

Delivery for Zion

Isaiah 33

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**BIG BEND
BIBLE
FELLOWSHIP**

Isaiah 33:1-9 – A Prayer in Deep Distress (NIV)

Woe to you, destroyer, you who have not been destroyed!

Woe to you, betrayer, you who have not been betrayed!

When you stop destroying, you will be destroyed;

when you stop betraying, you will be betrayed.

² *Lord, be gracious to us; we long for you. Be our strength every morning, our salvation in time of distress.*

³ *At the uproar of your army, the peoples flee; when you rise up, the nations scatter.* ⁴ *Your plunder, O nations, is harvested as by young locusts; like a swarm of locusts people pounce on it.* ⁵ *The Lord is exalted, for he dwells on high; he will fill Zion with his justice and righteousness.*

⁶ *He will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the Lord is the key to this treasure.* ⁷ *Look, their brave men cry aloud in the streets; the envoys of peace weep bitterly.* ⁸ *The highways are deserted, no travelers are on the roads. The treaty is broken, its witnesses are despised, no one is respected.* ⁹ *The land dries up and wastes away, Lebanon is ashamed and withers; Sharon is like the Arabah, and Bashan and Carmel drop their leaves.*

v1 – Who are those who plunder or destroy?

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.

Who did Assyria betray?

Certainly, both Israel and Judah, and probably others not documented in Scripture.

How would Assyria be betrayed?

By God when he sent the destroying angel against them then later by Babylon who took advantage of their weakened condition.

What is the principle that addresses dealing dishonestly with others?

Jesus spoke of this same principle in Matthew 7:1-2: *Judge not, that you not be judged. For with what 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.

v2 – In what did the failure of the Egyptians to help Judah result?

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.*

v3 – What did the people of Judah expect God to do about Assyria?

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.

v4 – What would be harvested like locusts?

Verse four may already have had an initial fulfillment after the death of the Assyrian soldiers, for undoubtedly the inhabitants of Jerusalem congregated like locusts around the corpses and the implements of war.

v5 – What did God's dealing with Assyria result in?

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.

v6 – What is the key to the treasure of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge?

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.

Proverbs 9:10 – *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.*

How is the fear of the Lord the beginning of wisdom?

The fear of God is foundational to true wisdom; all other types of learning are worthless unless built upon a knowledge of the Lord Himself.

What is fear?

In the Bible, the word translated “fear” can mean several things...

- It can refer to the terror one feels in a frightening situation (Deuteronomy 2:25).
- It can mean “respect” in the way a servant fears his master and serves him faithfully (Joshua 24:14).
- Fear can also denote the reverence or awe a person feels in the presence of greatness (Isaiah 6:5).

The fear of the Lord is a combination of all of these.

- Fear of the Lord can be defined as “the continual awareness that our loving heavenly Father is watching and evaluating everything we think, say, and do

How do people come by the fear of the Lord?

We must recognize God for who He is. We must glimpse with our spirits the power, might, beauty, and brilliance of the Lord God Almighty.

- Those who fear the Lord have a continual awareness of Him, a deep reverence for Him, and sincere commitment to obey Him.

How is wisdom contrasted with foolishness?

Proverbs 1:7 – *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

A wise person fears/reverences/obeys the Lord; a fool despises God’s instruction and cannot be told what to do (an unteachable spirit).

- The wise person is wise because he has started at the starting place; the fool has no foundation on which to build wisdom.

How do people become fools?

Romans 1:21-22 – *neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools.*

This is a description of people who try to obtain wisdom while ignoring God—it cannot be done for the simple reason that God is the source of wisdom.

How do we get wisdom from God?

James 1:5 – *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.*

Ask Him for wisdom and He will give it to us. But we must ask in faith with plans to obey (verse 6). Many people want God’s wisdom, but then they want to weigh it against their own understanding and decide for themselves whether or not they will follow it...

Proverbs 3:5–6 – *Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.*

We become wise when we study the Word and apply it to our lives:

Psalm 119:98–100 – *Your commands are always with me and make me wiser than my enemies. I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes. I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey your precepts.*

We also develop wisdom when we learn from our mistakes. Everyone makes mistakes, but the difference between the wise and the foolish is that wise people learn their lessons and don’t repeat the sin. Fools rush back in over and over, puzzled as to why they keep getting the same results.

Proverbs 26:11 – *as a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool returns to his folly.*

Wisdom involves seeing life from God’s perspective and acting accordingly. We must remove the shackles of earth-bound thinking to see life through a bigger lens. Life is not about us. It is about God.

v7 – Who are the brave men who will cry?

The warriors of Assyria. In general, when the judgment of the LORD comes to the earth, everyone is brought low before Him.

Their valiant ones: The Hebrew word translated valiant ones appears only this one time in the Bible.

v8-9 – What does the judgment of God result in?

Desolation; no travel, no protection in the cities, and environmental disaster. In general, tragedy to all indiscriminately.

Isaiah 33:10-16 – Impending Judgment on Zion (NIV)

¹⁰ “Now will I arise,” says the Lord. “Now will I be exalted; now will I be lifted up. ¹¹ You conceive chaff, you give birth to straw; your breath is a fire that consumes you.

¹² The peoples will be burned to ashes; like cut thornbushes they will be set ablaze.” ¹³ You who are far away, hear what I have done; you who are near, acknowledge my power! ¹⁴ The sinners in Zion are terrified; trembling grips the godless: “Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?” ¹⁵ Those who walk righteously and speak what is right, who reject gain from extortion and keep their hands from accepting bribes, who stop their ears against plots of murder and shut their eyes against contemplating evil— ¹⁶ they are the ones who will dwell on the heights, whose refuge will be the mountain fortress. Their bread will be supplied, and water will not fail them.

v10 – Who will arise?

As the whole earth is brought low by the judgment of the LORD, at the same time, the LORD lifts Himself up.

v11 – Who will conceive chaff and stubble?

Those who oppose the will of God.

How is it the breath of those who oppose God will consume them?

Their own words will condemn them...

Matthew 12:36 – *But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.*

v12 – What will God’s judgment be like?

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.

v13 – Who are those far off and near?

- The far off are those not subject to God’s judgment... learn the lesson and make the necessary corrections to avoid judgment.
- The near are those subject to God’s judgment... recognize it for what it is and give God the glory he deserves.

v14 – Why were the sinners in Zion afraid?

They were afraid because judgment of the LORD was coming. Those who were not afraid to practice their sin were now afraid when righteous judgment comes upon their sin.

What were the sinners afraid of?

1. The destruction of their mortal body
2. The destruction of their resurrected body

What is the fate of those who reject the salvation of Christ?

John 5:28-29 – *Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.*

All people will receive eternal, resurrected bodies. But those who rejected God’s provision for eternal life with Him will be separated from Him to spend eternity in the lake of fire.

Revelation 20:13-14 – *And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.*

v15-16 – What will become of the one who walks righteously and speaks uprightly?

he will dwell on high: Heaven... 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.

What kind of deliverance can the righteous expect?

To be protected and have his needs met even in his mortal body. Indeed, this is what Jesus promised:

Matthew 6:25-26 – *do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?*

Isaiah 33:17-24 – Land of the Majestic King (NIV)

¹⁷ Your eyes will see the king in his beauty and view a land that stretches afar. ¹⁸ In your thoughts you will ponder the former terror: “Where is that chief officer? Where is the one who took the revenue? Where is the officer in charge of the towers?” ¹⁹ You will see those arrogant people no more, people whose speech is obscure, whose language is strange and incomprehensible. ²⁰ Look on Zion, the city of our festivals; your eyes will see Jerusalem, a peaceful abode, a tent that will not be moved; its stakes will never be pulled up, nor any of its ropes broken. ²¹ There the Lord will be our Mighty One. It will be like a place of broad rivers and streams. No galley with oars will ride them, no mighty ship will sail them. ²² For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; it is he who will save us. ²³ Your rigging hangs loose: The mast is not held secure, the sail is not spread. Then an abundance of spoils will be divided and even the lame will carry off plunder. ²⁴ No one living in Zion will say, “I am ill”; and the sins of those who dwell there will be forgiven.

v17 – What else can the righteous look forward to?

Your eyes will see the King in His beauty: The LORD will bless His righteous ones and they will see the King in His beauty. 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.

What will it be like to see the King Jesus in His beauty?

1 Corinthians 13:12 – *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*

Today 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.

What is the land that is very far off or stretches afar?

In context, this has to be Israel during the Millennial Kingdom. And the Millennial Kingdom foreshadows the Eternal State...

Why should the promise of heaven be precious to us?

- 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.
- What makes heaven really heaven is the unhindered, unrestricted, presence of our LORD...

Isaiah 65:24 – *It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer*

v18 – Whose heart will meditate on terror?

The revealing of the King will be the greatest glory for the child of God, but it will be the greatest terror for the one who has set their heart against or apart from God. In vain, they will look to the government officials they trusted for help, but there will be none.

Why do people have such high expectation of their government?

Their hope is not in the Creator-God, their hope is in the world. While government is intended to serve as a proxy for God, it is made up of flawed humans that fail more than we would like. Nonetheless...

Romans 13:1 – *Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.*

People without God in their lives can only hope in the flawed proxy of God that will invariably let them down.

What else besides being made up of sin-prone humans will cause governments to let us down?

Satan is referred to as the god of this world because demons are commissioned to influence the human governments...

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 – *if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded*

What is the agenda of the demons influencing the governments of the world?

To thwart God's plan to take out *a people for His name* (Acts 15:14)...

- Since Jesus makes us free (John 8:36), Satan seeks to enslave us.
- Since Jesus came to give us life abundantly, Satan seeks to *steal, and to kill, and to destroy* (John 10:10)

How does Satan's agenda help us better understand the globalist interest in depopulation?

Globalism seeks to erase the national distinctions God established at Babel...

Acts 17:26 – *He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings*

You'd expect Satan to be all-in for eliminating the image of God where-ever he can...

John 8:44 – *[the devil] was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him.*

That is why those side with Satan against God love death:

Proverbs 8:36 – *All those who hate me love death*

And that is why we need to...

1 Peter 5:8 – *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour*

Since Government authorities are proxies for God, does that mean that we should obey them without question?

No, as Peter demonstrated when his government tried to get him to disobey God, he simply said:

Acts 5:29 – *We ought to obey God rather than men.*

v19 – Who were the foreigners Judah would see no more?

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.

v20 – What promise did God make Judah regarding Assyria?

Look upon Zion... Your eyes will see Jerusalem, a quiet home: In the midst of the Assyrian threat, God will preserve Jerusalem. Not one of its stakes will ever be removed.

v21 – How is it the Lord would be for Judah a place of broad rivers?

Most great civilizations have grown up around important rivers. Israel, in general, and Jerusalem, in particular, were exceptions to this. But the presence of the Lord would make all the difference for Judah.

v22 – Who would the Lord be for Judah?

Judge, Lawgiver, King, Savior

v23 – What would become of the great Gentile civilizations?

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.

Who is the lame that will 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.

What applications come to mind from our discussion?

- God will treat us the same way we treat others, so be kind
- Wisdom is important so fear God and ask Him for it.
- Our words condemn us, be careful what you say.
- Don't worry, God will take care of the needs of His children.
- Heaven will be glorious; this hope helps us deal with whatever we face in this mortal life.
- Obey the government until they seek to make us disobey God, then civil disobedience is called for.
- The god of this world is bent on depopulation, resist!