover their heads with dark veils. That’s just what death does to us—it covers us and smothers us like a shroud. Death is the one reality that is present for every demographic; it does not distinguish between race, gender, color, or social status. It’s the all-encompassing, unavoidable outcome for all. Death swallows up all things, and you can’t cheat death. Even if you make a miraculous recovery, even if you beat the odds and surpass the doctor’s most optimistic projection— eventually death will come. You will be covered with that shroud, and your loved ones covered with the veil of mourning.

But the LORD—He has an answer to death! He makes this universal truth irrelevant: ***He will swallow up death forever!*** At the eternal feast, the LORD will take the first bite, and death will cease to exist. Paul says in the Resurrection chapter of 1 Corinthians: ***“When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”*** (1 Corinthians 15:54) He’s quoting this very verse from Isaiah! And this is just the beginning of the blessings.

With death overcome, the LORD takes one more step: ***“The Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces.”*** All the heartache and the hurt that comes along with death, it will be gone. God understands that pain, and He himself will stoop down to wipe the tears from your eyes. At this feast, not only will you have the best that God can offer, death will be abolished and all the despair and discouragement of life will be forgotten. That’s some feast! That’s the love our God has for you.

Finally, after the LORD swallows up death for ever, it will be our turn to sink our teeth into the final meal. Isaiah concludes: ***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.”*** Have you ever eaten something so good that you wished the flavor would just last forever? Maybe that savory juicy bite of steak cooked to a perfect medium rare... You just wish that taste never had to end!

Well, the final meal is already prepped, and on the Last Day we will savor His salvation forever. Isaiah says that on the Last Day believers will finally be vindicated. If you ever have questions, wondering why things are going the way they are, when is God finally going to come, when is He going to take ME home—after living entire lifetimes without seeing our God with our physical eyes and being filled with all sorts of questions, on that day we will finally be able to point right at God and say, “Here He is! This is our God! This is the LORD! We’ve waited for Him. He’s here to deliver His salvation to me!”

But dear friends in Christ, this feast, this victory over death, this vindication—to get it fully, you’re going to have to wait a little while. But that doesn’t mean you can’t taste it today! You see, that Hebrew word for “salvation” from our last verse is pronounced *Yeshua*. And when Mary was naming Jesus at his birth, she would have likewise pronounced His name *Yeshua*. Because Jesus’ name means salvation, as Jesus is the LORD’s salvation! Even today, while still here, we can rejoice and be glad, because we’ve been given Jesus, the perfect taste of God’s feast of grace. The Psalmist says, “**Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!**” (Psalm 34:8)

Even today you can taste the banquet of God’s grace! Because even today God answers your hunger of guilt, your thirst of weariness over sin and dissatisfaction, he does so by opening his hand and offering gracious morsels of rich compassion, wonderful forgiveness, and satisfying food for the soul. We don’t have to simply wait to see God, for today we hear His voice! Today He reassures you that you can take refuge in Him for He will neither leave you nor forsake you. He has prepped the meal of eternal life and reserved a spot at the table for you.

The Final Meal is Already Prepped. I remember hearing a story about a Reformed Pastor who believed that a person had to decide to accept Jesus into his heart and the exact moment when that happened would be the moment that person was saved. One day he asked his Lutheran friend when he was the saved. He probably expected some story about an “altar call” or “sinner’s prayer.” But instead, without even thinking twice, the Lutheran friend replied, “2000 years ago on a hill called Calvary. That’s when I was saved.”

The answer is the same when it comes to God’s eternal feast in heaven. The final meal is already prepped. When did that happen? 2000 years ago on a hill called Calvary. On that hill, God made the final preparations for the final feast by sacrificing His innocent Son for the sins of you and me and all people. Because of Christ’s work on the cross and His resurrection from the dead, all these predictions that Isaiah made about the Last Day are a sure thing! It really will be a fatty feast for all people. God really will take the first bite and swallow up death in victory. And we really will savor Christ’s salvation forever.

It’s as good as done! So “**Let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation!**” Amen.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:7)