

INITIATION INTO ISAIAH

by

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CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

THEME:

A woe pronounced on those who spoil God's people and land then and hereafter.

REMARKS:

This chapter records the 6th and final woe of this section. It also begins a movement which is projected into the Kingdom blessings of chapter 35. At chapter 35 we are brought to the end of the first major division which is labeled "*Judgment*." There is not much that the most sanguine interpreters, who ignore all distinction between Israel and the Church, can claim for the Church. They are inclined to let all the judgments fall on Israel, but they are perfectly willing to take the blessings for the Church. Of course, they will have a field day when we come to the last major division of the book where the emphasis is upon salvation and blessings.

This chapter, in particular, pronounces a judgment upon those who seek to destroy God's people and lay waste His land. It refers to the Assyrian in the immediate purview, but extends on to the final enemy of the last days. The chapter is geocentric. The land is the thing of primary importance.

OUTLINE:

1. **PRAYER of the Remnant for Deliverance.** Verses 1-6
2. **PLAINTIVE CRY of the Ambassadors Who Failed in Their Mission.** Verses 7-12
3. **PETITION for all Peoples to Consider God's Dealings.** Verses 13-19
4. **PRAISE to God for Final Deliverance.** Verses 20-24

COMMENT:

Verse I—**Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee when thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled; and when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee.**

This is Isaiah's way of expressing the great spiritual principles in Galatians 6:7:

Be not deceived: God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

The spoiler here is Sennacherib who came against Jerusalem during the reign of Hezekiah (Isaiah 36-37). This is the unanimous conclusion of all sound scholars; however, it does not limit this chapter to the Assyrian, but is the beginning of a wider and more complete fulfillment, as this chapter clearly indicates. This will be consummated finally in the Antichrist and the restored Roman Empire. The reference here is primarily to the king of the north who will come down like the Assyrian in the last days (Ezekiel 38-39).

Verse 2—O Lord, be gracious unto us; we have waited for thee: be thou their arm every morning, our salvation also in the time of trouble.

This is the prayer of the godly remnant then and in the future.

Verse 3—At the noise of the tumult the people fled; at the lifting up of thyself the nations were scattered.

“**Nations**”—the enemy here is more than the Assyrian. The Lord heard the prayer then and will hear it in the future.

Verse 4—And your spoil shall be gathered like the gathering of the caterpillar: as the running to and fro of locusts shall he run upon them.

Verse 5—The Lord is exalted; for he dwelleth on high: he hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness.

Verse 6—And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: the fear of the Lord is his treasure.

A great transformation will take place in God’s people in that day—they will turn from the material to the spiritual. This will be in the day when the Kingdom is established here on earth. This applies to Israel and the nations here on the earth at that time. The reference is not to the Church.

Verse 7—Behold, their valiant ones shall cry without: the ambassadors of peace shall weep bitterly.

Verse 8—The highways lie waste, the wayfaring man ceaseth: he hath broken the covenant, he hath despised the cities, he regardeth no man.

Verse 9—The earth mourneth and languisheth: Lebanon is ashamed and hewn down: Sharon is like a wilderness; and Bashan and Carmel shake off their fruits.

The ambassadors were those who were sent to Sennacherib to conclude a covenant. They failed, for the Assyrian continued to march on Jerusalem.

This is but a picture of the last days when another ruler will break his covenant with Israel in the midst of the 70th week of Daniel (Daniel 9).

Verse 10—**Now will I rise, saith the Lord; now will I be exalted; now will I lift up myself.**

Verse 11—**Ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble: your breath, as fire, shall devour you.**

Verse 12—**And the people shall be as the burnings of lime: as thorns cut up shall they be burned in the fire.**

The deceptions of man will not deter the Lord from carrying out His sovereign purpose on the earth. This is judgment from God.

Verse 13—**Hear, ye that are far off, what I have done; and, ye that are near, acknowledge my might.**

Two groups of people are addressed here, “**ye that are far off**”—the Gentiles, and “**ye that are near**”—Israel.

Verse 14—**The sinners in Zion are afraid; tearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?**

“**Sinners in Zion**” are those of Israel who are not Israel. There are godless Israelites as well as godless Gentiles.

“**The devouring fire**” does not refer to the lake of fire, rather to the fact that “**our God is a consuming fire.**” It is not a reference to “hell” but to the “*holiness of God.*”

Verse 15—**He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil;**

The questions of verse 14 are answered here (Read Psalm 15). This is in entire accord with the whole tenor of Scripture. The one who has been declared righteous by his faith in Christ is called to walk in righteousness.

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? (Romans 6:1).

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:8-10).

Verse 16—**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.**

Verse 17—**Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off.**

This is the happy anticipation of those who have put their trust in the Lord.

Verse 18—**Thine heart shall meditate terror. Where is the scribe? where is the receiver? where is he that counted the towers?**

Paul quotes this verse in I Corinthians 1:20:

Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

No man who is not taught by the Holy Spirit can learn spiritual truths.

Verse 19—**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.**

Peoples of strange language will yet understand the Word of God.

Verse 20—**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 I ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken.**

Verse 21—**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.**

Verse 22—**For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; he will save us.**

Verse 23—**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.**

Verse 24—**And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.**

This is the glorious prospect which is held out for Jerusalem.

The eye of faith looks beyond the immediate hard circumstances to the glorious prospects of the future. This is the day when the King will be in Jerusalem.

The Prince of Peace will then bring peace to the earth.

- Babylon could boast of the Euphrates.
- Assyria could boast of the Tigris and upper Zab,
- Egypt could boast of the Nile.

In that day Jerusalem, a land locked city, can best boast of the Lord as the source of broad waters. Are not great physical changes predicted for Jerusalem? (See Zechariah 14:4).

The important item is that sin will be removed.

TOTALITARIANISM

Awful world despotism is already on the horizon. It is almost incredible what the United Nations Organization has approved. A so-called code of offences (says *The Midnight Cry*) against “the peace and security of mankind” has come up for consideration at the international law commission of the U.N.

Under this code, American citizens could be transported beyond the seas and tried by an international criminal court without the protection of the United States Constitution. As pointed out by the Chicago Tribune Press Service, “Legal experts have held that one provision, prohibiting acts causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of such groups, would ban such publications as the Bible, Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice* and Dickens’ *Oliver Twist*.”

With regard to the first, this implies that no one would be at liberty to preach the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, to denounce sin or refute false doctrine in the light of the Scriptures, or even to possess a copy of the Holy Bible. Technically, this genocide convention is already in force, having been accepted by the majority of U.N. members.

~ end of chapter 33 ~

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