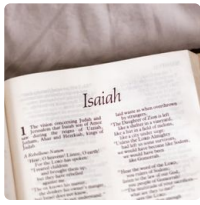


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Isaiah 30-33



Isaiah - Steve Gregg

Isaiah 30-33, as taught by Steve Gregg, covers Zion judgment, salvation in Old Jerusalem, and God's plans. The passage discusses the offer of remuneration to Egypt for help, the use of the term Rahab to refer to Egypt, and the fleeing from threats. Tophat, meaning "the drum," is also mentioned as a place that Josiah put an end to, but rabbis later used it to refer to post-mortem judgment upon the lost, which Jesus also affirmed.

Transcript

Alright, we're picking it up at Isaiah 30, beginning at chapter 28. We began a section of six chapters. There obviously are four left.

We covered two in the last session. These chapters, all except one of them, begin with the word Woe, and therefore they are decrying disasters that are coming upon Jerusalem. And they are intermixed with positive prophecies about Zion.

My thesis has been, and I base this of course on the way the New Testament writers use these very passages and quote them, that the woe upon Jerusalem ultimately is viewing the end of the Jewish order, which was signaled by the destruction of the temple in the year AD 70, and that was the end of the Jewish order. The end of the Old Covenant order, the sacrificial system. And yet, before God brought that down, just so there might be never any lack of a true worshipping community, God started a new worshipping community just prior to destroying the old.

And that was built upon a different foundation, who is mentioned in chapter 28-16 as the foundation that God lays in Zion, which is Christ, the New Testament writers tell us. So there's two Zions. There's the Zion that is under judgment, the old Jerusalem.

There's the Zion that has its foundation as Christ and is enduring. The very mention of a foundation suggests stability and standing. And as I said, Jesus himself made this comparison with the Jews of his day who heard and didn't hear him, and the Jews of his day who heard and did follow him.

The ones who did not were building a house on sand, a refuge of lives. The tempest

would come and sweep it away. Yet those who were building on the foundation of Christ on a rock, the tempest would not sweep them away.

There is, with the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, not a total wipeout. It's the end of the old order, but within the old order there were some who came out into the new order and followed the Messiah, and they are now Zion. They are now the surviving Jerusalem.

And so we see Zion and Jerusalem alternately referred to in these passages as either coming under judgment or surviving and having salvation. And they seem to just bounce back and forth in the passages to one or the other. In chapter 30, it says, Woe to the rebellious children, says the Lord, who take counsel, but not of me, and who devise plans, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin, who walk to go down to Egypt and have not asked my advice to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh and to trust in the shadow of Egypt.

Therefore, the strength of Pharaoh shall be their shame, and trust in the shadow of Egypt shall be their humiliation. For his princes were at Zion, and his ambassadors came to Hades. These are Egyptian cities.

Probably the ambassadors here are Judah's ambassadors sent down to try to strike a deal and make a pact. It says, They were all ashamed of the people who would not benefit them, that is, Egypt disappointed them, or be of help to benefit, but a shame and also a reproach. So this is a woe on those in Jerusalem who are ignoring God's spirit's directions through the prophet.

They're not taking counsel or devising plans by his spirit. They could, because the spirit of the Lord is on Isaiah the prophet, giving God's plans, but they're ignoring those. Instead, they're making their own plans, making counsel not of him, and that includes going down and resting on an alliance with Egypt and with Pharaoh.

And they are informed, this is not going to work out for you. This is a bed that's too short. The covers are too narrow.

You're not going to get any rest because there's no real security here. Pharaoh's going to do nothing for you. And he says the same thing again in verses six and seven, but this time with a different Oracle addressed, showing some pity, as it were, for the animals, the beasts of burden that are carrying probably the gifts to Egypt from Jerusalem.

Those who are going down to make a pact obviously offer some kind of remuneration to Egypt for their help. And so they have donkeys or beasts of burden carrying loads of gifts to Egypt. And as they're going down, it says the burden against the beasts of the south or the negate through the land of trouble and anguish from which came the lioness and the lion, the viper and the fiery flying serpent.

They, that is, the beasts of burden will carry their riches on their backs of young donkeys

and their treasures on the humps of camels to a people. That's Egypt who shall not benefit them. That's just what was saying in verse five.

These people will not be able to help or benefit to them. The Egyptians are not going to rescue them. They're taking treasures to the Egyptians to buy them off for the Egyptian shall help in vain and to no purpose.

Therefore, I have called her Rahab him Shabath in the King James. This line Rahab him Shabath is a translation of these words is attempted in the King James. And I think it says there something like Rahab sits still or something like that.

Or no, her strength is to sit still. I think it says in the King James, her strength is to sit still. This is not really a very good translation.

Rahab actually is a nickname for Egypt. And we see this more than one place elsewhere. Apparently it was a common nickname for Egypt for whatever reason.

And Isaiah 51 and verse nine in talking about the deliverance of Israel from Egypt in the time of Moses, looking back at the Exodus. Verse nine of Isaiah 51 says, Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord. Awake is in the ancient days in the generations of old.

Are you not the arm that cut Rahab apart and wounded the serpent? Are you not the one who dried up the sea and the waters of the great deep and made the depths of the sea erode? He's talking about the Exodus here, but he says he cut Rahab apart. That's Egypt. And also in the Psalms in Psalm 87 for Rahab is also a name for Egypt there.

Psalm 87 and verse four, it says, I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to those who know me. Behold, O Philistia and Tyre with Egypt. This one was born there.

We don't have time to go into the context here, but obviously mentions Babylon and Rahab. Both of them are places that the Jews had been in captivity that God delivered them from. But Rahab is here a reference to Egypt.

If you look at the marginal reference in your Bible, it should say so. In Isaiah 30 and verse seven, where it says, Therefore, I have called her, that is Egypt. I've called her Rahab, Hemshebet, which means the do nothing.

The translation given in the margin of our new King James is sit still. Egypt sits still. Rahab sits still.

They do nothing. Sometimes they should say Rahab, the do nothing. So Isaiah is kind of mocking them.

Now, the name Rahab itself, its actual meaning has been disputed, but some commentators have suggested it may have the connotation of a boaster or of a big

mouth. Someone who boasts a great deal, but doesn't do anything. So that may be the use of the word Rahab for Egypt here.

Egypt promises much, boasts much, but doesn't deliver anything. They just sit still and don't ever come to the rescue. As far as we know, the Egyptians never did mobilize and send help to Judah.

Whether they took their gifts or not, we have no actual record, but Judah sent gifts down there to hire them. It may be that Egypt took the gifts and just didn't come. Or maybe they just refused to enter into a pact, but it's not all that clear.

But since earlier, the people of Jerusalem were saying, we have made a covenant with death, and they are referring to their league with Egypt. It sounds like maybe Egypt did take their money, but just didn't do anything, didn't come. And Isaiah says that's the way it's going to be.

Now go write it before them on a tablet and note it on a scroll that it may be for a time to come forever and ever. That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children who will not hear the law of the Lord, who say to the seers, do not see, and to the prophets, do not prophesy to us right things. Speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits, get out of the way, turn aside from the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.

These people not only don't obey, they are intolerant of those who preach. Our society has become very much that way now too. There's probably throughout our entire history, except during times of great revival, our society has more or less ignored the gospel.

In some measure, they followed the law of God, just because it was written into our cultural code. But as far as following Jesus, probably the majority of Americans never have done that, but now it's getting to a place where they don't even want to tolerate those who speak for God. Now those who speak the word of God are going to jail or threatened with it, or laws are being made to try to silence the prophets or the spokesmen of God.

That's how Jerusalem was, that's why they killed Jesus, that's why they killed Stephen. So Jerusalem has become one that is violently opposed to hearing from God. Therefore thus says the Holy One of Israel, because you despise this word and trust in oppression and perversity and rely on them, therefore this iniquity shall be to you like a breach ready to fall, a bulge in a high wall whose breaking comes suddenly in an instant.

And he shall break it like the breaking of a potter's vessel, which is broken in pieces. He shall not spare, so there shall be not found among its fragments a shard to take fire from the hearth or to take water from a cistern. That is to say your sin is like it's weakening your society just like an incipient crack in a wall, which maybe it's not evident the

moment before it comes crashing down, but with just the right pressure or whatever it just falls in an instant.

And it breaks into many pieces like a pot that falls and breaks into a bunch of shards. And he's talking about the smallness of the shards, there's not a shard left to pick up some coals from a fire or some water from a cistern. Apparently, you know, if you broke a pot, you could still use the pieces if they're big enough for things like a fireplace shovel or something like that.

But you're not gonna be shards big enough, it's gonna be in, you know, tiny pieces. Your sin is gonna be like a crack that's about to cause your wall or your society to fall and break into pieces. For thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, in returning and rest, you shall be saved.

These beasts that are going down to Egypt to get help from Egypt, call them home, call them back, return back from your plans, return to God and rest in Him and you'll be saved. In quietness and confidence shall be your strength. But you would not.

And you said, no, for we will flee on horses. In other words, if this doesn't work out, we've got plan B, we've got an escape route, we got horses. If the enemies come and our alliance with Egypt doesn't wash, we can still escape.

We've got a back route. We'll flee on horses. He says, well, therefore you will flee.

And you say, we will ride on swift horses. Well, therefore those who pursue you will be swift. That's the problem with depending on horses and chariots or military might at all.

If you depend on military might, you better have the superior military might or you're in trouble. Your horses may be swift, but your enemies may have swifter horses, in which case you've got the disadvantage. As long as you're depending on military might, you've got to have the most built up armaments of anyone in the world who might be hostile to you.

You've got to be able to outclass them militarily. Jerusalem couldn't hope to do that. The Assyrians had faster horses than they had.

But they could trust in God. And when you trust in God, then it doesn't matter how big or fast the chariots and horses are of the enemy. We will remember the name of the Lord our God.

Some trust in chariots and some in horses, David said in Psalm 20, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God. We trust in God. He's bigger than all armies.

And he demonstrated that in the case of the Assyrians at the gates of Jerusalem, when a single angel of God wiped out 185,000 Assyrian troops. Talk about superior force there.

And it was not the armies of Israel or Judah that wrought that victory.

Those who trust in chariots and horses, you just never know. The enemy may have faster horses. One thousand shall flee at the threat of one at the threat of five.

You shall flee till you are left as a pole on the top of a mountain and as a banner on a hill. This image of a pole, probably a flagpole on a mountain or a tree stripped of branches on a mountain and a banner just refers to there being not much left. If there's a banner, it shows that people were once there.

But apparently they they fled like an army that set up their banner, but been driven off. Nothing is left but the banner they set up. Therefore, the Lord will wait that he might be gracious to you.

Now, of course, in that case, we are now talking about the Messianic age. That he may have mercy on you, for the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all those who wait for him.

That'd be the remnant for the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem. You shall weep no more. So this is those who wait on him, the remnant.

They will weep no more. He will be very gracious to you at the sound of your cry. When he hears it, he will answer you.

And though the Lord gives you bread of adversity. Notice who gives it? God does. Though God gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your teachers will not be removed to a corner anymore, but your eyes shall see your teacher.

So when you're going through trials, listen to your teachers. You can go to my series on making sense out of suffering and it'll help you with your when you're going through afflictions. God gives us trials, but he also gives us encouragement from instructors or whatever.

People who are no doubt replacing the rabbis or replacing the priests who taught the law in the body of Christ. There are now teachers who are the main instructors of the law. Your ears shall hear a word behind you saying, this is the way.

Walk in it whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left. Now, why is the voice behind you? Because you've turned off the road. The voice of your teachers is, you know, they're pictured as being on the right road, teaching you the right way to go.

And if you turn off the road, they are still on the road behind you, calling you back. Hey, this is the way. Walk in it.

So even though Christians sometimes do get a little off center at times, there will be a

witness, those who teach the word, no doubt, who will call them back to the right road and say, this is the way. Go this way. You will also defile the covering of your graven images of silver and the ornament of your molded images of gold.

You will throw them away as an unclean thing. You will say to them, get away. So you'll just forswear all former gods or idolatry that's been in your life.

Then he will give the rain for your seed with which you sow the ground, the bread of the increase of the earth. It will be fat and plenteous in that day. Your cattle will feed in large pastures.

Likewise, the oxen and the young donkeys that work the ground will eat cured fodder, which has been winnowed with a shovel and fan. There will be on every high mountain and every high hill, rivers and streams of water in the day of the great slaughter, that great slaughter when the towers fall. So even though the towers of the city of Jerusalem are falling yet, there's an alternative stream of water that God's providing to those who are the remnant.

Moreover, the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun. The light of the sun will be sevenfold as the light of seven days in the day that the Lord binds up the bruise of his people and heals the stroke of their wound. Remember in the beginning of Isaiah, the nation was like a man with full of bruises and putrefied sores from head to foot and no one had bound them up.

Well, the day will come when God will bind them up. Who's going to do that for him? Well, of course, Isaiah tells us the answer to that also. Over in Isaiah chapter 61, a passage which Jesus quotes has been about himself.

Isaiah 61, one, the spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted is how it reads in the Hebrew. It says heal in our Bible, but Jesus is the one who is sent to bind up the wound of his people.

And so in the day that Jesus would come, which he did, as Jesus said, this, this process has been fulfilled in your hearing. This, this age that we're referring to here is the age that has been inaugurated for us with the coming of Christ. Now, the next section seems to be about God judging Assyria.

And we know that this happened when Hezekiah turned to God. And it may be talking about what happened at the gates of Jerusalem, or it may be talking about later when Assyria was conquered by Babylon. And in other words, the ultimate end of Assyria.

Assyria is the threat to Judah and Israel throughout the book of Isaiah throughout Isaiah's lifetime. Assyria was the danger. And so he sees as he did in chapter 10 that God will ultimately turn his sword on Assyria after he's used Assyria to do what they're going to

do.

They will have their day in court too. And it says in verse 27, behold, the name of the Lord comes from afar, burning with his anger and his burden is heavy. His lips are full of indignation and his tongue like a devouring fire.

Now, I know this is about Assyria because he says so down in verse 31, by the way, it doesn't say that immediately, but this is against Assyria because he mentions Assyria as his target in verse 31. But notice the language, behold, the name of the Lord comes from afar. In chapter 19 in verse 1, the Assyrians coming against Egypt were described as the Lord rides a swift cloud and comes to Egypt.

So the Assyrian armies were God coming here. Here, what comes against Assyria now either is directly the angel of the Lord striking them at the gates of Jerusalem or maybe a reference to their later judgment through Babylon. But it's again, the Lord is coming.

It's the name of the Lord coming from afar with anger and devouring fire. His breath is like an overflowing stream, which reaches to the neck. Isn't that interesting? Because that's what in chapter 10 and elsewhere, it talks about Assyria doing.

They're coming against Jerusalem or against Judah and they cover it to the neck. That is only the head sticks out. It's almost like the same language is used of how God's going to judge Assyria then.

Probably what he's talking about here is that with the fall of Assyria or the fall of the enemies in general, the people of God will have gladness and celebration. The Lord will cause his glorious voice to be heard and show the descent of his arm. That's his judgment with indignation of his anger and the flame of a devouring fire with scattering tempest and hailstones for through the voice of the Lord, Assyria will be beaten down, who struck with a rod.

And in every place where the staff of punishment passes, which the Lord lays on him, it will be with tambourines and harps and in battles and brandishing, he will fight with it. Now there will be a judgment on Assyria that will result in celebration for those who have been conquered. So there's the along with the judgment, wherever the staff of judgment passes, there will also be tambourines and harps that will be people rejoicing.

And verse 33, for Tophet was established of old. Yes, for the king, it is prepared. He has made it deep and large.

It's pyre, which is where you burn dead bodies, is fire with much wood. The breath of the Lord, like stream of brimstone, kindles it. Now, what is Tophet? Well, Tophet is a word that means the drum, and it was the name of a place.

In fact, it's the name of the same place that was called the Valley of Hinnom. We know

this because Jeremiah tells us that over in Jeremiah chapter 7. Jeremiah 7, beginning at verse 32, actually verse 31 mentions that the people of Judah had been burning their infants to an idol called Moloch in the Valley of Hinnom in Tophet. And therefore it says in verse 32, Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when it will no more be called Tophet or the Valley of the son of Hinnom.

These are alternate names for the place. It was called Tophet. It was also called the Valley of the sons of Hinnom or Valley of Hinnom.

But it'll be called the Valley of Slaughter, for they will bury in Tophet until there's no room. The corpses of the people will be food for birds of the heaven and for the beasts of the earth, and no one will frighten them away. Now the Valley of Hinnom was outside, is outside Jerusalem today.

The old city walls southwest of the city is this valley. It is commonly said by preachers and many commentators that the Valley of Hinnom was a garbage dump. We know it was the place where Manasseh and others burned their children as sacrifices to Moloch.

Josiah, the good king, put an end to that. And he defiled the Valley of Hinnom. That is, he made it unsuitable for worship.

And many say he turned it into the town garbage dump so that all the trash and garbage from Jerusalem would be thrown out there and then they'd burn it. And the fires would burn continually because you're always throwing more trash in it, just like a dump today. If you keep throwing trash into the fire, it's going to keep burning in the incinerator.

And it is even argued sometimes that this garbage dump outside Jerusalem was used for burning the bodies of criminals or people who otherwise were not given a normal burial. Now this picture of the Valley of Hinnom as a garbage dump has been challenged because there is, in fact, not much historical documentation for it as a garbage dump. The earliest reference to it being a garbage dump seems to come from the 11th century from a rabbi who wrote about it in that way.

He said that it was a garbage dump, but he was writing a thousand years after the events of the fall of Jerusalem and would not necessarily know unless he had earlier sources, and those earlier sources are not known to us. So it cannot be established from historical sources that that which is so commonly said that Jerusalem was a garbage dump, but we can establish from scripture that it was the place where corpses were thrown and burned. Isaiah says so in verse 33, Now the imagery of fire and brimstone in Gehenna, which means the Valley of Hinnom, comes into play in the book of Revelation, and although Gehenna is not mentioned by name in Revelation, there is fire and brimstone in the Lake of Fire.

Jesus mentions Gehenna and speaks of it as a place where the fires do not go out, the

fire is not quenched, and the worm does not die. In fact, Jesus is borrowing language from Isaiah. Isaiah 66, 24 also says that, but doesn't mention the Valley of Hinnom by name.

What we do have is Isaiah and Jeremiah and Jesus and John in the book of Revelation all speaking about an ultimate place of judgment, which is sometimes referred to as the Valley of Hinnom. Sometimes it's spoken of as fire and brimstone. Sometimes it's just spoken of as a furnace of fire or something like that.

The Jews of Jesus' time, many of the rabbis, had come to use the word Gehenna, whose literal translation is simply the Valley of Hinnom, to refer not to the Valley of Hinnom at all, but to the fate of the dead. And so it was common for some rabbis to use the word Gehenna, even in Jesus' day, to mean the post-mortem judgment that would come upon the lost. Usually Gentiles were in view, or very wicked Jews, and it talked about the post-mortem punishment.

Now, these rabbis had developed this use of the word Gehenna prior to Jesus' time, but they didn't get it from the Bible. They got it from other sources. Their Bible, the Old Testament, does not talk about post-mortem states.

The rabbis had speculated about this and had, in fact, come up with ideas very similar to that of the Egyptians found in the Egyptian Book of the Dead or of the Zoroastrians of Persia. Not surprisingly, most of the Jews in the intertestamental period were in Egypt or Persia. Those who were still remnants after Daniel's time in Persia were still in those regions.

And, of course, one of the largest Jewish populations in the pre-New Testament times was in Alexandria, Egypt. So, it's not surprising to see Egyptian and Persian ideas coming into the rabbinic thought, especially when they're trying to answer questions about subjects that the prophets of the Old Testament never spoke about. Namely, what is happening to people when they die? When people die, what happens next? The Old Testament revelation didn't answer those questions.

Some pagan religions gave answers, and the rabbis seemed to pick up those answers and perpetuate them. It was the rabbis, then, who attached the name Gehenna or the Valley of Hinnom to these traditional ideas. Many scholars believe that Jesus, when he spoke of Gehenna, meant hell.

In fact, it's always translated hell in our English translations, sadly, because it's not a translation. Gehenna means Valley of Hinnom. It doesn't mean hell.

But the rabbis used it, the word, to speak of what we might call hell. And therefore, many scholars believe that it's justifiable to translate Gehenna as hell, since Jesus, they say, would be using it the same way the rabbis did. Maybe he did.

If he did, it's a strange thing, since Jesus had very little respect for the traditions of the rabbis, and often referred to them as traditions of men, as opposed to the word of God. If Jesus, in fact, felt the rabbis were correct about Gehenna being a place of fire and brimstone after the grave, for wicked, then he's, in a sense, affirming that they hit it right by accident, because God had never revealed this to them. If they got it right, it was from the Egyptians and the Persians, or maybe out of their own imaginations.

It didn't come from the Old Testament or any inspired scripture. And it seems to me very strange to imagine that people in the intertestament period, speculating and borrowing from pagan religions about the state of the dead, would actually come up with a correct notion about it, when the prophets of God had been deprived of any such information. Jesus, it seems to me, would be very out of character to confirm the Jewish ideas about this, which were not inspired.

And it seems more likely that Jesus used the word Gehenna the way that Isaiah did, and that Jeremiah did, as the Valley of Hinnom, a place of corpses being thrown. And in particular, although the Valley of Hinnom literal may not have been in mind, the idea of a place where corpses are thrown could be referred to as the Valley of Hinnom, since that did happen in the Valley of Hinnom. And Isaiah says it did, Jeremiah said it did, and so this picture of Gehenna may have informed the rabbi's ideas of a post-mortem state, but in Isaiah and Jeremiah, it's not talking about a post-mortem state, but simply the disposition of corpses.

Even the place where the fire is not quenched and the worm does not die. The expressions Jesus borrowed from Isaiah to speak of Gehenna. Jesus did apply those to Gehenna.

In Mark chapter 9, he spoke of Gehenna, where the fire is not quenched and the worm does not die. Well, that language comes from Isaiah 66, 24, and notice Isaiah, whose language is, you know, he provides the language that Jesus is using here for Gehenna. Isaiah 66, 24 says, We're not talking about living souls in a place like hell, we're talking about corpses that are being burned like cordwood stacked up in a valley.

Now, Isaiah 66 doesn't mention Tophet or the Valley of Hinnom as the location, although he does here in chapter 30. And so, but Jesus takes those words of Isaiah and applies it to Gehenna. So, if that's very confusing, it should be.

There's a lot of threads of this Gehenna tradition, both biblical and extra biblical, to sort out. But the bottom line is that when Jesus used the word Gehenna, he was either affirming a Jewish tradition that used the term Gehenna as hell, or affirming a prophetic tradition from the Old Testament that used the word Gehenna to mean the place where corpses are thrown once God has judged the city and their corpses have to be removed. I personally, of course, lean toward the latter, since I believe Jesus is more likely to speak according to the prophets rather than according to the rabbis and the Jewish traditions.

So, I'm thinking Jesus was warning not about what we call hell, but about the destruction of Jerusalem and the fact that as in Jeremiah's time, the bodies and corpses of those slain by the Babylonians were thrown into Gehenna, so those who would be slain by the Romans in Jerusalem would be thrown there. That strikes me as the most likely use that Jesus uses. And Isaiah here is the first, the earliest of the prophets to say anything about it.

And he associates it with fire and brimstone and corpses being thrown in there. It's a funeral pyre for those who don't receive a normal funeral. It's a mass grave.

Chapter 31 of Isaiah, Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses, who trust in chariots because there are many, and in horsemen because they are very strong, but who do not look to the Holy One of Israel nor seek the Lord. Trust in military might instead of in God invokes this woe. Yet He also is wise, that is God, and He will bring disaster, and He will not call back His words, but He will arise against the house of evildoers and against the help of those who do work iniquity.

Now, the Egyptians are men. They're not God. Their horses are flesh, not spirit.

When the Lord stretches out His hand, both he who helps will fall, and he who is helped will fall down. They all perish together. This is hypothetical.

If the Egyptians would choose to come, God can reach out His hand and wipe out them who are helping, the Egyptians and Jerusalem, who is being helped. As we've said repeatedly, God didn't, you know, He eventually didn't do this because the Egyptians didn't come and because Jerusalem repented and turned to God, these disasters didn't happen. But what he's saying is, if you're looking to Egypt to help you when God's against you, better think again.

Because if Egypt shows up to help you and I'm against you, you and Egypt are both going down. God is stronger than the horses and chariots of Egypt. But, verses 4 through 9 then, tell of the fact that in fact there will be repentance and there will be God's deliverance of Jerusalem from Assyria in the short range.

Now the fact that he predicts this deliverance in the short range suggests that all his repeated references to judgment probably look beyond this immediate crisis to a later time. He says, More probably, thus the Lord has spoken to me. As a lion roars, and a young lion over his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is summoned against him, he will not be afraid of their voice, nor be disturbed by their noise.

So the Lord of hosts will come down and fight for Mount Zion and for its hill. Like birds flying about, so will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem. Defending, he will also deliver it.

Passing over, he will preserve it. Now this is, this verse was quoted by some prophecy students, futurists, who spoke, I don't remember the exact event, it was in World War I, I

think, or World War II, when airplanes, military allied airplanes, flew over Jerusalem and delivered them from invaders. I think it was the Turks at the time, maybe.

I don't remember the details of what event it was, but I've often heard prophecy teachers say, this fulfilled the prophecy that like birds flying over Jerusalem, God will deliver Zion. That is, airplanes. Airplanes flew over Zion like birds and delivered it from a particular modern catastrophe in the 20th century.

This is not talking about catastrophes in the 20th century, it's talking about Assyria, as we shall see when we get to verse 8. It's talking about the immediate threat to Jerusalem in Isaiah's day. And in this case, it doesn't seem to go beyond that. It says, Return to him against whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted, for in that day every man shall throw away his idols of silver and his idols of gold, sin which your own hands have made for yourselves.

Then Assyria shall fall by the sword not of man. Okay, this is an angel killed the Assyrians and drove them from Jerusalem, not a man. And a sword not of mankind shall devour him, but he shall flee from the sword and his young men shall become forced labor.

This actual fulfillment is recorded by Isaiah later in chapter 37 and verse 36. We can look there. It says in Isaiah 37, 36, Then the angel of the Lord went out and killed of the camp of the Assyrians 185,000.

And when the people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses, all dead, probably in the valley of Hinnom, as a matter of fact. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned home, and remained at Nineveh. So it says in Isaiah 31, 9, And he shall cross over, that is Assyria in retreat, cross over to his stronghold, probably Nineveh, for fear.

And his princes shall be afraid of the banner, says the Lord, whose fire is in Zion and whose furnace is in Jerusalem. So when God decides to take the side of Jerusalem, he's got what it takes to get rid of the Assyrians. He's like a lion who takes a lamb from a flock, and when all the shepherd boys come with their sticks and their stones to try to drive the lion off, the lion is undisturbed.

He's not intimidated by a bunch of little shepherd boys. That's the illustration given in verse 4. As a young lion roars over his prey, when a multitude of shepherds summoned against him, he will not be afraid of their voice or be disturbed. He's not going to give up his prey to a few shepherds with sticks and stones.

A lion just is not that easily intimidated. And he says that's what God's like. Let all the shepherds that want, let all the armies that want come against God.

If he wants to defend his own, he can do so. And he does so, not with the sword of man,

nor with the sword of mankind, but supernaturally, as we see later on. Now, chapter 32.

Behold, a king will reign in righteousness and princes will rule with justice. A man will be as a hiding place from the wind and a cover from the tempest, as rivers of water in dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. The eyes of those who see will not be dim.

The ears of those who hear will listen. Also the heart of the rash will understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers will be ready to speak plainly. Now, this means people who formerly were stammerers, who formerly were stupid and rash, who formerly were blind, they will hear, they will see, they will understand.

This is going to be brought out again in chapter 35, a kingdom passage. Of course, when John the Baptist sent messengers to Jesus and said, are you the one who's to come or not? Jesus pointed out these very things going on, as the answer to John's question. Tell John what you see.

The eyes of the blind are open. The deaf hear. The lame are walking.

These kinds of things are marks of the fact that he was, in fact, the one who was to come, that he was inaugurating the kingdom age, and John should be able to put that together, if that information is given to him, Jesus said. The foolish person will no longer be called generous, nor the miser said to be bountiful, for the foolish person will speak foolishness, and his heart will work iniquity to practice ungodliness, to utter error against the Lord, to keep the hungry unsatisfied, and he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fall. Also, the schemes of the schemer are evil.

He devises wicked plans to destroy the poor, and lying words, even when the needy speaks justice, that is, when they're speaking correctly, but a generous man devises generous things, and generosity, by his generosity he'll stand. In other words, in the messianic age, there will still be bad people. They won't be esteemed.

A foolish man, a miser, a bad man, an ungenerous man, will not be viewed to be a good man. Remember earlier Isaiah said, woe to those who call evil good and good evil. That's what happens in a society like it was in his day in Jerusalem, apparently they had turned morality on its head, so that a miser, or a fool, or some other person who's not a good person is referred to as a generous person, or as a wise person.

That's not true. But there are generous people, verse 8 says, and that man is known by his generosity, not by some reputation based on a false standard of assessing people. Now, verse 9 says, Rise up, you women who are at ease.

Hear my voice, you complacent daughters, and give ear to my speech. Now, this reminds us of chapter 3, where he spoke against the haughty women of Jerusalem, and about the judgment that would come upon them. But even more, it's reminiscent, I think to me, of

Amos, chapter 6, where Amos speaks to the haughty women of Israel, or excuse me, of Jerusalem, same women.

And Amos, in chapter 6, verse 1 says, Woe to you who are at ease in Zion, and who trust in the Mount of Samaria. I guess, in this case, being at ease in Zion is the issue. Amos does talk about the women, specifically.

I thought it was there in chapter 6, but it's not the women that he speaks to, but those who are at ease, which is also a term used by Isaiah 32 at 9. But there is, Amos does talk to the women. Oh, here it is, chapter 4 of Amos. He says, Hear this word, you cows of Bashan, who are on the mountains of Samaria, who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, who say to your husbands, Bring wine, let us drink.

So, these women, you know, they're women, they have husbands. He calls them cows, affluent cows, and they're just oppressing the poor, and so forth. And so, sometimes the women are addressed, those who are at ease in Zion, in Amos chapter 6 and chapter 4. But here, in Isaiah 32 at 9, it's women who are at ease in Zion.

So, both ideas are combined here. He says, Give ear to my speech. In a year and some days you will be troubled, you complacent women, for the vintage will fail.

Well, you're not going to be able to drink your wine anymore. And gathering will not come. Tremble, you women who are at ease.

Be troubled, you complacent ones. Strip yourselves, make yourselves bare, and gird sackcloth on your waist. Now, remember, in chapter 3, he said, those women with all that finery, God's going to strip them bare.

And they're going to go into captivity naked. But he's saying, Hey, do yourself a favor, strip yourself bare, that is, put on sackcloth, and repent. Then God won't have to strip you bare.

You've got the choice. You can humble yourself, or God can humble you. If God humbles you, it's much harder on you.

People shall mourn upon their breasts, for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine. On the land of my people will come up thorns and briars, yes, on all the happy homes in the joyous city. That's the city that's temporarily joyous in its sins.

Because the palaces will be forsaken, the bustling city will be deserted. Of course, this is Jerusalem. And the forts and towers will become lairs forever, a joy of wild donkeys, a pasture of flocks.

But notice, until the Spirit is poured out upon us from on high. And the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is counted as a forest. So, again, the Spirit is

being poured out as rivers in the desert, and transforming it into fruitfulness.

Zion is transformed into a waste, but then the Spirit is poured out, and it is transformed into a fruitful field. But, of course, it's the New Jerusalem that is the fruitful field, upon whom God has poured His Spirit. He poured out His Spirit at Pentecost, this is what this is referring to, on the remnants that were there in the city.

And they became fruitful, while the rest of the city became thorns and briars. Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field, and the work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever. That's essentially what Paul said in Romans 5.1. Therefore, being justified by faith, that's righteousness, we have peace with God.

Being justified, we have peace. The effect of righteousness is quietness, peace, assurance, because Christ has made us peaceful, being justified by faith. Romans 5.1. My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.

Though hail comes down on the forest, and the city is brought low in humiliation, of course, the natural city of Jerusalem, blessed are you, who sow beside all waters, who send out freely the feet of the ox and the donkey. Now, what he means by that, there's, even though the city of Jerusalem comes under judgment, there's a blessed remnant, Jesus announced them, blessed are you, meek, blessed are you, poor in spirit, blessed are you, who's hungry, blessed are those who are the remnant, who survived this thing, and who lived to see that peaceful time, when they can just sow their seed peaceably by the waters, they can send out their ox and their donkey and not have to worry about them being stolen or taken by wild beasts. This is an agricultural kind of imagery.

We realize, of course, none of this is quite literal, I mean the city going down is essentially literal, but the imagery of the desert becoming a fruitful field and things, these are the agrarian images that are so common in Isaiah for simply images of transformation from being worthless to being fruitful. God's always looking for fruit and the people of God finally become fruitful, but the, in the course of saying so, images from agriculture and farming and ranching are used, but they are the images of the most attractive sort, peaceful times. The enemies are no longer a threat to you.

You're living in a land that's fruitful now. Now, of course, all this is spiritual. The church has never had, at least not for very long, in any one place, that kind of peaceful relation with the world itself.

Jesus said, these things I've spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace. Then he said, in the world you have tribulation. But be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

So, in Christ we have this peace. In Christ we have these circumstances. We have peace

in our soul.

We have an inward joy. All the things that are described, the righteousness, the peace and joy in these kingdom passages is in the Holy Spirit, Paul said. And so this is spiritual peace.

They're described in natural terms. But described in spiritual condition. Because in the world, Jesus said, you'll have tribulation.

But we live in two realms. We live in this world and we live in Christ. In me, you have peace.

In the world, you have tribulation. In the midst of tribulation, which defines our earthly circumstances many times, we have peace, nonetheless. And that is what is predicted here.

Though one could easily misunderstand it, and you can see why the Jews didn't understand it the way the New Testament writers did. And why it was, in fact, necessary for Jesus to open their understanding so they could understand the scriptures. Now, chapter 33, Woe to you who plundered, though you have not been plundered.

Now, I will say that this opening verse kind of sounds to me like it's talking to Assyria. As the last part of chapter 31 was talking about the judgment on Assyria. They were the ones who plundered, although they had not been aggravated.

They had not been plundered by Judah. Why did they come against Judah? They had not been plundered by Israel. Why did they come plunder Israel? They were unprovoked attackers.

And so, it sounds like it's referring to Assyria here. On the other hand, as the chapter progresses, it sounds like it's talking about the wicked in Jerusalem. Because, again, in this chapter, as in previous ones, we're going to see judgment on Jerusalem and also the kingdom of the Messiah.

It's the same theme. The same two themes are going to be here. And so, it may be that maybe this one verse or two might be talking about Assyria being judged.

Or it might be talking about the apostate Jerusalem being the one who plunders those who did not plunder them. It is, in fact, the case that Jesus never did any harm to them and they killed him. Stephen never did any harm to them.

They killed him. The church never did any harm to the Jews in their neighborhood. But the Jews arrested them and pursued them and killed them and so forth.

It may be that Jerusalem is in mind here. They're the ones who plunder who were not previously provoked by their victims. It could be the persecution of the church that's

here in mind.

I can't say for sure, but certainly as the chapter progresses, it is the fall of Jerusalem and the kingdom age that is clearly described in terms we will have no trouble recognizing. Woe to you who plunder, though you have not been plundered, and you who deal treacherously, though they have not dealt treacherously with you. When you cease plundering, you will be plundered.

And when you make an end of dealing treacherously, they will deal treacherously with you. Praise. O Lord, be gracious to us.

We have waited for you. This is the remnant praying. Be their arm every morning.

That is the remnants. Our salvation also in the time of trouble. At the noise of the tumult, the people shall flee.

When you lift up yourself, the nations shall be scattered. And your plunder shall be gathered, like the gathering of the caterpillar, as the running to and fro of the locust. He shall run upon them.

Apparently the likeness of the caterpillar and the locust are these are creatures that come in great swarms, especially the locust, and they destroy all the crops. And so God's devastation on his enemies will be as devastating as a locust plague or as a plague of caterpillars destroying everything in their wake. The Lord is exalted for he dwells on high.

He is filled Zion with justice and righteousness. Wisdom and knowledge will be the stability of your times, and the strength of salvation. The fear of the Lord is his treasure.

Now, these verses, obviously verses two through six, though starting out as a prayer, are describing a condition that would be in the new Zion, filled with justice and righteousness. But then it goes back to talk about what's going to happen to the old Zion, the old order. Surely their valiant ones shall cry outside.

The ambassadors of peace shall weep bitterly. The ambassadors of peace are probably the ones who went down to Egypt looking for help in the immediate context. The highways lie waste.

The wayfaring man ceases. He has broken the covenant. He, that is God, has broken the covenant because they did.

God's not a covenant breaker, but when they break the covenant, it's broken, and he also breaks his end. He puts, he ends the agreement that he made at Mount Sinai with Israel because of their behavior. He has broken the covenant.

He has despised the cities. He regards no man. The earth, or land, mourns and

languishes.

Same language you found in chapter 24. Lebanon, which just means the cedars of Lebanon are the emblem of pride, and so the people of Jerusalem who are proud are like Lebanon, the cedars, the proud cedars that are cut down, is shamed and shriveled. Sharon, which was known for its flowers and beauty, is like a wilderness.

And Bashan and Carmel shake off their fruit. Now I will arise, says the Lord. I will be exalted.

Now I will lift myself up. You shall conceive chaff. He's speaking to Jerusalem here.

They conceived wind, or they actually bore wind before. Now they're conceiving and bringing forth chaff and stubble. Again, no fruit.

Your breath as fire shall devour you. And the people shall be like the burnings of lime, like thorns cut up. They shall be burned in the fire.

Here you who are afar off, what I have done, and you who are near, acknowledge my might. The sinners in Zion are afraid. So obviously this is not some other country.

This is not Assyria. This is Zion, Jerusalem that's coming under judgment. Fearfulness has seized the hypocrites.

That's what Jesus called the religious leaders of his day. Hypocrites. Repeatedly.

Continuously, actually. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell in everlasting burnings? This is actually a very similar question to that which is posed in Malachi chapter 2, which is set at the first coming of Christ. Malachi chapter 2, excuse me, 3. Malachi 3 verse 1 says, Behold, I send my messenger, and he'll prepare the way before me.

That's John the Baptist. And the Lord whom you seek, that's Jesus, will suddenly come to his temple. When? This is not him coming with a scourge of small cords and driving out the cattle.

This is another coming to the temple. As we see, even the messenger of the covenant, that's Christ, in whom you delight, that is you claim to want to see him, well here he comes. Behold, he's coming says the Lord of hosts.

But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he's like a refiner's fire and like a fuller's soap. When Jesus comes to the temple, he's going to clean house. This was done partially with the whip, but certainly this is referring to something more disastrous than that, because who will survive it? Who will stand? When Jesus drove the cattle out of the temple, it was a small action that affected the day's wages of a few merchants.

But to say, who can stand when he comes to the temple, suggests there might not be many that could be expected to survive. And I believe it's referring to AD 70, when Jesus comes in judgment there. But, the question in Isaiah 33-15 is very similar, or 14.

Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Jesus comes like a refiner's fire, in judgment on Jerusalem. Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? Who's going to survive, in other words, this judgment that's coming upon Jerusalem? He who walks righteously, that is the remnant will. And who speaks uprightly? He who despises the gain of oppressions, that is, he will not take money from those who've been oppressed and plundered.

Who gestures with his hands refusing bribes. He's so adamant against taking bribes that he waves it away. You offer me a bribe? No, I don't even, come near me.

Get out of here. He gestures with his hand to refuse the bribe. Who stops the ears from hearing a bloodshed, that is, plots to kill.

He won't listen to those plots. He won't participate. And shuts his eyes from seeing evil, that is, from looking upon evil plans and so forth.

Of course, we can't just ignore evil. We have to address it. But the idea is he's refusing to countenance evil, refusing to participate in plans of bloodshed or taking bribes.

All the oppressive things the bad rulers did, this person will not do. He's part of a remnant who don't do that. He will dwell on high.

His place of defense will be the fortress of rocks. Bread will be given to him. His water will be sure.

Now, though we're nearly out of time, I just want to call your attention to Psalm 15, which asks and answers essentially the same question, or one very much like it. Psalm 15, a very short psalm, but you'll see it resembles these verses we just read in Isaiah 33, verses 14 and 15 especially, or 14 through 16 in Isaiah 33. Psalm 15 is only five verses.

It says, Lord, who may abide in your tabernacle? Who may dwell in your holy hill? The answer, he who walks uprightly and works righteousness and speaks the truth in his heart. He who does not backbite with a tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor, nor does he take up a reproach against his friend. In whose eyes a vile person is despised, but he honors those who fear the Lord.

He who swears to his own hurt and does not change, means he makes a promise and doesn't break it, even though it's hard, hurts him to keep it. He who does not put out his money at usury, and who does not take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved.

And so that's almost like a, Isaiah seems to almost paraphrase that. Who can dwell in the true Zion with God? Those who are righteous, who don't take bribes, who don't oppress, that person will dwell on high, he'll never be moved. Now, the last portion of chapter 33, and we're done of Isaiah.

Your eyes will see the king and his beauty. That is, this remnant who has just been despised. Excuse me, I saw the word despised in verse 15, I meant described.

The remnant that's been described in verses 15 and 16 are addressed. Your eyes shall see the king and his beauty. They will see the land that is very far off.

This is a spiritual promised land. Your heart will meditate on terror. Where is the scribe? Where is he who weighs? Where is he who counts the towers? Now, the scribe, the one who weighs, the one who counts the towers, commentators and translators are not sure exactly what this means, but it's thought in the context to mean where are the besieging armies and the officers of the Assyrians who were counting towers and plotting to just seeking to make strategies against Jerusalem.

The way it's translated here, scribe, one who weighs, one who counts towers, it doesn't bring that out so much. There are different translations of these words in different versions of the Bible. In general, it seems to be saying where are those people who were at the walls and their officers who were plotting and counting your towers and making plans how to tear them down and so forth.

Where'd they go? They're gone. You will not see a fierce people, a people of obscure speech beyond perception, of a stammering tongue that cannot, that you cannot understand. These are images, of course, that go back to earlier prophecies about the Assyrians and no doubt the disappearance of the Assyrians is seen as a salvation from God that foreshadows the salvation of the Messianic age.

He says look upon Zion, the city of our appointed feasts. Your eyes will see Jerusalem, a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that will not be taken down. Not one of its stakes will ever be removed.

This is, of course, the spiritual Zion, the spiritual tabernacle, the permanent one. Nor will any of its cords be broken, but there the majestic Lord will be for us a place of broad rivers and streams, in which no galley with oars will sail, nor majestic ships pass by. Now rivers in the desert are a good thing.

That's imagery that's used a lot in Isaiah as a positive aspect of God's blessing, but some rivers can admit invaders, navies, galleys of soldiers and so forth to attack you, but these rivers, not like that. God will be a place of rivers of water, but there will not be attackers coming on those rivers. It says, for the Lord is our judge, which also means our vindicator.

The Lord is our lawgiver. The Lord is our king. He will save us.

Your tackle is loosed. They could not strengthen their mass. They could not spread the sail.

Then the prey of the great plunder is divided. The lame take the prey, and the inhabitant will not say, I am sick. The people who dwell in it will be forgiven their iniquity.

Now this reference to tackle and the mass, the ship, this is continuing from verse 21. Verse 22 in our translation of the New King James is in parentheses, so that after 22, verse 23 picks up from the end of verse 21 this imagery of ships invading God's people on these wide rivers with their galleys, the navies of the attackers coming in. Well, no, they're not going to be there.

Their tackle has been loosed. They can't strengthen their mass. They could not spread their sail.

They can't get up the wind to come against God's people. Their ships are just not going to show up. But the inhabitants of the land will not say, I am sick.

And this idea of sickness obviously is a common theme in Isaiah. And the healing is through the Messiah. By his stripes we are healed.

The people who dwell in it will be forgiven their iniquity. So this sickness, this healing of sickness is forgiveness. The sickness is iniquity.

And the healing is the forgiveness of their iniquity. And so we come to the end of this section. The section that follows is chapters 34 and 35 and it is a continuous section.

It's like it could have been one chapter. And it covers pretty much the same themes of the fall of the old and the institution of the new. We'll see that in a later lecture.