

# The LORD Arises for His People

Isaiah 33:1-24

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## **Introduction**

Today we come to the last of the six woes that Isaiah began pronouncing in chapter 28.

- Up until now, all of the woes have been pronounced against the covenant people.
  - First, there was the warning to those who made themselves insensible of God through drunkenness...
  - Then, in chapter 29, there was the woe given to Ariel (where the fire of God is on the altar at Jerusalem) against those who draw near and boast in the altar, but whose hearts are far from God.
    - And this woe was repeated again in the middle of the chapter to those who thought they could hide from God...
  - Then in chapter 30, there was the woe against God's people for looking to Egypt for their help when they have the Lord as their help...
    - And in chapter 31 the woe against them for going down to Egypt for help is repeated.
- You see that all five of these woes are directed against the covenant people, the church, rather than against those outside the assembly.
  - The covenant people are the ones with whom God is most concerned.
    - In Deuteronomy where there is a long list of blessings and curses, it is important to realise that both the blessings and the curses are addressed to the covenant people.
      - Sometimes people look at this superficially and suppose that the blessings are for those who are inside and the curses are for those who are outside.
      - They are admonished to continue in faith lest they be destroyed!
      - The hypocrites do not hear and so *are* destroyed, but the elect respond.
  - We find the very same thing in the book of Hebrews...
    - The blessings and the curses are pronounced upon the people of the New Covenant to warn them so that they will not depart from the faith.
      - Those who do will be cursed, but those who hear and heed will be blessed.
      - If you are a part of the church of Jesus Christ,
        - these warnings are for you.
        - And if you are among the elect who truly believe, they are especially for you, for you will hear and heed them!
          - In other words, God will use them to keep you.

- Oh how our LORD loves His church!
  - He provides these warnings for His covenant people to keep us from destruction.
- But there is a notable contrast when we get to chapter 33... to the sixth and final woe.
  - It is directed against Assyria, the plunderer who was plundering the whole land of Judah and who had set his eye upon Jerusalem.
  - This change from woes directed against the church to a woe directed against Assyria is quite significant.
    - It reminds us that judgement begins with the household of God, but will at last be directed against those who do not even profess to know the true God.
    - It assures us that even as the LORD will deal with the enemies who are within the church,
      - so also He will deal with the enemies who are outside the church.
      - The day comes when the LORD will arise to utterly destroy them!
        - Evil will not always continue.
        - God Himself will arise to deal with His enemies and establish righteousness in the earth under King Jesus.
  - Indeed, throughout the chapter, the rising or exaltation of God to deal with Assyria is described...
    - Assyria was the great tyrant in Isaiah's day...
      - but let us who live 27 centuries later not forget that these things are written for our admonition and encouragement who trust in God today.
        - It is for us to look back and see how God has arisen for His people in the past to destroy their enemies when all appeared to be hopeless...
          - and to know that He will yet arise to destroy our enemies and will at last establish His glorious kingdom of perfect righteousness and peace.
          - You who serve God feel the pressure and strength of those who do not like for you to serve God...
            - but you can be sure that He will arise!
    - And this chapter shows us about that arising of the Lord for His people!
      - We do well to think even of the resurrection of our dear Lord Jesus which is central to God's arising for our help.
      - When our sins were charged to Him and He was delivered over to His enemies, it appeared that everything was lost!

- They barbarously crucified Him and even God the Father forsook Him.
- And that was, in a sense, the rejection of the whole church because He was on that cross as our representative.
- And He was put into that grave because of our sins...
  - But then He arose!
    - He came forth with victory over sin forever and with eternal life to bestow on all His people, even the forgiveness of sins and an everlasting inheritance in glory!
- And now we are waiting for Him to arise again and complete our deliverance at the last day,
  - when He will, as one who has been in a sense hidden away, come forth in power to deliver us and settle us into eternal glory, destroying all His and our enemies—enemies because they do not want God to rule.
  - I say all this so you can see how this chapter applies to us in connection with God’s people in very age!
    - The Lord arose for Noah
    - The Lord arose for Abraham to bring him out of Babel
    - The Lord arose for Joseph to bring him out of slavery
    - The Lord arose for His people in Egypt
    - The Lord arose for them again and again in the time of the judges
    - He arose for them to bring forth David, to restore and deliver.
    - He arose to destroy Assyria when they had surrounded Jerusalem.
    - He arose to bring them out of captivity in Babylon
    - And He has arisen again and again in the history of the church.
    - But most of all, He arose from the tomb to bring us out of our sin and will arise at the last day to establish His kingdom.

Today we are going to look at what we are taught in this chapter about God’s arising for the help of His people in their distress.

- We look back at what happened in Isaiah’s day to learn about God’s working in our day.
  - Again, these things were written for our admonition and encouragement that we might have hope.

- In this chapter we shall consider...
  - First, what happens before the LORD arises
    - In other words, what does He do to prepare His people for His arising?
  - Second, what happens when the LORD arises
  - And third, what happens after the LORD arises
    - In other words, what are the consequences of His arising.

TRANS> Okay, so first of all...

### **I. What happens before the LORD arises? (1-9)**

- We will look at four things that happen before the LORD arises:
  - There is a threat of the enemy's destruction
  - There is an earnest prayer for God to arise
  - There is a reformation of God's people in preparation of His coming
  - There is a humiliation of God's people to prepare them for His coming.

#### **A. There is a threat of the enemy's destruction**

- This threat is given to us in verse 1.
  - It is a threat against Assyria, the plunderer.
    - Isa 33:1: Woe to you who plunder, though you have not been plundered; And you who deal treacherously, though they have not dealt treacherously with you! When you cease plundering, You will be plundered; When you make an end of dealing treacherously, They will deal treacherously with you.

#### **1. This is a very apt description of Assyria...**

- They continually boasted in the plunder or spoils they took from the nations they mercilessly conquered.
  - They made themselves rich by conquering nations that had done them no wrong.
- And often, before they conquered them, they would take tribute from them, promising to spare them in exchange for payment...
  - But their promises were quickly forgotten and their covenants of peace were broken—thus they are called treacherous.
  - This was exactly what Judah had experienced as Assyria began to conquer their land and had every intention of conquering Jerusalem.
    - Even though (as 2 Kings 18 tell us), Hezekiah had given Assyria 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold,
      - Assyria forgot all about that and came to plunder the rest.
        - They were a treacherous nation!

- Here we see the way of Satan who promises and then devours.
  - Who said to Adam and Eve, “You will not die if you eat this fruit, but you will be like God—in His place, knowing good and evil... it will be up to you to decide good and evil for yourself!”
  - Who says even to our LORD, “Worship me and I will give all the kingdoms of the earth,”
- 2. You see that Assyria is told that she shall reap what she has sown!
  - As she has treated others, so she shall be treated!
    - This surely speaks of the Babylonians who conquered Assyria and broke their treaty with her.
    - This is the law of God’s retribution!
      - It is not impersonal Karma, but it is the judging of the personal God who hates wickedness and who raises up enemies against Assyria.
      - Karma was invented to de-personalise judgement so as not to have to answer to God.
  - This threat against Assyria is related to God’s ancient threat to Satan...
    - God told Satan that the seed of the woman would crush his head.
    - Satan, the strong man who plundered the human race, will be bound by the Son of Man, and now his house is the one that is plundered as the nations of the world are given to Christ.
    - And Jesus will yet come forth and uproot him at last and cast him into the Lake of Fire that has been prepared for him.
  - Brothers and sisters,
    - Our LORD promises to take care of even our most vicious enemy, and of all who are in league with him...
      - all who in any way stand in opposition to the kingdom of God and oppose the rule of God in the world that He has made...
      - They seek to take for themselves what is His, but they will themselves be plundered.
    - Be warned if you have not repented and turned to Christ!
      - You have taken what is God’s—He will take what is yours (or what you claim to be yours)!

TRANS> But see secondly that having heard and believed the threat that the LORD makes against His plunderer,

B. There is an earnest prayer for God to arise, a prayer offered up by His people.

1. This prayer is recorded for us in verses 2 to 4.

- The people of God take hope in what He has promised to do to their oppressor!
    - They turn to Him with believing prayer!
      - They cry out to God to avenge them of their adversary.
2. Let's look at the different parts of this prayer...
- a. First, note that it is addressed to Yahweh, to the self-existing one who made His covenant with us—"Oh LORD"
    - What confidence comes when we pray to the One from whom and for whom are all things, knowing that He has made a covenant with us to be gracious to us.
      - Indeed, we come in the name of *the LORD Jesus Christ*, with full assurance in what He has done—
        - He is Yahweh, the LORD, in whose name we now pray.
        - He came to destroy the works of the devil and He will.
  - b. Second, observe that it is a cry for Him to be gracious (*Hanni*)
    - This is the cry of one who has no claim—only need...
    - We must come to God as those who seek grace, for we have no merit in ourselves—it is all of His mercy in Christ.
  - c. Third, you see the mention in this prayer that "we have waited for you."
    - This waiting involves patient faith.
      - Even though things may have gotten worse after we began to pray, we continue to wait for Him, knowing that He will do what He has said, knowing that we will be avenged of our enemy.
  - d. Fourth, there is this prayer of intercession by Isaiah for the people,
    - "Be their arm every morning."
      - Followed by a prayer for himself and the people together:
        - "Our salvation also in the time of trouble."
    - Isaiah yearned for God to be both the strength and salvation of the people.
      - He wanted them to experience God's powerful salvation
        - They had been looking to Egypt and to political policy to save them.
          - Isaiah yearned for them to experience God's salvation.
        - We must lay hold of what God has promised in prayer and put no confidence in the flesh.
        - This is the prayer of faith!

- e. Verse 3 and 4 close out the prayer with the affirmation that when God does lift up Himself, the Assyrian and all the other enemy nations would be routed and ravished.
  - There is a visualisation of what God has promised!
    - Not a visualisation of whatever we choose to visualise as if visualisation itself had some intrinsic power,
    - but a visualisation of what God had promised to do.
    - Isaiah sees everything that pertained to mighty Assyria swallowed up by God's judgements!

TRANS> So there is believing prayer when the godly remember that the LORD has promised to arise to avenge them of their adversaries...

- And to accompany this believing prayer,

C. There is a reformation of God's people in preparation of His coming.

1. Before the LORD visits His people with His salvation, it is His way to prepare them for it by first sanctifying them.
  - a. You know that before Jesus came, John the Baptist was sent to prepare the way for His coming with a baptism of repentance.
    - The extensive influence of John is often underestimated!
      - He did a tremendous work in preparing a people.
      - Many of Jesus' disciples had been John's disciples.

TRANS> It is God's way to come to an expectant people.

- b. He does not always do this, but He certainly did it in the day of Assyria.
  - When Assyria came against Jerusalem,
    - God promised against all the appearance of things that He would deliver the city.
    - The Assyrian used every power of persuasion to get them to surrender,
      - but because the LORD had prepared them to stand, they were able to resist His arguments and to hold fast to their faith.
      - Hezekiah had led them in reformation.
      - They had removed the high places and had restored purity to worship and morals.
- c. The Bible calls us to always be ready for the coming of the Lord.
  - It is our duty to see to that we are a prepared people.
    - Jesus, in the parable of the ten virgins, tells of five who were ready and five who were not ready.

- Those who were ready entered into the joy of His kingdom, but the five who were not ready were excluded.
2. This preparation is a work that God does by the powerful working of His Spirit among His people.
- We might say that before He arises to avenge them, He arises to reform them.
    - It is His work of lifting Himself up among them even while they are still oppressed under the thumb of their enemies.
  - Verse 5-6 describe this exaltation or lifting up of God among His people...
    - Isa 33:5-6: The LORD is exalted, for He dwells on high; He has filled Zion with justice and righteousness. Wisdom and knowledge will be the stability of your times, And the strength of salvation; The fear of the LORD is His treasure.
  - This is a description of the effect of what it is to be filled with the Holy Spirit—anoined by Him!
    - The people are made strong and stable because of godliness—so that they do not cave in under the pressures of an ungodly world!
      - They maintain morality—righteousness and justice...
      - They have insight—wisdom and knowledge...
      - But not just that, they also have the greatest treasure of all—the fear of the LORD,
        - In other words, it is not just lifeless morality or knowledge,
          - but a living responsiveness to the living God!
          - a living before the face of God, in the reality of His person!
            - It is so easy for your Christian life to become a show before other men rather than a response to God.
            - When that happens, you have lost the fear of God.
  - God is said to fill them with these things, and these things are exactly what Isaiah told us would characterise the Messiah in Isaiah 11...
    - Isaiah 11:2-4 says of Him,
      - The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. His delight is in the fear of the LORD, And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, Nor decide by the hearing of His ears; But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
    - Remember, the Messiah is *the* anoined One.
      - That is what the word **Messiah** and the word **Christ** mean: the anoined one!
        - And even as Christ would be anoined with the Holy Spirit, so His people are anoined with the Spirit.



- They are first anointed in preparation for His coming, and then they are anointed with a great fullness of the Spirit after His coming.

TRANS> But this does not exhaust the preparatory work that must be done before God arises.

D. There is a humiliation of God's people that is also necessary...

1. They must be shown how helpless they are so that when the deliverance comes, they will know that the LORD alone has done it!
  - You see, Israel was relying on all sorts of things.
    - They had, as I mentioned before, sent out their ambassadors to negotiate with Assyria,
      - and they had given them 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold.
      - This was a last resort!
2. But now we see in verse 7-9 that their efforts had been totally frustrated-- useless!
  - Verse 7 speaks of the weeping ambassadors...all their efforts had failed.
  - Verse 8 describes the invasion of Assyria into Judah which closed down the highways.
    - Assyria had no regard for the covenant that had been made and no regard for any of Judah's cities, and no regard for human life!
      - They were content to mow them down without mercy!
  - Verse 9 explains how the whole land of Judah and Israel was ruined...
    - From Lebanon which speaks of what is permanent with its great trees...
    - to Sharon which represents what was beautiful...
    - to Bashan which refers to what was fertile...
    - to Carmel which speaks of what was cultivated, planned and ordered.

TRANS> What devastation had been brought to the land!

- How human efforts not rooted in God had failed!
  - How necessary this was for God's people
3. Oh brothers and sisters, God does this before He arises!
    - He has to bring us to an end of ourselves so that when His salvation comes we will know that salvation is of the LORD
    - We must become as Israel in the time of the judges—over and over again—when their enemies oppressed them and they realised that they had nowhere to turn but to the LORD.
      - We must become as Peter and the disciples when the 5000 departed and Jesus asked them if they were also going to depart and they said,

- Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life!
- My brothers and sisters,
  - Have you any other options?
  - Do you realise that without Christ you can do NOTHING?
    - Probably not—we don't really get it...
    - But God works to bring you to that place...
      - Do not complain under your trials...
      - He sends them to teach you not to boast.

TRANS> So you see all that God does to prepare His people for His arising to deliver them from their enemies...

- He says that He will destroy their enemies
- He receives prayers from them...
- He brings reformation to them...
- And He humbles them so that they will know that there is no hope in their own efforts...
- And then, after all this has been done,
  - He says,
    - “Now I will arise. Now I will be exalted. Now I will lift myself up!”
      - Up until now, He has done nothing to Israel's enemies...
        - It has been as if He were sleeping with respect to them.
        - It has been as it was when Jesus allowed Himself to be abused by His enemies on the cross...
      - But **now** the time has come for Him to arise!
        - **Now** everything has been done and He is going to act.
  - Let us learn from this that when God is inactive,
    - He has not forgotten!
      - He is waiting until the time is right.
      - He will arise when all has been done that is preparatory to His rising.
        - We must be patient.
- Now I want you to look at:

## II. What happens when the LORD arises? (10-16)

- Two things are mentioned...
  - There is a destruction of His enemies as described in 11-12
  - And then there is a sifting of His people as described in 14-16.

- A. So first, when He arises, He destroys our enemies...
1. In verse 11, He describes them trying to bring forth their schemes and their wicked contrivances...
    - But all they bring forth is chaff and stubble.
      - The busy Assyrians are mustering their forces and surrounding the city and making their plans...
        - and it is all straw that will be kindled by their own breath!
    - You need to get this picture clearly in your mind when persecutors and tempters are strong...
      - When they are passing laws and mustering forces against the Lord and His people—
        - and when they are making threats and passing judgements...
      - Just remember that everything that they bring forth is chaff and stubble and will be destroyed...
        - You have no reason to fear them...
          - Only what is done for the LORD will last.
  2. Just look at how complete their destruction will be!
    - The consuming fire that they themselves kindled by their own wickedness will reduce them to lime—powder.
      - The burnings will be like the burning of dry thorns which go up very quickly and leave nothing behind.
      - It is amazing—
        - This invincible Assyrian army that no one could stop will go up in smoke!
          - Do not fear them, children of God!
          - They can destroy your body if God allows it, but only for a time...
            - and then they will be completely consumed.
      - Jesus will crush the serpent's head!
        - He will cast him away into the consuming fire forever.
        - All his contrivances will come to nothing.
          - Know this when you see those who oppose the kingdom of God smelling victory...
          - They are only planting such seeds as will bring forth a harvest of destruction to themselves.

TRANS> In verse 13, the Lord calls us to take note of this great work that He will do!

- He says:

- Isa 33:13: Hear, you who are afar off, what I have done; And you who are near, acknowledge My might."
- It is an event that is to gain the attention of the whole world.
  - God is going to use it in particular to draw attention to Himself—to manifest His glory in all the earth!
    - When He shook Egypt in the old days, it showed everyone that He was LORD.
    - When He defeated Midian, it showed that He was Lord.
    - When He destroyed the Assyrian Army outside the gates of Jerusalem, it showed His might and power in a way that none could question it.
    - When Jesus conquered death and rose again, it was not done in a corner—He was proclaimed to be LORD. Our very calendar is dated by it.
    - And at the last day, He will arise again to act for His people and everyone will know finally and fully that He is LORD.
      - All who are near and all who are far!

B. And this will have a great sifting effect upon His people.

- It will separate the hypocrites from those that are true.
1. Verse 14 explains that the hypocrites among God’s covenant people will be terrified!
    - They will say, “Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire?”
      - Hypocrites are some of the toughest people to get through too.
      - They feel safe and secure in their empty religious practices...
        - They go to church and follow some rules and that is enough to make them secure...
        - But they do not come before a holy God.
          - To them, God is not real—not really who He says He is.
    - But when God’s power is so clearly displayed in the destruction of Assyria,
      - they will be brought face to face with the fact that He *is* real and that they have not honestly lived before Him!
        - All their pretences to the contrary will evaporate and they will be terrified.
        - They will complain about God—
          - They will not like what they see.
          - To them, He will be cruel and unreasonable.
            - They will say, “Who an live with Him?”
  2. But verse 15 and 16 describes those who will dwell comfortably with the LORD in that day.

a. Verse 15 says:

- Isa 33:15: He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, He who despises the gain of oppressions, Who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes, Who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, And shuts his eyes from seeing evil:
  - He walks righteously... that means that His whole life is consecrated to God...
  - He speaks uprightly... His words are consecrated to God
  - He does not gain by oppression... He does not subordinate people for profit.
  - He refuses bribes... he does not subordinate truth to profit...
  - He stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed...he has no delight in the harm of his neighbour.
  - He shuts his eyes from seeing evil... he takes no pleasure in seeing wrong.
- Understand that this is not a description of what a person must do to be saved.
  - This is a description of what a person is who has been saved...
    - He is reconciled to God and so He lives to God.
- This is a person who has a conscience before God!
  - His life is unto God.
  - This is a person who has come honestly before God and has sought His mercy and grace—His cleansing and His mercy.
  - This is the person who has come to Christ and lives in Him and through Him—
  - He lives as a new creation in Christ because He *is* a new creation in Christ.

TRANS> And you see that unlike the hypocrite who finds God cruel and unacceptable when His judgement is revealed...

b. This man receives a blessing when the LORD arises.

- Verse 16 describes what will happen to Him:
  - Isa 33:16: He will dwell on high; His place of defense will be the fortress of rocks; Bread will be given him, His water will be sure.
- 1) The Lord is so kind and so generous to those who come to Him!
  - What security they have, lifted up on high to dwell under the shadow of God's protection!
    - They are as secure as they can be!
    - Not that they have no trials in this world, but that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation...
      - He holds them in His hand, and no one can snatch them out.

- 2) And He provides them with everything they need!
    - He gives them bread and their water is sure!
    - Nothing is lacking that they might live before God...
- c. This is what happens whenever God arises to judge His enemies...
- 1) The righteous among God's people are blessed, and the hypocrites are exposed for what they are...
    - This is what happened when Jesus appeared in the world...
      - The righteous came to Him and rejoiced in Him,
      - but the wicked cursed Him and were excluded from Him.
    - This happens whenever God arises to make Himself known...
      - When His word goes forth, it divides the true from the false, the genuine from the hypocrite.
      - The one group finds God to be harsh, the other finds Him to be marvellously merciful.
  - 2) This is just what our Lord describes in His teaching about the day of judgement.
    - There is a separation of the just and the unjust.
    - The hypocrite is told, "Depart from me, I never knew you"
    - The wheat is separated from the chaff, and the chaff is cast into the outer darkness...
    - The five virgins that had oil in their lamps are called to enter in, but the five virgins who were not prepared are excluded...
    - The ones who gave him something to eat when He was hungry and who visited Him when He was in prison are rewarded,
      - but the ones who did not are cast into the everlasting fire.

TRANS> It behoves you to be sure that you are not one who trifles with God!

- He will arise!
- If you have refused to enter His kingdom and to live with His people, you will be destroyed like the Assyrian in that day.
  - And if you are a hypocrite who has outwardly entered His kingdom, you will be terrified when you see that His judgements are real and that you are not real...
  - But if you are a true follower of Jesus Christ and have been reconciled to God through Him into a new life,
    - Oh how happy you will be in that day!

- How glorious and lovely your LORD will appear when He comes in His glory, having His reward with Him...
- And that brings us to our third point...

### **III. What happens after the LORD arises (17-24)**

#### **A. After He arises, your eyes will see the king in His beauty!**

- That's what it says in verse 17!
  1. After the Lord had struck down Assyria,
    - King Hezekiah was able to come forth in beauty...
      - During the siege, he had been shut up in Jerusalem as in a cage, troubled as the cities all around Jerusalem were destroyed.
        - But after God arose to destroy the Assyrian—King Hezekiah came forth in His beauty!
    - But of course this is about a lot more than Hezekiah!
      - It is about Jesus Christ who was abused and maligned and who was crucified and shut up in the cold dark tomb...
        - It is about Him coming forth as the risen conquering King and going to reign at God's right hand!
    - How beautiful He is to us now!
      - God has declared Him to be LORD and Christ!
        - We see His kindness, we see His majesty, we see His love, we see His wisdom, we see His justice and purity and holiness, we see His power and we see His hatred of sin.
          - He is everything to us.
          - He has opened the everlasting gates of God's kingdom so that we can enter in through Him and find rest for our souls!
            - He is the fairest of ten thousand!
    - And this is all in stages...
      - For He is already so glorious and lovely...
        - but God is going to arise—Jesus is going to arise at the last day to destroy His enemies, and then He will be all the more lovely!
        - We will see the glory that He had with His Father before the world began!
          - He yearns for us to see this!
            - We will see love that is without parallel, beauty that exceeds all boundaries!

- Even so come Lord Jesus!

2. And it also says that we will see “the land that is very far off.”
  - His kingdom will no longer be narrow, confined to the walls of Jerusalem as it was after Assyria had conquered all the rest of Judah...
  - His kingdom will extend to every inch of this globe...
    - There will not be one spot that is not in subjection to Him...
    - All will be brought under His feet.
  - Already, He is risen and given a title...
    - And it is our privilege to go into all the world to make disciples of the nations.
      - He will reign until He has brought all enemies under His feet,
        - and then, when death is conquered and Satan is sent to His place,
          - He will have uncontested dominion in a world of righteousness.

TRANS> And when His kingdom is fully established,

B. We will reflect back to what it was like before He arose to judge...

1. Verse 18-19 seems to be a reflection on how things used to be:
  - We will remember back to what it was like when the oppressor was in the land.
    - Isa 33:18-19: Your heart will meditate on terror: "Where is the scribe? Where is he who weighs? Where is he who counts the towers?" You will not see a fierce people, a people of obscure speech, beyond perception, of a stammering tongue that you cannot understand.
  - This speaks of the oppressive bureaucracy that Assyria set up in which there were secretaries (scribes) and assessors (those who weigh) and appraisers who came to tax every thing...
    - and who were fierce and to whom you could not even plead for mercy because they spoke in a foreign tongue.
      - There was no humanity about them, no love, no mercy, no concern.
      - All they wanted was what was yours.
2. And how happy we will be to remember how bad it was...
  - Because all that will be gone, never to return...
    - And we will be living before God in a kingdom of perfect righteousness where there is no oppression...
      - no Satan
      - no oppressive nations



- no oppressive rulers
- not even a trace of the oppressive attitudes toward others that are so much a part of us now!
- Instead of those who want what is yours,
  - There will be King Jesus who takes all that is His and gives it to you!
  - We will study in order to give to each other rather than to take from each other...
    - My life will truly be for you, and your life will truly be for me.

C. The rest of the chapter describes the glories of His righteous kingdom!

1. In verse 20, You are told to look upon Zion, the city of our appointed feasts!
  - This is the place where His people are brought together to worship!
  - This is the place where the glory of God is revealed!
  - This is the place where the Law goes forth to guide is into all the ways that are pleasing to Him.
  - Praises are offered up to Him, and our lives are joyfully poured out to Him and to each other for His sake.
2. Jerusalem is called our home! Our “quiet home.”
  - It is a **home** because God is our Father and Christ is our brother...
    - And in Him, we are all adopted as brothers and sisters, united in God’s Spirit to live for Him and for each other forever and ever.
  - It is **quiet** because the enemy has been destroyed.
    - There is an eternal Sabbath rest.
    - It is a tabernacle, not a fortress, because a fortress is not needed...
      - There is no enemy to molest us ever again.
        - The stakes of the tent are never pulled up.
  - Already, we have been brought into the peace that Christ has purchased...
    - We have been made a part of the family of God and adopted...
      - Yet there are still enemies that must be destroyed—and my brothers and sisters, God will arise to destroy them...
      - Then the kingdom will be complete... it will become a quiet home.
3. In this glorious house we shall have rich provision...
  - verse 21 says that the majestic LORD Himself will be for us “a place of broad rivers and streams”...
    - He Himself will be a river of life for us.

- Not a river on which war ships come to attack us, but river that supplies us with life...
  - This is the river from which we drink living water so that we never thirst again...
    - A river that perfectly satisfies us forever with delight.
      - Surely this speaks of the fullness of the Holy Spirit given to us so that we become before God all that we are meant to be...
      - Filled to overflowing with the fullness of the new life that He gives!
        - Filled with love for our neighbour and filled with love for our God.
        - Filled with wisdom and grace to live beautifully so that we bring gladness to others and they to us...
          - Oh, we are hurtful to each other here—so disappointing—so inadequate for each other...
    - But then we will be filled with God’s provision and it will glory.
      - But taste of it now brothers and sisters...
        - Already, the Spirit is like a river that flows from your inmost being, bringing life and joy to others...
          - But this is only the downpayment...
          - The fullness is yet to come...
            - but rejoice and receive with gratitude the beginning of new life in Christ that you will have forever.
            - The majestic Lord Himself is our river!
4. Verse 22 goes on to speak about Him again...
  - He Himself is the glory of the place!
    - He is the LORD, Yahweh, the self-existing one who alone has life in Himself and so is the fountain or source of life for all of us.
  - The LORD Himself is our Judge, our Lawgiver, and our King who saves us!
    - This is an emphatic way of telling us that everything in that land is done in His glorious, beautiful, marvellous way.
      - That nothing moves outside of His will.
        - That every breath and every thought and every move that every creature takes is in full accord with His revealed will.
        - There is no more rebellion at all in thought, word, or deed.
          - This glorious LORD Himself will save us.

TRANS> And when He does...

5. The weak will be made strong.

- Verse 23 pictures Assyria as a worn out ship that can no longer support its own mast or spread its sails.
  - It will be so debilitated and ruined that the lame will be able to plunder it.
    - This is exactly what happened outside the city of Jerusalem when the angel of the Lord struck down 185,000 Assyrians...
    - These Assyrians were loaded with all the spoils that they had taken in the previous conquests,
      - but now they were dead in Israel's front yard so that even the lame could go out and collect the spoils.
- This shows us that when God is finished His work for His people,
  - They will inherit the earth!
    - All that the wicked have will be given to the righteous.
    - Even those among God's people who were weak and oppressed and trampled upon will have their full share of all the abundance.
- And even their very sickness will be removed, for Jesus will heal all our diseases so that not one is left...
  - Verse 24 says that the inhabit of Zion will not say, "I am sick."
    - Sickness and everything that has to do with the curse will be completely eliminated.
    - All misery and all sorrow and all pain will be banished from the kingdom of righteousness.
      - Weakness and infirmity, like sin, will be a thing of the past.
        - This is what God has in store for the righteous!

TRANS> But there is yet one more thing that is mentioned about this glorious city.

6. The people who dwell in it will be forgiven their iniquity!
- When God arises for His people, He not only arises to destroy their enemies and to establish them in His glorious kingdom of perfect righteousness...
    - He also arises to secure their pardon.
    - It is sin that has separated us from God in the first place and that brought His curse upon us.
      - If that sin is not removed, God is against us and if God is against us, we can have none of the other blessings.
      - We are then His enemies who shall be destroyed with Satan and all who are unforgiven.
        - There is nothing worse than to be unforgiven!
          - To be repulsive to God...
          - to be that that which He loathes and attacks in His holy wrath.

- But what marvellous things He has done to secure our pardon!
  - He promised to do it under the Old Covenant as signified by the offering of the blood of bulls and goats in the place of His people...
  - But these were only provisional until the true Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world was brought forth...
    - He offered Himself for the sins of the world and was raised up,
      - having obtained eternal redemption for all who were given to Him by the Father.
    - He secured our pardon by bearing all of God's punishment for our sin.
      - And now all who come to Him for forgiveness and mercy are pardoned for every sin.
      - He has arisen with righteousness and justification and we are justified as soon as we turn to Him to be our Saviour.
- And when the LORD arises on the last day when He comes to destroy His enemies,
  - Then He will declare to all His people that they are forgiven, that they are His, that their sins are not counted against them for Christ's sake.
  - We have the forgiveness of sin now, but we will have the full benefit of forgiveness in that day when we receive the fullness of His acceptance.
    - Do not miss this blessing!
      - You are a sinner and you will be destroyed with all of God's enemies unless you come to Him for this pardon and enter into the new life that He has promised.
      - Come, take His yoke upon you, and he will give you rest.
        - Be ready for Him to arise that when He arises, you will be found true and will enter into the joy that He has prepared for those who love Him.