

## **Woe to Evildoers When God's Justice and Righteousness is Fully Revealed**

**Isaiah 33: 1-14**

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### **I. Introduction:**

There are numerous times throughout the Scripture where the Lord enacts His righteous justice on behalf of His people. Even when His people failed to follow His commands, turned to the worship of idols or made treaties with other peoples contrary to the Lord's commands given them by the prophets, the Lord continued to protect and provide for them. Although the Lord chose to chastise His people for their sins, the mode or module that he used to do so was not without limitations and would not be allowed to totally destroy them. They were often displaced, but never destroyed. They had to endure suffering because of their misdeeds, but they were never totally destroyed. There has always remained a remnant.

### **II. The Lesson Topic: Woe to Evildoers When God's Justice and Righteousness is Fully Revealed**

#### **1. v. 1.**

This verse in chapter 33 is a continuation of the prophecy in chapter 32. It is the last of six woes. The prophet Isaiah is continuing his call for the return of God's chosen people to the Father. This passage is a promise of doom and destruction as well as a promise of vengeance and retribution. Doom and destruction for the enemies of God's people and retribution by God for mis-treatment and betrayal of His people. This prophecy of woe is likely regarding king Sennacherib and the Assyrians. 2 Kings 18 and 19 tells of the Assyrian threat and betrayal towards Hezekiah and the people of Judah. The Assyrians had invaded Judah without being provoked and this after accepting a peace treaty of silver and gold from king Hezekiah that was sent to Sennacherib to prevent an Assyrian invasion.

Within the second half of this verse is a promise of God's just and righteous repayment to the enemies of His people. The second half declares the enemy will be caught in its own trap. **Is. 31:8** is specific in its prophecy

regarding the Lord's handling of the Assyrians. *Assyria will fall by a sword that is not of man...* This can be seen as an encouragement to the people of Judah. They can take comfort and have peace in knowing that the Lord will repay their enemies with His righteous justice. **Deut. 32:35** reminds us that God himself will avenge his people. **Rev.18:16** reminds us that what one reaps, that shall they also sow. ***Payback is coming after a while!***

2. **vv.2-4.**

The people in Jerusalem had finally come to realize their total dependence on the Father and offer up prayer and supplication to God in anticipation of the threatened invasion by Assyria. In **Isaiah 30:18-19**, the prophet stated that their God would hear them when they called out to Him, here we see Isaiah's words beginning to bear fruit. They pray seeking God's mercy and expressing their confidence in Him with a possible echo of **Ps. 68:1**. But where was this confidence before the threat of invasion? Where was this longing after the Lord before now? Does this seem familiar? They acknowledge now that He is their only hope. They acknowledge that the Lord will Himself thwart the invasion of the enemy. As He reveals His divine power and supremacy the nations will be in disarray. It is the Lord's righteousness and justice that reign.

3. **vv. 5-6.**

Isaiah believed that the Lord alone is fit to be exalted to the highest heights; in **ch. 2** he depicted this great God as finally given His rightful place when everything contrary to His supremacy has been corrupted. Here, he presents the complementary truth that the Lord is exalted already. The Lord Himself was more than enough to give them protection from their enemies and wisdom in living as his people in the world. The people trusted Egypt and feared Assyria; in fact, God was to be their fear just as the reference to a sure foundation suggests that He too should be their trust.

4. **vv.7-9.**

The envoy of leaders sent to seek favor with the Assyrian king by delivering the treaty of peace return without success. The fear of the impending invasion and the desolation brought with it is described here. All normal commerce between communities comes to a halt, and the treaty that

apparently existed between Sennacherib and Hezekiah is treated as null and void.

The whole land was in mourning. The northern kingdom had already felt the heavy tread of the conqueror's feet; and the places named (2Kings 18:32b – 35) suggest that Judah would go the same way.

5. **vv. 10-12.**

This is assurance from God that the task of the destruction of the enemy, He would take into His own hands, thus exalting Himself. The Lord declares that He will disappoint the enemy's expectations of victory and totally destroy them as if they had been set ablaze. Their destruction will in fact be self-induced, for it is the result of their sinful hostility to God's people. In v.12 the prophet moves briefly from the particular to the general, making a point about the completeness of judgment, when it falls on all nations.

6. **vv. 13-14.**

God speaks to the whole world, calling on people to learn from the object lesson provided by his righteous judgment of Assyria. Zion was God's city. This was surely no place for the godless, but in every age the godless have lived side by side with the godly, publicly expressing and voicing contempt of and for the things of God that make their presence felt in society every day. The Apostle Paul reminds us; though we are in this world we are not of this world. In that great day, God shall separate the wheat from the shares!