

“Woe” #6 — Destruction and Deliverance

Isaiah 33

Isaiah 33 begins with the sixth and final “woe” (28:1; 29:1, 15; 30:4; 31:1; 33:1). It is a “woe” specifically aimed at Assyria. Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, gained power by treachery, therefore he will fall by treachery (v. 1). In other words: “They who live by treachery will die by treachery.” As Jesus said, “*They that take the sword shall perish with the sword*” (Mt. 26:52). Sennacherib spoiled other nations—now he will be spoiled. He will become the victim of the same evil he inflicted on others.

- “Poetic justice: God will “turn the tables” on Sennacherib and he will get what’s coming to him according to the principle of sowing / reaping. In essence, God was saying, “You come against My people, and I’ll come against you. You poke your finger in the apple of my eye, I’ll poke you in the eye!” (Zech. 2:8).

➔ As in other parts of Isaiah, Isaiah 33 as a dual application—The **destruction** of Judah’s enemies and God’s **deliverance** of His people both *historically and prophetically*.

- For example, verse 2 is the prayer of the Jewish remnant in the tribulation period (“*the time of trouble*” cf. Dan. 12:1; Jer. 30:7).
- The prayer begins with a **plea for grace**. Judah realized it did not deserve God’s deliverance, and neither do we. We need grace!

I. The nations DEFEATED (vs. 3-16). God reassures Judah, “I’ve got this!” He will defeat the nations that come against Judah and Judah will get the spoils. In the end He will be exalted because He did it!

A. **WRATH** upon Assyria / nations in tribulation (vs. 3-4, 10).

➔ A remnant of God’s people in the tribulation are prayerfully waiting (33:2) for the day when Christ will “rise up” and pounce on it’s prey (31:4 cf. Zeph. 3:8—“Therefore **wait** ye upon me, saith the LORD, **until the day** that I **rise up to the prey**: for my determination is to **gather the nations**, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to **pour upon them mine indignation**, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be **devoured with the fire** of my jealousy.”).

1. When Jesus comes, He will lift Himself up to defend His people (33:3, 10). The *“lifting up of thyself”* indicates Christ lifting Himself up to judgment (Num. 10:35; 23:24; Ps. 7:6; 94:1-2; 106:26; Ezek. 20:6; 44:12; John 8:7; Rev. 10:5-6).

➔v. 10—**Three-fold application:** *Historically*, God delivers Jerusalem from Assyria. *Prophetically*, Christ delivers Jerusalem at His second advent. *Spiritually*, Christ’s deliverance of N.T. Christians from sin:

- *“Now will I rise,”*— Jesus promised, *“After three days, I will rise again”* (Mt. 27:63).
- *“Now will I be exalted”*—After Christ arose, *“God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name”* (Phil. 2:9 cf. Acts 2:33; 5:31).
- *“Now will I lift up myself”*—Jesus said, *“if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me”* (John 12:32 cf. Mt. 3:14).

2. His enemies flee and scatter at *“the noise of the tumult”* (33:3 cf. 2 Kings 7:6-7; Zech. 14:12-13). He will *“rise up”* against them and *devour* them in fiery judgment (see also Isa. 42:13-14; Jer. 25:30-33; Psalm 97:1-9).
3. Judah will quickly gather the *“spoils”* left behind after Assyria flees (v. 4).

B. **WORSHIP** in Zion (vs. 5-6, 20).

1. The contrast: *“the time of trouble”* (v. 2—tribulation) to *“thy times”* (v. 6—kingdom). The tribulation will be characterized by trouble. Christ’s kingdom characterized by stability.
2. v. 20—*“Look upon Zion, the city of our SOLEMNITIES...”* — *“solemnities”* are Jewish feast days (Lev. 23:36; Num. 15:3; Dt. 16:18; 2 Chron. 2:4; Ps. 92:3; Isa. 30:28; Ezek. 45:17; Joel 2:15; etc.). Jerusalem will again be the center of worship in the Kingdom.
3. A nation’s greatest treasure is its *“fear of the Lord.”*

- “Wisdom and knowledge” are both linked to “the fear of the Lord” (Prov. 1:7; 9:10).

C. **WEeping** for devastation (vs. 7-9).

➡ Historically, verse 7 refers to Assyria’s “valiant” army outside the walls and the failure of the ambassadors who were sent to negotiate the covenant with Sennacherib (2 Kings 18:13-18). Sennacherib broke the covenant.

- v. 8—“...he hath broken the covenant...” Prophetically applies to the covenant the antichrist breaks with Israel in the middle of the tribulation (Dan. 9:27).

➡ v. 9—Lands **laid waste** following Assyria’s attack (Micah 7:13-15).

- *Lebanon* (Leban = white. Northern mountains of cedars and firs covered with snow.)
- *Sharon* (At the foot of Mt Carmel, known for flowers.)
- *Bashan* (Northeast of Galilee—high plains, forests and also known for wild cattle.)
- *Carmel* (Divides Sharon from Eschaelon, near Megiddo.)
- Cf. Isaiah 35:1-2—belongs to a different time/millennium.

II. **The adversaries DEVoured** (vs. 11-15).

A. The **FRUSTRATION** (v. 11—“Ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble...”)

- The plans and devices of the Assyrians are frustrated and of no avail.

B. The **FIRES** (vs. 11-12). A contrast of fires.

1. Verse 11 “...breath, AS fire...” Someone is burned by his own fiery words (Prov. 16:27; 26:21; James 3:5-6). A reference to Sennacherib’s fiery speech coming back to burn him (cf. 2 Kings 18:28-35; 19:10-13, 32-37).
2. Verse 12 is literal fire from God that burns His adversaries— “...they be burned IN the fire” (v. 12 cf. 9:18; 10:17; Heb. 6:7-

8; 2 Sam. 23:6-7; John 15:6; 2 Thess. 1:8). God is a consuming fire (Dt 4:24; Heb. 12:29)!

C. The **FEARFULNESS** (vs. 13-15).

1. **A call to recognize** God's judgment and might (v. 13). God's call to two groups of people: "*Ye that are far off*" (Jews of the dispersion or Gentiles), and "*ye that are near*" (in Jerusalem).
 - The designation "*sinner*" in the O.T. basically applies to anyone (Rom. 3:23)—Jacob, David, Moses, were all sinning saints.
 - Two types of "sinners": Generally—Everyone is a sinner (2 Chron. 6:36; Eccl. 7:20). Specifically—wicked people whose lives are defined by sin (Gen. 13:13; cf. John 9:24-25, 31; Luke 7:37-39, 47).
 - The "*sinners*" in Isaiah 33:14 are those who are very wicked.
2. After seeing God burn up His enemies, fear grips "*the sinners and hypocrites*" in Zion. It caught them off guard. They were not expecting it. They wondered, "*Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire?*" Answer (v. 15): Only those who walk righteously (1 Kings 3:6; Ps. 15:2). In the N.T. only those who are imputed with righteousness of Christ walk righteously—they walk in Christ's righteousness, and not their own (1 Cor. 1:29-30; Phil. 3:9 cf. Isa. 61:10).
 - v. 15—True righteousness disdains **(1)** corrupt speech; **(2)** using oppression to get gain; **(3)** bribery; **(4)** hearing reports of bloodshed; **(5)** the sight of sinful acts. [Description of someone who does not subscribe to cable TV?]
 - Speak no evil... Hear no evil... See no evil!
 - Jesus Christ fulfilled all the things mentioned in verse 15.

III. **The King's DOMINION** (vs. 16-24). Seven characteristics of Christ's dominion in the millennium.

A. It's **PEOPLE** (v. 16 cf. Ps. 91:14-16; John 17:24).

- B. It's **PROVISION** (v. 16—Protection and nourishment).
- C. It's **PLEASANTNESS** (v. 17 cf. Ps 15:1-3; 27:4).
- **Contrast:** v. 15—“shutteth his eyes from seeing evil...” / v. 17—“Thine eyes SHALL SEE...” / v. 19— “Thou shalt NOT SEE...” / v. 20— “thine eyes SHALL SEE...” When Christ comes, He will remove all the terrible stuff that goes on in the world today! Fierce terrorists will be a vague memory. Why would anyone want to look at unsightly garbage when they can see that which is beautiful (v. 17)?
- D. It's **PEACE** (v. 18-21). What will a man “see” when he looks upon Zion during the millennium? (v. 20). He will see PEACE, not like today!
1. Complete “peace of mind” (v. 18). When Christ reigns there will be no anxiety about terror. There will be no wondering, “Where are the ones who made us afraid?”
 2. The Lord at Jerusalem will be like a peaceful river or stream that is untroubled by warships (v. 21; Isa. 66:12-13).
 - A “galley” is a single decked ship propelled by oarsmen and/or sails. The “tacklings” are the riggings used to operate the sails. The “mast” is a tall upright pole that supports the sails.

NOTE: Today Jerusalem is a landlocked city. Zechariah 14:4-8 indicates at the second advent an earthquake will create a deep valley between the Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea forming a broad river. [See also Ezek. 47:1-12; Rev. 22:1.]

- E. It's **PERMANENCE** (v. 20). Unlike the wanderings in the wilderness, the tabernacle will remain stationary at Jerusalem.

Allusion to the Trinity (v. 22). America's three branches of constitutional government is based on this verse:

1. Judge (Judicial branch)
 2. Lawgiver (Legislative branch)
 3. King (Executive branch)
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- F. It's **POWER** (v. 23). Weak are made strong (35:6). The weakest in this kingdom is stronger than the strongest in the kingdom of evil.
- G. It's **PARDON** (v. 24; Jer. 50:20). Notice connection between sin and sickness (cf. Mark 2:1-12; James 5:13-15). Because sin will be pardoned sickness will be removed.