

The Beauty of the King

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I would like to invite you to look with me in Isaiah chapter 33. I want to come back to a verse that we looked at last time, but really were not able to spend enough time on it, I believe, to truly understand the importance of it and that is in verse 17. Isaiah 33 and verse 17. And I will read to the end of the chapter, but it is particularly this first part.

Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is 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, 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. Thy tacklings 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.¹

“The king in his beauty.”²

Now historically this would be a reference to Hezekiah. And if you want to get some of the historic background of these particular portions of Scripture, I would encourage you to get a Bible dictionary and look it up and study how the Lord raised up King Hezekiah at a very desperate time in the history of Israel. It is well worth your reading to familiarize yourself with this king who at the time he was raised up was totally unexpected.

¹ Isaiah 33:17-24.

² Isaiah 33:17.

There had been a series of what we call bad kings, evil kings, but the Lord had raised up one after another. And that, as a chastening of the people of Israel. And just the people of Israel began to despair that there would be any hope and totally unmerited on their part with the enemy bearing down upon them, Assyria being that nation that the Lord raised up to bring pressure to bear and chastening upon the people of Israel, out of the midst of all this suddenly he raises up a king to be the Savior, to be that one who would set things right.

You remember he was the one that took that brazen serpent that the children of Israel had kept all those years, all the way back there in the desert, in the wilderness and actually had started offering incense unto it and made an idol out of it. He took it and ground it up and destroyed it. They called in the language of the day what it was, just a piece of brass.

I would love to see people take their crosses today and their jewelry, things that they have made idols of and just grind them up. I know some people think, well, that would cut out a lot of people's business. Well, maybe it needs to be shut down. Maybe these things need to be called what they are, just wood and brass. You know, it is not the cross that is our savior. It is the Savior who hung upon that cross. He was the Savior. The cross in and of itself was just a piece of wood. It was the wood much like that in the time of the offering of offerings on the altar that was to be burnt up. They just lit the fire. But what was important was the sacrifice.

Even Isaac knew that. As he and Abraham went up on the mount he said, "I see the wood and I see the fire, but where is the lamb? Where is the lamb?"

In all of our worship that is what is vital. You know, things pertaining to it, they are just designed to be burned up, but what is vital is the lamb.

But Hezekiah was a type of our Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, the title that the editors put in my Bible here, I think they had it right. It is written here, "Safety and joy under the Messiah."

So when they wrote that they wrote a good thing that this portion of Scripture that I have read to you really pertains to the Lord Jesus Christ, because the one that we see by God's grace given eyes to see will see the king in his beauty.

I know that seems to contradict what we read over here in Isaiah chapter 53 and verse two. Now Isaiah 53 and verse two is speaking of Christ. It says that, "He shall grow up before him [before God] as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him."³

³ Isaiah 53:2.

So you say, well, if that is speaking of Christ there is new beauty that we should desire him and we read here, “Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty,”⁴ what then is this beauty that those who are given eyes to see behold?

I know that many today try to physically paint and draw a beautiful Christ. They down through history have tried to make him appealing to the eye. Most of this comes back from the Renaissance age where they portrayed Christ as somewhat of a blonde haired and blue eyed Germanic sort of Savior and depict some beauty in him. But Christ was not a European. He was a Jew.

And as Isaiah 53 and verse two what it is describing is that he came in a physical body that was very uncommon. When he walked down the street there in that country of Israel he wore the same clothing as anybody else out there. In fact, you can’t walk in that sun very long without it affecting your skin and drying it up. There was much about his body, his physical presence that when men looked on him they did not see God in the flesh. In fact, that was what was most unbelievable. When he would state that he as the Son of God, they say, “Well, you know, that is blasphemy. We know where you came from.”

In fact, God purposed that he be raised in one of the remote regions of Israel in the north to the degree that men said, “Can anything good from Nazareth?”

So physically there was no beauty with which to behold him. And yet here in Isaiah 33 and verse 17 it says, “Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty.”⁵

It must mean that there was something about him as the king that when the Spirit of God opens the eyes that you behold him in his beauty much like the thief on the cross who was pouring out cursings and revilings just like his companion on the other side of Christ, but then suddenly stopped and said, “This man has done nothing. We deserve justly our condemnation, but he has done nothing.”

And he said, “Worthy of condemnation.” And he said, “Lord, remember me.” What did he say? “When you come in your kingdom.”

Now you stop and think about that moment at the cross. Kingdom? Here is a man dying, identified with the same cross and death as these two thieves. You know, people that heard that that had not been given any understanding might well have said, “This guy is starting to get delusional. You know, he has had a little bit too much of this suffering and the sunshine beating down on him. He is getting heat stroke to say tot his man hanging here in the middle, ‘Remember me when you come in your kingdom.’”

But, dear friends, he was given eyes to behold the King in his beauty, to see him as the Savior, to see him as his substitute, to see him as he is in truth, God of very God, although in a human body dying. That was that sacrifice.

⁴ Isaiah 33:17.

⁵ Ibid.

And much like that centurion, you talk about a hardened man, these men were given this responsibility of crucifixion because of their position and status. They saw death daily. They were putting criminals to death daily. That was their task. And yet at a given moment that centurion said, “Truly this is the Son of God.”

That man was given eyes to see the King in his beauty. And I believe that that is the perspective here. All the while the enemy had laid siege to Jerusalem and the outcome looked grim and many probably thinking themselves rightly condemned for what the Lord had brought in chastening, yet there were those in that day given eyes to see saw the king in his beauty represented in Hezekiah.

And it says there in verse 17, “They shall behold the land that is very far off.”⁶

That is an interesting second part of verse 17. What land would they have been beholding that is very far off?

You remember when the Lord took Abraham up on Mount Moriah and he took Isaac with him and Isaac asked, “Where is the lamb?”

What was Abraham’s response? “The Lord will provide himself a lamb.”

What was he speaking of? The Lord gave Abraham eyes to look beyond that time and that particular physical mountain that they were on. And I know that because what did Christ say of Abraham?

“Abraham saw my day and rejoiced.”

Abraham was given eyes to behold the beauty of the king. And when he said, “God will provide himself a lamb,” he was looking to a land that was very far off. He was looking to a time that down through the centuries time would come back to that very place because do you realize that Mount Moriah is exactly where God ordained that Solomon build the temple? Right there in Mount Moriah. He was looking beyond what was taking place right there at that particular time to a day when God would provide himself a lamb, not only just provide a lamb for himself, but when you read it, God would provide himself, he himself being that lamb, because this king that these would behold in his beauty is Christ or God in the flesh. He is that lamb.

And we see the hope that is given here of those that behold the king in his beauty. When it says in verse 18, you know, what does this king do? Hezekiah was just but a type as we have been seeing in our Bible study. David the king was a type of our Lord Jesus Christ. That man Hezekiah that the Lord raised up lived and died and he lives no more.

So we know that as a type he was temporal, but not with our Lord Jesus Christ. When the Lord raised up Hezekiah he gave him strength to defeat this otherwise impossible enemy, an enemy that was too strong for any one of those in that day. But the Lord’s hand was

⁶ Ibid.

upon Hezekiah to accomplish his work and even though in a minority, yet that work was successful in defeating the enemy.

Do you see how this depicts our Lord Jesus Christ? As men looked upon him there was no beauty with which to behold him. This Jewish man walking in a geographical sliver of land that if you look out on a map you have got to get a magnifying glass to kind of look at it compared to these nations that were all around it. They say 70 miles wide and 125 miles long. And yet to this day there has not been an enemy that has been able to destroy that land or remove it. Why? God is faithful. He said he would preserve it until the end.

But more importantly, out of that little sliver of land just like in Isaiah 53 where we just read and like a root out of dry ground, the Lord raises up literally the Savior of the world.

Now when the Scriptures say the Savior of the world he is talking about the fact that in all the world there is no other Savior. Whether or not, you know, some are bowed down to Buddha, some are worshiping some other form of God, but all is false worship apart from this king that the Lord raised up and as it says in Psalm two, that he has set upon his holy hill.

Now you stop and think about it logically as much as you have heard about Christ being preached, this is the most unbelievable thing in the world, logically, that all of my hope as a sinner would be based upon a man who in history and in time God raised up to represent a people that he would come live and die a very shameful death in men's eyes, the death of the cross being numbered with transgressors. And as men look upon it wonder how on earth could such a one be the Savior, but that is the Savior. And those who see him as such are those whom the Spirit of God gives eyes to see.

You would never believe on Christ. You would not be believing on him right now were it not the fact that the Spirit of God has given you eyes to see the beauty in his... the king in his beauty. Because it doesn't make sense otherwise, logically, in this natural flesh. That is what causes a lot of people to try to match the two. You can have a little of Christ, a little of our works just to be sure. Make sure all of our bases are covered, one man told me.

Or as I heard another time, it is like walking a tightrope. On one hand you have got Christ on the balance beam that you are carrying. On the other you have got your works. So between the two you are going to make it across.

Now that is not to see the King in his beauty. To seek the King in his beauty is to see him as that Savior, to see him as that one by whom upon completion of his death God has forever declared righteous that people and chased away the enemy.

Think about the enemy. We talked about how this enemy Assyria was too strong even for the nation of Israel or for one like Hezekiah. Were it not for God's hand to keep it. You think about what stands against you as a sinner. Not only your sin, that is too strong an enemy. Try stopping sinning.

If God were to say to you, “Christ died, but I am requiring of you from here forward not to sin anymore,” who could be saved?

Satan, you know, he felled man at his strongest point in history when he was put in that garden an innocent. Since that fall all of us are born in this world under the curse of sin. Do you think that given the challenge to face Satan and to defeat him that you would be saved? Who could defeat him? He would have us at will.

But more than that do you know the greatest enemy that stands against you and against me? It is the very law of God. I know some like to preach it up, like, ok, Christ died, but now you have got to do your part. If that were so who could stand? That very... if I when my mouth even to speak of the law in any good sense it would condemn me. It would judge my very words.

And so you can see what it is to see the king in his beauty. It is to see this one that God has established as his King who would come and what does a king do? He is a conqueror. Defeat every enemy of his people and give them that righteous and just standing before him to such a degree that the enemy is defeated.

You know, in verse 18 that is what is being described here. When it says, “Thine heart shall meditate terror,”⁷ it is not in the sense of continuing to fear this enemy, but meditate terror in the sense of what it was compared to what you enjoy now.

When the Lord raised up Hezekiah and the enemy was defeated don’t you know that many spent their days thinking back of those times of terror when they are under fear and until the Lord opens your eyes to see the king in his beauty, that is all you can know is terror. That is why when the Lord first began to do a work in your heart and you were made sensitive to your sin as a lost person you weren’t, but then he made you sensitive to your sin and the fear that overwhelmed you, the sense of God’s holiness, the sense of his being just should he condemn me. I don’t think I am describing anything that is unique to me. I can remember the Lord’s dealings in my own heart where there was nothing but darkness. I was as one without hope until the Lord caused these eyes to behold the King and his beauty and to see that that condemnation that I deserved had been put away.

No amount of law preaching got it done for me. It only made it worse. Legalized it. I grew up under that kind of preaching, moralists, how to be right and do right, live right. That doesn’t take away the terror. It only makes it worse.

But to see Christ, to see the King in his beauty, to see him who suffered, lived, suffered and died and rose again. Now when I meditate that terror I see it as something past.

“Where is the scribe?”⁸

⁷ Isaiah 33:18.

⁸ Ibid.

See, that is the question.

“Where is the receiver? Where is he that counted the towers”⁹

You see, when they were under the oppression of Assyria there were scribes that came down to tax everybody. That is what they did. The receiver was the one who came and said, “All right, if you want the king’s favor any longer you are going to have to come up with the money.” They counted the towers. Everything was being taxed and charged by the enemy. And now they were no more. They were removed. They were gone.

Such is the work of the Lord Jesus Christ that when he came and lived and died and rose again and put away the sin of his people, “There is therefore now no condemnation.”¹⁰

If you look over in Hebrews chapter two what is it that is going to give peace of heart and mind? It is not the law. It is not preaching up morality. But it is seeking the King in his beauty.

Here in Hebrews chapter two we read in verse 14,:

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death [through his dying the death] he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.¹¹

Can you imagine the people that lived back in the day of Hezekiah when suddenly the Lord delivered them from this very powerful enemy? And suddenly these couriers that came, these scribes that counted to determine tribute that would belong to this strange and foreign king, now they were no more. People lived freely. They bought and sold in the market freely. What a rejoicing.

And some of these when it says, “Thine heart shall meditate terror,”¹² as time went on began to remind some of the newer generation of how it was back in the day. Kind of like what you hear some of the old ones talk about today. You know, you ought to really appreciate this freedom because it wasn’t always that way.

I wonder how much we value the freedom that the death of the Lord Jesus Christ has brought to us as sinners for whom he died. That is why Paul with great determination told the Galatians, “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.”¹³

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Romans 8:1.

¹¹ Hebrews 2:14-15.

¹² Isaiah 33:18.

¹³ Galatians 5:1.

You know, the very notion of works preaching or will preaching ought to just pierce to your very heart because we know that there is no salvation there. And to be put back under that sort of legalistic bondage is to forget the great debt that Christ paid in order to free and give freedom to enjoy what his death has bought, the sin debt paid. And that is really what this is describing here in verse 19.

“Thou shalt not see a fierce people.”¹⁴

You know, if Christ paid my debt, I don't fear the law. I don't fear its commandments, because Christ fulfilled it. Christ paid the debt. Either he did or he didn't. I am either going to live in light of what he has accomplished and rejoice, or I perhaps I haven't truly seen the King in his beauty. I love the law in the sense that it shows me Christ and what he accomplished and makes me thankful for what he did, but I am not going to fear it.

You know, to fear it means that in some way Christ has not actually fulfilled it. And to cower the same with my sin, the same with the holy God. You talk to most people today. When they think about facing a holy God they get to doing. They start thinking about things they need to do to clean up their lives. They have not seen the King in his beauty.

When I consider these things, when I consider facing a holy God my lips are sealed. If Christ paid my debt, then I have nothing to fear. And if he didn't pay my debt, all my fearing isn't going to change a thing. God would be just in condemning me, sending me to hell. But because the Lord has opened my eyes and caused me to see the King in his beauty, I rest. I rest. And the book of Hebrews says that.

“Labour therefore to enter into that rest.”¹⁵

Oh, that God would give us eyes to behold the King in his beauty just like here. When he removed the enemy they were gone. It says, “A people of a deeper speech than thou canst perceive; of a stammering tongue, that thou canst not understand.”¹⁶

He is talking about people here that saw all these... imagine of all of the sudden foreigners invaded this country. They were speaking a language that wasn't English. You are just kind of... it sets you to fear just being in the presence of people you can't understand. But all that has been removed.

Now here is verse 20 is the key to all of this. And I want to tie this with a verse over in Psalm 27 verse four. To see the King in his beauty, the command here is to look where? Verse 20.

“Look upon Zion.”¹⁷

¹⁴ Isaiah 33:19.

¹⁵ Hebrews 4:11.

¹⁶ Isaiah 33:19.

¹⁷ Isaiah 33:20.

That is the city that had been surrounded until the Lord delivered them.

“Look upon Zion.”¹⁸ And it says, “the city of our solemnities.”¹⁹

That word “solemnities” is the word used for the sacrifices. Whereas there was a certain fear that the temple would be destroyed and all done away at this particular time, the prophet Isaiah says, “Look upon Zion, the city of solemnities.”²⁰

Look upon this place where God has purposed to put his name.

“Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation.”²¹

You know, when you look to the enemy it is anything but quiet. I would say the same thing with regard to your spiritual enemies and mine. If I look at my sin, if I make that my focus, there is no quiet. There is no rest. If I look at the law for what it is, there is no quiet. There is no peace. There is no rest.

But look at, just like here the call was to look at the city of our solemnities where the sacrifices were being offered up. Sinner, look to Christ. Look to this one who paid the debt. Look at his sacrifice of which all these others were but a type and a picture and there you will see a quiet habitation, as it says, “A tabernacle that shall not be taken down.”²²

All these others were temporal. They had to go away when Christ came and fulfilled it, but when the Scriptures say that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, that word “dwelt” is the word “tabernacled.”

All that pertained to that Old Testament tabernacle Christ fulfilled and in his fulfilling of those sacrifices and all that was required that God might be just and justify, there is a tabernacle that shall not be taken down. And there is where those who have been given eyes to see the King in his beauty rest.

That is why the Scriptures speak of Christ and him crucified. It is Christ the suffering servant. It is Christ the Savior who died. And by his death those for whom he died are justified before a holy God.

It is not just Christ. There are a lot of people today that seeing their sin, seeing the law they endeavor to follow Christ as an example. There is no rest. Those are shoes too big to fill. You know, if righteousness become by the law, your obeying it, then Christ is dead

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

in vain. There is only one remedy for sin. There is only one remedy for the law. There is only one place in which sinners can find true rest, everlasting rest.

Where it says in verse 20, “Not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed.”²³

That is Christ. What he has accomplished and because of his death, him having paid the debt in full there is no double jeopardy. God is not going to punish his Son and then turn around and pull up those stakes and say, “Now I am going to punish the sinner for whom he died.”

It is impossible. God is a just God. If he paid the debt, then the sin is put away.

And it says, “Neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken.”²⁴

Compare that to people who make resolutions and determine from here forward I am never going to do this again. Let’s drive the stake.

How many as a young person I heard that from our youth. Let’s drive the stake. Or how many of those little camp fires did you go around and you stand up and you make your resolve that this is my weakness. This is my sin, that I, you know, have been struggling with. From here foreword I am going to take and toss this into the fire and be done with it.

And what do you? You go right back to it. Anything that you determine by way of driving stake or tightening the cords or determining somehow from here forward I am good. You have just made yourself a very blatant liar.

There is only one stake that has ever been driven, cords that have been attached to that altar and that is the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. If you have hope anywhere else, it is a false hope. If you have a peace in any other stake or cord tightened, it is a false peace. It is a false peace.

You see, in verse 21 the consequences, again, of this work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“But there the glorious LORD will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams.”²⁵

That is important. It is not a physical Jerusalem of which he is speaking here, because it says, “There the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams. Wherein shall go no galley with oars.”²⁶

It is talking about an enemy coming up the river and surprise attacking. No, none of that.

²³ Isaiah 33:20.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Isaiah 33:21.

²⁶ Ibid.

“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.”²⁷

People ask you, “On what basis do you have such confidence that standing before a holy God you don’t have to fear Satan, you don’t have to fear your sin and you don’t have to fear the law?”

Well, it is based upon the Lord who is our judge. If he put away our sin in Christ then there is therefore now no condemnation. He is the lawgiver. He is the standard. He is the King and based upon what he said he will not change his Word. He will save us. So that is where I rest based upon what this Word says.

But as far as the enemy, you can see there the tacklings are loosed. Whatever they determine by way of bringing you down.

“They could not well strengthen their mast. They could not spread the sale. Then is the prey of a great spoil divided. The lame take the prey.”²⁸

That is interesting there. It is not saying that because Christ has died for us and our sin is put away now we are strong.

Mephibosheth was lame to his death. They had to go fetch him and bring him to David’s table. But that lameness did not keep him from sitting at the king’s table because the king determined that was where he would sit. And that is where the king put him.

I like the fact that he sat at the table lame. You know if you have got a bunch of people sitting around a table, viewing them from here up sitting at the table you can’t tell whether they are lame or not. He was there with everyone of the other sons of the king. No discrimination made because the king for Jonathan’s sake purposed that he would show him mercy.

It says here “The lame take the prey.”²⁹

That law is still too strong for me. My sin is still too strong for me. And would God turn me over to it, it would indeed devour me. It would devour you. Don’t put any trust in your morality so-called. Don’t put any trust in your attempts at keeping the law. That enemy will devour you.

You say, “Well, how... what hope do you have then as a lame person?”

The beauty of the King, the one that stood in my place, paid the debt, laid down his life. In that I am more than conqueror. That is how I am more than conqueror. It is in what he

²⁷ Isaiah 33:21-22.

²⁸ Isaiah 33:23.

²⁹ Ibid.

did, not what I do. I am still as lame as they come. But he did it. And that is why it says there in verse 24, “And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick.”³⁰

I don't dwell on it. Because of Christ I can say, “I am whole. I am whole.”

“And the people that dwell therein shall [what?] be forgiven their iniquity.”³¹

That is where forgiveness is. We don't run to any other refuge, but to Christ.

Over in Psalm 27 and verse four, I will close with this, we see this parallel. Psalm 27 and verse four.

One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, [notice this] to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple. For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.³²

That pavilion, that tabernacle, that temple, that house in which David desired to dwell was none other than that place where there was that high priest that entered in, the secret place in the pavilion in which he was hidden was that place where those sacrifices were offered up under the Lord. That was his only hope. That is the picture of Christ to be hid in him and to find our hope and rest in him. Oh, to have eyes to behold the beauty of the King.

All right. Brother Mike.

³⁰ Isaiah 33:24.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Psalm 27:4-5.