

Wednesday, December 13, 2023 • Read Isaiah 33–35

Questions from the Scripture text: What have the objects of this last woe been doing (33:1a–b)? What has not been done to them? What is about to happen to them (v1c–f)? What cry (v2) will occasion this response of the Lord? Who is the rampaging, plundering army of v3–4? What will this show about Him (v5a)? What else shows that He is exalted (v5b–6)? How have the warriors (v7a), politicians (v7b), and merchants (v8a–b) of the world (and the church, v14a–b) fared in this picture of the end (v7–9, 11–14)? How have the godly fared (v16)? What is their greatest reward (v17)? What will be absent in those days (v18–19)? Who will Himself be unto them what the best earthly conditions of church and state in this world could only anticipate (v20–24)? Whom does 34:1 summon? To do what? What are they to hear/heed (v2)? What is coming upon all nations (v2–3)? And upon whom else (v4–5)? With what word picture do v6–7 describe the carrying out of the Lord's vengeance? For whose benefit/vindication does this also occur (v8, 17c–d)? What exchange will His and their enemies (characterized here as Edom) endure (v9–15)? Where has He declared the certainty (v16a–b) of the blessing of His people and the certainty of the accursedness of His enemies? Where was the certainty established (v16d–17b)? How does v16c teach that the accursedness of the one and the blessedness of the other must go together? How do 35:1a–2d describe their blessedness in the new creation. What is the greatest part of their blessing (v2e–f)? How should those who are hoping for this respond to this (v3–4, cf. Heb 12:12–13)? What disabilities will no longer exist then (v5–6)? What else will be corrected (v7, 9a–b)? Who will inhabit this place (v8, 10)?

What does the end of history look like? Isaiah 33–35 prepares us for the first serial reading in public worship on the Lord's Day. In these fifty-one verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **the end of history is assured wrath upon all the wicked of heaven and earth, but assured blessedness in a new heavens and new earth upon those sanctified and glorified ones who have the beauty and glory of the Lord Himself as their reward.**

The King in His beauty, ch33. These three chapters make up the "sixth woe" in the section from ch. 28–35. The whole of ch. 1–37 set the Lord's promised King over-against the kings of Israel and Judah, and of the nations. Man's guilt before God has been compounded by his pride in himself, in which he refuses to submit to God as his help and hope. Each of the first five woes have addressed some aspect of Israel's own failure to submit, as a warning to all of us of the danger of such pride. Now, the sixth woe turns its attention squarely against the arrogance of those who thought they were untouchable in power, as they ruthlessly pounded the people of God (33:1).

God will route the oppressor like a rampaging, plundering army (v3–4). And He will do so in response to His people's prayer (v2)—His people who have now been turned from all other hope and security to find hope and security in Him Himself. The Lord shows His exaltedness (v5a, 10) both by the destruction of the enemy (v3–4, 11–14) and by the transformation of His people (v5b–6, v15).

The reward of God's people is not merely peace and provision in earthly things (v16), but God Himself (v17). Paradise is not so much in the absence of their oppressors (v18–19), so much as the presence of the King in His beauty. Paradise is not in the lack of invaders (v21c–d, 23) or illness and iniquity (v24), so much as in having the majestic YHWH Himself (v21a) as the government of the place (v22).

God's glory in the ultimate vengeance and ultimate redemption, ch34. We dwell in the earth and see the need of God's vengeance in this world (v1–3). But perhaps we forget that the Lord is preparing not just a new earth but also a new heavens. Not only are there wicked men upon whom His vengeance will rain (v5b–7), but wicked spirits as well (v4–5a).

Throughout Scripture and history, God's vengeance upon the wicked (v8a) is bound together with His vindication of His people (v8b). "The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment" (2Pet 2:9). These two things are "mates" (to use the language/picture of v16c). So the dreadfulness of v9–10 (and barrenness of v11–15) goes hand in hand with the blessedness that will be described in chapter 35. The two have a mutual certainty, being concluded in the determination of God (v17) and declared as a certainty by the Word of God (v16).

Responding to the joyfulness and certainty of the everlasting blessing that is coming, ch35. Again, the new-creation blessings of God's people (v1–2), and their vindication in His vengeance (v4c–e), are secondary to that greatest blessedness: seeing the glory of YHWH Himself (v2e), seeing the excellency of God as "our God," the God Who has bound Himself to us in covenant (v2f)!

If we know this is the sure outcome of whatever difficulty we are in, we will respond to present pains with determined resolution (v3a–4b) that looks forward to the time when all of our weaknesses will be eliminated (v5a–6b) together with the elimination of the creation's groaning (v6c–7).

This is why the creation longs, with us, for us to come into our own resurrection (cf. Rom 8:18–23). And this is why every moment of pain is a reminder to press forward for that holiness that we must have on the day that we finally come to see the Lord Himself (cf. Heb 12:11–14). These apostolic expositions of Isaiah 35 were not new ideas (they are taught in Isaiah!), but the revelation of God Himself in Jesus Christ has revolutionized for us what this means. When Philip asked for Isaiah 33–35 blessedness, Jesus declared Himself to be the King in His beauty, Himself to be the glorious YHWH and excellent God (cf. Jn 14:9).

In the new heavens and the new earth, there will not be any danger (v8a, 9a–c). There will only be the redeemed (v9d), who have been perfected in holiness (v8b), so that the most "foolish" among them will be completely wise, holy, and secure (v8b, e–f). The days of sorrow and sighing will have come to an end, replaced forever by days of unmitigated joy in YHWH Himself, our King (v10)!

O, dear reader, this end of all things is absolutely sure in the determination of God. And the sufferings that we now endure have been specifically designed to bring them about (cf. Rom 8:18–23, Heb 12:14). There has never once been an unnecessary moment or pang of pain for one of the Lord's elect. Let us, then, pursue the holiness that He Himself is pursuing in us, even as we ask Him to sanctify unto us every trial and quickly bring the trial itself to an end.

What oppression do you currently experience? What outcome has the Lord ultimately determined for that? What outcome has the Lord ultimately determined for you? What difficulty or pain or trouble are you currently in? What is the Lord determined to use it to do to you? What should you be determined to gain by it? How do you plan to do gain it?

Sample prayer: Lord, we thank You for telling us of the certainty of Your vengeance. Please forgive us for how still, we have been unmindful of Your justice and despaired over what we see done by those who seem to have power. Thank You for telling us of the certainty of our blessedness in holiness. Please forgive us for how little we have employed our troubles as opportunities in the pursuit of holiness. And thank You, most of all, for presenting to us Yourself as our great reward in the beholding of Your beauty and glory. But, O Lord, please forgive us for how often we have been content to set our hearts upon lesser things, apart from You. Forgive us, Lord, and cleanse us, until we have come into that holiness and delight that the Lord Jesus has had as our substitute. Conform us, now to Him, we ask in His Name, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP73C "Yet Constantly, I Am with You" or TPH471 "The Sands of Time Are Sinkin'"

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Isaiah chapter 33 through 35. These are God's words. Woe to you who plunder the you have not been plundered. Well, and you who deal treacherously though, they have not dealt treacherously with you. When you see splundering, you will be plundered. When you make an end of dealing treacherously, they will deal treacherously with you.

Oh yeah, be gracious to us. We have waited for you. We are their arm every morning. Our salvation also. In the time of trouble. At the noise of the two melt, the people shall flee. When you lift yourself up the nation's shall be scattered. And your plunder shall be gathered, like the gathering of the caterpillar as the running two and row of locusts.

He shall run upon them. You always exalted for he dwells on high. He is filled Zion with justice and righteousness. Wisdom. And knowledge will be the stability of our your times. And the strength of salvation. The fear of yalpa is his treasure. Surely their value at one shall cry outside.

The ambassadors of peace. Shall we bitterly? The highway is lie. Waste the traveling man ceases. He has broken. The covenant, he has despised the cities. He just got

he regards no man. The earth, mourns and laments. Lebanon has changed and traveled sharon like a wilderness. Patient and caramel, shake off the fruits.

Now, i will rise as yah right now, i will be exalted. Now, i will lift myself up, You shall conceive. Chaff, you shall bring forth stubble, your breath as fire shall to vary. 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 far off what i have done. And you who are near acknowledge, my might The sinners and zion are afraid. Fearfulness has seized the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire, who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? He who walks up, right? Righteously and speaks uprightly.

He who despises the gain of oppression? Who gestures with his hand refusing bribes. Who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed? Shuts. His eyes from seeing anything evil. He will dwell on high. This place of defense will be the fortress of rocks. Bread will be given him. This water will be sure.

Your eyes will see the king. In his beauty. They will see the land. That is very far off. Your heart will meditate on terror. Where is the scribe? Where is he? Who base. Where is he? Who counts the towers? You will not see a fierce people. What people have obscure speech beyond perception of stammering tongue, that you cannot understand.

Look up look upon zion the city of our appointed feasts. Your eyes will see jerusalem, quiet home. The tabernacle that will not be taken down. Not one of its takes will ever be removed. Normal. Any of its chords to be broken. But, The majestic y'all play will be for us, a place of broad rivers and streams.

In which no galley with oars will sail. Norm adjustic ships passed by for yahweh is our judge. Yahweh is our lawgiver. He always as our king. He will save us. Your tackle is loosed. They could not strengthen their mast, they could not spread the sale. Then the prey of great.

Plunder is divided the lane, take the prey, The inhabitant will not say, i am sick, the people who dwell in it. We'll be forgiven their iniquity. Come near you nations to hear and heed you people. Let the earth hear and all that is in it. The world and all things that come forth from it.

For the indignation of yahweh is against all nations. As fury against all their armies. Here's utterly destroyed them. He has given them over to the slaughter. Oh, so they're slain shall be thrown out. They're stents shall rise from their corpses. The mountains shall be melted with their blood. All the host of heaven shall be dissolved.

And the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll. Scroll all there has stuff all down. As the leaf falls from the vine is fruit falling from a fig tree. For my sword shall be bathed in heaven. Indeed, it shall come down on him. And on the people of my curse for judgment.

The sword of yahweh is filled with blood. It is made overflowing with fatness with the blood of lambs and goats with the fat of the kidneys of rams for yahweh has a sacrifice and bus route. And a great slaughter in the land of Edom. The wild oxygen shall come down with them.

The young bulls with the mighty bulls their land shall be soaked with blood. And their dust saturated with fatness. For it is the day if you always vengeance the year of recompense for the cause Of zion. That streams so he turned into pitch. It's dust into brimstone. Its land shall become burning pitch.

Shall not be quenched tonight or day. It's smoke shall ascend forever. From generation to generation, it, shall i waste? No one shall pass through it forever and ever. The pelican and the porcupine shop, possessed, the owl and the range shall dwell in it. And he shall stretch over at the line of confusion and the stones of emptiness.

They shall call its nobles to the kingdom, but none shall be there. Oh, it's princess. Shall be nothing. And thorns shall come up in its palaces nettles and brambles and its fortresses. She'll be a habitation of jackals courtyard. For ostriches the wild beasts of the deserts also meet with the jackals, the wild goat shall bleat to its companion.

The night creature, shall rest there and for find for herself, a place of rest there, the aeros snakes shall make her nest, and lay eggs, and hatch and gather them under his under her shadow. There. Also, the hawks be gathered everyone with her mate. Search from the book of yahai and read.

Not one of these shall fail. Not one shall lack her mate. For my mouth has commanded it. And his spirit has commanded as gathered them. He has cast the lot for them in his hand has divided it among them. With a measuring line, they sell possess it forever. From generation to generation, they shall dwell in it.

The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad. For them and the desert. So rejoice and blossom is the rose. It shall blossom. Abundantly and rejoice, even with joy and singing. The glory of leavenin shall be given to it excellence of caramel, and sharon. They shall see the glory of yahweh.

The excellence of our god. Strengthen the weekends make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are fearful hearted be strong. Do not fear. Behold, your god will come with vengeance with the recompense of god. He will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened at the ears of the death shall be unstopped.

And the lame shall leap like a deer the tongue with a dumb thing. For waters, will burst forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert. The parched ground shall become a pool. And the thirsty land springs of water. And the habitation of jackals, where each lay there shall be grass with reeds and rushes.

A highway shall be there in the road and it shall be called The highway of holiness. Unclean shall not pass over but it shall be for others. Whoever walks the road, although a fool shall not go astray. No lion shall be there. Nor shall only ravenous beast. Go upon it.

It should go up on it. It shall not be found there. But the redeemed shall walk there, the ransom of yahweh shall return And come to Zion was singing. With our last enjoy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness. And sorrow and saying, Shuffling away. Man, this ends this reading of god's inspired.

And inherent worked.

These three chapters are the sixth. Whoa, from chapter 28 up until the end of chapter. 35, we have the Um, the six woes and then comes the Um, historical section. With the threat of Assyria. Averted. And then. Hezekiah is falling with the Babylonian. On voice. Um, So that really chapters one through 35.

Are the promise of Uh, the righteous king. Uh, righteous king who've seen several times. Now, As a king who is really the lord? Uh, y'all hit himself. Uh, but then Hezekiah. Proves himself not to be the sort of king that is needed in the next section. So this is really concluding The first.

Uh, big trunk, the first half. Of the book of isaiah, after the historical section, we're going to get into what we sometimes called a new covenant section. Um, But here in the sixth row, he turns his attention from a woe on his own people from a woe upon the unfaithful in jerusalem.

Which was really the main subject of the first five was Uh, each dealt with a different way. In which jerusalem was foolish. Or unfaithful. Rebellious against the lord or failing to trust in the lord. Uh, but here the woe is Upon those who have plundered his people. Uh, who thought themselves untouchable?

Because nobody was plundering them. No one was succeeding against them. And rather than recognizing. That the god who made heaven and earth as the one. Uh, who was Um, superintending in his providence their successes they of course We're proud and ruthless. And so, the The first half of chapter 33 is Uh, basically about how when the lord Uh, decides to act against them, they're going to be completely helpless.

Just like everyone else has been helpless against them. This is a warning. Uh, to those who are in power now against god's people. There's an encouragement to the people of god. When people when authorities and depressors seem to be unstoppable against us, The very first movement of the lord against them will never will devastate them.

Utterly. And then, Uh, If you look at versus seven and eight, you know, the value at ones. The, those who seem great in military, things ambassadors of peace. Those are seem great and political things. Um, the highway, the tribe traveling, man, those who seem great and economic things. It still is the same today.

Uh, people fret over, what those who have military power or those who have political power or those who have economic power are doing. And those who have that power. Think themselves untouchable. Uh, but The lord will surely take vengeance. Upon them, and he does it for the sake of his people.

Uh, verse 5, you always exalted dwells on highs filled zion With justice and righteousness, indeed. The day of his wrath is coming. And it's not just coming in fire upon the nations. Verse, you know, up through verse 13, it's also coming upon unbelievers, among his people Those who How does it work?

Church membership. Those who

Were in the people of god and attended the worship of god and had the rules of god. But they didn't trust God himself. They didn't love god himself. They didn't humble themselves before him. And they are the hypocrites, in verse 14, who are going to participate. With. In the Condemnation, the punishment.

That the nation suffer under the wrath of god. The ones who will survive. The ones who will come out are the ones who genuinely belong to the lord. Those who By his spirit. Uh, new life, by which they rested. And the lord alone by which They had a new nature in which they love the lord.

And walk uprightly. They walk righteously speak uprightly despise the gain of oppressions. Um, someone gives them a bribe, they're not. Uh winking and shuffling their feet and signaling, that they're going to take the bride, they use their gestures to refuse the bribe. Verse 15. Um, they refuse to listen to plans.

Of how they can take their own vengeance. They stop their ears from blood. Check. Um, they Refuse to consider. Uh, doing sinfully So, even within zion, you have the Those who are in the in israel, but not of israel as it were or in the church, but not of the church.

In verse 14. And then you have those who are actually in the lord. In verse 15. And they. Are the ones who will be safe. When the judgment, when the wrath of god comes as verse 16 describes, let's safety is not. They're they're primary blessing. We do not trust in the lord and hope in him long to him nearly.

So that when, when the day of great fire comes, Uh, that we will escape the fire. There are those who live in this world as those merely escaping fire. But that's Uh, that is the least of Uh, our Uh, Motivations least of our inheritance. The least of our blessedness, the great blessedness is in verse 17.

You will see. The king. In his beauty. He himself. Because the blessingness of the place and he himself is the strength of the place. The reason the, the invaders on the ships, In verses 20 to 23. Are unable to do anything is because Yahweh himself as king of this new country.

Uh, this is Of course. Uh, when the new heavens the dworth comes, when jesus reigns on the earth. They're actually aren't going to be. Enemies present on the earth, he will have done with them. In fact, revelation uses this picture but it doesn't use this picture about people coming.

Um, On the sea. In in ships, invaders, coming. Uh, with the Foreign tongue that sounds like stammering. Uh, nonsense. In revelation. There's no sea at all. It's not saying that, you know, there aren't going to be Uh, water features in the earth. Uh, it's describing the elimination. Of all the enemy's god's people, dwell secure.

An incidentally, this Um, This idea in verse 22. You always are judge, you always our love ever. You always our king. That's actually where we get our Uh, our three branches of the federal government. Uh, it's pretty amazing to think that. Even. Even when our nation was being formed.

They were thinking about, Uh, being ruled. According to The different aspects of authority. That the lord has instituted. Now, we didn't do a Of wonderful job, but Uh, the idea that there should be a judicial branch, a legislative branch and an executive branch actually comes from isaiah 33, verse 22, you always are judge, you always are lawgiver.

Yahoo is our king. Praise god. Um, in the kingdom that we are looking forward to, there are not three branches of government. The branch is the government, the righteous branch who has come from the stump of jesse. The lord jesus himself. Yahweh the god man, the king. And when his wrath comes, It will come not just as retribution upon the nation's for the sake of his people as we see in verse 33.

But it will come as worship unto the lord. The description in. Most of chapter 34. Is of the entire. Um, Old earth. Being transformed into an altar. And not just the old earth, even the old heavens. So that this judgment comes verse four and five on the host of heaven.

Which will be dissolved. The heavens will be rolled up by As a scroll verse 4. Um, Verse 5. My sword shall be bathed in heaven. So when we saying the clouds v rolled back as a scroll, that's actually an active vengeance upon the heavens. And there's this vengeance upon the heavens and the earth that turns the entire surface.

Into an altar that is on fire. And the sword of yahweh bathed in the blood and the fact and you can Uh, you've just been Through levticus. Haven't you? And your see how the fat and the blood is reserved for the lord. Well, Uh, he is just, this is not the means by which his people come near him.

This is him slaughtering and burning forever, his and his people's enemies. And it is so completely planned. That not one person. Will be missing from the wrath. And not one creature will be missing from the wrath. Every Aspect of it. Has been planned out. Uh, everyone with her, mate.

Verse 15, not one of these. Uh, shall lack her mate. Verse 16. And so, Nothing is left to chance. Nothing will be overlooked. No sin will go on avenged. Both when with respect to what happens to the wicked and the one hand and the destruction of the old creation.

And with what happens to the righteous on the other hand and the bringing in of the new creation. The lord will attend to every particle of everything. And so, the believer looks at this, And we see the certainty of the vengeance of god upon the wicked, but we also see The certainty of the lord finishing his work in us and making us.

Holy and so, there's this. There's this overlap. When you get, From. To the end of Uh, chapter 34. So Uh, chapter 34 verse 16 and 17 was a search, the book of Yahweh and read. In other words, He has determined that he divided it with his measuring line, he's planned it out.

Verse 17 engineered Uh, the end of the world as it were, or the end of this age and the ushering in of eternity He used determined these things, and then into chapter 35, it turns its attention, especially to the redeemed, and there's a lot of overlap then between Isaiah 35 and Hebrews 12.

Uh, not just the first part of Hebrews 12. Where it's talking about the lord, puts his people through things that are producing in the left a holiness without which we won't see the lord. Just like he was putting israel. Um, through a chastening at the hands of the assyrians but he was going to judge the Assyrians and that becomes a picture in time.

A picture in history of what the Lord is doing. On a broad scale. Uh, In the hole. Of, of human history. And Unto eternity. But it's not just the first half of hebrews 12 there, but the second half of hebrews 12, The lord preserving for his people and unshakable kingdom.

The lord being a consuming fire. So that he is a consuming fire of wrath. Against his enemies but he's a consuming fire of glory and joy and delight. That for his people. And it's right there in the middle of his at. And it's right there in the middle of hebrews 12 that he quotes from isaiah.

35 says strengthen the we cans and make firm the feeble knees So hebrews 12 is not saying. Uh, Hard times. Are hard. Uh, but Uh, the pain is good for you because it's producing. Uh holiness. So suck it up. And, and grit your teeth. And press on. It's saying the lord is actually using.

The difficult times. To set your faith in him. To give you strength in him by faith. To transfer your hope and confidence from yourself. Like israel had. Wickedly unbelievably, had to a hope and confidence in the lord himself. And it's at that point in the transition, in the middle of hebrews 12.

That the attention turns from the suffering that is on earth. To the worship that is being led by jesus in heaven. Where there are who Angels, gathered for feast. Angels, who Are also the armies of god. And the souls of the just made perfect. The multitude, the growing multitude of those who are living proof.

That this plan of god to redeem, his people works. It is actually producing holy people. And so you have not just the new creation glory versus one and two in isaiah, 35, but you have Uh, god's people are no longer blind verse 5. They're no longer deaf verse 5.

They're no longer lame verse 6. And then you have some more new creation stuff. The rest of verse 6 and verse 7. Uh, but all of the people, In the new heavens and the new earth, all of the redeemed. Our holy and wise. Uh, the people who walk on it.

Are the redeemed. Verse 9 who walk on the highway of holiness first eight. The most foolish among them and you can put the word, foolish. And in air quotes there in verse 8, the most foolish among them are wise and never go astray. No one ever goes astray again.

Gods. Sanctifying work will be completed. And the character of his people will be perfect. To match their delighting god. And to match the new heavens and the new earth in which he has given them to dwell. And again, The greatest part of this is not. The new creation. It's the enjoyment of the new creator.

Verse 2, they shall see the glory of yahweh. The excellency of our god and that of course should remind you of 3317. Your eyes will see the king in his beauty. Then we'll see the land. That is very far off. So Um, the lamb. Is all the glory in emmanuel's land.

The king is all the glory. And Emmanuel's land. It really is. One of the great themes, perhaps the great theme. Here in isaiah 33 through 35. So do not fret over evildoers. Who seem like their power is unchallenged. As soon as the lord. Uh, begins to act. They are devastated and destroyed and helpless.

But rather know that, the lord's intention to make for himself, a holy people. To enjoy an unshakable kingdom, in a new heaven and a new earth. That intention. Not only will be satisfied later. But everything that he does now. Is bringing it about. And you can rest in him.

And if we are resting in him, Uh, according to This thought of if according to this idea, we arresting him. Then we will be devoted. To him. Pursue peace with all men. And the holiness without which We will not see the lord. Those who hope that, thus Purify themselves.

Even as he is pure. So the lord granted to us the confidence and the hope. That produces. This pursuit of holiness. And then, whatever. Our father in heaven. We thank you for this section of Isaiah. We pray lord that you would write its truth in our hearts especially In a time and place where there are many even among your people.

Who fret over those who seem to have. Military power, or political power, or economic power. You o, lord. Are already our judge, our lawgiver and our king. And we look forward. To when you're what you have planned perfectly is executed, exactly. And we come into the new heavens and the new earth.

But oh lord, give us by faith already. To see you in christ. That we would behold the beauty of the king. And that your glory. Would be the vision, the reward. The happiness of our life. You know, lord how much Our remaining flesh obscures this from our sight through the course of ordinary life, help us by your spirit, To kill that flesh to Star from suffocate.

What comes from the old, man. That we may both. Glorify you and service and obedience that is like unto christs. And enjoy you. In delight and motivation. That is like unto christs. For we ask it in his name. Amen.