

In the present section of the book of Isaiah (chs. 28-35), the chapters we have examined so far (chs. 28-32) have devoted a great part of their attention to the sin of the people in Jerusalem and to God's determination to punish them in the near and in the distant future. Chapter 32 ended with a wonderful vision of the outworking of God's Spirit in the age ahead, after the leadership of God's people would be taken away from the Judean nobles and given to others gathered from all the nations of the earth. In the rest of the section the stress is mainly upon God's deliverance of His people and the great blessings He has in store for them. Chapter 33 deals principally with events within the lifetime of Isaiah, placing most of its emphasis upon the wonderful deliverance from the armies of Sennacherib, -- a deliverance which God promised to perform without human aid.

Isaiah 33

Verse 1 contains a general statement regarding the future of the Assyrian Empire. This great aggressor which has dealt treacherously with so many nations is itself to fall through the treachery of its enemies. This result might be said to be foreshadowed in the defeat of Sennacherib's army, but finds its true fulfillment a century later, when Nineveh is destroyed and the Assyrian Empire completely ended. The principle contained in this verse may be applied to all who deal treacherously or who carry on aggression contrary to the principles of God's Word, but its specific application is only to Assyria.

Verse 2 contains a prayer. It deals not so much with the final outcome, which God has already revealed, as with a request that He will be gracious and give protection during the course of the events described. It is a prayer that His presence may abide with those who are trusting in Him. The latter part of the verse presents a difficulty in the fact that two different pronouns are used in it, "Be thou their arm every morning, our salvation also in the time of trouble." In the American Standard Version, "their arm" is changed to "our arm," and a footnote says "Hebrew their." This is hardly a satisfactory way to deal with the difficulty. There is no reason why the text should be changed. It is far better to