

Notes

The LORD Our King and Deliverer (33:1–24)

- Isaiah's 6th "woe" is directed against Assyria, which had dealt treacherously with Judah. The LORD is the righteous Judge, the mighty Deliverer, and the glorious King. He would judge Assyria, the proud spoiler or destroyer, and deliver His people.

1. The Judgment of the Destroyer (33:1)

- Isaiah 33:1 pronounces a "Woe" against Assyria, the destroyer of nations. Assyria had plundered and dealt treacherously with others (cf. 2 Kgs 18:13–17), but God declared that the destroyer would itself be destroyed. The one who sows wickedness and treachery will eventually reap its consequences (Matt 7:2; Gal 6:7).
- Assyria's judgment was fulfilled when the angel of the LORD struck down 185,000 Assyrian soldiers surrounding Jerusalem, and Sennacherib was later assassinated by his own sons (37:36–38). The mighty destroyer was humbled by the LORD. This reminds us not to envy those who prosper through dishonesty, corruption, or abuse of power. We should walk in integrity and trust God to judge righteously in His appointed time.
- The judgment of Sennacherib also points forward to the final defeat of God's enemies. His pride and opposition to God provide a picture of the Antichrist, who will exalt himself against God and oppose His people (Dan 9:27; 2 Thess 2:3–8). But his power will also be temporary. When Christ returns, He will destroy His enemies and establish His righteous kingdom (Rev 19:19–21). Evil may appear powerful for a time, but God is sovereign, Christ will triumph, and no enemy can ultimately defeat His purposes.

2. A Prayer for Grace and Deliverance (33:2–6)

- Isaiah responds to the crisis with a prayer for his people (v2).
 - A Cry for Grace: "*O LORD, be gracious unto us.*" Judah's hope was not in its own merit but in God's mercy and grace.
 - A Commitment to Wait: "*We have waited for thee.*" Waiting on God involves confident trust, patient endurance & obedience to His Word.
 - A Plea for Strength: "*Be thou their arm every morning.*" God's people need His strength every day (Lam 3:23).
 - A Request for Deliverance: "*Our salvation also in the time of trouble.*" Faith does not deny trouble; it brings our troubles to the God who is able to save.

Isaiah's prayer expresses the attitude Judah should have: to depend on God's grace, seek His strength daily, and trust Him in times of trouble.

- When the LORD rises to act, the nations are scattered (v3), and the wealth of the enemy becomes spoil (v4). Earthly rulers rise and fall, but the LORD reigns above them all (v5; Ps 97:9). Verse 6 gives the key to true stability: *"And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times....the fear of the LORD is his treasure."* True stability is found in knowing, fearing, and trusting the LORD (Prov 9:10). When life is uncertain, God remains our sure foundation. As we treasure Him and His Word, He gives us wisdom for life's decisions, strength for present trials, and confidence for the future.

3. The LORD Arises in Judgment (33:7–16)

- Assyria's invasion brought Judah to a point of helplessness: *"Behold, their valiant ones shall cry without: the ambassadors of peace shall weep bitterly"* (v7). The ambassadors had failed to secure peace, and the land was devastated: *"The highways lie waste, the wayfaring man ceaseth"* (v8). Lebanon, Sharon, Bashan, and Carmel - all known for their beauty and fruitfulness - were affected by the devastation (v9).
- But at the darkest moment, the LORD declares: *"Now will I rise, saith the LORD; now will I be exalted; now will I lift up myself"* (v10). The repeated "now" emphasises God's timely and decisive intervention. God acts according to His perfect wisdom and timing. When God rises to act: *"Ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble: your breath, as fire, shall devour you...."* (vv11–12). Isaiah uses pictures of chaff, stubble, lime, and thorns to show that those who oppose God and depend on their own strength will ultimately be destroyed. Their plans will amount to nothing, and their apparent strength cannot withstand God's judgment.
- The LORD calls everyone to recognise His greatness: *"Hear, ye that are far off, what I have done; and, ye that are near, acknowledge my might"* (v13). Even those in Zion who were hypocritical and rebellious could not hide from the holiness of God: *"Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"* (v14). The answer is sobering: *"He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart"* (Ps 15:1; 24:3–4).
- Isaiah describes the fruit of a life that is rightly related to God (v15):
 - Walk righteously – live with integrity.
 - Speak uprightly – be truthful and honest.

- Reject dishonest gain – do not profit by exploiting others.
 - Refuse bribes – do not compromise justice for personal advantage.
 - Reject evil – do not participate in, approve of, or delight in wickedness.
- These qualities do not earn God's acceptance; rather, they show that genuine faith produces a changed life.
- God promises security and provision to those who walk with Him: *"He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure"* (v16). Whatever hardship we may face, we are never outside God's care.

4. The King in His Beauty (33:17–24)

- The greatest blessing is seeing the King Himself: *"Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty"* (v17). The deliverance of Jerusalem from Assyria was a foretaste of the greater future deliverance when Christ will reign as King. To behold the King in His beauty will be our greatest joy (1 Cor 13:12).
- Judah's present fears would become distant memories: *"Thine heart shall meditate terror. Where is the scribe? where is the receiver? where is he that counted the towers.....?"* (vv18–19). The enemy that once caused terror would be gone. Zion will be secure: *"Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities"* (v20). Jerusalem is pictured as a secure tent whose stakes cannot be removed. The LORD Himself will be Zion's protection. *"But there the glorious LORD will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams"* (v21). No enemy fleet can threaten the city.
- The LORD is Judge, Lawgiver, and King: *"For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us"* (v22).
 - Judge – He judges with perfect righteousness.
 - Lawgiver – He establishes His holy standards for His people.
 - King – He reigns with absolute authority and power.The wonderful outcome is: *"He will save us."* Jesus, whose name means "the LORD saves," delivers His people from sin, judgment, and death.
- The enemy is pictured as a disabled ship: *"Thy tacklings are loosed; they could not well strengthen their mast, they could not spread the sail"* (v23). The powerful enemy is completely helpless. The victory is so complete that even the weakest can share in the spoil. Isaiah closes with a wonderful promise: *"And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity"* (v24). The greatest blessing is the forgiveness of our sin.