**Isaiah 25:6-9** 6On this mountain the Lord of Armies will prepare for all peoples a feast of choice food, a feast of the best wines, with the best cuts of meat, and the finest of wines. 7On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that covers all peoples, the burial cloth stretched over all nations. 8He has swallowed up death forever! The Lord God will wipe away the tears from every face. He will take away the shame of his people throughout the earth. For the Lord has spoken. 9On that day it will be said, “Surely, this is our God! We waited for him, and he saved us! This is the Lord! We waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation!”

 Yes, this is one of the prophecies of Isaiah concerning the future. If you would, let me just share with you how carefully we need to be with prophecies.

 For instance, in this prophecy, and do note that we start at verse 6, we can ascertain that Isaiah is “seeing” a number of things. Now, even when I say “seeing” we are not sure Isaiah saw anything but what we know is that the Lord gave Isaiah these words and in these words Isaiah is able to see, to put forth what the Lord has said. Seriously, we don’t even know if Isaiah clearly understood what he was writing. Here is what we do know.

 Isaiah is given prophecy from the Lord. Sometimes that prophecy was about what was soon to be, sometimes that prophecy was about what was to be in the future and sometimes what was to be in the very far future. Our job is to work clearly with God’s Word, to let God’s Word show us what is what and how it will all come together. As you look at each section of prophecy, often it is the context, the reality of what is being said that helps us grasp where the prophecy fits in our world. It takes a careful study of the text and all that God’s Word says to come to a proper conclusion.

 So here are a few things I can tell you. Prophecy in God’s Word is usually very specific. God’s Word doesn’t do generalities. What I mean is that just because you think the words you are reading pertain to a general this or that, just that will tell you that you have it wrong. If a prophecy is so general that several portions of history fit, you have it wrong. With one exception. If the prophecy is dealing with the Savior you actually might have something we call “rectilinear prophecy.” A partial fulfillment at one point of time and then a complete fulfillment in a later point of time. A great example of this is the prophecy God gave to David in Samuel about the son that would sit on his throne and build God’s house. You could argue that Solomon was the partial fulfillment of that prophecy, which served as a kind of “shadow” of what Jesus will do and be. The complete fulfillment of that prophecy would be found in Jesus, who came to sit on the throne of Heaven and establish the Holy Christian Church forever. By the way, in that prophecy you find that word “forever” in the text. It says that the king, the son being pointed to, would sit and establish his throne “forever.” Says it twice! That can only be applied to Jesus! But you can see how Solomon fits, but a whole lot loosely.

 Prophecy is tricky. But, when the truth of a prophecy is revealed and seen, what an absolute joy those words are. Today we have before us a prophecy of Isaiah, of course, given to him by the Lord our God. What it reveals, what it says is going to be is absolutely awesome. Let’s look at our text under the theme: **A PROPHECY OF SALVATION!**

 So let’s look at our first verse, which also happens to be our first section, and contemplate what it says. It says: **“6On this mountain the Lord of Armies will prepare for all peoples a feast of choice food, a feast of the best wines, with the best cuts of meat, and the finest of wines.**” Now, obviously, something is being revealed to us. In this case, because of the language used and because of the subject matter of the verse what is being spoken of is pretty clear. First, the mountain of the Lord is none other than the very mountain that Jerusalem sat on. Do note this is the place where Abraham’s faith was tested in seeing if he would sacrifice his son, his only son to the Lord. He didn’t have to do that, because God saw he would and God stopped him and provided another sacrifice instead. This is the mountain where eventually the city of Jerusalem would sit and eventually Solomon would build the Temple to the glory of the Lord.

 Yet it is not really this mountain. We know that because in the Book of Revelation we find the “New Jerusalem” as a golden city coming down out of the clouds, a city of wonder and beauty with pearly gates, jeweled foundations and streets of absolutely pure gold. We are told this New Jerusalem is where the feast of the Lord, the eternal feast of the Lord is going to be held. Here, in the “Revelation New Jerusalem” we will live and dwell with the Lord in utter perfection and wonder. Yes, it is described as a “feast,” the banquet of the eternal king for all his faithful children.

 And yes, we could speak of the Lord of Armies as the very picture of the conquering Savior, Jesus who as he ascended into heaven is now known as the Lord of Lords and King of Kings. We could talk of the banquet feast and how everything spoken of here pictures a banquet filled with the best of the best of the best. Clearly this verse draws our attention to the great day of the Lord, if you would, to the wedding banquet of the King that the King wants you to attend. But what we want to ask, is this banquet any old banquet or can we say this banquet is a very special one? I will tell you it is a very special one, because the next verses give us the reason for this banquet held on this mountain.

 Verses 7-8 give us the reason. They say, “**7On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that covers all peoples, the burial cloth stretched over all nations. 8He has swallowed up death forever! The Lord God will wipe away the tears from every face. He will take away the shame of his people throughout the earth. For the Lord has spoken.”**

 Here is the reason for the banquet. We are celebrating the destruction of the shroud that covers all people. More specifically we are celebrating the fact that **“He has swallowed up death forever!”** In other words, this banquet is because of one very specific fact: The victory is won and death is done. Now here is where we have to keep our wits about us. Here is the reason for the banquet. Well, when did this victory take place? The only answer can be: in the redemption work of Jesus!

 You see, it was on the mountain of Jerusalem where Jesus did his work and brought us the wonders of the Gospel. God’s Son Jesus, walked among us, preached among us, in fact, Jesus did wonders and signs among the people that were absolutely overwhelming. And then, just as Scripture had said would be, Jesus on this very same mountain, went to the cross for our sins. Our Passover lamb is sacrificed. Our sins have been atoned for by the blood of the Lamb. God’s very Savior, Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God took on death, hell, and eternal damnation that we might have the gift of salvation and life. But most important is the fact that Jesus, on this mountain, rose from the dead and proclaimed to all the world the absolute truth of who He is. He is God’s Son. He is our Redeemer. He will raise us from the dead.

 It is this last part that helps us grasp what is found in Isaiah. Jesus was raised from the dead and so the power of death, namely sin, has been broken and defeated in Jesus. Please, first understand that the death being spoken of here is eternal and spiritual death. Jesus took that threat away. Jesus opened the gates of heaven to us, made the gift of heaven attainable and true. Jesus paid our hell, took away the horror of eternal damnation. So the first thing to grasp is that death, eternal death is conquered for us. By faith our sins no longer condemn us. By faith we have life, eternal life in Jesus. By faith, heaven is our home, the banquet invitation is given to us.

 We can also understand that physical death is deeply affected too! Yes, it is true, we are all still subject to that mark of spiritual death. Physical death is still among us, and still confronts us. But that’s why the second part of this verse says: **“The Lord will wipe away the tears from every face. He will take away the shame of his people throughout the earth. For the Lord has spoken.”** The Lord has proclaimed death at an end.

Now you can believe that or you can deny it. You can believe what your eyes see, that people of the world stop breathing and living and you can then decide that since this physical death exists, why then, all the stuff about God, Jesus, salvation and eternal life is just wrong. Understand, we can’t see, right now, what Jesus has truly done. But God has told us what it is all about. Hell has been vanquished and because hell has been vanquished, you and I, by faith in Jesus, because we trust what God has declared in His Word, you and I will have eternal life and salvation. Yes, we may physically die, but we don’t die! Do you remember how Jesus said that? He said in John: **“I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even if he dies. And whoever lives and believes in me will never perish.”** In truth, our souls, by faith go to be with the Lord in heaven, yes, we already get to enter into the banquet hall with Jesus. We only know this truth by faith because God says it is true. In other words, I can’t physically prove it, I can’t show it to you. I can’t do anything but tell you that we know this truth because the Lord has declared it so.

 Here is the heart and core of our faith. God has spoken. All of this will be true and is true in the Lord, understood through His Word. Listen to the last verse to grasp this wonder. **“On that day it will be said, ‘Surely, this is our God! We waited for him and he saved us! This is the Lord! We waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation!”** Notice how everything is attributed to the Lord. All of this is because the Lord has done it. He has saved. He has kept his promises. We could add that He has risen from death and shows that His promises and His salvation are true and factual because it is so! We rejoice, we are glad because the Lord our God says that we are saved. Saved in Jesus. Saved by his goodness. Saved by the Lord!

 In other words, there is no doubt that this defeat of death is true. Jesus has done it. In fact, if you want proof that all of this is true then, please look at and contemplate the wonder and marvel of Jesus. You have heard me say it before and I hope I never tire of saying this: If you just look at the words and promises of God found in the Old Testament and then look at the life and times of Jesus and how many of those promises he fulfilled, it is awesome. Today, if we have some psychic who gets three or four things right in their hundreds of predictions for the year and we hail them as true prophets who really got the stuff! Here is Jesus who fulfills, in a very conservative count, some 350 promises of the Scripture, promises often dating back 5, 6, and 700 years before he even came, and we have people running around declaring it all a fraud! What a sad world we live in. Now, really put this together.

 Look again at what our prophecy has stated. It states that a banquet is going to be held celebrating the fact that death has been destroyed for all people. Name one other, name any other event in the history of the world apart from the work of Jesus where such a thing could become true! There isn’t one. And then recognize that you can’t look at all the history of the world, you can only really look at the history that surrounds this mountain in the land of Israel. It will all happen on this mountain! Dear people, this is about Jesus and the forgiveness of sins, the defeat of eternal hell and death that He has accomplished and done. Yes, let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation!

 Now if you would, please grasp how Jesus points to this banquet and take into your heart his lesson very deeply. The king has invited you and I to his banquet feast. When you and I turn away, the Lord will simply seek others who will come. This is a solemn warning to us about the reality of the banquet. You are going to need the King’s invitation. If you have received it and have despised it by making everything and anything more important than this King’s Son’s wedding you are going to have a problem! Yes, this wedding banquet Jesus is speaking of is a picture of the Judgment Day! But you have loved the world. You have not heard, heeded or come as you have been called. What will be your excuse? I was too busy? I didn’t know? I didn’t realize this was it! I figured it didn’t matter? Make no mistake, in the parable of Jesus the invitation to come is the issue of faith. You don’t get to the banquet without faith. So when the call comes, come to Jesus. Don’t wait. Don’t figure you’ve got time. Don’t decide that it doesn’t matter.

 Jesus has won the victory for us. Let us hear our invitation to come! Let us be glad and rejoice in Jesus. Amen.