

Isaiah Chapter 33

Verses 33:1-12

Isaiah's final "Woe" on Israel and Judah looks beyond the coming Assyrian invasion to the ultimate devastation that will come on the land in the final days.

"Thee that spoilest" and was "not spoiled" is a reference to the Antichrist and his kingdom.

"The time of trouble" refers to the Tribulation period.

The invading army is likened to a horde of "locusts" that shall cover the land of Israel.

"He hath broken the covenant ... he regardeth no man" is certainly reminiscent (of Daniel 9:27), which refers to the Antichrist.

Thus, both prophets foresee a time when the one who has promised to defend Israel will turn against her during the Tribulation period.

Isaiah 33:1 "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."

Though the immediate reference is to Assyria (2 Kings 18:13-16; 19:32-37), the prophecy looks beyond Assyria to any power that sets itself against Israel.

This is just another way to say, whatever you sow, you will reap.

In this particular instance, this is saying this to a country, rather than to an individual.

We can safely assume that Isaiah is specifically speaking of Assyria here.

The countries that spoil other countries in battle can expect the very same treatment in return.

Isaiah 33:2 "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."

"We have waited for thee":

Israel refused to do this earlier (30:15; 31:6), but had repented (25:9; 26:8; 33:2).

This statement is not to Assyria or about Assyria, but is a prayer of Isaiah.

Isaiah is praying for his country, as well as himself.

The saddest thing about being a prophet is that they see the danger even before it is there.

In a sense, they suffer twice.

Once when they see it in vision or dream, and once when it actually happens.

Isaiah knows how badly they need the grace of God.

He is fully aware that the only way of escape is in the salvation of God.

Verses 3-4

Just as Sennacherib took flight suddenly (37:37; 2 Chronicles 32:21), so the nations will scatter before the LORD, leaving their spoils behind.

Isaiah 33:3 "At the noise of the tumult the people fled; at the lifting up of thyself the nations were scattered."

The people flee from the enemy, and are no match for these Assyrians.

When God reaches out His hand, the tables are turned.

No nation is able to fight against God and win.

These nations are afraid of God (even if they do not recognize Him as their God).

When God rises up, they flee in defeat.

Isaiah 33:4 "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."

They fled from God so quickly; they had no time to gather up their spoil from the nations they defeated.

They left it behind in their hurry to get out.

When locusts are turned on a field, there is nothing left to harvest.

Isaiah 33:5 "The LORD is exalted; for he dwelleth on high: he hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness."

We have said over and over that the LORD fights for Jerusalem and, also, for His people.

Zion can mean Jerusalem, but it also symbolically means His church.

When God's people repent, and turn to Him for help, He saves them every time.

The LORD is seated in heavenly places.

He is exalted above the earth.

He is the Judge of all the earth.

It is His righteousness that fills the church.

These people and the Christians have no righteousness of their own.

It's the righteousness of Christ that fills Zion (church).

Isaiah 33:6 "And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, [and] strength of salvation: the fear of the LORD [is] his treasure."

“Fear of the LORD”:

The same Spirit imparted qualifications possessed by the Messiah (11:2), will belong to His people when He returns.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.

We find God's blessings on Israel, when they follow the teachings of the LORD.

Wisdom is a gift from God.

Knowledge is accumulated learning.

I have repeated many times in these lessons, the only way not to be deceived in the end times is to accumulate all the wisdom and knowledge of the Scriptures we can.

Those who are not really familiar with the teachings in the Bible will be deceived.

The strength of our salvation is in Jesus Christ who is the Word of God.

Verses 7-9

From the vision of future glory, Isaiah returns to the disastrous present.

Jerusalem's situation was hopeless when (in 701 B.C.), the Assyrian army had the city surrounded and was ready to move in.

Isaiah 33:7 "Behold, their valiant ones shall cry without: the ambassadors of peace shall weep bitterly."

Both men of war and diplomats had failed in their attempts to thwart the invaders.

We see a little more detailed explanation of the first 6 verses here.

Judah has many valiant warriors.

They see the futility of trying to make peace with the world.

All of their strength and power (without God's help), will just bring defeat.

Isaiah 33:8 "The highways lie waste, the wayfaring man ceaseth: he hath broken the covenant, he hath despised the cities, he regardeth no man."

The enemy surrounding the city had cut off all travel and trade with the outside world.

To a worldly man, previous peace treaties mean nothing.

How long will it take Judah (and us), to realize our strength does not lie in our own abilities?

The only strength capable of taking care of this evil world force is God.

Covenant, of course, is speaking of an agreement.

The Spirit and the flesh will never keep covenant.

This is like the Jew and the Arab today.

One represents flesh, the other Spirit.

There can be no real peace in the world, until Jesus brings peace.

In the end times, there will be a 7 year treaty between the Arabs and the Jews.

It will not bring true peace, however.

Jesus brings the only true peace to the world.

Isaiah 33:9 "The earth mourneth [and] languisheth: Lebanon is ashamed [and] hewn down: Sharon is like a wilderness; and Bashan and Carmel shake off [their fruits]."

The enemy had spoiled places renowned for their lush fertility.

This is speaking of how wide the destruction is.

Languisheth, in this verse, means droop.

There is no possibility for this very fruitful land to produce anything in this confusion.

Lebanon, which usually produced beautiful, strong trees, possibly, had them destroyed as well.

Without God, all is lost.

Isaiah 33:10 "Now will I rise, saith the LORD; now will I be exalted; now will I lift up myself."

When the oppressor's power had reached its zenith, the time had arrived for the LORD to assert Himself in judging the plunderer, in Isaiah's case the Assyrian troops.

The LORD will rise up and fight for His people.

What a shame, He must lift up Himself.

When all else fails for Judah, God rises up and saves them.

Isaiah 33:11 "Ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble: your breath, [as] fire, shall devour you."

"Chaff ... stubble":

References to Assyria reaffirm that the plunderer is to be plundered (verse 1).

This is speaking to the enemies of Judah and the enemies of the Christian.

The weapon they formed against God's people shall turn on them and destroy them.

Their own breath shall destroy them.

Isaiah 33:12 "And the people shall be [as] the burnings of lime: [as] thorns cut up shall they be burned in the fire."

"Lime ... thorns":

Burned limestone became dust; thorn bushes burned rapidly.

Lime burns quickly, but puts off a terrible odor.

This reminds us of the destruction at Armageddon, where the stench will be so bad.

Thorns cut up and burned would burn quickly, as well.

I believe this is speaking of the quick destruction.

Verses 13-24

God's judgment is pictured as a "devouring fire", which is so awesome that only the righteous will be spared (Matt. 24:22).

The "king in his beauty" is Christ Himself, and the description of the magnitude of His kingdom is reminiscent of the New Jerusalem (in Revelation 21:16-17).

Here the prophet foresees the millennial kingdom when Christ will rule the world in peace.

All that Israel needs will be fulfilled in the LORD her God, who will be the "judge, lawgiver," and "king".

Thus, in this threefold capacity, "he will save us."

Isaiah 33:13 "Hear, ye [that are] far off, what I have done; and, ye [that are] near, acknowledge my might."

"Far off ... near":

When God puts down the final enemies of Israel, He will receive worldwide acknowledgment of His might.

Everything that happened in the Bible was not only for the people it was happening to at the time, but as an example for us, as well.

The following is one example of that.

2 Peter 2:6 "And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned [them] with an overthrow, making [them] an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;"

Isaiah says; whether you are far away, or near, acknowledge the might of Almighty God.

Isaiah 33:14 "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?"

When sinners (false professors among the elect), comprehend the might of God, fear takes hold of their lives (Acts 5:11; Heb. 12:29).

Sinners in Zion (Jerusalem), and the church now, must take heed.

A "hypocrite" is one who says he believes, but does not live like he believes.

He says one thing and does something else.

In the verse above, the word "hypocrites" means soil, in a moral sense.

God is a consuming fire.

We cannot deceive Him.

He knows what we believe.

Many will stand before Jesus, who call themselves Christian, and He will say, "Get away from me, I never knew you".

Judgment begins at the house of God.

Isaiah 33:15 "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, and speaketh uprightly”:

The only survivors in the presence of mighty God will be the righteous (Psalms 15:1-5; 24:3-4).

Now, we see just who will be saved.

Those who walk with Christ on a daily basis shall be saved.

We must live the salvation we have received.

These people of Jerusalem are the same.

They must walk and talk uprightly on a daily basis.

We are what the condition of our hearts are.

Taking bribes is for the hypocrite, not for believers.

We must stay on the narrow path which leads to everlasting life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Isaiah 33:16 "He shall dwell on high: his place of defense [shall be] the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters [shall be] sure."

“Defense ... bread ...waters”:

Those who are right with God will enjoy perfect security and ample provisions (32:15, 17-18).

When we dwell on high, we are living in the presence of the Lord.

The Rock of protection, spoken of here as munitions, is the Lord.

He is the Bread of life.

He actually was the Manna which fell from heaven to feed them.

Look, with me, at what Jesus said about this.

John 6:58 "This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever."

Jesus is also the Water of life, spoken of in the verse above.

Jesus Christ our Lord is our Bread, our Water, and even our Life.

Isaiah 33:17 "Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off."

“King in his beauty”:

The prophecy moves beyond Hezekiah in his sackcloth, oppressed by his enemy, to Messiah in His beauty.

Seeing Him in glory is another reward of the righteous.

The near future deliverance from Sennacherib anticipates a more distant wonder when the Messiah will sit on His throne.

This is a prophecy of Messiah who will reign as King.

This is speaking of the beauty of the King of kings, when He comes in power and great glory to the earth.

His beauty is so great; it cannot be compared with mortal man.

The “far” land, here, could be speaking of the vastness of the land He will reign over.

Verses 18-19

Speaking of that future day, God's people will remember past hardships under foreign domination.

Isaiah 33:18 "Thine heart shall meditate terror. Where [is] the scribe? where [is] the receiver? where [is] he that counted the towers?"

Not only will every eye see Him, but terror will befall those who denied Him.

The scribe, receiver, and the one who counted the towers, had their eyes on things of the earth.

They had overlooked the weightier things of the Spirit.

They feel terror, because they rejected their Messiah.

Isaiah 33:19 "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."

This is speaking to God's people.

They would not see these foreign oppressors again.

God won the battle.

The people received the victory.

Jesus won the battle over the devil for you and me at Calvary too.

We must accept His free gift of victory for us.

There will be no foreign languages.

We will all speak the same language in the New Jerusalem.

Isaiah 33:20 "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."

God's presence is to permanently inhabit restored Jerusalem in the millennial kingdom.

"Solemnities":

This was the chief part of Zion's glory that God was solemnly worshipped, and the solemn assemblies and feasts kept in her.

This city of "solemnities", is where the saints solemnly assemble together for religious worship; where the word of God is solemnly preached, and where the ordinances are solemnly administered, and the sacrifices of prayer and praise are solemnly offered up:

The "solemnities", in the verse above, probably are speaking of such things as Passover, Sabbath etc.

The tabernacle that shall not be taken down has to be after the time of the destruction of the temple about 70 A.D.

This prophecy leads far into the future, even unto now.

This could be speaking of the everlasting nature of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It could also, be looking to the time when God will remember their iniquities no more.

The tabernacle that shall never be taken down is in the New Jerusalem which comes down from God.

We read about that tabernacle in Revelation.

Revelation 15:5 "And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:"

Revelation 21:1-3

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea."

"And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God [is] with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, [and be] their God."

This is that everlasting tabernacle that we read of in the Scripture in Isaiah above.

Isaiah 33:21 "But 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."

God is to restore wide rivers and streams as a means of defending the city.

Isaiah 33:22 "For the LORD [is] our judge, the LORD [is] our lawgiver, the LORD [is] our king; he will save us."

"He will save us":

In explicit language, God, not the surrounding nations, is to deliver Israel.

We can see from the following Scripture who the Judge is.

2 Timothy 4:8 "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

Jesus is our Judge.

Jesus is our Lawgiver.

Jesus is our King.

Jesus is our Salvation.

Put your trust in Jesus, and He will not fail you.

Isaiah 33:23 "Thy 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."

In her own strength, Jerusalem is as helpless to defend herself as a ship deprived of its ropes and pulleys.

The earthly strings that had us tied down will be no more.

Judah then or the Christians now, cannot sail their ship to safe port.

Our strength is in Jesus.

Isaiah 33:24 "And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein [shall be] forgiven [their] iniquity."

"Forgiven their iniquity":

When Christ returns to rule, Jerusalem will be free of physical and spiritual problems.

There is no sickness, nor suffering in this city we have been reading about.

Revelation 21:4 "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

Jeremiah 31:34 "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Isaiah Chapter 33 Questions

1. What is verse 1 saying really?
2. Is this spoken to an individual, or to a country?
3. What country specifically is Isaiah speaking to?
4. What is verse 2?
5. How does a prophet suffer worse than an individual from his prophecy?
6. The people fled at what?
7. What caused the enemy to scatter?
8. What does the comparison of the locusts say to us in verse 4?
9. Where does the LORD dwell?
10. He filled Zion with what 2 things?
11. What does verse 6 say is the stability of thy times?
12. What has the author repeated in these lessons about deception in the end times?
13. Why will the world not keep covenant?
14. Who represents the flesh and the Spirit in our society today?
15. Describe what has happened to them in verse 9.

16. Who will lift up the LORD?
17. What happens to the weapons formed against God's people?
18. Verse 12 is speaking of quick _____.
19. What is meant by the word "hypocrite"?
20. Where does judgment begin?
21. Describe what the walk of a Christian should be like.
22. Who is the Rock of protection for the believer?
23. What is verse 17 a prophecy of?
24. What are the "solemnities"?
25. Where is the tabernacle that shall never be destroyed?
26. Where do we read that the tabernacle of God is with men?
27. Who is the righteous Judge?