



ShalomAZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption

“I Sure Would’ve Loved if You’d have just taken my Word for it.”

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): *Is 33:7-12; 30:15, 18; 2 Ki 18:13; Prov. 3:5-6; Gen. 3:18; Dt. 30:15-20; Ex. 34:6-7*

As we continue in Isaiah 33, this passage really feels like the Lord pulling His people aside and saying, *“Why did it have to come to this?”* Why did everything have to be stripped away? Why did it have to become painful before you trusted Me? Why couldn’t you just take Me at My word? That question echoes all the way back to the garden. The LORD says, *“If you eat of it, you will surely die,”* and the enemy responds, *“Did God really say...?”* And humanity has been replaying that same moment ever since—trusting another voice, trusting our own plans, trusting our own wisdom, instead of trusting the Lord.

Isaiah 33 sits right in the middle of that tension. Assyria is coming. Judah has tried everything—alliances, diplomacy, military strength, even stripping the Temple to pay tribute. None of it worked. Every plan collapsed. And only then—when there was nothing left—did Hezekiah finally cry out to the Lord. And the Lord answers, but not without exposing the truth: *This was never how it was supposed to go.*

1. WHEN OUR STRENGTH AND OUR STRATEGIES FAIL, THE STREETS FILL WITH TEARS (Isa. 33:7-8). Isaiah opens this section with a haunting picture: *“Behold, heroes cry outside; ambassadors of peace weep bitterly.”* The brave ones—the “lions”—are in the streets, broken. These are the people who trusted strength, power, and force. And right alongside them are the messengers of peace—the diplomats, the negotiators—who trusted clever words and political maneuvering. The hawks failed. The doves failed. Military might didn’t work, and diplomacy didn’t work either. Why? Because neither one ever waited on the Lord.

The roads are empty. The highways are desolate. Travel has ceased. Covenants are broken. Treaties are violated. Human life is treated as disposable. This is what happens when people trust plans instead of promises. Isaiah uses “highways” elsewhere as an image of deliverance, but here the highways are abandoned. Life has ground to a halt. When we lean on our own understanding, it doesn’t just affect the big decisions—it freezes everyday life. Everything stops when trust is misplaced.

2. WHEN WE CHOOSE OUR OWN WAY, BARRENNESS ALWAYS FOLLOWS (Isa. 33:9)

The land itself begins to mourn. Lebanon is dug out and withers. Sharon becomes like the desert. Bashan and Carmel are shaken bare. There’s a literal reality here—armies devastate the land, strip trees, consume crops—but Isaiah never separates the physical from the spiritual. The barrenness of the land reflects the barrenness of the people’s hearts. What’s happening on the outside is the visible result of what’s already been happening on the inside.

ADONAI warned them long ago. *“In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength.”* But they answered, *“No—we have horses. We have fast horses. We have a plan.”* And *THIS* is where that plan leads: desolation, emptiness, and loss. The tragedy is

not that the LORD failed them—it's that they refused to trust Him. And then, when everything collapses, they cry out, *"Why, Lord?"* And His heart responds, *"This was never what I wanted for you."*

3. THE LORD WAITS—NOT TO CRUSH US, BUT TO RESCUE US (Isa. 33:10–12)

Then comes one of the most powerful moments in the chapter: *"Now I will arise,"* says Adonai. *"Now I will be exalted. Now I will lift Myself up."* That word "now" repeats again and again. God waited—not because He was unwilling, but because they wouldn't listen. And when they finally cried out, He stood up. He was already exalted. He was already lifted up. But now He arises to act.

Isaiah exposes the truth about human self-reliance: *"You conceive chaff; you give birth to stubble."* Our best ideas, apart from God, can only produce what burns. Even more striking, the text says it is **our own breath**, our own spirit, that becomes the fire that consumes us. Sin is self-destructive. We don't just suffer because of it—we fuel the destruction ourselves. And yet, even here, God's heart is not condemnation. His glory is not raw power; it is His mercy, His faithfulness, His compassion. He arises to save, even after we've learned the hard way.

CONCLUSION

The Lord never wanted His people to reach this point. He never wanted desolation to be the teacher. He set life and death before them and pleaded, *"Choose life."* And that choice has always looked the same: love the Lord, listen to His voice, cling to Him. *HE* is your life. He always has been.

Maybe today you're standing in the aftermath of plans that didn't work. Maybe things feel stripped bare. Hear the heart of the Lord—not anger, but sorrow mixed with mercy: *"I wish you would have trusted Me sooner."* And yet He still says, *"Now I will arise."* If you've been relying on your own strength, your own wisdom, your own plans, today is the day to return. Choose life. Trust Him—not after everything collapses, but now. Let Him be your strength, your salvation, and your way forward.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why do we often trust our own plans before trusting God's word?
2. In what ways do "highways becoming desolate" show up in our everyday lives today?
3. How have you seen spiritual barrenness reflected in outward circumstances?
4. What does it mean that our own "breath" can become the fire that consumes us?
5. What would it look like for you to choose life by trusting God now—not later?

CLOSING PRAYER:

ADONAI, You are gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in mercy. Forgive us for trusting our own ways instead of Your word. Forgive us for learning the hard way when You were speaking all along. Today, we choose life. Teach us to listen, to trust, and to cling to You. Be our strength each morning and our salvation in times of trouble. We wait for You, and we thank You that when we cry out, You still arise.

B'Shem Yeshua, In Yeshua's Name, Amen.