

# Book of Isaiah



## Chapter 33

*Theme: The final woe is pronounced on all who spoil God's people and land.*

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## Chapter 33

This chapter, in particular, pronounces a judgment upon those who seek to destroy God's people and lay waste to His land. It refers to the Assyrians in the immediate purview but extends to the final enemy of the last days. The chapter is geocentric. The land is the thing of primary importance.<sup>1</sup>

There is general correspondence between this sixth "woe" and the third one (29:15-24), but this one deals more with application and the third one more with principles. It is the most eschatological of the "woes," though it contains many references to the Assyrian invasion. It is the only "woe" directed against a foreign power, the others being addressed to the Judahites. This is a woe against Assyria for its destructive opposition to Yahweh and His plans. The first six verses anticipate the salvation of Zion and contain a prayer for deliverance.<sup>2</sup>

Although the people in Isaiah's day didn't want to hear the Word of God, the Lord knew that someday they would repent. On that day, at the end of the Great Tribulation, Jesus will return to establish His kingdom on the earth.

A prayer and a prophecy. This chapter includes sections that initially seem unrelated: Some vv. are spoken to God by the Judeans or by Isaiah on the Judeans' behalf, others are descriptions of a disaster, and some include prophecies of salvation. Many of the prayers in the book of Psalms are similarly diverse; see, e.g., Ps. 89. Thus this text is probably a prayer or psalm composed by Isaiah.<sup>3</sup>

**<sup>1</sup>Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou *wast* not spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee! when thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled; *and* when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee.**

Woe #6 of 6 (28:1; 29:1, 15; 30:4; 31:1; 33:1).

Keep your promises. Alludes to covenant Hezekiah made with Assyria to be left alone (2 Kgs 18:18ff) .<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>2</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Jewish Study Bible notes

<sup>4</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

[thee that spoilest] Commentators usually associate this spoiler with the king of Assyria who was paid to help Judah, and who then turned on the kingdom to destroy the Jews; but the passage more particularly refers to the future Assyrian, the Antichrist (Isa. 14:25; 30:31; 31:8; Mic. 5:5-6). He will make a seven-year covenant with the Jews, then break it in the middle of the seven years and become the greatest spoiler of Israel in history or prophecy (Dan. 9:27; Mt. 24:15-22). He will deal treacherously with the Jews, and then, when it is time for him to cease, he will be dealt with likewise, and will be destroyed.<sup>5</sup>

The destroyer and treacherous one in view is Assyria. So far Assyria had practiced destruction and treachery without having them come back on her, but eventually they would (cf. Deut. 19:18-19). Sennacherib accepted a large sum of money that King Hezekiah sent to him so he would not besiege Jerusalem, but Sennacherib accepted the money and attacked Jerusalem anyway (2 Kings 18:13-17). That is treachery. Yahweh was the opposite of the Assyrian king. He was always true to His promises, and the Davidic kings were to follow His example as His vice-regents. To behave the opposite from how God behaves is to court divine discipline.

"As the royal annals demonstrate, Assyria took great pride in her capacity to destroy anyone who had the temerity to stand against her. By the same token, she had no qualms about breaking agreements which were not to her advantage, all the while punishing with great severity any who broke agreements with her." (Oswalt, p. 592.)<sup>6</sup>

This is Isaiah's way of expressing the great spiritual principles, which God put down from the time man sinned. It is stated well in Galatians 6:7: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

The "spoiler" here is Sennacherib who came against Jerusalem during the reign of Hezekiah (Isa. 36 -- Isa. 37). I believe this is the unanimous conclusion of all sound scholars. However, it does not limit this chapter to the Assyrians. God says in effect, "You spoil My people, and I'll spoil you." God promises to take vengeance on behalf of His people. For this reason we as believers should always let God handle all of our revenge. God says that we are not to avenge ourselves, but He will repay. Turn it over to God. He can do a better job than we can do.

Now this is also a picture of that final day of consummation after God has brought together again the restored Roman Empire, and Antichrist will destroy the land of Israel again. God will take care of him at the second coming of Christ.<sup>7</sup>

Assyria continually broke its promises but demanded that others keep theirs. It is easy to put ourselves in the same selfish position, demanding our rights while ignoring the rights of others. Broken promises shatter trust and destroy relationships. Determine to keep your promises; at the same time, ask forgiveness for past promises you have broken. Treat others with the same fairness that you demand for yourself.<sup>8</sup>

**Verses 1-12** discuss the woe of judgment to come on people who live unrighteously, who are traitors to the truth. The destroyer was the Assyrian enemy, and the traitor probably refers to those within Judah who wanted to form alliances either with Egypt or with other powers to

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<sup>5</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>6</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>8</sup> Life Application Study Bible.

protect them from Assyria. None of them would succeed in their efforts, for the destroyer would be destroyed and the traitor betrayed.<sup>9</sup>

Woe to you who plunder: This prophecy, spoken before the Assyrian invasion, shows that this seemingly unstoppable army will in fact be stopped. Those who did the plundering will be plundered, and will be dealt with treacherously by others.

Jesus spoke of this same principle in Matthew 7:1-2 : Judge not, that you not be judged. For with what judgment you judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the same measure you use, it will be measured back to you. God has every right to deal with us as we have dealt with others.<sup>10</sup>

the one spoiling...the one dealing treacherously: Isaiah's use of present participles for both these words is the use of a Hebrew idiom that means he was addressing a current condition of "spoiling" in progress. The one spoiling is Assyria who had completed dissolving the northern kingdom of Israel and at the time of the writing of this was in the process and had just finished capturing and spoiling all the fenced cities of Judah and now sought to capture and spoil Jerusalem and deport her citizens.<sup>11</sup>

**<sup>2</sup>O LORD, be gracious unto us; we have waited for thee: be thou their arm every morning, our salvation also in the time of trouble.**

This is the prayer of the godly remnant then and in the future.

[O LORD, be gracious unto us] This is the prophetic prayer of the Jews, to be said in the tribulation when Antichrist betrays them and determines to exterminate the nation (Dan. 7:19-25; 8:20-25; 9:27; 11:40-45; 12:7; Rev. 13).<sup>12</sup>

[we have waited for thee] See Isa. 25:9; 26:8; 30:18; 42:4; 49:23; 51:5; 64:4.

[their arm] "Their arm" means their strength.

[the time of trouble] "The time of trouble" here is the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7) and the time of trouble such as never has been or ever will be again -- the great tribulation (Dan. 12:1; Mt. 24:15-22; Rev. 11:3 -- Rev. 19:21).<sup>13</sup>

These are the words of the righteous remnant who were waiting for God to deliver them from their oppression.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.studyight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-33.html>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.moellerhaus.com/isa33.htm>

<sup>12</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>13</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>14</sup> Life Application Study Bible.

we have waited: The advice of Isaiah and Hezekiah was to be calm and wait for YHWH's deliverance even though it looked hopeless. These words must have been uttered often during the year long siege when it looked like the enemy would prevail if YHWH did not intervene.<sup>15</sup>

**2-4** The words in these verses seem to be those of the righteous remnant waiting for the Lord to deliver them. They will long for His grace (cf. 30:18-19) and the Lord Himself. Longing for His strength and salvation (deliverance) they were confident that He would scatter the nations who opposed Israel. Then speaking to the nations who will be judged, the remnant will say that the plunder which those nations had taken from others will be taken from them. That plundering will be as complete and irreversible as locusts destroying everything in their path.<sup>16</sup>

**2-4** O LORD, be gracious to us: In light of the Assyrian threat and the longed for deliverance of a righteous king, God's people no longer look to the Egyptians, they no longer look to themselves. Now, they look to the LORD, and cry out, "O LORD, be gracious to us."

We have waited for You. Be their arm every morning: God's people aren't trusting in themselves anymore. They are waiting on the LORD, and looking to His arm every morning.

When You lift Yourself up, the nations shall be scattered: God's people have a confident expectation in the LORD. Their prayer is filled with wonderful expectancy.

Like the gathering of the caterpillar: "Verse four may already have had an initial fulfillment after the death of the Assyrian soldiers, for undoubtedly the inhabitants of Jerusalem congregated like caterpillars around the corpses and the implements of war." (Bultema)<sup>17</sup>

The faithful remnant in Judah prayed to the Lord, evidently as the enemy approached Jerusalem. These godly Judeans asked for Yahweh's grace on the ground that they had trusted in Him (cf. 30:18-19). They asked Him to be the daily strength of those who opposed the destroyer, Assyria. They also requested deliverance for the Jerusalemites when Assyria attacked. "Never underestimate the power of a praying minority." (Wiersbe, p. 40.)<sup>18</sup>

**<sup>3</sup>At the noise of the tumult the people fled; at the lifting up of thyself the nations were scattered.**

See Dan. 7:23-24; 8:20-25; 11:40-45.

Sennacherib has been completely successful in all his conquering ventures. That condition is about to change,

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.moellerhaus.com/isa33.htm>

<sup>16</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.studyight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-33.html>

<sup>18</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

**<sup>4</sup>And your spoil shall be gathered *like* the gathering of the caterpillar: as the running to and fro of locusts shall he run upon them.**

Antichrist's armies will be destroyed and much spoil gathered (Zech. 14:14).<sup>19</sup>

See 2 Kings 19:20-37 and Isaiah 37:21-38 for a description of the victory over Assyria described here.<sup>20</sup>

**<sup>5</sup>The LORD is exalted; for he dwelleth on high: he hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness.**

[he hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness] The language of this prophecy is partly in the past tense, as if already fulfilled, but in such cases we should understand the statements in view of the time of their literal fulfillment (Dan. 9:24; Rom. 11:25-29).<sup>21</sup>

When Christ's Kingdom is established, Jerusalem will be the home of justice and righteousness because the Messiah will reign there. As a light to the world, the new Jerusalem will be the holy city (Revelation 21:2).<sup>22</sup>

**5-6** Speaking now to the remnant, Isaiah said that the exalted Lord (cf. 6:1) will eventually fill Zion with justice and righteousness (cf. 9:7; 11:4; 16:5; 32:16) when the kingdom is established. But in order to have these things, including salvation... wisdom, and knowledge they must fear... the Lord (cf. Prov. 1:7; 15:33). Fearing God does not mean being terrified of Him (except for those who are being or will be judged). It means to recognize and respect Him and His authority and righteous demands, which in turn results in godly living, worshiping, trusting, serving, and obeying Him. Those who fear Him find Him to be their sure Foundation, their Source of inner security and peace (cf. "Rock," Isa. 26:4).<sup>23</sup>

**5-6** The LORD is exalted: The tough times were hard, but they brought God's people to a different, better view of who He is. Because they have been brought low, they see that the LORD is exalted.

He has filled Zion with justice and righteousness: God's people pray this in anticipation of the answer. You don't have to wait until God does it all to give Him thanks. You can, by faith, give Him thanks ahead of time!

The fear of the LORD is His treasure: Honor, respect, and reverence towards the LORD is His treasure. It is a gift God gives us, not so we will cower in fear, but so we will rightly honor Him.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>20</sup> Life Application Study Bible.

<sup>21</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>22</sup> Life Application Study Bible.

<sup>23</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-33.html>

**5-6: YHWH...exalted:** Verse 10 shows that the exalting of YHWH is imminent but not current. It is therefore future in this verse. This and the rest of the conditions described in verse 5 were not being enjoyed at the time of the writing but were still promised and anticipated. Context governs the time of Hebrew verbs more than any other mechanism. Time in Hebrew verbs is not determined by grammar. Verse 6 is contextually future and therefore verse 5 must be also. These verses are as others from chapters 30 onward are promises of what conditions will be enjoyed by the faithful who will endure this, the most difficult period and test thus far faced by the Davidic line in Jerusalem. So the promise is that: "YHWH, who inhabits eternity, will be exalted and He will fill Zion with justice and righteousness at which time you shall be strengthened through the coming salvation and be filled with wisdom and knowledge, by means of your fear of YHWH which is your treasure."<sup>25</sup>

**<sup>6</sup>And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, *and* strength of salvation: the fear of the LORD is his treasure.**

[stability of thy times] This refers to the time when wisdom and knowledge will actually stabilize the times in the government of the Messiah -- when Zion will be filled with judgment and righteousness (Isa. 33:5-6; 2:2-4; 11:9; 59:21).<sup>26</sup>

**<sup>7</sup>Behold, their valiant ones shall cry without: the ambassadors of peace shall weep bitterly.**

This verse predicts the utter uselessness of trying to make peace with the Antichrist who will be determined to destroy the nation (Dan. 7:19-25; 8:20-25; 9:27; 12:7; Mt. 24:15-22; Rev. 12-13).<sup>27</sup>

**7-8** You would think that we would have learned a lesson today, but we have not. A great peace conference was held at the Hague; and, while it was going on, Germany began World War I and broke all of the treaties. At the end of that war the League of Nations was formed; and, when President Woodrow Wilson went to be our representative, the idea was to make the world safe for democracy. What they forgot, however, was to make democracy safe for the world. Peace didn't come. It led to World War II. Now the United Nations is making the world ready for World War III. We talk about peace, but we are not doing it God's way.<sup>28</sup>

**7-9** Their valiant ones shall cry outside . . . The earth mourns and languishes: When the judgment of the LORD comes to the earth, everyone is brought low before Him. The valiant ones shall cry, and the ambassadors of peace - who trusted in other nations instead of the LORD - shall weep bitterly. Even the mighty Lebanon, with her majestic forests of cedar, is shamed and shriveled.

The Hebrew word translated valiant ones appears only this one time in the Bible. "The word *ereham*, which we translate valiant ones, is very difficult; no man knows what it means. Kimchi

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<sup>25</sup> <http://www.moellerhaus.com/isa33.htm>

<sup>26</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>27</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>28</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

supposes that it is the name of the angel that smote the Assyrian camp! The Vulgate, and my Old MS., translate it seers; and most of the Versions understand it this way. None of the MSS. give us any help.” (Clarke)<sup>29</sup>

**7-12** Those in Judah who thought they could achieve peace through an alliance (cf. envoys in 30:4, 6) would weep bitterly. Assyrian terror would be everywhere and people would be unable to travel the roads because of lurking danger. Lebanon, north of Israel and well known for its cedar forests, would wither. Sharon was the coastal plain south of Mount Carmel extending inland to the hill country of Ephraim. A fertile area, Sharon would become a desert like the Arabah (which means "arid" or "dry"), the desolate rift valley extending from the Dead Sea south to the Gulf of Aqabah. Bashan ("fertile plain"), east of the Sea of Kinnereth (later named the Sea of Galilee), was productive agriculturally (cf. Jer. 50:19) and known for its oak trees (Isa. 2:13; Ezek. 27:6; Micah 7:14; Zech. 11:2). Carmel ("fruitful land") was a mountain range thickly forested and well watered at that time. This destruction would show that the people could not save themselves. When the Lord would use the Assyrians against Judah, Judah's plans for peace would come to nothing. It was as if the people gave birth like a mother to nothing but chaff and straw, which can easily be burned up.<sup>30</sup>

**7-9:** Lebanon, Sharon, Bashan, Carmel: These areas include all of the "Holy Land" except for the region around Jerusalem. It is further description of the Assyrians having totally overrun all of Palestine including the coastal plain west and south of Jerusalem.<sup>31</sup>

**<sup>8</sup>The highways lie waste, the wayfaring man ceaseth: he hath broken the covenant, he hath despised the cities, he regardeth no man.**

Sennechreb in local sense, yet also broader sense applies to Coming World Leader.<sup>32</sup>

Verses 8-9 picture the breaking of the covenant between Antichrist and Israel and the devastation of Palestine when this enemy enters the land to destroy the nation and make Jerusalem his capital (Dan. 7:19-25; 8:20-25; 9:27; 12:1,7; Mt. 24:13-22; 2Th. 2:3-4; Rev. 12-13).<sup>33</sup>

**<sup>9</sup>The earth mourneth *and* languisheth: Lebanon is ashamed *and* hewn down: Sharon is like a wilderness; and Bashan and Carmel shake off *their* fruits.**

Most beautiful regions:

Lebanon - Leban = white. (Northern mountains, 120 miles of snow covered with cedars and firs.)

Sharon - (Foot of Mt Carmel to Shefelah, known for flowers and forests.)

Carmel - (Divides Sharon from Eschaelon, the rocky hills.)

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<sup>29</sup> <http://www.studyight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-33.html>

<sup>30</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.moellerhaus.com/isa33.htm>

<sup>32</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

<sup>33</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

Bashan - (Trans-Jordan upland from Hermon to Gilead with high plains, forests of Oak and known for wild cattle.)  
Idiomatically describing the desolation to come.<sup>34</sup>

These fruitful, productive areas would become deserts. Lebanon was known for its huge cedars. Sharon was very fertile. Bashan was very productive in grain and cattle. Carmel was thickly forested.<sup>35</sup>

**<sup>10</sup>Now will I rise, saith the LORD; now will I be exalted; now will I lift up myself.**

**10-11:** Now will I rise: The announcement to the Assyrians that God will intervene is repeated again with the result that the Assyrian forces will be turned to powder.<sup>36</sup>

**10-14:** Now will I...fire...everlasting burnings: This is a repetition of the coming culmination of the siege which has already been described at the end of chapter 30 as being associated with a visible tempest of pulsating lights with hail and lightning and fire in the sky with eerie sounds that "passed over" the city of Jerusalem but descended on the Assyrian forces which were scattered over a large area visible from Jerusalem. The fire of God is the "ensign" which the Assyrians would remember and escape from in humiliated fear. This phenomena of miraculous intervention and natural disaster was one of the greatest interventions in the history of this nation in all of their history. It is given space in the book of Isaiah more than any other event. Seven whole chapters are devoted to predicting it and describing it and portions of others mention the event. It is not lost in the history of the nation as the historical books also record the event, 2 Kings 18-19 and 2 Chron. 32 record many details of the siege. 2 Kings 19:35 and 2 Chron 32:21 both call the "visitation" an angel. Sennacherib did not record the defeat at Jerusalem nor for that matter the debacle at Pelusium.<sup>37</sup>

**<sup>11</sup>Ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble: your breath, as fire, shall devour you.**

Five comparisons -- God's enemies:

1. They are like chaff.
2. Like stubble.
3. Their breath like devouring fire.
4. They are like the burnings of lime.
5. Like thorns cut up to be burned in the fire.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

<sup>35</sup> Life Application Study Bible.

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.moellerhaus.com/isa33.htm>

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.moellerhaus.com/isa33.htm>

<sup>38</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

**10-13** Now I will rise: As the whole earth is brought low by the judgment of the LORD, at the same time, the LORD lifts Himself up.

And the people shall be like the burnings of lime; like thorns cut up they shall be burned in the fire: God's judgment will come like fire, and the wicked and worthless works of man will be like chaff and stubble that is quickly and ferociously burned in the fire.<sup>39</sup>

**12**And the people shall be *as* the burnings of lime: *as* thorns cut up shall they be burned in the fire.

**13**Hear, ye *that are far off*, what I have done; and, ye *that are near*, acknowledge my might.

People far and near are commanded to hear and acknowledge God's acts and power.

Two groups of people are addressed here: "Ye that are far off" are the Gentiles, and "ye that are near" are the people of Israel. The call is to recognize God.<sup>40</sup>

In contrast with the destruction of the destroyer and traitor, the righteous will live. Isaiah noted the kind of people who will be saved (vv. 13-16) and then described the land in which they will live (vv. 17-24).

**13-16** God called on people everywhere (far away and near, v. 13) to acknowledge His righteous actions and His power. Sinners asked who can endure God's awesome judgment (a consuming fire), and the prophet responded that those who can dwell with God walk righteously and speak what is right (v. 15). They do not extort or take bribes. They refuse to be involved in plots of murder and other sins (cf. Ps. 15). These people will be safe and will enjoy God's blessings (Isa. 33:16). Therefore the people should live by God's standards even though the nation as a whole would be judged by Him.<sup>41</sup>

**14**The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?

**14-16** These sinners realized that they could not live in the presence of the holy God, for he is like a fire that devours evil. Only those who walk uprightly and speak what is right can live with God. Isaiah gives examples of how to demonstrate our righteousness and uprightness: We can reject gain from extortion and bribes, refuse to listen to plots of wrong actions, and shut our eyes to evil. If we are fair and honest in our relationships, we will dwell with God, and he will supply our needs.<sup>42</sup>

Devouring fire (Cf. Deut 4:24).

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<sup>39</sup> <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-33.html>

<sup>40</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>41</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

<sup>42</sup> Life Application Study Bible.

Two classes to be punished:

1. Sinners of Zion who are afraid
2. Hypocrites -- surprised with fear of everlasting fire

Their concern: Who will be able to escape the wrath of God?

"Sinners in Zion" are those of Israel who are not Israel. There are godless Israelites just as there are godless Gentiles.

"The devouring fire" does not refer to the lake of fire mentioned in the Book of Revelation, but rather to the fact that "our God is a consuming fire" (see Heb. 12:29). He is a holy God, and He intends to judge in that day.

Today there is a tremendous godless movement abroad. It is growing by leaps and bounds. That is the reason we are giving out the Word of God. We don't know how much longer we can do it, but we are going to continue as long as the Lord allows. God is going to bring judgment, and God's people need to be concerned about getting His Word out. Judgment is not a pretty subject. It is not one that will make friends, but these are the words of Isaiah, and Isaiah's message is God's message, and He would like the human family to hear it.<sup>43</sup>

**14-19** The sinners in Zion are afraid: Of course they are! The judgment of the LORD is coming! Those who were not afraid to practice their sin are now afraid when righteous judgment comes upon their sin.

He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly . . . He will dwell on high: Though the sinners and hypocrites are terrified at the coming judgment of the LORD, the LORD's righteous ones are comforted that God is coming to set things right.

Your eyes will see the King in His beauty: The LORD will bless His righteous ones. They will have a place of defense, a fortress, and bread and water will not fail them. But far above these material blessings, they will see the King in His beauty. In the most immediate sense, this referred to Hezekiah; but in the ultimate sense, to our Beautiful Savior Jesus.

Beyond all the material glory, splendor, and comfort of heaven, this is the greatest glory of heaven: not to be personally glorified, but to see the King in His beauty.

It isn't only seeing the King; it is seeing Him in His beauty. It can be said that we occasionally catch a "glimpse" of our King Jesus, and even sometimes have a glance at His beauty. But the highest experience we could have now is like nothing compared to what we will experience when we see the King in His beauty. Paul said of our present walk, For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known (1 Corinthians 13:12). Today, when we look in a good mirror, the image is clear. But in the ancient world, mirrors were made out of polished metal, and the image was always unclear and somewhat distorted. We see Jesus now only in a dim, unclear way, but one-day we will see Him with perfect clarity.

Heaven is precious to us for many reasons. We long to be with loved ones who have passed before us and whom we miss so dearly. We long to be with the great men and women of God who have passed before us in centuries past. We want to walk the streets of gold, see the pearly gates, see the angels round the throne of God worshipping Him day and night. However, none of those things, precious as they are, make heaven really "heaven." What makes heaven really

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<sup>43</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

heaven is the unhindered, unrestricted, presence of our LORD, and to see the King in His beauty will be the greatest experience of your eternal existence.

Part of the beauty of the King in heaven will be the scars He retains from His suffering for our sake on this earth. After Jesus rose from the dead in His glorified body, His body uniquely retained the nail prints in His hands and the scar on his side (John 20:24-29). In Zechariah 12:10, Jesus speaks prophetically of the day when the Jewish people, turned to Him, see Him in glory: then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. Zechariah 13:6 continues the thought: And one will say to him, "What are these wounds between your arms?" Then he will answer, "Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends."

Your heart will meditate on terror: The revealing of the King will be the greatest glory for the child of God, but it will be greatest terror for the one who has set their heart against or apart from God. In vain, they will look to the scribe or he who weighs or he who counts the towers for help, but there will be none.

You will not see a fierce people, a people of obscure speech: Though the northern nation of Israel was demolished by the Assyrians (a people of obscure speech, beyond perception), the southern nation of Judah would be delivered (you will not see). Isaiah mixes the pictures of the LORD's ultimate deliverance on the day of judgment, and the soon coming deliverance from the Assyrians.<sup>44</sup>

**<sup>15</sup>He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil;**

[walketh righteously ...] Six requirements to escape God's wrath:

1. Walk in righteousness (Isa. 33:15).
2. Speak uprightly.
3. Despise gain of oppression.
4. Refuse to be bribed.
5. Stop ears from hearing of blood.
6. Shut eyes from seeing evil.<sup>45</sup>

Compare these six qualifications of a righteous man with those found in Ps. 15.

[speaketh uprightly] That is, choosing words that are honest, true, and well-ordered -- those that are not false, slanderous, or obscene.

[despiseth the gain of oppressions] He despises deceit and abhors ill-gotten gain (which comes from false dealings, and false weights and measures). He doesn't oppress the poor, take advantage of anyone, or cruelly extort payment.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-33.html>

<sup>45</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>46</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

[shaketh his hands from holding of bribes] He doesn't make any deal or render justice for reward. Literally, he doesn't hold his hand out or shake it as a sign of expecting a bribe.

[stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood] He won't listen to any proposal to shed blood or to any scheme of violence, robbery, murder, etc.

[shutteth his eyes from seeing evil] He doesn't desire to look upon any evil, or be found in places where sin is committed. He removes himself from contention.<sup>47</sup>

The one who has been declared righteous by his faith in Christ is called to walk in righteousness. In that awful day we find that where sin abounds, grace will much more abound.<sup>48</sup>

Only the righteous may dwell in Zion where God resides. Various activities mark the righteous person (cf. Ps. 15; 24:3-6); they do not make him righteous before God. His righteousness is not just private but public. His speech is pure, he does not extort money from others, and he does not take bribes (because he does not love money). He does not listen to anything connected with hurting other people, and he will not look at anything vulgar, evil, or perverted (cf. Ps. 119:37). That is, he will not participate in these things. These last two characteristics are particularly challenging to us who live in an age of motion pictures, television, and Internet.<sup>49</sup>

**15-16:** He that walks etc.: The result of waiting for God to act in bringing the enemy to full defeat will have full justification. He will be assured that his position and purposes are correct and profitable while the enemy and the doubters will be ashamed.<sup>50</sup>

**<sup>16</sup>He shall dwell on high: his place of defence *shall be* the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters *shall be* sure.**

[He shall dwell on high] It is no wonder that such a righteous man (of Isa. 33:15) will dwell on high and be protected and blessed by God!<sup>51</sup>

[munitions of rocks] This could read: "The strongholds of the rock shall be his lofty fortress." It no doubt refers to the rock-hewn city of Sela where Israel will have headquarters during the future tribulation when they flee from Judea for the last three and a half years of this age. See The Sun-Clothed Woman, and Sela.<sup>52</sup>

**<sup>17</sup>Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off.**

Ps 15:1-3.

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<sup>47</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>48</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>49</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.moellerhaus.com/isa33.htm>

<sup>51</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>52</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

The subject now shifts from the people who will inhabit the future Zion to the king who will rule there. This is a revelation of Messiah's universal rule. It is a picture that stands in stark contrast to the one Isaiah painted of the present Jerusalem in chapters 28—31.

[Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty] The eyes of the last generation of this age who will be alive on earth when the Messiah comes will see Him.<sup>53</sup>

[they shall behold the land that is very far off] They will be able to look at any part of their land - - even the most remote part -- and see that it is freed from their enemies.<sup>54</sup>

17-24 The prophet then described the fruitful land in which these redeemed individuals (vv. 15-16) will dwell. This is the kingdom of Israel where righteousness and peace will flourish in the land. The King (cf. 32:1; 33:22; 43:15; Micah 2:13; Zeph. 3:15; Zech. 14:9), the Messiah, will be there (Isa. 33:17), and the people will see Him. They will think back on their former times (vv. 18-19) and realize that those who did not live righteously will be with them no longer. No foreign invader will be among them, including the Assyrians, those arrogant people, who spoke an incomprehensible language (v. 19; cf. 28:11). Jerusalem will be peaceful and secure (33:20), and no warships will attack the nation Israel (v. 21). Being properly related to the Lord, the people will acknowledge Him as their Judge... Lawgiver... King (cf. v. 17), and Savior (v. 22).<sup>55</sup>

**17-18:** Your eyes shall See and Meditate: The word "see" here is the word for vision, (chazon not the normal word for see or Ro'ay). This probably refers to the vision of the Shekinah Cloud that overshadowed Jerusalem and brought about the death of 185,000 Assyrian soldiers. Isaiah predicts that they would later "meditate" on the terror that was taken away by the lifting of the siege by the "vision."<sup>56</sup>

**17-19:** Your eyes shall see: Those waiting for God's completion will see his wonderful work complete in the end of the siege and they will live to look back on the terror and remember the confidence of the Assyrians as they reckoned the results of the defeat of Jerusalem which however was not realized. Rather the fierce people whose language was not understood will not be a part of the future. It has already been pointed out that that generation who endured the siege had a period of prosperity and renewed power of religious life without the presence of the threat of Assyrian invasion..<sup>57</sup>

**18<sup>Thine heart shall meditate terror. Where is the scribe? where is the receiver? where is he that counted the towers?</sup>**

[Thine heart shall meditate terror] The heart of the Jews in Judea when the Messiah comes will meditate terror, that is, think over all the terrors of the great tribulation which they have just come through.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>54</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>55</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

<sup>56</sup> <http://www.moellerhaus.com/isa33.htm>

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.moellerhaus.com/isa33.htm>

<sup>58</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

[Where is the scribe? where is the receiver? where is he that counted the towers?] Questions 55-57. Next, Isa. 36:4. The enemies of the Jews will be destroyed so suddenly that others will ask where they are.<sup>59</sup>

[scribe ... receiver ... he that counteth the towers] Three enemy officers:

1. The scribe -- the officer that counted, numbered, wrote and mustered the men for war, and listed the spoils.
2. The receiver -- the one who weighed the spoils of war and the wages for the soldiers.
3. He that counted the towers -- the one who made an estimate of the strength of cities to be besieged.<sup>60</sup>

Verse 18 sometimes throws people into confusion. Why would you meditate on terror? Well, "meditate" might be better translated "muse" or "ponder." During the days of Messianic rule, people will think back on the times of terror. They will look around and say, "Where have all the bad times gone?" Jerusalem will be undisturbed, because Jesus Christ will be king. Sickness and sin will be unheard of.<sup>61</sup>

**<sup>19</sup>Thou shalt not see a fierce people, a people of a deeper speech than thou canst perceive; of a stammering tongue, *that thou canst not understand.***

[Thou shalt not see a fierce people] After this destruction of the armies of the Antichrist Judah will never again see a foreign army fighting on their soil. Men won't fight in the Millennium and the New Earth (Isa. 2:2-4; Rev. 21:3-7).<sup>62</sup>

**<sup>20</sup>Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle *that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken.***

20-24 Now we come to the fourth division, where there is praise to God for final deliverance.

Judah is invited to look upon Zion and Jerusalem under the Messiah as a place of worship, a quiet and peaceable city, and the tabernacle of God that will never be destroyed again.

[solemnities] Solemnities, festival days and rituals of Israel (Ezek. 45:17; 46:11).

[tabernacle] Jerusalem is here pictured as a tabernacle with posts and stakes holding up the tent wall, with not one stake ever being moved or any cord (holding up a wall post) being broken.

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<sup>59</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>60</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>61</sup> <http://sur.ly/o/rondaniel.com/AA000014>

<sup>62</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

This plainly illustrates the eternity of Jerusalem as the capital of the eternal kingdom of Messiah and David (Isa. 2:2-4; 65:17-25; 1Chr. 23:25; Zech. 14).<sup>63</sup>

Babylon could boast of the Euphrates River, Assyria could boast of the Tigris and upper Zab, and Egypt could boast of the Nile, but Jerusalem was a landlocked city with neither river nor harbor. However, Zechariah gave an amazing prophecy which leads us to believe that God will provide a harbor for Israel during the Millennium (see Zech. 14:4-8). It is my understanding that the earthquake he describes will open up a deep valley to the Mediterranean Sea, and Jerusalem will be a seaport town during the Millennium.

The literal fulfillment of the prophecy also has a spiritual application. "The glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams." The Lord Himself is the source of Israel's defense and blessing.<sup>64</sup>

**20-24** Look upon Zion . . . your eyes will see Jerusalem, a quiet habitation: In the midst of the Assyrian threat, God will preserve Jerusalem. Not one of its stakes will ever be moved!

A place of broad rivers and streams: God's blessing on Zion would bring broad rivers and streams to this once barren, desert land.

"This chapter, so full of compelling imagery, presents a picture of Jerusalem as a kind of Near Easter Venice or Amsterdam, or, to place it in its historical context, like the great cities of Egypt or Mesopotamia. Most great civilizations have grown up around important rivers. Israel, in general, and Jerusalem, in particular, were exceptions to this." (Grogan)

But wouldn't a wide river give a path to an enemy coming on a ship? No, because there the majestic LORD will be for us . . . no galley with oars will sail, nor majestic ships pass by. For the LORD is our Judge . . . He will save us.

Those majestic ships turned out to be not so majestic after all. Your tackle is loosed, they could not strengthen their mast, they could not spread the sail. It was foolish to ever fear the majestic ships instead of trusting the majestic LORD.

"Although they shall have from God the security of a great river, yet they shall be freed from the disadvantage of it; which is, that the enemies may come against them in ships; for no galleys nor ships of the enemy's shall be able to come into this river to annoy them." (Poole)

The lame take the prey . . . the people who dwell in it will be forgiven their iniquity: When God saves, He does it in unlikely ways. It is an unexpected blessing that the lame take the prey. It is an unexpected blessing that people can be forgiven their iniquity. The majestic LORD brings unexpected blessing!

"They shall not only receive from me a glorious temporal deliverance; but, which is infinitely better, the pardon of all their sins, and all those spiritual and everlasting blessings which attend upon that mercy." (Poole)<sup>65</sup>

Zion: This verse speaks of the peaceful period that will be enjoyed after the departure of Sennacherib and also looks forward to the future when Zion's purpose is completed in Messianic Zion which is made clear in the next verses.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>64</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>65</sup> <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-33.html>

<sup>66</sup> <http://www.moellerhaus.com/isa33.htm>

**21But there the glorious LORD will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby.**

[broad rivers and streams] God will make broad rivers and streams where no warship will ever come. These are the rivers that will flow out from under the Millennial sanctuary (Ezek. 47; Zech. 14:8). The river referred to in Ezek. 47 is to be over 3 miles wide, so it can rightly be called "broad" here.<sup>67</sup>

[no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby] No small galley ship or gallant warship will ply the waters of the rivers flowing from the Millennial sanctuary into the Mediterranean and Dead Sea.<sup>68</sup>

**21-24:** Galley, gallant ship: It is unusual for Isaiah to mix in a strange metaphor with the pictures he has consistently drawn of the siege and its aftermath. Here he pictures the enemy as Ships and Zion as a river. The enemies of Zion will flounder in the river and their strength will become spoil for Zion. Sickness and sin will disappear in the completed Zion. Isaiah has already said that there is a predetermined full end. The perfected condition of Zion is that full end.<sup>69</sup>

**22For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us.**

Judge, lawgiver, king (our judicial, legislative and executive branches) will be covered by Jesus.<sup>70</sup>

Four things God will be to Judah:

1. Judge (Isa. 11:4-9; 9:6-7)
2. Lawgiver (Isa. 2:2-4)
3. King (Isa. 2:2-4; 9:7; Zech. 14:9)
4. Savior (Isa. 43:3,11; 45:15,21; 49:26; 60:16; 63:8; Hos. 13:4)<sup>71</sup>

**23Thy tacklings are loosed; they could not well strengthen their mast, they could not spread the sail: then is the prey of a great spoil divided; the lame take the prey.**

[Thy tacklings are loosed; they could not well strengthen their mast, they could not spread the sail] The enemy is pictured here like a helpless warship floundering in the water and becoming an easy prey to others.<sup>72</sup>

[great spoil divided] The spoil at Armageddon will be in great abundance (Zech. 14:14).

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<sup>67</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>68</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>69</sup> <http://www.moellerhaus.com/isa33.htm>

<sup>70</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

<sup>71</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>72</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

[lame take the prey] The spoil is to be so abandoned by the armies at Armageddon that even the lame can take what they want.<sup>73</sup>

**<sup>24</sup>And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein *shall be forgiven their iniquity.***

#### Two Blessings Upon Judah

1. The inhabitant of Jerusalem will not say, I am sick. There will be universal healing and health (Isa. 33:24; 35:3-6). This is what should be today through the church appropriating the full benefits of the gospel.

2. The people will be forgiven of their sins (Isa. 33:24). Both healing and forgiveness go hand in hand (Isa. 6:9-10; Mt. 9:5; 13:15; Jas. 5:14-5:14-16; 1Pet. 2:24).

This was promised to O.T. saints (Ex. 15:25; 23:25; Lev. 26:1-13; Dt. 28:1-14; Ps. 34:9-10; 84:11; 90:1-12; 103:3; Prov. 3:7-8; Isa. 53:4-5; 58:8), and to N.T. Saints as well (Mt. 7:7-11; 8:17; 13:15; 17:20; 21:22; Mk. 9:23; 11:22-24; Jn. 10:10; 14:12-15; 15:7,16; 16:23-26; Rom. 1:16; 8:11; 1Cor. 12:4-11; Jas. 5:14-16; 3Jn. 1:2).<sup>74</sup>

This is a glorious prospect which is held out for Jerusalem. The eye of faith looks beyond the immediate hard circumstances to the glorious prospect of the future. This is the day when the King will be in Jerusalem. The Prince of peace will then bring peace to the earth.<sup>75</sup>

Assyria's defeat will be like a shipwreck, after which the many spoils on the ship will be divided among the Israelites. So much plunder will be there that plenty will be left by the time even... lame people get there. Illness will be wiped away (cf. 57:18-19; 58:8; Jer. 33:6) and the sins of the redeemed remnant will be forgiven (Isa. 33:24; cf. Jer. 31:34; 33:8; 36:3; 50:20). Peace, prosperity, and salvation will come by God's sovereign work not by foreign alliances or human cunning.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>74</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>75</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>76</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary