

"For the Lord is our Judge; the Lord is our lawgiver; the Lord is our king; He will save us!" (Isaiah 33:22)

Remember last week's lesson on Isaiah 32-32? Where Isaiah continued with his message of "woe, to those who go down to Egypt and trust in horses and chariots for security" rather than looking to the Holy One of Israel--pleading with them to repent and return to the One "who longed to be gracious to them"!

He also prophesied about "a king" who would one day reign righteously over the nation and totally "turn things around"! It would be a day (in the eschatological future) when "the eyes of those who are able to see would no longer be blind, and the ears of those who hear would listen"! And (according to the Message Bible) "when fools would no longer become celebrities, nor crooks rewarded with fame" (and getting back to NASB), "when noble men would devise noble plans"! It would all come about (he said) "when the Spirit of the Lord is poured out from on high...when justice and righteousness will reign...and God's people will live in a peaceful habitation, secure dwellings, and undisturbed resting places"! Describing the days to come in the millennial kingdom!

And that brings us to Isaiah 33--with another "woe"! But this one directed squarely at "the destroyer"! Sennacherib and his Assyrian army who, Isaiah says, dealt treacherously with others, including the people of Judah, who did not deal treacherously with them! "Those you have dealt treacherously with will deal treacherously with you! And you will be destroyed," Isaiah prophesied! (The full story of Sennacherib's treachery--and of king Hezekiah's initial naivete (and sinfulness) in "giving Sennacherib all the silver found in the house of the Lord" to keep him, from attacking Jerusalem, before finally consulting with Isaiah and trusting God for deliverance--is given in II Kings 18-19!)

Isaiah 33:2 records Isaiah's prayer! "O Lord, be gracious to us; we have waited for You! Be our strength every morning and our salvation in the time of distress!"

And distress there was in all of Judah, as described in verses 7-9, while the siege is underway:

- Brave warriors and "envoys of peace" crying in the streets (Motyer says, "coming belatedly to a realization of their ineffectiveness and discovering how they've been duped")!
- Highways desolate, all travel ceased!
- The land "mourning and pining"--with the best parts of Judah having already been decimated by the Assyrians!

MacArthur notes that "when the oppressor's power had reached its zenith, the time had arrived for the Lord to assert Himself in judging the plunderers"!

"Now I will arise," says the Lord, "Now I will be exalted, now I will be lifted up!" (We know from the account in Isaiah 19, and elsewhere, how "the angel of the Lord struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians, and how they departed, never to threaten Jerusalem again!)

Interestingly, the Lord summoned, through His prophet, the whole world ("those near and far away") to hear about what He had done for His people! (Remember Rahab, in Jericho (in Joshua 2:10-11) remembered how God had departed the waters of the Red Sea in the children of Israel's escape from captivity in Egypt!--and chose to follow the God of Israel!) Wotyer writes, "Behind it lies the assumption what the Lord has done for His people has world-wide significance, both as a revelation of the Lord and

as a message of salvation! The first move of the people of God to the world is 'informative'! The world is to be won by persuasion of the truth--to know God's power!"

Verse 14 indicates that the same miraculous deliverance of Jerusalem which brought glory to God from the Gentiles all over the world, apparently brought "fear and trembling" to "sinners in Zion"! And raised questions about "who could live with the consuming fire" of God (a symbol throughout the Old Testament of a holy God)! A question also raised, coincidentally, by Ryan Francis in his sermon Sunday from Malachi 3:2, "Who can endure the day of the coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and will purify the sons of Levi.")

Isaiah gives an answer in verses 15-16:

- He who walks righteously and speaks with sincerity!
- He who rejects unjust gain, and shakes his hand so that they hold no bribe!
- He who shuts his eyes from looking upon evil..!
- And on and on!

Psalm 24:2-4 asks the same question: "Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord...and stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood and has not sworn deceitfully!"

Like the children of Israel, we too have much to fear if we're trusting in our own righteousness to "see God" one day!

And yet Isaiah holds out the hope and assurance (in verses 17-24) that "the righteous ones"--in a day yet to come--will see "the King in all His beauty...and behold a far-distant land"! In an "undisturbed habitation" where "the tent will not be folded and its stakes never pulled up (language the Jewish people could easily identify with!) ...where the Lord is our judge, our lawgiver, and our king"! And "the people who dwell there will be forgiven their iniquity"!

Setting the scene, as Isaiah, and all the Old Testament does, for the sending of a Savior, "who knew no sin but would be made sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him"! (II Corinthians 5:21)

And thus the basis for "imputed righteousness"!

Don't delay in making Him king of your life!

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