



ISAIAH 33

ZION RESTORED ~ THE RIGHTEOUS KING

It's like Isaiah has been waiting for weeks, months, maybe even years to share the revelation of Yahweh he is now making known to God's people. The message must have been exploding within him. He is finally able to share with them the beauty and righteousness of the King and the message is overwhelming!

What seems to "leaking" out in this revelation Isaiah is bringing is the restoration of the fear of the Lord. This is obviously the real difference-maker for God's people. Nothing will move forward without it. The King will not come to an ill-prepared people. The Passion Translation of the book of Proverbs describes the fear of the Lord as being "consumed with awe." Nothing is impossible for a people who start here. The King is about to make his dramatic entrance into Isaiah's revelation and nothing will ever be the same again!

English Standard (ESV)	Passion Notes	Passion Translation (TPT)
<p>Isaiah 33:1 Ah, you destroyer, who yourself have not been destroyed, you traitor, whom none has betrayed! When you have ceased to destroy, you will be destroyed; and when you have finished betraying, they will betray you. ² O LORD, be gracious to us; we wait for you. Be our arm every morning, our salvation in the time of trouble. ³ At the tumultuous noise peoples flee; when you lift yourself up, nations are scattered, ⁴ and your spoil is gathered as the caterpillar gathers; as locusts leap, it is leapt upon. ⁵ The LORD is exalted, for he dwells on high; he will fill Zion with justice and righteousness, ⁶ and he will be the stability of your times, abundance of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge; the fear of the LORD is Zion's treasure.</p>	<p>a 33:1 This refers to Sennacherib, the king of Assyria. When Assyria is finished destroying Jerusalem, God will destroy Assyria. See 2 Kings 19:35–37.</p> <p>b 33:2 The Hebrew concept of waiting is not passive but includes joining our hearts to God and looking to him alone to help us.</p> <p>c 33:2 Or "arm," a metaphor for strength.</p> <p>d 33:4 Or "your."</p> <p>e 33:5 The Hebrew uses the word shakan, a word from which we get "shekinah (glory)." You could say, "Yahweh is shekinah'd on high."</p>	<p>Zion Restored</p> <p>Isaiah 33:1 Woe to you, destroyer, you who have not been destroyed. Woe to you, traitor, you who have not been betrayed. When you have finished your work of destroying, you will be destroyed, and when you have completed your betrayal, you will be betrayed. a ² Yahweh, be gracious to us, for we wait for you. b Be our strength c every morning and rescue us when troubles come. ³ The nations retreat at the sound of your roaring voice. The nations scatter as you arise in your majesty. ⁴ Their d spoil will be harvested, carried away like locusts that strip a field bare. And like leaping locusts, men will leap upon the spoils. ⁵ Yahweh is high and lifted up; he dwells e on high! He lavished his justice and righteousness on Zion! ⁶ He will be your constant source of stability in changing times, and out of his abundant love he gives you the riches of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge. Yes, the fear of the Lord is the key to this treasure!</p>

English Standard (ESV)	Passion Translation (TPT)	Passion Translation (TPT)
<p>7 Behold, their heroes cry in the streets; the envoys of peace weep bitterly. 8 The highways lie waste; the traveler ceases. Covenants are broken; cities are despised; there is no regard for man. 9 The land mourns and languishes; Lebanon is confounded and withers away; Sharon is like a desert, and Bashan and Carmel shake off their leaves.</p> <p>10 “Now I will arise,” says the LORD, “now I will lift myself up; now I will be exalted. 11 You conceive chaff; you give birth to stubble; your breath is a fire that will consume you. 12 And the peoples will be as if burned to lime, like thorns cut down, that are burned in the fire.”</p> <p>13 Hear, you who are far off, what I have done; and you who are near, acknowledge my might. 14 The sinners in Zion are afraid; trembling has seized the godless: “Who among us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?” 15 He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, who despises the gain of oppressions, who shakes his hands, lest they hold a bribe, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed and shuts his eyes from looking on evil, 16 he will dwell on the heights; his place of defense will be the fortresses of rocks; his bread will be given him; his water will be sure.</p> <p>17 Your eyes will behold the king in his beauty; they will see a land that stretches afar. 18 Your heart will muse on the terror: “Where is he who counted, where is he who weighed the tribute? Where is he who counted the towers?” 19 You will see no more the insolent people, the people of an obscure speech that you cannot comprehend, stammering in a tongue that you cannot understand. 20 Behold Zion, the city of our appointed feasts! Your eyes will see Jerusalem, an untroubled habitation, an immovable tent, whose stakes will never be plucked up, nor will any of its cords be broken.</p>	<p>f 33:7 Or “the Arielites (lions of God).” Others translate it “priests.”</p> <p>g 33:8 As translated from Dead Sea scroll 1QIsaa. Some manuscripts have “cities.”</p> <p>h 33:11 Or “You conceive straw and are pregnant with chaff.”</p> <p>i 33:11 Or “your breath.”</p> <p>j 33:15 See Ps. 15.</p> <p>k 33:15 Or “(who) shut their eyes from seeing evil (harming others).”</p> <p>l 33:16 This verse refers to those who are enthroned with Christ and seated with him in the heavenly realm (Rev. 3:21; Eph. 2:6). They receive a supernatural supply of revelation-bread and living water. Their eyes are fixed on their beautiful King, not on themselves or their ministries.</p> <p>m 33:17 This is the King of Glory, the King of Kings. No earthly king is in view here. See Song. 2:10–13; Eph. 1:3; 2:6; 2 Peter 1:3–4.</p> <p>n 33:17 Or “land of distances.”</p> <p>o 33:18 As translated from the Septuagint. The Hebrew is “Where is the counter?”</p> <p>p 33:18 As translated from the Septuagint. The Hebrew is “Where is the one who weighs the money (tribute)?”</p> <p>q 33:18 As translated from the Septuagint. The Hebrew is “Where is the one who counts the towers?”</p> <p>r 33:20 See Lev. 23; Deut. 16.</p> <p>s 33:21 This points to a restoration of Eden’s paradise. See Gen. 2:10; Ezek. 47:1–12; Acts 3:21.</p>	<p>7 Listen! The valiant ones f cry in the streets and envoys of peace weep bitterly. 8 The highways are deserted and the travelers have disappeared. Covenants are broken and witnesses g rejected, and no one is respected. 9 The land mourns and languishes. Lebanon is disgraced and withered. The fields of Sharon are like a desert. The lands of Bashan and Carmel are stripped bare. 10 “Now I will arise,” says the Lord. “Now I will exalt myself; now I will unveil my majesty! 11 Assyria, your plans are worthless, as useless as chaff. h My breath i will be a fire that consumes you. 12 As a thorn bush is cut down and thrown into the fire, your nation will be burned to ashes of lime.</p> <p>The Righteous King</p> <p>13 “You who are far away, listen to what I have done, and you who draw near to me, acknowledge my power and strength! 14 Sinners in Zion are afraid, and the godless are gripped with panic, saying, ‘Who can dwell with such an all-consuming fire? Who can live in the presence of the never-ending flame?’ 15 Only those who walk with integrity and speak what is true, j who despise even the thought of cheating the poor, and do not accept a bribe, nor plot violence, nor contemplate doing evil—k 16 they will live safely on the heights and make their safe place the mountain strongholds, with bread in steady supply and water assured. l 17 In this high place, your eyes will see the king m in his stunning beauty and gaze upon his broad domain. n 18 You will look back on the fears of your past and say, “Now, where is the scholar? o Where is the advisor? p Where is the one who numbers those who are maturing?” q 19 You will no longer see the defiant foreigner who speaks a strange, incomprehensible language. 20 Set your gaze on Zion, the city where we gather for Yahweh’s feasts. r Your eyes will see Jerusalem as a quiet, pleasant place. It is a secure dwelling, permanent and unmovable, not like a tabernacle that must be taken down, pegs pulled up, and transported.</p>

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<p>²¹ But there the LORD in majesty will be for us a place of broad rivers and streams, where no galley with oars can go, nor majestic ship can pass. ²² For the LORD is our judge; the LORD is our lawgiver; the LORD is our king; he will save us.</p> <p>²³ Your cords hang loose; they cannot hold the mast firm in its place or keep the sail spread out. Then prey and spoil in abundance will be divided; even the lame will take the prey. ²⁴ And no inhabitant will say, "I am sick"; the people who dwell there will be forgiven their iniquity.</p>	<p>t 33:21 The Hebrew of this clause is uncertain.</p> <p>u 33:22 Isaiah refers to the three forms of Israel's governmental history: the laws of Moses, the judges, and the kings.</p> <p>v 33:22 See 1 Thess. 5:23.</p> <p>w 33:23 Their "cords (of faith)" were not tightly fastened to Yahweh, their "mast" (human strength) was not secure, and their "sail" (to move forward by the Spirit-wind of God) was not unfurled, yet God would be faithful to them.</p> <p>x 33:23 These are the spoils of the great victory of Christ, won for us through his death, resurrection, and ascension. See Matt. 12:30-33; Eph. 1:3, 4:8; Col. 2:13-15.</p> <p>y 33:23 The "lame (feeble)" are those who worship with a limp (Gen. 32:24-32).</p>	<p>²¹ Glorious Yahweh will be there for us in a land with broad rivers and life-giving streams, s where the hostile, majestic ships will not sail. t ²² The "Lord Yahweh is our Judge, our Lawgiver, and our King; u he will save us completely! v</p> <p>²³ Your ropes hang loose, your mast is not secure, and your sail is not unfurled. w Then there will be a great plunder, such an abundant treasure divided x that even the lame will seize their rich share. y ²⁴ No one living in Zion will say, "I am sick," for all who live there will have their sin forgiven.</p>

BIBLE KNOWLEDGE COMMENTARY

JOHN A. MARTIN

- WOE TO THE ENEMIES OF GOD'S PEOPLE (33:1-12)

- **33:1.** Verses 1-12 discuss the woe (see comments on 3:9) of judgment to come on people who live unrighteously, who are traitors to the truth. The destroyer was the Assyrian enemy, and the traitor probably refers to those within Judah who wanted to form alliances either with Egypt or with other powers to protect them from Assyria. None of them would succeed in their efforts, for the destroyer would be destroyed and the traitor betrayed.
- **33:2-4.** The words in these verses seem to be those of the righteous remnant waiting for the LORD to deliver them. They will long for His grace (cf. 30:18-19) and the Lord Himself. Longing for His strength and salvation (deliverance) they were confident that He would scatter the nations who opposed Israel. Then speaking to the nations who will be judged, the remnant will say that the plunder which those nations had taken from others will be taken from them. That plundering will be as complete and irreversible as locusts destroying everything in their path.
- **33:5-6.** Speaking now to the remnant, Isaiah said that the exalted Lord (cf. 6:1) will eventually fill Zion with justice and righteousness (cf. 9:7; 11:4; 16:5; 32:16) when the kingdom is established. But in order to have these things, including salvation ... wisdom, and knowledge they must fear ... the LORD (cf. Prov. 1:7; 15:33). Fearing God does not mean being terrified of Him (except for those who are being or will be judged). It means to recognize and respect Him and His authority and righteous demands, which in turn results in godly living, worshiping, trusting, serving, and obeying Him. Those who fear Him find Him to be their sure Foundation, their Source of inner security and peace (cf. "Rock," Isa. 26:4).

- **33:7-12.** Those in Judah who thought they could achieve peace through an alliance (cf. envoys in 30:4, 6) would weep bitterly. Assyrian terror would be everywhere and people would be unable to travel the roads because of lurking danger. Lebanon, north of Israel and well known for its cedar forests, would wither. Sharon was the coastal plain south of Mount Carmel extending inland to the hill country of Ephraim. A fertile area, Sharon would become a desert like the Arabah (which means “arid” or “dry”), the desolate rift valley extending from the Dead Sea south to the Gulf of Aqabah. Bashan (“fertile plain”), east of the Sea of Kinnereth (later named the Sea of Galilee), was productive agriculturally (cf. Jer. 50:19) and known for its oak trees (Isa. 2:13; Ezek. 27:6; Micah 7:14; Zech. 11:2). Carmel (“fruitful land”) was a mountain range thickly forested and well watered at that time. This destruction would show that the people could not save themselves. When the LORD would use the Assyrians against Judah, Judah’s plans for peace would come to nothing. It was as if the people gave birth like a mother to nothing but chaff and straw, which can easily be burned up. The deliverance of the righteous (33:13-24) In contrast with the destruction of the destroyer and traitor, the righteous will live. Isaiah noted the kind of people who will be saved (vv. 13-16) and then described the land in which they will live (vv. 17-24).

- **THE DELIVERANCE OF THE RIGHTEOUS** (33:13-24)

- **33:13-16.** God called on people everywhere (far away and near, v. 13) to acknowledge His righteous actions and His power. Sinners asked who can endure God’s awesome judgment (a consuming fire), and the prophet responded that those who can dwell with God walk righteously and speak what is right [Vol. 1, p. 1084] (v. 15). They do not extort or take bribes. They refuse to be involved in plots of murder and other sins (cf. Ps. 15). These people will be safe and will enjoy God’s blessings (Isa. 33:16). Therefore the people should live by God’s standards even though the nation as a whole would be judged by Him.
- **33:17-24.** The prophet then described the fruitful land in which these redeemed individuals (vv. 15-16) will dwell. This is the kingdom of Israel where righteousness and peace will flourish in the land. The King (cf. 32:1; 33:22; 43:15; Micah 2:13; Zeph. 3:15; Zech. 14:9), the Messiah, will be there (Isa. 33:17), and the people will see Him. They will think back on their former times (vv. 18-19) and realize that those who did not live righteously will be with them no longer. No foreign invader will be among them, including the Assyrians, those arrogant people, who spoke an incomprehensible language (v. 19; cf. 28:11). Jerusalem will be peaceful and secure (33:20), and no warships will attack the nation Israel (v. 21). Being properly related to the LORD, the people will acknowledge Him as their Judge ... Lawgiver ... King (cf. v. 17), and Savior (v. 22). Assyria’s defeat will be like a shipwreck, after which the many spoils on the ship will be divided among the Israelites. So much plunder will be there that plenty will be left by the time even ... lame people get there. Illness will be wiped away (cf. 57:18-19; 58:8; Jer. 33:6) and the sins of the redeemed remnant will be forgiven (Isa. 33:24; cf. Jer. 31:34; 33:8; 36:3; 50:20). Peace, prosperity, and salvation will come by God’s sovereign work not by foreign alliances or human cunning.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The destroyer (the Assyrians) and the traitor (those within Judah who wanted to form alliances either with Egypt or with other powers to protect them from Assyria) were not going to succeed. God’s people would have to wait for the Lord to rescue them. Why is waiting for God to move on our behalf so difficult?

2. Isaiah compares our plans to save ourselves to childbirth. “You conceive chaff; you give birth to stubble; your breath is a fire that will consume you.” Can you think of a time when you “gave birth” to something that was not God’s best for you? In that situation, what do you see in hindsight that you missed when it was all coming down?

3. When the King enters Isaiah’s revelation the result is righteousness for the people. Most of us would say there is no righteousness apart from God. If that is true, what are some of the keys to experiencing the righteousness of God in your personal life? How has God’s righteousness manifested for you, in you or through you?

4. The beauty of the Lord is a key component of his character. Have you ever experienced the beauty of the Lord? How did your heart respond?

5. What might be the commotion between seeing the beauty of the Lord and growing in the fear of the Lord?