

The Mountain of God

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Date: 02 April 2023

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[0 : 00] We're working our way through the first book of Isaiah, chapters 1 through 39. And the last couple weeks we've done two cycles of prophecies.

There's three cycles of oracles from chapter 13 to 27. We looked at chapter 13 to 20 and then 21 to 23, which are the first two cycles. And tonight we enter the third cycle of prophecies.

And we'll camp down here a little longer because there's some really famous texts like Isaiah 25 in this third cycle. We've learned already that the day of the Lord, this is the big thing, the day of the Lord is coming.

And on the day of the Lord, God is going to kick evil out of the world. He's going to bring justice in the midst of injustice. And then that means that he's going to especially destroy Babylon.

And so last time we saw that fallen fallen is Babylon, not just the empire of old, but the spirit. And the spirit of Babylon is the spirit of selfishness, which creates injustice.

[1 : 01] And that means that God is going to bring judgment to selfishness, to human selfishness. And we ended last week by saying that instead God is building a better city, the New Jerusalem, and tonight, section 3, oracle number 3 that we get, the cycle, we learn the specifics about this great city, the city of God.

And in our passage, chapter 25, we learn that it's going to be on a mountain. And what we really get here is the details. Now there's nothing new about this. Isaiah has already said everything that's in Isaiah 25, back in Isaiah 2.

And Derek had looked at that many weeks ago, but here he gets into some more specifics. And you can see it. He says, where is God building the city on the mountain? Who's it going to be?

All peoples. What's it going to be? A feast. And so in the city of God, there are three big things to see from this passage. One is that it's a mountain.

Second, there is a shroud. And finally, there's a feast. So let's look at each of those things. First, the mountain. All right, God is building a better city.

[2 : 12] And it's going to be on a mountain, we're told here. So you can see in verse 6, it says, on this mountain, the Lord of hosts will do this. And the question that immediately becomes, if you've read through the Old Testament at all, and you read this passage in light of the whole, why does God keep coming and showing up on tops of mountains?

This is something that God seems to do over and over again. When you read Genesis 1 and 2, you don't realize this, but when you come to Ezekiel, the prophet, chapter 28, verse 13, Ezekiel says that Eden is the holy mountain of God.

That's what Ezekiel called Eden, the holy mountain of God. And then Adam and Eve were kicked out of Eden, and eventually they end up in Egypt, their people, their lineage.

And from Egypt, God frees them and they go, where? God even says through Moses when he brings the 10 plagues to Pharaoh, he says, I'm getting you out of Egypt and I'm taking you where to the holy mountain of God, Sinai.

And when they get to Sinai, God says, now I'm sending you from here and I'm going to send you on a long journey of pilgrimage and you're going to end up where? In the land that I've made for you at the holy mountain of God.

[3 : 24] And so there's one way of reading the Old Testament where the entirety is just Israel's journey to the final mountain, from mountain to mountain to mountain. They're really longing and looking and journey and pilgrimaging towards the final mountain.

And this is the mountain that we're reading about here, Mount Zion, as the Bible calls it in the Old Testament. Now why is this the path of God's people? In other words, that's like asking why these mountains?

Why does God keep bringing His people to mountains and coming down on top of mountains? Now here's why. Edinburgh Castle. It tells you everything you need to know.

You know, have you been to Edinburgh Castle? Of course you have. And when you visit, you realize exactly why God keeps bringing people to mountains. You know, when you're a pre, imagine that you're a pre-modern person or even further back, you're an ancient person, like in the ancient Near East here, you're living daily life.

And in daily life, there are all manner of dangers that you face. Ones that we really can't understand as modern people. Animals really are a much bigger deal. And that's why all across the Old Testament, you see references to human relationship to the wild animals.

[4 : 35] It's a big deal because you face them all the time and you slip on rocks all the time. And so even in the songs of the sin, the Psalms, it talks about slipping on rocks and hurting your leg because you're climbing and you're walking in wet weather.

Of course, we're used to that as well, slipping on rocks. But this is the life of an ancient person. But even more than that, invading armies, constant threat from invading armies.

Even more than that, there's no protections in the civil order from skirmishes, little skirmishes between neighbors that could quickly get you killed. That's why there's so many laws about manslaughter and murder, very specific ones, in cities of refuge and jubilee and the Torah, dealing with all these sorts of things.

Every year when I was in university, I loved taking a week or two to go hiking, backpacking, hill walking. In the States, it was on the Appalachian Trail every year.

Here it's even better. You get to go to the Munroes and the Highlands. And if you've ever done that before, if you've done a multi-day, even a multi-week trip like that, eventually you get deep into the wild, 20 miles a day or something.

[5 : 42] And you're far, you're way in. There's no help. And there's two things, I think, that happen in that moment. On the one hand, you're connected with the land and with nature in a way that brings you to a place of gratitude and all.

But at the same time, you at night especially feel your vulnerability and you're scared. And I have to admit as many times as I did it, every night that came in the tent, I was a little bit scared.

There was no help for me. Now, this is the pre-modern life. This is the life in the ancient world. And we don't know what life looks like that all the time. And so we think about it in the opposite.

We think of mountaintops as dangerous and valleys as safe. But in the Old Testament, the people thought exactly the opposite.

It's the mountaintop that's safe and the valley that's dangerous. You see, the valley is the place where you get robbed. The valley is the place where you're blind. The valley is the place where you can't see the invading armies.

[6 : 40] The valley is the place where all the animals, the wild animals are dwelling, not on the mountaintops. And so when you look at why the mountain, why does God keep showing up on mountains? Why, what does God communicating?

Why in this metaphorical image we have Isaiah 25 is the final city of God depicted as the place of the mountain. And it's because God is saying something very simple. He's saying, I will keep you safe.

For the ancient person, he's saying it's saying that God is your place of safety. And that's why in the Psalms you have these three mountaintop metaphors. We don't always register them this way, but what are they?

God is our rock, our refuge, and our fortress. Now look at Edinburgh Castle. You're a pre-modern person. You're an ancient person. And there's an invading army.

And you live out in the valley, in Stockbridge, or somewhere else. Where do you want to be? The place of the rock, the refuge, the fortress.

[7 : 40] You want to be on top of the mountain. Where there's a fortress literally built into a rock, and therefore it is your refuge. And that's why the mountain, you see God is saying over and over again that I will keep you safe.

You can be safe with me reciprocally. That's why in the Old Testament Psalm 23, you know, Psalm 23, that great Psalm of lament at the beginning. Where is it? it's the valley of the shadow of death.

Or in Ezekiel, it's the valley of dry bones. Or in the Psalms of the Senate, it's the valley where the danger is. But Mount Jerusalem, Mount Zion in Jerusalem, that's the place of safety.

Or even last week in the vision that we saw from Isaiah, he charged Jerusalem with disaster. And he called them in the midst of wrath, the valley of vision.

He said, you're going to become like a valley, not like a mountain. You see over and over again, God keeps saying this. And what it's saying is that metaphorically, the great city of God, the mountain is God.

[8 : 40] He's the place of safety. And that's why this is talking about Zion, this mountain, Jerusalem, excuse me, Mount Zion, where the temple mount is.

But the city of Jerusalem gathers all around the temple mount. And so when it says this mountain, it's talking about the temple, and when it says on this mountain, God, it's saying that you as a city, the great city of God's people would gather around God.

He will be the mountain, just like they gathered around Sinai. God's the mountain, you're the people. The city gathers around the mountain in the end of history, and he will be your safety. Now what that means for us tonight is that this text is speaking to our fear.

That we as human beings in a cursed world are people that are afraid. And we're naturally afraid. And there's multiple ways that we fear, some of the obvious ones that we all have constant fears of being safe physically.

We have fears about our bodies and our health. We've got fears about insecurity, the fear of being insecure, a lack of security with regard to our economic situation, our wealth, a lack of security with what people might think about us.

[9 : 55] And we have fears about ultimately rejection, ultimately the greatest fear I think for us is not being loved. Being known for who we really are and being rejected, not being loved.

And we face all sorts of fears like that. When I taught our anxiety series last year, I used a German word to describe this, and it's a word that comes to us from the mid-20th century German philosophers that thought a lot about our fears.

And they called this Gavorphenheit. Maybe you remember that if you were here. Gavorphenheit means being thrown into the world. It's a word that begins at the time of your birth, that when you're born, you're thrown into the world, and immediately the world is a place of danger.

There's a whole sense of your life where there's just a being thrown out there, to be eaten up, to be chopped up, to be captured, to be invaded. Exactly what a pre-modern person lived every day, and we live psychologically through fear in our lives.

And in the midst of that, this passage comes and says, you've got anxieties of all kinds in your life, all sorts of fears. Know that when the city of God comes, the Lord will be your mountain, your rock, your refuge.

[11 : 13] Fear not. Be not afraid. Now, there's a second type of fear, and we'll move on. And the second type of fear is even more important.

And that's that, you know, God keeps showing up on the top of mountains, but if you remember well, when God shows up on the top of mountains, it's not just fear of the animals, fear of the land, fear of skirmishes and armies.

You remember what happens? When God shows up at Sinai, who is it that the people are afraid of? You know, back in Exodus 20, 18 to 19, the Lord says to the people, you better be afraid.

You see, every time before this that God shows up on the top of the mountain, the people tremble. And it's not the fear of the Lord in mere terms of weightiness and all and glory. No, no, they are shaking in their boots afraid.

They're scared to death. They want to run away. They said, we're going to die. And the Lord says, yes, you should be afraid because you touched the mountain and you will die.

[12 : 18] And you see, every time the Lord comes down on top of the mountain, after the people of the human being goes east of Eden, when we see the Lord of the mountain, there's nothing in it for us but death. You see, the Lord says, if you come and touch, you see, I came, you're made to be safe with God.

That's Eden. That's the holy mountain of the Lord, the place where you're made to be safe with God. But when you come to Sinai and the law gets preached, the Ten Commandments go out and you hear the word of the Lord, the Ten Commandments, you have to be terrified.

You have to know that you cannot touch that holy mountain. Who will stand in the presence of the Lord when the law is read? And the answer is you've got to be afraid of the Lord. But here in the middle of Isaiah's prophecy, we see something else.

And here, well, here it is. How can Sinai become Zion? That's the question. You know, how can trembling before the mountain of the Lord, after the Exodus become this mountain, the city of God, where God is your refuge and your safety?

And here's how. You remember back in the Garden of Eden, the holy mountain of the Lord, Adam and Eve were there with God. And when they decided to sin against the Lord, when they decided to shake their fist at God, God dismissed them off the holy mountain.

[13 : 36] He kicked them out of Eden. It says that they went east of Eden. Now look, what mountain is this really talking about? You know, it's using Zion. It's using the temple.

It's saying on this mountain. But is it literally Jerusalem? Is that what it's talking about? You see, in the middle of history, in the Gospels, you know, the first Adam stood on the holy mountain of the Lord, and then he got kicked out east of Eden.

But the second Adam, when he came in the middle of history on Easter week, you know, on Monday of Easter, he took his triumphal entry, and he marched straight as the king into the city of our God.

And he went right to the temple. He was here, Mount Zion. And by the end of the week, they will take him and they'll beat him, and they will kick him off the mountain.

You know, where do they send Jesus? They send him east of Eden. He the second Adam, just like the first, he went up the mountain to see the Lord. But this time, it's not him, it's the people that will kick him out of the city, kick him off the mountain.

[14 : 47] And he will go east of Eden, and he will be murdered. You see, the second Adam was kicked outside of the garden. He went into exile so that we might have the mountain.

And that means that ultimately, this is not talking about Jerusalem. This is saying that Jesus Christ is the mountain. The one that first would go into exile for us, but in his resurrection and his Easter week performance, he would become our safety.

He would become our refuge. He would become our peace. He would become the city of our God. You see how Paul says it? Paul says that he picks up on this in 1 Corinthians 10. Paul says Jesus Christ is the rock.

Jesus Christ is the castle. Jesus Christ is the rock and the refuge that the Psalms talked about. He's the mountain of Isaiah 25. He will keep you safe.

Now secondly, let's be more specific, because the passage is more specific. He came not only to be your refuge, but to be your refuge in a very specific way.

[15 : 50] And you see it here in verse 7. It's not only that the mountain is coming, but also verse 7. On this mountain, he's going to swallow up the covering cast over all the peoples, the veil that is spread over all the nations.

He says there that one of the things that Jesus is doing, that God is doing in bringing the city of God, is he is destroying, swallowing the covering or the veil that's been cast over the world.

Now what veil is this talking about? All the commentators say the same thing, that the veil here that's being referred to is the burial cloth. So it's the cloth that would be put over the face of the dead.

So when a person dies in the ancient world, and this is still being practiced in many places, a cloth is laid over their face to cover them before burial so that we can't see them.

Now that's because veils serve exactly that purpose. Veils exist, and we use veils in all sorts of ways. Cultures use veils to cover things up and to say there is something behind this sheet that you cannot look at.

[16 : 58] It's inappropriate to see this. And it's obvious when you put a veil over a dead person's face, we're saying don't look at death. And this is no longer the person that you once knew.

They're gone. This is they've left their body and so look no more because death is hiding their true identity, something like that. But that's not the only time, even in the ancient world in Israel, just like today, what else happened with the veil?

It's not just the dead body that would wear the veil. Who would wear the veil? People would. So if someone died, people would wear a veil. And we still have this practice. Sometimes I saw watching Queen Elizabeth's funeral that a number of the women in the family wore the veil over their faces at the funeral.

They wore a black veil. And that practice in our tradition has been picked up from the Bible and tons of ancient cultures. And what are they saying? Well, one of the reasons is because you're trying to hide the red, puffy, swollen cheeks that you've been crying so much that you want to hide your face.

But even that is exactly the same symbol. It's saying, look, a person, remember the laws in Leviticus? Even if you see and touch death, you're unclean. Even in the sight of death, there's something that needs to be covered up.

[18 : 20] This is a person that's seen death, and so we veil their face. And the red and the puffiness and the swollen cheeks even say they've seen death. It's got to be covered. They're not fit to show forth life anymore.

C.S. Lewis has a wonderful novel. I think this is his best book. It's called Till We Have Faces. It would take three hours to try to unpack what it means. I don't think I know.

But that's the title. He says, till we have faces. The whole point is he's saying, because of what's happened and death, we don't really have faces. But one day, till we have faces, one day we will.

Now look, when God brings this mountain city, two things are going to happen. We're being told here. And it comes right after the line we read, verse eight.

First he is going to swallow up death forever, and then he's going to wipe away the tears from all of our faces. Now listen, the first thing it says about the veil, think about the veil.

[19 : 22] The first thing it says, he's going to swallow up death forever. Now that verb there is as literal as it sounds. It's exactly the translation. He will swallow up death forever.

Now what do you notice? Notice this. It says God will swallow death. And if there is one being that exists, that it is unfit, not fitting, to drink death, which is exactly the metaphor being used, it's God.

You know, it shouldn't say that. It shouldn't say, God will drink the cup of death. But that's the first layer of the idea here.

You know, it's shocking to read a text like this. And on the night that he was betrayed, God took the cup and he gave it to his disciples and he said, drink this.

And he went out to Gethsemane and he said, Lord, let this cup pass from me. And you know, Jesus Christ, he's not only the mountain, but he is the one who in the Garden of Gethsemane said, I know that this is the moment that I have to swallow death.

[20 : 27] You know, he talked about death like drinking down a bitter wine. And when he went to the cross, he did it. Death swallowed him and he swallowed death.

But note the real idea here is that it's highlighting choice. Jesus chose, the Lord chose to take the cup.

He chose to swallow death. He chose to let it run down the back of his throat. He wanted to drink the poison to bring the city of our God to us. And that means the second sense of this verb.

It's not only that Jesus chose to swallow death, but that when he swallowed death, God swallowed death. And the second idea in this verb is that in that moment, a chasm in the earth opened.

It's as if all of a sudden, the great earthquake came and death fell down right into the crack and then the earth closed back over it and death was swallowed forever in that moment.

[21 : 27] Now look, that's abstract. It's not too abstract. We've put some metaphors on it, some images. But how many times have you been preached to and said, one day we won't have death anymore?

And you say, I know, and I want that, but it also is a little bit abstract. It's hard to feel that when you stand in the midst of the life of death right now.

And so that's why I think the text gets more specific about the veil. You see, it says here that he'll also rip the veil away.

Jesus Christ was crucified outside of the city, east of Eden. And remember what happened? He was outside the city and outside the city in exile, away from the holy mountain.

A few people, Joseph of Arimathea, they took his body down and they took him into the garden tomb and what did they do? They wrapped his face in the veil.

[22 : 29] They laid the burial cloth over him. And on Resurrection Sunday, when Mary Magdalene and the others came, she was the first to see it.

There they were. You know, it says here that Isaiah 25 says that one day God will rip away the veil, the shroud, the covering, death that stands over all the nations.

And remember that on that Sunday, next Sunday, this Sunday, Easter Sunday, that the burial cloth, the veil that stood over Jesus' face was folded up nice and neatly.

I think it says that, you know, it's time to take these burial cloths, these veils that we keep putting on dead bodies' faces and stick them in the cupboard and say, we don't need these anymore. You know, that's, in other words, it's saying to you that if you know Jesus Christ as your Rock and your Refuge one day in that city, understand very concretely that He will come for your body and He will pull the burial cloth from your face.

You know, He will very gently tear away the cloths that you've been buried in. And He will fold them up and He'll say, it's time to put these in the cupboard.

[23 : 44] Now it gets even more specific than that because the text also says He's going to wipe away every single one of your tears.

And you know, you're going to have, you've got red and puffy cheeks in this life. And let me ask you, have you ever had a person wipe away your tears?

Think about it. I mean, this is how specifically he gets. It's not abstract at all. What is it like to have another person wipe your tears off your face?

That's what it says God is going to do for you. And it's an incredibly intimate moment. It's the image of a father to a son, of a mother to a child, of a husband to a wife, a wife to a husband.

I think more than all it conveys a motherly idea. Getting down on the knee and wiping, wicking away the tears off the children's faces.

[24 : 40] And it says the Lord Jesus Christ is going to wipe away your tears. Now listen, what do you cry about? What makes you cry? You know, maybe this week you shed tears as you heard the news of three little nine-year-olds being murdered.

And to those parents, he will wipe away their tears. He will wipe the tears from their face. It's not abstract, it's that specific. Jesus Christ is coming to wipe the tears from your face.

Whatever makes you cry, the suffering that you experience in this present life. One of my favorite images of this in the Old Testament is Malachi 4 verse 2, where it talks about the coming of the Lord in the end of history.

And it gives us this image for what this will be like. It says that we will skip about like calves running from our stalls at last. You've seen, have you seen one of those?

A calf being let loose from a stall finally, they've finally come of age. And what do they do? They kick their back legs up when they finally get to the grass. And they can't help it.

[25 : 45] It's in their DNA, it's their instinct. They're so excited and joyful. You stag, deer do this as well, where they bob their back legs up whenever they're excited. And God says to you that when Jesus Christ wipes your tears from your faces, it will be like the stall door coming open and you will run out into the grass and you'll kick about like a playful calf.

The veil, the stall door, all of it. Remember, oh boy, the veil. That day that Jesus died east of Eden, apart from the holy mountain in the moment of darkness, the veil, remember the other veil?

It was ripped in two. The veil that day was ripped in two and saying, now you can't come into the holy of holies. You can't come near the mountain. If you pull back the veil, you will die.

But in that moment, the curtain was ripped in two. And because of that one day, Jesus will pull the veil from your face and he will shut the tears away. Now C.S. Lewis, and we've got to hurry here.

C.S. Lewis wrote about this. He talked about this in *The Problem of Pain*, his book. In that book, he was trying to remember what it would be like and what it was like to not have hope in God prior to coming to Christ before he was a Christian.

[27 : 07] And really, he doesn't say this specifically, but what he says there is, what would it be like to not have hope in God? And he says, well, I don't know what I would do with my tears. That's really what he's trying to say, what he's arguing in the passage.

And he goes to Romans 8.18, where it says, the sufferings of this present life do not compare with the joy that is to be revealed in the coming of the Lord. Now the Bible, Lewis notes, the Bible regularly does this.

It takes the weight of suffering in this present life, your tears. And it puts your tears into a scale and then puts on the other side of that scale the joy, like a little calf in the life to come.

And it weighs them. And it says that the joy that is to come is not worth comparing to the light affliction, as Paul puts it, of the tears of this present life. Now, look, let me say, when I read texts like that, sometimes I say, how offensive?

How offensive? To say that the sufferings of this present life are a light affliction, and you've got to hear very carefully what's being said there, because the Lord is not saying, Paul is not saying to those families in Nashville this week, that the sufferings of this present life are nothing but a light affliction.

[28 : 20] He's saying something more, something, remember Paul was imprisoned, flogged, beaten five times with 40 lashes, minus one, which is basically to death.

Rip-Rect, starved, thirsty, naked, cold. Lewis reflects on this. He's remembering, and he's saying something more like this. What if, what if, I think this is what Paul's doing, what if you have nothing beyond this present life to hope in?

And Paul is saying, what reality do you want to live in? What do you hope for? What do you want to be true? What do you want to hope in, and what if, in the myth that became fact, one day Jesus Christ will get down on his knees and wipe away your tears?

What story do you want to believe? And this is the real one. Now finally, let's close with the feast. My preference would be that we had three sermons on Isaiah 25, but I'm trying to do three and one.

The feast, lastly, we'll be brief. We could spend so much time on this, but we'll close with this. Verse six, on this mountain the Lord of hosts will make a feast for all peoples of rich foods.

[29 : 38] Now, look, the reason we do this last is because this is ultimately an expression of all that we've said so far. Revelation 21, we said last week that the book of Revelation, especially the end, is a mirror of Isaiah.

It's a fulfillment of the Isaiah prophecy. And Revelation 21, 4 says Jesus Christ will bring the feast. There's a feast in the new city of Jerusalem that God is bringing.

Now the reason that this is the fulfillment of all we've said so far is because the feast here is both literal and figurative. The Lord's Supper tells us, breakfast on the beach with Jesus, John 21 tells us that we will eat the banquet feast, the wedding feast with Jesus Christ, but the feast on the mountain, which are metaphors, is also figurative.

And it's figurative for the idea that ultimately the feast points us to the festival. And the festival is a season across the Old Testament. It's not just a day, it's not just one meal.

The festival's lasted for a week and sometimes even longer. It was a season of joy, a season of life. And that's really what the feast is being, we're being told about. It's here. Ultimately, the feast points to the festival, the festival points to the Sabbath.

[30 : 49] And the idea that we start with in the Bible on the seventh day is the Sabbath. And the Sabbath means there is festival, and the festival means there is feast. And that's what we're being told about here. And look, let me say that we, the Sabbath, this is rest, peace, joy, feasting, delight, skipping about like calves.

That's what's being talked about here in this feast. And that means that if we think of the Sabbath as simply a day where we have to be so careful to follow every rule that we have to protect ourselves lest we accidentally work, there are good things and true things in that idea.

But ultimately, the Sabbath is about the feast. It's about the festival. It's about joy and peace and shalom and glory and skipping about like calves.

The Lord's Supper is not a funeral meal because Jesus didn't stay dead. It's a festival meal. It's about the mountain of the Lord on the day of the coming of the city of our God.

That's the idea of the feast here at the end of history. And that means that ultimately what's happening here is Isaiah is prophesying resurrection life. That's what he's talking about.

[32 : 03] He's talking about resurrection life. You know, in our modern age, in our modern age, and we'll close with this, there are, there have been three main responses to Christianity since the 19th century.

I think they can really be whittled down to these three things. One, Karl Marx, you know, Karl Marx said that Christians, the problem with Christianity is that Christians just ignore the problems of this world.

They don't care about the poor. They don't care about the material order. They're too busy looking up at heaven to be of any earthly good, the classic line. That was one. Freud was another.

And Freud said the problem with Christianity is that it's nothing but wish fulfillment. You know, it's imaginary. It's people casting visions of what they really want, an idealic future that will never actually be its wish fulfillment.

That was the second. And then Nietzsche, Nietzsche said that ultimately Christianity is just for wimps. You know, it's casting a vision of a weak Messiah, Nietzsche said, to justify weakness instead of power, to try to make sense of life when you don't have any power.

[33 : 11] Inti writes in his book on the resurrection, he talks about Marx, he talks about Freud, he talks about Nietzsche, and he says, but not if Easter is real.

He says, you know, you take Easter away and the whole picture is different. You take Easter away, Marx is probably right. Freud probably right. Paul says that himself. Without the resurrection, our faith is futile.

It's imaginary. He says without Easter, Nietzsche was probably right. But if Easter is real, if you put it back, if you say that the Son of God really did walk out of the grave on the third day, then when Marx says to us, you know, Christians don't care about the word God, your God doesn't care about the material world.

Did you see what the text said? It says on that mountain, he will make a feast for all peoples. It says that every single conflict between races, classes, nations, communities will be gone, that God cares about it that much, the material order.

You know, Marx said, we don't care about the material. God says, I'm going to resurrect your body from the dead. And so Christians have to care about that too, the material world, the problems that we face today.

[34 : 20] You know, in the face of Freud, Freud said that Christianity is nothing but wish fulfillment. It's just dreaming about something you want and imagining some type of idyllic future.

But because Easter is real, this is not mythological, this is empirical. It's fact. A real body walked out of the grave on the third day.

He could be touched. He could be eaten with. You know, it's not myth, it's the myth that became the fact of history. And Nietzsche said, well, Christians are just wimps.

They're just trying to justify their powerlessness. And if Easter really did happen and it did, has any superman of history, has any emperor, has any king ever given his life away in love and then had the power to take it back up again in resurrection?

Nietzsche had never seen a power like that. And that means that the mountain of God is simply this, that God is bringing that resurrection power into your history.

[35 : 23] He will bring you up from the dead. He will rip the shroud from your face. He will wipe the tears from your eyes. The power that destroyed death and evil in the middle of history, Jesus Christ will reach out his hand and he will gently pull the burial cloth from your face one day.

And he will wipe your tears. And you will have hope and joy in the city of our God. What do you hope in? Let's pray together.

Lord, we give thanks for Isaiah 25 and we long for the day that our faith will become sight that our tears will be wiped away.

And we ask now for sufferers in this room that they would especially know the beauty of these promises and the comfort that they are. And in these momentary afflictions, Lord, would you give us the joy of looking forward to the day where we will skip about like calves running from our stalls at last?

So as we sing now, give us images and visions of the mountain of the Lord. And we pray this in Christ's name. Amen.