

EXPOSITION OF ISAIAH

Message #47

Isaiah 33:1-12

When we were in Savannah, there was a big news story about a diabolical white man and his son who kidnapped a young innocent black boy and brought him into their house and the husband and son molested him and the son killed him. The wife, who witnessed the whole thing, was given immunity for her testimony and both the son and the husband were found guilty. Now in Georgia, they still have the death penalty and just as we were leaving, they were deliberating about whether or not both the father and son should be given the death penalty because the son seemed to have emotional problems. This became a hotly debated issue.

It seems so odd to me that some people don't seem to mind hearing about someone who totally destroys another person, but does not want the person who did it to be destroyed. When Ted Bundy went on a serial killing rampage of raping and killing innocent girls, there were some people who protested the idea that he should be destroyed.

Well I promise you this, in God's world it doesn't work like that. Anyone who gives himself or herself to doing destructive things in a nation, state or even the church will eventually be destroyed. For awhile they may appear to get away with it, but God has his ways of leveling and even destroying those who do destructive things.

The Apostle Paul said concerning the believer in the church, "If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him..." (I Corinthians 3:17). This is true for the church and this is also true for Israel.

If you track the history of Israel, even since the days of Isaiah, it appears that one destructive political power after another has risen up for awhile doing hateful and harmful things. But we may also notice that eventually those who do those things are destroyed. A good example in our own time is Saddam Hussein, who led much of the Arab world to try to destroy Israel. But one day all of these destructive agents will be gone because God will destroy them, and there will be no greater demonstration of that than when God will destroy the Antichrist.

What Isaiah prophetically describes in these verses is the chaos which will exist in the Promised Land just prior to Jesus Christ establishing His righteous reign in Israel. Much of this chaos will have to do with an evil Antichrist.

The language of this section describes a time when nations are overflowing the Promised Land, attacking Israel, led by some key treacherous military leader. What Isaiah reveals is this:

**GOD WANTS HIS PEOPLE TO KNOW THAT THERE IS COMING AN EVIL
DESTRUCTIVE WORLD LEADER WHO WILL EVENTUALLY BE DESTROYED .
BY GOD, JUST BEFORE HE DELIVERS AND BLESSES HIS PEOPLE.**

It is a very serious thing for anyone to do something destructive against God's sacred people and property. For awhile, the destroyer may seem to get away with the destruction but that will change quickly. God wants His people to know that He will eventually deliver them and destroy the one hurting them. There are five prophetic parts to these verses:

PROPHETIC PART #1 – Isaiah pronounces a “woe” judgment on the destroyer. 33:1

What Isaiah predicts here is that as soon as the destroyer destroys, he will be destroyed.

There are two Hebrew words repeated several times in this verse - “destroy” (four times) and “treacherous” (four times).

The actual word “destroy” is a word that is only used in a bad sense and it refers to one who violently destroys people from a strength position and brings them to total waste, such as when a city was completely destroyed and leveled (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, pp. 805-806).

The word “treacherous” which refers to one who is a fraud, who pretends to be on your side, but behind your back is covering and is out to oppress and afflict you (*Ibid.*, p. 102).

What is predicted here is that there is going to come into existence some specific fraud who will pretend to be Israel’s friend but will actually be her destroyer. He will be powerful and ruthless and he will not be instantly destroyed. At the time he is in power, he thinks that he is the one in charge of all of his success. What he does not realize is that God is the one in charge and He will bring him down, when He has fulfilled His prophetic purpose. Isaiah predicts that just as soon as he has finished his work, God will finish him.

Now many commentators see this as a reference to Sennacherib, who was in charge of the Assyrian army. We certainly agree that there is an immediate reference which may be made to him. However, as one carefully looks down through this prophecy, there are things here that do not fully fit him. **This is a reference to none other than the Antichrist.**

One thing we learn here is that for awhile, this political leader will seem to be successful and will seem to be in total sovereign power. He will appear to be Israel’s friend, but behind the scenes he is her worst nightmare. Other people and nations will respect him. Eventually he will specifically target Israel for destruction. But as soon as God has permitted him to do his evil work, others are going to target him and eventually God will destroy him.

You may get away with being a phony for awhile. One could come into this church and go back to the coffee fellowship time and appear to be so united with the work of God and yet have a secret plot to undermine and destroy the ministry. One may get away with it for awhile, but then God will bring him down. Woe to him for the destroyer will be destroyed.

PROPHETIC PART #2 – Isaiah prays for Israel. 33:2

In this verse, Isaiah prays specifically in reference to Israel and specifically in reference to that faithful remnant that did trust that one day God would deliver.

(Request #1) - That God would be gracious. 33:2a

Here is a very important principle to see; **in order for God to do anything good, even for His own people, they are in desperate need of His grace**. We do not deserve one thing from God except His judgment and wrath. We do not merit God’s grace and we cannot possibly earn

it by our works. The only chance we have is to do exactly what Isaiah does here and that is pray that God will be gracious to us. That grace is found in Jesus Christ. He is the total grace package.

(Request #2) - That God would be gracious to those who trusted and waited for Him. 33:2b

The word “wait” is one that means to wait with expectation in a strong and robust way (*Ibid.*, pp. 726-727). Isaiah specifically prays for those who have kept their strong focus on God, waiting for His deliverance and help.

The truth is, in every context of everything in life, we wait on God to do what He is going to do both with us and for us. In the Church Age, we keep our sights fixed on the Rapture and as John said, those who do will see Jesus Christ with confidence and not with shame.

Israel has been waiting a long time for God’s deliverance. She has longed for her Messiah to come. When He did come the first time she rejected Him. So now she has been waiting 2000 years for Him to come back. She is going to learn her lesson and there will come a day when that nation will cry out to Jesus Christ to return, and on that day He will come.

(Request #3) - That God would be their strength every morning. 33:2c

During the Tribulation, Israel will need God’s strength every day and every morning. When the Antichrist is pouring out his venom, every Jew will need the strength of God just to get through a day.

I am convinced that we cannot even possibly walk through a day in a way that glorifies God without His strength. Without God’s help we will make a sinful mess of everything. Our thoughts, our speech, our acts will not glorify God without His help. We need to pray and ask God to give us strength every morning. We need to ask God for opportunities to witness and to be used by Him. Perhaps you find yourself in a negative predicament right now. Ask God to give you strength every day.

(Request #4) - That God would give them salvation in time of distress. 33:2d

It doesn’t matter what kind of salvation you discuss; national salvation for Israel or individual salvation from sin, salvation is always from God and people who want it need to turn to God.

The Tribulation will be the most distressful time ever for Israel. Approximately 3½ years will be the time of Jacob’s trouble. This will be the prelude to Israel’s deliverance. **But there is a very important point to see here; distressful times are wonderful times to pray to God for deliverance.** This is true nationally, internationally, locally and personally. There is no other Person in whom you may have salvation other than God.

PROPHETIC PART #3 – Isaiah predicts God’s judgment against the nations. 33:3-4

In direct connection to the prayer of His people, God rises up and strikes the nations. These proud arrogant nations have dared to raise their hands against Israel and God says, I am bringing them all down.

(Fact #1) - God causes them to flee . 33:3a

Notice carefully the nations will flee at the sound God makes. During the Tribulation there will be lots of sound. There will be thunder and lightening and earthquakes and stars will fall out of the sky and the sky will be split apart like a scroll and mountains moved out of their places and there will be one hundred pound hailstones falling out of the sky and slamming into the earth. There will be lots of heavenly, judgmental noises and it will be scary and the people will flee.

(Fact #2) - God causes nations to disperse . 33:3b

The word “disperse” is more than just run; this is a word that means God will scatter people and break nations to pieces (*Ibid.*, p. 558). Those proud, arrogant, political powers who dared to turn against Israel and God’s people will be broken into bits by God.

Notice carefully what causes nations to disperse; God lifts up Himself. God does not need little man’s military; He will slam nations right out of heaven and when God displays His sovereign power and majesty, all will fear and reverence Him. There will be no shallow or light view of God.

(Fact #3) - God caused them to lose their spoils . 33:4

Caterpillars and locusts gather crops quickly and thoroughly. A farmer plants and nurtures the crops and then these armies sweep in and destroy it rapidly. That is what God would do to the nations. Everything people trusted in will be gone in a second. All their houses and wealth and health and security will be gone. In the end, Israel will receive all of the wealth of the nations (Revelation 21:26).

You can work your entire life for something and lose it instantly. Down in Georgia and Florida, people have worked to get their dream condo on the ocean; but one owner told us the banks are foreclosing because people have lost everything. The only real trust we can have is the Lord.

PROPHETIC PART #4 – Isaiah describes God’s blessings in the world and in Israel. 33:5-6

(Blessing #1) - God is exalted . 33:5a

The LORD Himself will be exalted by every one and every thing. The word “exalt” means that God is lifted up as the most High God to a lofty, exalted position. There will not be one place in the entire world where God will not be honored.

(Blessing #2) - God has filled Jerusalem with His justice and righteousness. 33:5b

Jerusalem will be known as the headquarters of the world and Jesus Christ will be in Jerusalem and will reign. When He does, justice and righteousness will rule the world right from this spot.

(Blessing #3) - God will spiritually bless Israel. **33:6**

- A. He will be her stability - notice this happens in “your times,” the time Israel will be blessed.
- B. He will be her salvation - notice all the wealth of her salvation, Israel will enjoy.
- C. He will be her wisdom - He will be the wealth of her wisdom.
- D. He will be her knowledge - Israel will have a wealth of knowledge directly by Jesus Christ
- E. He will be treasured and all will fear Him.

Strength and stability come to those who fear God and there is coming a day when the whole world will fear God. What a wonderful world it will be - God will rule the world.

PROPHETIC PART #5 – Isaiah describes what happens to those who would not trust in God.
33:7-11

Take a careful look at what will eventually happen to the big-time world players and world leaders. This will be the atmosphere that will exist just prior to God being exalted on this earth:

(Response #1) - The brave men will cry. **33:7a**

(Response #2) - The ambassadors will weep. **33:7b**

(Response #3) - The highways will be abandoned. **33:8a**

Some take these next responses to refer to what God would do, some what Assyria would do and some what the Antichrist would do. The context of all found in **chapter 33** would favor the Antichrist.

(Response #4) - The Antichrist will break His covenant with Israel. **33:8b**

(Response #5) - The Antichrist will despise and destroy Israeli cities. **33:8c**

(Response #6) - The Antichrist will have no regard for man. **33:8d**

(Response #7) - The Antichrist will devastate the Promised Land. **33:9**

It is precisely at this moment when God will step into the scene, as Isaiah says:

(Divine Action #1) - God will arise. **33:10a**

(Divine Action #2) - God will be exalted and lifted up. **33:10b**

(Divine Action #3) - God will destroy and burn the Antichrist and all of the people. **33:11-12**

God will let you live the life of a fraud for awhile. He will permit you to seem to succeed for awhile. But in the end, He will arise and He will destroy those who do not fear Him.