



• Zion will be saved

Assyria – says Isaiah – is to be destroyed.^{Ⓜ1} The next section goes on to tell us that Zion will be saved by its King.^{Ⓜ2}

Ⓜ1 33:1-12
Ⓜ2 33:13-24

Through Isaiah, God addresses the whole world

Through Isaiah, God addresses the whole world. ‘You who are far away’ refers to the gentiles. ‘You who are near’ refers to Israel. The implication is that God’s Zion will one day include gentiles!

*¹³You who are far away, hear what I have done;
you who are near, know my power!*

• Salvation will be an act of God’s power

Salvation will come not by what the people of the world do, but by what God does for them. Salvation will be an act of God’s power.

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*¹⁴The sinners in Zion are terrified;
trembling grips the profane:
‘Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire?
Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?’*

• The fire of God’s holiness will consume sin

Salvation involves an awareness of the hostility of God against sin. The fire of God’s holiness will not tolerate continuation of wickedness. God must and will ‘consume’ it. His burning holiness is part of his everlasting character. The sinner sees it and is gripped with fear.

• Who can dwell with God?

Who can dwell with God? Isaiah proceeds to answer the question.

*¹⁵He who walks in righteousness
and speaks what is straight,
who rejects gain from extortion
and shakes his hand refusing to accept bribes,
who stops his ears against plots of murder
and shuts his eyes against looking at evil –
¹⁶this is the man who will dwell on the heights,
whose refuge will be the strong places high in the cliffs.
His bread will be given to him,
and water will not fail him.*

• Walk and talk are straight

• No unjust money

• No gossip

• Hates evil

Isaiah puts to us the picture of a righteous person. His walk and his talk are right and straight. He does not get money unjustly. He does not listen to gossip or slander. He hates even to look at evil. The result is that he dwells in security and with adequate provision for his needs.

• No one can reach salvation without some kingly power

But there is an unanswered question here. Who can get to be like this? Is there any such person? Who always walks in righteousness? Who always speaks what is straight? It is this unanswered question that takes us from the salvation to the Saviour. No one can reach any salvation like this unless there is some mighty kingly power that brings it about. It is this that is to be described next.

Isaiah gives a description of the Saviour who is needed

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*¹⁷Your eyes will see the King in his beauty
and view a land that stretches afar.*

The ‘King’ must be the divine Messiah, the one in the line of King David who brings salvation. He will clearly be recognized by those who are in God’s new

• King – the divine Messiah – recognised by those in the new Jerusalem

Jerusalem. The new kingdom will be vast in time and space, holding no terrors for those who live in it. The Assyrians – and all who resemble them – will be gone.

*¹⁸In your hearts you will think over the terror:
'Where is the one who noted things down?
Where is the one who weighed things out?
Where is the officer who noted down the towers?'*

*¹⁹You will see those arrogant people no more,
those people whose speech is too guttural to understand,
so staccato that it is past comprehending.*

• The people of God will be admiring Zion

Instead of looking at Assyrians the people of God will be admiring Zion.

*²⁰Look upon Zion, the city of our appointed feasts;
your eyes will see Jerusalem,
an undisturbed abode, a tent that will not be moved
its stakes will never be pulled up,
nor any of its ropes broken.*

• The new Jerusalem – a permanent place of joy and stability

The new Jerusalem will be a place of festivity and joy, a place of security and stability. The days of pilgrimage will be over and instead there will be a home that will last for ever.

*²¹But on the contrary, Yahweh, that Mighty One,
will be for us.*

• God will be present – a beautiful place of abundance

The outstanding mark of the new Jerusalem will be the presence of God, conspicuously at work as the God of his people. It will be a beautiful place of abundant rivers but the rivers will be part of paradise, not part of a commercial harbour!

*It will be like a place of broad rivers and streams.
No ship with oars will ride them,
no mighty vessel will sail them.*

• God acts to bring paradise to sinners

This is how the righteous salvation of 33:15–16 comes about. No sinner could attain it. But God acts on behalf of his people to bring them to the paradise of broad rivers and streams.

*²²For Yahweh is our judge,
Yahweh is our lawgiver,
Yahweh is our king;
it is he who will save us.*

• Our mighty Warrior-Saviour brings salvation by conquering sin

Salvation is brought to Zion by the mighty Warrior-Saviour. The 'judge' here is not a courtroom official, but a 'judge' like the mighty leaders of the book of Judges. Our Saviour is not so much a courtroom official. He is more a Samson conquering sin with his mighty strength. Our salvation is brought to us, not achieved by us. The point is made clear by the picture of a much-damaged ship.

*²³Your rigging hangs loose:
The mast is not held secure
the sail is not spread.*

• Like a much-damaged ship full of abundant treasures

Yet the damaged ship is full of an abundance of treasures.

*Then an abundance of spoils will be divided
and even the lame will carry off plunder.
²⁴No one living in Zion will say, 'I am ill';
and those who dwell there will have their sins forgiven.*

• **The goal of salvation is perfect healing – both physical and spiritual**

• **Those who have seen the King in His beauty will dwell with God**

The inhabitants of God's new Jerusalem have an abundance of treasures. Their sickness of body and the guilt that troubles their spirit have been banished. Physically and spiritually the goal of salvation is perfect healing. In the fulfilment of the vision the healing of the guilt is first and the final restoration of the body in a perfect world is yet to come. Every healing-miracle of Jesus was (and often still is) a flash of light from heaven, a glimpse of the prospect of the new heavens and new earth. Who will dwell with God? Those whose eyes have seen the King in his beauty.

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