

Commentary on Isaiah chapters 33, by Chuck Smith 7.12.23

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July memory verse Proverbs 30:5 (NKJV) Every word of God *is* pure; He *is* a shield to those who put their trust in Him.

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Now chapter 33 begins with a warning to the Assyrians.

Woe unto thee that spoilest, and you have not been spoiled; you that deal treacherously, you've not been dealt treacherously with! ([Isa 33:1](#))

The Assyrians were extremely treacherous people. They often would mutilate their prisoners of war. Physically mutilate them. They would pull out their tongues. They would gouge out their eyes. They would physically mutilate their prisoners of war. They were extremely cruel. History records that many times cities when surrounded by the Assyrian army the inhabitants would commit suicide rather than be taken captive. So fearful were they of the Assyrians because of their barbarity, that rather than being taken captives by the Assyrians and be exposed to the torture that the Assyrians gave to their captives, they would just commit suicide. So Masada is not an isolated case in history. At the time of the Assyrian might, there were many records of cities-entire cities-that, rather than being captives of the Assyrians, committed suicide. So, "Woe unto you who deal so treacherously."

when you shall cease to spoil, you will be spoiled; and when you shall make an end to deal treacherously, they will deal treacherously with you. 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. At the noise of the tumult the people fled; at the lifting up of thyself the nations were scattered. 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. The LORD is exalted; for he dwelleth on high: he hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness. And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: the fear of the LORD is his treasure. Behold, their valiant ones shall cry without: the ambassadors of peace shall

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weep bitterly. The highways lie waste, the wayfaring man ceaseth: he hath broken the covenant, he hath despised the cities, he regards no man ([Isa 33:1-8](#)).

He's talking about how the Assyrians have come and taken many of the cities already of Judah. And how the highways of Judah lie waste.

The earth mourns and languishes: Lebanon is ashamed and hewn down: Sharon is like a wilderness; and Bashan and Carmel shake off their fruits. Now will I arise, saith the LORD; now will I be exalted; now will I lift up myself. You shall conceive chaff, you shall bring forth stubble: your breath, as fire, shall devour you. And the people shall be as the burnings of lime: as thorns cut up shall they be burned in the fire. Hear, ye that are far off, what I have done; and, ye that are near, acknowledge my might ([Isa 33:9-13](#)).

God said, "I'm going to burn them in my fire." Like thorns are going to be cut up and burned in the fire. And so at the destruction of the Assyrians, the effect upon those in Jerusalem:

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? ([Isa 33:14](#))

If the fire of God has wiped out the Assyrian army, this highly vaunted Assyrian army, who amongst us can dwell in that kind of fire? The sinners become fearful, afraid. The hypocrites filled with terror. When they see the effect of God's fire against the Assyrians.

In Hebrews we read, "Our God is a consuming fire" ([Hebrews 12:29](#)). In Hebrews we read that, "If we sin wilfully after we come to the knowledge of truth, there remains no further sacrifice for our sins, only that fearful looking forward to the fiery indignation of God's wrath which will devour His adversaries" ([Hebrews 10:26-27](#)). The fire of God.

Now the fire of God to us as children of God is not something that we fear. "Beloved, consider it not strange concerning the fiery trials which are to try you as though some strange thing has happened unto you" ([1 Peter 4:12](#)). God puts us through the fire but it is the refining fire whereby God is purging out from our lives the dross in order that we might be pure.

Commentary on Isaiah chapters 33, by Chuck Smith 7.12.23

When we come to Jesus Christ we have all of our hang-ups. We have all kinds of impurities within our lives. And so God puts us through the fire in order that He might burn out these impurities. We go through the testing. We go through trials, but God has a purpose in the testings and trials of refining us and making us pure, even as He is pure. And so I am in the fire of God. But because I am a child of God, the fire of God is only refining me and taking away the impurity from my life. You are in the fire of God. Whoever you may be-sinner, Christian alike. If you are a sinner, the fire of God is devouring and destroying and will ultimately destroy you. Where if you are a child of God, then that same refining process of God's fire is bringing about the purity in your life.

"Who amongst us can dwell in the devouring fire?" The answer:

He that walks righteously, he that speaks uprightly; he that despises the profit off of other people's ills or oppressions, he that refuses to take bribes, who will not listen to evil, and shuts his eyes from seeing evil; For 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. Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty ([Isa 33:15-17](#)):

Oh, how I long to see the King in His beauty and in His glory. Jesus prayed, "Father, I pray for these that have been with Me that they might see Me with the glory that I had with Thee before the world ever existed. And not only for these do I pray, but for all of those that will believe upon Me through their witness" ([John 17:20,24](#)). What is the Lord's desire? That you might see Him in His glory and see the King in His beauty. We have seen Him in His humiliation. We have seen Him as He was despised and rejected. But His desire is that we might also see Him in the glory that He had with the Father before the world ever existed. And they shall see the King in His beauty.

they shall behold the land ([Isa 33:17](#))

The promised land, the kingdom of God.

that was very far off. Thine heart shall meditate terror. Where is the scribe? where is the receiver? where is he that counted the towers? 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. Look upon Zion,

Commentary on Isaiah chapters 33, by Chuck Smith 7.12.23

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. 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. For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our King; he will save us ([Isa 33:17-22](#)).

It speaks of that glorious day when Jesus will come and establish the kingdom of God upon the earth and He will reign there in mount Zion. And when Jesus comes, actually there's going to be a tremendous earthquake that will split the Mount of Olives in two. It is going to open up a subterranean river that will flow out from Jerusalem. Out from the throne of Jesus Christ there in Jerusalem. The subterranean river which will break into two rivers-one flowing to the Mediterranean and the other flowing down to the Dead Sea. And when the river flows into the waters of the Dead Sea, the waters of the Dead Sea will be healed so that it will no longer be a dead sea but it will become a center of fishing industry as they dry their nets around the area of Engedi.

And so Ezekiel prophesied of this river that flowed forth from the throne of God and how he measured the river and the depth that was so deep he couldn't walk across as it made its way down towards the Dead Sea. Isaiah also in another prophecy speaks of this same river. "The glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers," not where ships navigate. Not like the river Euphrates or the Tigris where the ships navigated on it.

But, "The Lord is the judge, He is the lawgiver, He is our King; and He will save us."

Thy tacklings ([Isa 33:23](#))

Speaking in terms of shipping now.

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. And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity ([Isa 33:23-24](#)).

Commentary on Isaiah chapters 33, by Chuck Smith 7.12.23

"Oh how happy is the man whose sins are covered. Whose transgressions are forgiven" ([Psalm 32:1](#)).

But before the great day of the Lord comes, before Jesus sets up His kingdom, before He reigns there in Jerusalem, the nations of the earth are going to experience the most horrible bloodbath that has ever taken place in the history of man. And so chapter 34 he sees now this horrible bloodbath of the nations before the reign of Christ.