

verses that are addressed to God, using the second person singular in praising Him, and describing His mighty deeds.

There is a remarkable parallel between the first and last parts of the chapter. Although verses 2-5 are directly addressed to God while verses 10-12 speak of Him in the third person, both sections deal with God's great power in overcoming the forces of evil. Verses 2-5 describe how He has done this in the past and verses 10-12 declare that He would continue to do so in the time that was still future when the prophet wrote. Except for the first part of verse 4, which shows that in the midst of all this turmoil there is still refuge and shelter for those who trust in God, all these verses are descriptions of God's destruction of wickedness.

The similarity of the first and last portions of the chapter emphasizes and stresses the importance of the four verses that stand between them. Although parts of these verses are highly figurative and somewhat vague, their meaning becomes clear when carefully examined in the light of the rest of the Bible. Actually Isaiah 25:6-9 is one of the great prophetic passages of the Scripture. The events that it describes are so important as to form the basis for the worldwide extension of God's Word as described in 24:14-16.

Both verses 6 and 7 begin with the words "on this mountain," a phrase that occurs also in verse 10, but nowhere else in the Old Testament in exactly this form, except in Deuteronomy 1:6. The phrase "on this mountain" stresses the fact that at a particular place on this earth the Lord will do something of tremendous importance for His people. What He will do is described figuratively. He will prepare a feast of rich food "for all peoples."

In verses 6-7 the phrase "all peoples" occurs twice and "all nations" once. A universal blessing is here described, not merely for the nation of Israel but for "all nations." Nowhere else in the Bible is this precise figure used, that God will prepare a great feast for all nations. Two things come readily to mind -- the Passover supper in the Old Testament and the communion service in the New Testament. Both of these are feasts at which God is the host and at which His great work of salvation is emphasized. Both center on the lamb that God would slay so that we might "proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." Truly this is a symbolic picture of the blessing