

# (The Word for Today) Isaiah 33:1 - Part 1

by Chuck Smith

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*God's judgment on Assyria and the people's reaction to it highlights God's love and value for His people, and the importance of fearing the Lord as a treasure that brings stability and strength to our lives.*

**Duration:** 25:59

**Scripture:** Exodus 33:11, Judges 7:2, Isaiah 33:1, Matthew 6:33, Ephesians 1:18

**Topics:** "Expositional"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of God receiving all the glory for His works. He uses the example of Gideon and how God reduced his army to 300 men in order to show His power and receive the glory. The speaker also discusses the consequences of misrepresenting God, using the story of Moses striking the rock instead of speaking to it. He highlights the need for us to recognize our own helplessness and rely on God in our extremities. The sermon concludes with the reminder that God often works in our lives when we have reached our limits and have no other options.

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## Transcript

Welcome to the Word for Today. The Word for Today is a continuous study of the Bible, taught by Pastor Chuck Smith of Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, California. Pastor Chuck is currently teaching from the Old Testament.

And if you're following along in your Bible, we'll be continuing today in Isaiah chapter 33, beginning with verse 1, as we continue with an in-depth message entitled, The Spoiler of Jerusalem. 1. One thing is needful, O my Father, 1. One thing is needful, O my God, 2. That I sit at your feet, and pour out my mouth, 3. This thing is needful, O my God. And now with today's study, here's Pastor Chuck.

So let's turn to Isaiah chapter 33 and continue our journey through the Bible. The 33rd chapter of Isaiah is directed toward Assyria. And it is written about the time that Assyria was defeated by God in her attempt to conquer Jerusalem.

Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, had come to Jerusalem and had demanded tribute from King Hezekiah, which he paid. It was sort of an extortion kind of thing. Either you pay us or we're going to destroy you.

And so Hezekiah took money out of the treasury and he paid off King Sennacherib. But having received then the payment, he turned as if to go away, but then he returned and set up the siege against the city.

And thus he broke the covenant that he had made.

And he set his siege against Jerusalem. Now, Isaiah pronounces the judgment that is going to come against Assyria in the first part of this chapter. During the time that the chapter was written, that judgment came.

The Assyrians, as he began this, were again arrayed in battle. They had broken this covenant, or this treaty. They had dealt treacherously with Israel, or with Judah, and King Hezekiah.

And so he pronounces the judgment, and then the judgment came. And he then pronounces the subsequent reaction of those Jews who were in the city of Jerusalem when they saw the effect of God's judgment against the Assyrians. So he begins the chapter with, "Woe unto you, Assyria, that spoils, and you were not spoiled.

You dealt treacherously, but they did not deal treacherously with you. When you shall cease to spoil, you will be spoiled. And when you shall make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with you." And then his prayer, "O Lord, be gracious unto us, for we have waited for thee.

Be thou their arm,' that is the strength for Jerusalem and for Judah, "every morning be thou their strength, our salvation also in the time of trouble." So his pronouncing of the woe against Assyria. They had dealt treacherously. They had been spoiling all of the nations.

They had not been spoiled. They had not been defeated. And so Isaiah announces, "Lord, we have waited upon you." Now that was the command of God, to just wait upon the Lord, and trust in the Lord for their deliverance.

That is what Isaiah had been encouraging the King Hezekiah to do, to let God be their defense, that God would defend Jerusalem from the Assyrians. And so, having seen the treachery of Assyria, he is now saying, "Lord, we've waited on you. Be thou their arm every morning." That is the strength to them each morning, and be their salvation in the time of trouble.

And now he is describing what took place. "At the noise of the tumult, the people fled. At the lifting up of thyself, the nations were scattered.

Lord, when you came on the scene, they were scattered." The noise of the tumult. "And your spoils shall be gathered like the gathering of the caterpillar. As the running to and fro of locusts shall he run upon them." And so, when the Assyrians left in great haste, those that were left, as you know the story from the Bible, the angel of the Lord went out into the camp of the Assyrians, and in one evening, he killed a hundred and eighty-five thousand of their elite troops.

So that in the morning, when the children of Israel awoke and looked out on the battlefield, they saw all of these Assyrian corpses lying there on the field, dead. And those that did survive were fleeing. And no doubt they left tremendous spoil, as the prophet said, "You will be spoiled." And they no doubt left tremendous spoil there.

All of the things that they had brought in preparation for battle was left there on the battlefield, and all of these dead bodies that were there. And so, the people came out from Jerusalem, and they are described like locusts hopping around, just in pouncing upon all of the booty and spoil that was there. "For the Lord is exalted, for He dwells on high, and He has filled Zion with judgment and righteousness." So, God is

being praised.

The people recognize that the Lord reigns, and the Lord rules, and the Lord is exalted because of this tremendous victory that He gave to the inhabitants of Jerusalem over the Assyrians. "He has filled Zion with judgment and righteousness, and wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times and strength of salvation. The fear of the Lord is His treasure." The Bible speaks about those treasures that God has.

And God treasures those who fear Him. Malachi tells us that they who love the Lord spoke often one to another about Him. And God listened in.

Whenever you get together with people and you just start talking about the Lord and the goodness of God, God eavesdrops. He loves to hear you talking about Him. And He said, "And the Lord shall account them as His jewels in that day when He makes up His treasure." And so, they that fear the Lord are His treasure.

They that speak often one to another of God, He treasures that. In Ephesians chapter 1, as Paul is offering his prayer for the Ephesians, he prays that they might know what is the exceeding richness of His inheritance in the saints. One of the petitions.

That you might know just how much God treasures you. If you only knew how much God loves you, how much God treasures you. What a different concept this is of God than is often painted to us even in the pulpit.

I'm afraid that many times the ministry is guilty of misrepresenting God to the people. For you see, as I stand in this pulpit, I stand here as a representative of God to bring you God's Word. And I represent God.

And that's an awesome responsibility. And I wonder how many times God has been misrepresented, even as Moses who represented God as being angry with the people. You rebels, he cried, must I strike this rock to give you water again? How long are you going to rebel against God? And he was mad.

He was angry. And he smote the rock. Water came out because God is gracious.

But God said, Moses, come here son. Bad scene. And it's going to have consequences, Moses.

You're not going to be able to lead my people into the promised land. I've got to teach them a lesson of representation. And you misrepresented me.

And so we read later on that Moses was not able to lead the people into the land because he misrepresented God at the waters of Meribah. I wonder how many times that we represent God as being disgusted. Because we're disgusted.

You failed again. Oh, come on. Forget it.

Get out of here, you know. And we represent God as being totally upset and disgusted and ready to give up. That isn't true.

His mercy endureth forever. And God treasures you. And Paul prayed that you might know the Ephesian church, that they might know just what was his exceeding richness of his inheritance in the saints.

How much God treasures you. You remember Jesus gave the parable, a series on the kingdom of heaven, as likened to a man going through a field and discovering a treasure. And who for the joy thereof goes out and sells everything he has so he might buy the field so he can obtain the treasure.

And as we seek to unravel the mysteries of that parable, realizing that the field is the world, we must ask who gave everything to redeem the world or to purchase the world. And the answer is Jesus. And then what is the purpose that he might have the treasure? And then who is the treasure? As Peter said, you are his peculiar treasure.

But God treasures you peculiar as you are. And so they that fear the Lord are his treasure. God loves us to reverence him.

He loves us to talk about him. He loves us to worship him. And you become his treasure.

He puts such great value that Jesus gave himself, sold everything, that he might purchase the field in order that he could have the treasure. Now, Isaiah is describing at this point the scene that was going on in Jerusalem just before God intervened. The ambassadors had gone out.

They had paid the extortion that was demanded by the king. They thought that they were off the hook. And yet, Shennekerib came back and began to make further demands, which they were not able to keep.

And so he said, Behold, the valiant ones shall cry in the streets, in the open. These men, these leaders were out there weeping. Because they knew that the city could not really stand against the Assyrian siege.

The ambassadors of peace, those that went out to make peace, shall weep bitterly. At that point, the highways were occupied by the Assyrians. They were shut in the city.

And thus the wayfaring man ceased. There weren't any travelers on the highways. They were being occupied by the enemy.

He has broken the covenant. He had made a covenant. It was paid by Hezekiah.

But Shennekerib broke the covenant. He has despised the cities. He's overrun all of the cities.

And he doesn't regard any man. He did not regard God either, as was evidenced by his letter to Hezekiah. The earth mourneth and languisheth because of the destruction of the Assyrians.

They had conquered all these other peoples and nations. Lebanon had been conquered. It is ashamed and it has been cut down.

Sharon, that beautiful plain, is like a wilderness. And Bashan and Carmel shake off their fruits. These fruitful areas of Israel have been made bare.

And so we get now God's response. It's desperate. The valiant men, the ambassadors are weeping openly.

They see no hope. They see only a destruction and being carried away into captivity. But the Lord declares, now will I rise, saith the Lord.

Now will I be exalted. Now will I lift up myself. It is interesting to me that God often waits until we have exhausted every human means of deliverance.

He lets time run its course and He lets us attempt every endeavor that we can think of to deliver ourselves. He watches us as we go through these machinations of attempting to find the solution, to solve the problem. And He waits until we have exhausted our own resources, mentally, physically, emotionally.

When we're beat. When we are like those valiant men and ambassadors who are just weeping because I just can't see any way out. I've done all I know to do.

There's nothing left. I've tried everything. And God often waits for us to get into that place of despairing completely of self.

And then He works. God says, all right, you've had it. You know, you're there weeping in the streets.

You've had it. Now I will exalt myself. Now I'll show you what I can do.

You've done everything and it hasn't worked. You're facing the slaughter and you're recognizing now your total ineptness and your helplessness to do anything about the situation. Man's extremities are God's opportunities.

Now don't look for that scripture. You won't find it. That's one of those that should have been written because it is a truth so often demonstrated in our lives.

It is not until we've come to our extremity that God then steps in and works. And I can, looking back over my life, I can look at time after time after time after time where God brought me to the extreme. Where I came to the end, where there was nothing left.

Where I had exhausted everything I knew. And I figured this is it. You just sort of wait in the corner for the guillotine to fall, you know.

And then God at that time exalts himself. So that there is then that complete recognition and exalting of God. Because you know that you had done everything you possibly could and nothing had worked.

And now that it is just working out, you say, well, Lord, you're so good. You don't say, well, I knew I could. I just, you know, I had the right attitude towards it and positive.

No, no, you're not taking credit. You can't take credit. All you can do is give glory to God.

He came through again. All right, you're great. And that recognition that God rules.

So they had come to this place. I mean, the Assyrians are there. The valiant, the soldiers are weeping in the streets.

And those ambassadors, they're weeping bitterly. It's all over. Folks, this is it.

We've had it. Now will I rise, saith the Lord. Now will I be exalted.

Now will I lift up myself. Remember Gideon. God trimmed it down to 300 men.

Why? Because he knew the hearts of the people. He knew that if he delivered the Midianites to the 10,000, they would have been boasting what they did. So he brings them down to 300.

Makes it absurd. In order that only God can get glory from what happens. Pastor Chuck Smith will return with a few closing comments.

But first, I'd like to remind you that today's message is available in its unedited form on cassette or CD. Simply write or call and ask for ordering details on tape or CD number C-3257. Again, that's tape or CD number C-3257.

Well, Christmas time is soon approaching and it's easy to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of the season. Buying presents, decorating, cooking. The list grows longer every day.

Without realizing it, we can easily forget the true meaning of why we celebrate our Lord's birth. For this reason, the word for today would like to present a booklet by Pastor Chuck Smith entitled, How can a man be born again? And also an audio CD entitled, Why by Pastor Chuck that would be the perfect compliment for Christmas cards and gifts this year. Both resources share the gospel of Jesus Christ and explain the true meaning of Christmas and why a man born 2000 years ago can still affect the world today.

And best of all, they contain a message leading people to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. And remember the word for today would like to assist you this Christmas in spreading the gospel of Jesus to your family, friends and coworkers. Please call our customer service department to help you in finding that perfect gift that will reflect the true meaning of Christmas.

And if you call right now and mention this radio ad, the word for today will give you a 20% discount on any resource carried by the word for today. So call the word for today at 1-800-272-WORD or write to us at P.O. Box 8000 Costa Mesa, California 92628. Once again, that number to call is 1-800-272-9673.

And for those of you that would like to visit our website, you can do so at [www.twft.com](http://www.twft.com) or if you'd like to email us, you can do so at [info@twft.com](mailto:info@twft.com). Well, coming up next time on the word for today, Pastor Chuck will be continuing his fascinating study through the book of Isaiah. That's coming up next time on the word for today. And now with a few closing comments, here is Pastor Chuck.

So that desolation that will follow the great battle of Armageddon when God destroys the armies of man. As I say, go ahead and read on. You're allowed to do that, you know.

And come out into the light of chapter 35. 35 is a very special chapter to me. God has used this chapter to minister to my own soul in an hour of great need, in an hour of great sorrow.

God ministered to me through the 35th chapter. It's become one of my favorite chapters because of the way the Spirit of God used it to minister to my heart at a time of great need in my own life personally. And thus the 35th chapter is one that I cherish.

I just am waiting for God to fulfill this. And He shall. He said it, He'll do it.

This program is sponsored by the word for today. The radio ministry of Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, California.

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