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Sermon Notes

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## **The Eternal King Arises and Establishes His Beautiful Kingdom**

**Isaiah 33:1-24**

Our text today affords us an amazing glimpse into the coming realities of both hell and heaven.

Hell:

*Isaiah 33:14 The sinners in Zion are terrified; trembling grips the godless: "Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?"*

Heaven:

*Isaiah 33:17 Your eyes will see the king in his beauty and view a land that stretches afar.*

So... I have often said in witnessing, “If you could spend 30 minutes in heaven and 30 minutes in hell, my job as an evangelist of Jesus Christ would become immediately... you would be pleading with me to know how to have the one and avoid the other.”

John Piper, “I know of no one who has overstated the terror of Hell... We are meant to tremble and feel dread. We are meant to recoil from the reality. Not by denying it, but by fleeing from it into the arms of Jesus, who died to save us from it.”

By the same token: “I know of no one who has overstated the delights of Heaven... We are meant to yearn and feel delight. We are meant to be irresistibly drawn to the reality. Not by denying it, but by fleeing to it in the arms of Jesus, who died to bring us there.”

Here we also see the amazing grace of God in dealing with such weak sinners as us!!!

### The Humility of God in Accepting Such Weak Repentance

C.S. Lewis was an atheist who, through the persistent work of the Holy Spirit, eventually surrendered to Christ. But seldom in church history has there ever been a more reluctant convert. This is his testimony:

You must picture me alone in that room in Magdalen, night after night, feeling, whenever my mind lifted for even a second from my work, the steady, unrelenting approach of Him whom I so earnestly desired not to meet. That which I greatly feared had at last come upon me. In the Trinity Term of 1929, I gave in, and admitted that God was God, and knelt and prayed. Perhaps, that night, the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England. I did not then see what was the most shining and obvious thing: the Divine humility which will accept a convert even on such terms. The Prodigal Son at least walked home on his own feet. But who can but duly adore that Love which will open the high gates to a prodigal which is brought in kicking, struggling, resentful, and darting his eyes in every direction for a chance to escape? [quoted by Ortlund, p. 187]

Ray Ortlund: "Lewis is speaking for us all. We come to God reluctantly. We return to God reluctantly.... Isaiah 33 came out of a setting in which God's people were turning back to Him—not as their great Fountain of all good but as their last resort. Repentance was not their way of life... it was a last ditch effort to stave off disaster. But God received them anyway!! [p. 187]

Context: Judah being severely threatened by the Assyrian Empire. God had promised to deliver them if they would only put their trust in Him. He spoke to them again and again through the prophet Isaiah. But instead of listening to God, the people tried every other angle to deliver themselves. They went down to Egypt for military help... but Egypt let them down. So Assyria kept on pushing at them... determined to conquer them and reduce them to slavery. King Hezekiah tried to buy off the Assyrians... BUT once Sennacherib had received the money, he said he would destroy Jerusalem anyway!!

Isaiah 33 is God's astonishing answer... an amazingly full glimpse of God's wrath in punishment... but also of God's grace in salvation

## I. Woe to the Destroyer (vs. 1-6)

### A. (vs. 1) Woe to Assyria... a Prophecy of Assyria's Destruction

***Isaiah 33:1 Woe to you, O destroyer, you who have not been destroyed! Woe to you, O traitor, you who have not been betrayed! When you stop destroying, you will be destroyed; when you stop betraying, you will be betrayed.***

1. The “destroyer” is not mentioned by name... but it is almost certainly Assyria in the immediate context
2. However, like Habakkuk 2 which never mentions Babylon, the general nature of the words speak a universal lesson to ALL destroyers and treaty-breakers throughout all of history... God is watching!!
3. “Woe” is the word of prophetic warning... Isaiah 28-31 had FIVE “woes”... saying God's judgment is coming on you for this or that action
  - a. Isaiah 28:1 Woe to the northern Kingdom of Israel for their drunkenness and idolatry
  - b. Isaiah 29:1 Woe to Jerusalem because they draw near to God with their lips but they are far from Him in their hearts
  - c. Isaiah 29:15 Woe to sinners in Jerusalem who think they can hide their sins from God
  - d. Isaiah 30:1 Woe to the stubborn Jews who try to make an alliance with Egypt
  - e. Isaiah 31:1 The exact same thing again! Woe to those who go down to Egypt instead of looking to the Lord
4. Now... the woe is turned against Assyria, the foreign power the people of Judah had been so terrified of!!
5. Why the “WOE”??? Because of their wickedness in DESTROYING and in TREACHERY

- a. The Assyrians were violent and cruel...but “WHAT GOES AROUND COMES AROUND”

***Proverbs 26:27 If a man digs a pit, he will fall into it; if a man rolls a stone, it will roll back on him.***

***Matthew 7:2 with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.***

- 6. What was their treachery? How had they betrayed?
  - a. Judah had made a treaty with them in the days of wicked King Ahaz... who said to Assyria

***2 Kings 16:7-8 "I am your servant and vassal. Come up and save me out of the hand of the king of Aram and of the king of Israel, who are attacking me." <sup>8</sup> And Ahaz took the silver and gold found in the temple of the LORD and in the treasuries of the royal palace and sent it as a gift to the king of Assyria.***

- b. But this only made Assyria MORE INTERESTED in Judah
- c. Decades later, threatening Jerusalem with destruction, they bullied Hezekiah into paying a costly tribute

***2 Kings 18:13-16 In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah's reign, Sennacherib king of Assyria attacked all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them. <sup>14</sup> So Hezekiah king of Judah sent this message to the king of Assyria at Lachish: "I have done wrong. Withdraw from me, and I will pay whatever you demand of me." The king of Assyria exacted from Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. <sup>15</sup> So Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the temple of the LORD and in the treasuries of the royal palace. <sup>16</sup> At this time Hezekiah king of Judah stripped off the gold with which he had covered the doors and doorposts of the temple of the LORD, and gave it to the king of Assyria.***

- d. But once Sennacherib had received the money, he immediately betrayed the trust in that treaty of peace
- e. He came after Jerusalem to conquer it completely!! This treachery was common to Assyria... they would make treaties

with lesser kings, and if those lesser kings failed to keep those treaties, they would punish them viciously; but they felt free to break treaties any time they wanted to

7. God is saying WOE TO YOU, O DESTROYER!!!! WOE TO YOU, O TREACHEROUS NATION
  - a. When your time for destroying is done, you will be destroyed
  - b. When your time for betraying a trust is done, you will be betrayed
8. God measures everything out in human history... there is a time allotted for the tyrant to reign... but the end of his reign is destruction... at least for him personally
9. Fulfillment:

***Isaiah 37:38 One day, while he was worshiping in the temple of his god Nisroch, his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer cut him down with the sword, and they escaped to the land of Ararat.***

God controls everything... including the events in his own country, city, temple, and family... God is able to bring someone's wicked deeds back down on their heads in His own way and at His own time

This word of WOE is meant as an encouragement to the suffering people of Judah

Imagine the shock to Hezekiah and his advisors when their emissaries return with the news... "Sennacherib has taken the gold as tribute... but now he demands the total surrender of Jerusalem as well!"

***Isaiah 33:7-8 Look, their brave men cry aloud in the streets; the envoys of peace weep bitterly. <sup>8</sup> The highways are deserted, no travelers are on the roads. The treaty is broken, its witnesses are despised, no one is respected.***

God speaks this word of judgment over Assyria to encourage His own people, Judah

#### B. (vs. 2) Judah's Response: A Prayer for God's Grace

***Isaiah 33:2 O LORD, be gracious to us; we long for you. Be our strength every morning, our salvation in time of distress.***

1. This at last is the faith that Judah should have displayed all along!!
2. Shamefully, Judah has turned to everything but God
3. They sent gold and silver down to Egypt for help, but Egypt gave them nothing in return
4. They tried to buy off Assyria also with gold, and that only put them in deeper hot water with the ravenous king of Assyria
5. They should have relied on God all along... but only at this point are they crying aloud to Him
6. God is SO PATIENT!!! SO HUMBLE in dealing with sinners like us!!! How sad it is that we come so reluctantly to God and seemingly only as a last resort
7. God allows the Jews to run after their plans and make their efforts... and when all else has failed, He graciously receives them when they come running back to Him
8. What's in the prayer?
  - a. A cry that God be GRACIOUS to them... that He would pour out His mercy and forgiveness and NOT TREAT THEM AS THEIR SINS DESERVED
  - b. "We long for you..." A passionate statement of the people's heart after God; they are WAITING for God, they long to be with God, like a desperately thirsty man in a desert longs for water

C. (vs. 3-6) Judah's Rediscovered Faith: Praise for God their Deliverer

1. As desperate Judah pleads for God to deliver them, they speak words of praise and trust for God's power

***Isaiah 33:3-4 At the thunder of your voice, the peoples flee; when you rise up, the nations scatter. <sup>4</sup>Your plunder, O nations, is harvested as by young locusts; like a swarm of locusts men pounce on it.***

2. AND they acknowledge that God alone is their true treasure

*Isaiah 33:5-6 The LORD is exalted, for he dwells on high; he will fill Zion with justice and righteousness.<sup>6</sup> He will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the LORD is the key to this treasure.*

II. The King Arises (vs. 7-16)

A. (vs. 7-9) The Present Anguish: The Broken Treaty

*Isaiah 33:7-9 Look, their brave men cry aloud in the streets; the envoys of peace weep bitterly.<sup>8</sup> The highways are deserted, no travelers are on the roads. The treaty is broken, its witnesses are despised, no one is respected.<sup>9</sup> The land mourns and wastes away, Lebanon is ashamed and withers; Sharon is like the Arabah, and Bashan and Carmel drop their leaves.*

B. (vs. 10-13) “Now Will I Arise”, says the Lord!!!

*Isaiah 33:10-13 "Now will I arise," says the LORD. "Now will I be exalted; now will I be lifted up.<sup>11</sup> You conceive chaff, you give birth to straw; your breath is a fire that consumes you.<sup>12</sup> The peoples will be burned as if to lime; like cut thornbushes they will be set ablaze."<sup>13</sup> You who are far away, hear what I have done; you who are near, acknowledge my power!*

C. (vs. 14-16) Who May Dwell With Such a God?

*Isaiah 33:14-16 The sinners in Zion are terrified; trembling grips the godless: "Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?"<sup>15</sup> He who walks righteously and speaks what is right, who rejects gain from extortion and keeps his hand from accepting bribes, who stops his ears against plots of murder and shuts his eyes against contemplating evil--<sup>16</sup> this is the man who will dwell on the heights, whose refuge will be the mountain fortress. His bread will be supplied, and water will not fail him.*

1. Jonathan Edwards: “Sinners in Zion Tenderly Warned”

a. Basic concept: God's visible people on earth come in two categories: genuinely converted, and what the text calls "sinners in Zion"

b. The first category is described in verse 15

***Isaiah 33:15-16 He who walks righteously and speaks what is right, who rejects gain from extortion and keeps his hand from accepting bribes, who stops his ears against plots of murder and shuts his eyes against contemplating evil-- <sup>16</sup>this is the man who will dwell on the heights, whose refuge will be the mountain fortress. His bread will be supplied, and water will not fail him.***

c. The second category is warned in verse 14:

***Isaiah 33:14 The sinners in Zion are terrified; trembling grips the godless: "Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?"***

d. In Isaiah's day, there were such people living in Judah and Jerusalem, who did not love God or neighbor, and who were in danger of being swept away by the terrifying wrath of God

e. In our day, churches are filled with "gospel hypocrites"... people who attend church but are unregenerate

2. God a "Consuming Fire"

***Exodus 24:16-17 and the glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai. For six days the cloud covered the mountain, and on the seventh day the LORD called to Moses from within the cloud. <sup>17</sup>To the Israelites the glory of the LORD looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain.***

***Deuteronomy 4:23-24 Be careful not to forget the covenant of the LORD your God that he made with you; do not make for yourselves an idol in the form of anything the LORD your God has forbidden. <sup>24</sup>For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.***

***Hebrews 12:28-29 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, <sup>29</sup>for our "God is a consuming fire."***

3. This is pictured by the astonishing power of the sun's continual burning

Illus. the Sun... a raging inferno, 93 million miles away; surface of the sun is 10,000 degrees Fahrenheit; the center of the sun is estimated by physicists at 27 million degrees F!!

God dwells in “unapproachable light” like the sun exists in unapproachable heat!

Until recently, the closest a NASA probe has been able to get to the sun is 32 million miles; a recent probe can get 8 times closer—but still 4 million miles away! Even at 4 million miles away, the temperature is 2600 degrees F!

- a. a picture of God's wrath against all evildoers in the universe

***Matthew 3:12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.***

***Isaiah 33:14 The sinners in Zion are terrified; trembling grips the godless: "Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?"***

- b. Hence hell is pictured as a place of endless burning

***Matthew 25:41 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.***

4. The text's question: WHO MAY DWELL WITH SUCH A GOD???

***Isaiah 33:14-16 Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?" <sup>15</sup> He who walks righteously and speaks what is right, who rejects gain from extortion and keeps his hand from accepting bribes, who stops his ears against plots of murder and shuts his eyes against contemplating evil-- <sup>16</sup> this is the man who will dwell on the heights, whose refuge will be the mountain fortress.***

Simply put... the PERFECTLY RIGHTEOUS can dwell with the God who is a consuming fire

BUT... we are COMBUSTIBLE SINNERS ready at any moment to be ignited by the holiness of God

***Exodus 33:3 Go up to the land flowing with milk and honey. But I will not go with you, because you are a stiff-necked people and I might destroy you on the way."***

***Exodus 3:2-3 There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. <sup>3</sup> So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight-- why the bush does not burn up."***

- a. Only by the grace of God can combustible sinners like us dwell in close proximity with such a God and not be consumed!!!
- b. This is the immense value of the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ, our Savior!!!
- 5. Only the PERFECTLY RIGHTEOUS can dwell with such a God... and only Jesus Christ is PERFECTLY RIGHTEOUS... more at the end!!

### III. The Beauty of the King and His Kingdom (vs. 17-24)

- A. (vs. 17) The Promise of the Future: The Beauty of the King and His Vast Kingdom

***Isaiah 33:17 Your eyes will see the king in his beauty and view a land that stretches afar.***

- 1. Here Isaiah speaks of the blessedness of the righteous... the joy of what he or she will SEE... not merely Hezekiah... but CHRIST
- 2. There is no vision as glorious as this one...
- 3. Meditate on this magnificent sight... called by many the “beatific vision”... to see the KING IN HIS BEAUTY

***1 Corinthians 13:12 Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.***

***2 Corinthians 12:2-4 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know-- God knows. <sup>3</sup> And I know that this man-- whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows-- <sup>4</sup> was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell.***

***1 John 3:2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.***

- a. At this sight, we will lose forever our sin nature, our unclean passions, our divided self—the “sin living in me” (Romans 7) will instantly die forever
  - b. We will no longer struggle with evil inwardly, but will hate it with a perfect hatred and be free from it forever
  - c. We will no longer long and yearn and pine for happiness—it will be ours forever
  - d. We will see the King in His beauty, and we will be made like Him in every way we can—perfect in holiness, perfect in love, perfectly conformed to Christ
4. Not only will the believers see the glory of Jesus; but they will also see the overwhelming beauty of HIS LAND as it stretches afar
- a. This cannot refer to the extension of the Promised Land to a vast territory after the exile, for that never happened
  - b. NO: the ultimate fulfillment of these words is in the indescribable beauty of the New Heavens and New Earth
  - c. No longer in bondage to decay... no longer corrupted by sin
  - d. It will be called “the home of righteousness”... perfectly crafted by God, restored, radiant, magnificent
  - e. It will stretch out as far as the eye can see, and it will glow with the glory of God

Lafayette Houghton Bunnell (1824-1903) was a member of the Mariposa Battalion that became the white discoverers of the Yosemite Valley in 1851; he struggled to put into words the sensations that cascaded on his mind when he first saw El Capitan, the massive rock formation of Yosemite Valley:

We suddenly came in full view of the valley in which was the village, or rather the encampments of the Yosemites. The immensity of rock I had seen in my vision on the Old Bear Valley trail from Ridley's Ferry was here presented to my astonished gaze. The mystery of that scene was here disclosed. My awe was increased by this nearer view. The face of the immense cliff was shadowed by the declining sun; its outlines only had been seen at a distance.

...

That stupendous cliff is now known as "El Capitan" (the Captain), and the plateau from which we had our first view of the valley, as Mount Beatitude. It has been said that "it is not easy to describe in words the precise impressions which great objects make upon us." I cannot describe how completely I realized this truth. None but those who have visited this most wonderful valley, can even imagine the feelings with which I looked upon the view that was there presented. The grandeur of the scene was but softened by the haze that hung over the valley,—light as gossamer—and by the clouds which partially dimmed the higher cliffs and mountains. This obscurity of vision but increased the awe with which I beheld it, and as I looked, a peculiar exalted sensation seemed to fill my whole being, and I found my eyes in tears with emotion.

During many subsequent visits to this locality, this sensation was never again so fully aroused. It is probable that the shadows fast clothing all before me, and the vapory clouds at the head of the valley, leaving the view beyond still undefined, gave a weirdness to the scene, that made it so impressive; and the conviction that it was utterly indescribable added strength to the emotion. It is not possible for the same intensity of feeling to be aroused more than once by the same object, although I never looked upon these scenes except with wonder and admiration.

"See Yosemite and die! I shall not attempt to describe it; the subject is too large and my capacity too small. Painfully at first these stupendous walls confuse the mind. By degrees, day after day, the sight of them clears it, until at last one receives a just impression of their solemn immensity. Volumes ought to be and will be written about it."

BUT: words cannot capture the full impact of the VISION!!! When we see the King in His beauty and view His land that stretches afar, we will be enraptured at the perfection of the world God has made... even Yosemite National Park, with its 3000 foot high El Capitan rock formation and its stunning Half Dome and deep, magnificent valleys with soaring condors cannot compare with the beauty of the New Heavens and New Earth that our eyes will see stretching afar

### B. (vs. 18-19) Freedom from All Former Oppressors

*Isaiah 33:18-19 In your thoughts you will ponder the former terror:*

*"Where is that chief officer? Where is the one who took the revenue? Where is the officer in charge of the towers?"<sup>19</sup> You will see those arrogant people no more, those people of an obscure speech, with their strange, incomprehensible tongue.*

1. Immediate context: the Gentile invaders of the Promised Land... the Assyrians, the Babylonians whom God brought to chastise His sinful people

a. Remember how God said He would speak to His rebellious people this way

*Isaiah 28:10-12 For it is: Do and do, do and do, rule on rule, rule on rule; a little here, a little there."<sup>11</sup> Very well then, with foreign lips and strange tongues God will speak to this people,<sup>12</sup> to whom he said, "This is the resting place, let the weary rest"; and, "This is the place of repose"-- but they would not listen.*

b. God brought these people of a strange tongue to discipline His people

c. BUT at last, the time for that is OVER!!!

d. Your eyes will see them no more!!!

2. So it will be for us at the end of the world

3. Satan and his demons and all his wicked human followers will be gone forever

4. We will remember them and the specific ways they tormented us

- a. Think of those released from Nazi concentration camps
- b. “Where is that officer who used to pull out his Luger and shoot innocent people in the head?”
- c. “What happened to that prison guard in charge of the guard tower who used to machine-gun people who got too close to the barbed wire?”
- d. “Where are they now??” Languishing in hell

***Isaiah 33:14 "Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?"***

Part of the joy of heaven will be the total freedom from wicked men and their Satanic overlords... we will delight in that freedom!!

Next, Isaiah contemplates the CITY OF ZION in all its glory

C. (vs. 20-21) Zion: A City of Joyful Celebration, Peaceful Security, Rich Provision

***Isaiah 33:20-21 Look upon Zion, the city of our festivals; your eyes will see Jerusalem, a peaceful abode, a tent that will not be moved; its stakes will never be pulled up, nor any of its ropes broken.<sup>21</sup> There the LORD will be our Mighty One. It will be like a place of broad rivers and streams. No galley with oars will ride them, no mighty ship will sail them.***

1. Zion = the city where God and man dwell together in peace
2. Zion = Jerusalem, where God chose to put His name forever
3. BUT the first Jerusalem would be destroyed

***Mark 13:2 "Do you see all these great buildings?" replied Jesus. "Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down."***

4. This text refers to a final, eternal Jerusalem—which will NEVER BE MOVED; it's TENT PEGS will never be pulled up; it will be a PEACEFUL ABODE

5. There at last God and redeemed man will live together forever in peace... completely unthreatened by attackers—symbolized here by galleys with oars and mighty ships
6. This is nothing less than the New Jerusalem, described in Revelation 21

***Revelation 21:1-3 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. <sup>2</sup>I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. <sup>3</sup>And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.***

D. (vs. 22) The Perfect Government of the King

***Isaiah 33:22 For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; it is he who will save us.***

MORE IN A MOMENT!!

E. (vs. 23-24) The Overwhelming Blessings of the Redeemed in Zion

***Isaiah 33:23-24 Your rigging hangs loose: The mast is not held secure, the sail is not spread. Then an abundance of spoils will be divided and even the lame will carry off plunder. <sup>24</sup>No one living in Zion will say, "I am ill"; and the sins of those who dwell there will be forgiven***

1. Able to mock the deserted camp of the defeated Assyrians... representing the enemies of Zion that Almighty God has defeated
2. Free forever from illness and death, God's people will live in peace with Him... TOTALLY FORGIVEN!!!

IV. How This Chapter Preaches Christ and the Gospel

A. Clear Depiction of the Threats of Hell and Judgment... the Cross is the Only Remedy

***Isaiah 33:14 The sinners in Zion are terrified; trembling grips the godless: "Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?"***

B. Clear Depiction of the Righteousness of Christ Which Must Be Imputed to Us

1. Only the perfectly righteous can enter the New Jerusalem, and live in the New Heavens and New Earth... the HOME OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

2. BUT

***Romans 3:10-12 As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; <sup>11</sup> there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. <sup>12</sup> All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."***

3. Only by the imputed righteousness of Christ can we be saved

C. Clear Depiction of the King and His Beauty

D. Clear Depiction of the Glories of Christ's Government (vs. 22)

1. American Government established with a “separation of powers” written into the Constitution
2. The reason the Founding Fathers of our nation did this is because of the clear sense of the innate sinfulness of the human heart; “Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely”; so, to prevent any one man or small groups of men from having too much power, they established three branches of government: Executive (the President of the United States); Legislative (Congress—the Senate and the House of Representatives); Judicial (the Supreme Court)
3. These three wings of our government were established with the ability to “check” and “balance” each other... the President can veto legislation enacted by Congress, but the Congress can override the veto; the Congress can impeach the President, but the President in effect chooses the President of the Senate (the Vice President of the US); the President nominates Supreme Court justices, but only the Congress can install a Justice; the Supreme

Court has the right to declare laws enacted by Congress unconstitutional; etc. It goes on and on

4. This whole “separation of powers” and “checks and balances” was established because of the sinfulness of the human heart; because “power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely”
5. BUT NOT IN THE CASE OF CHRIST, the coming King!! He has absolute power over ALL AREAS of His Kingdom
6. Amazingly... all three branches of government are listed in verse 22, and ascribed to Christ, the Lord

***Isaiah 33:22 For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king***

- a. Judge = judicial branch
  - b. Lawgiver = legislative branch
  - c. King = executive branch
7. From these I wrote a four-part gospel outline
    - a. God the Creator... therefore God the King... therefore God the Lawgiver... therefore God the judge
  8. The Fourth Title: SAVIOR

***... it is he who will save us.***

- a. No human government can accept this title
- b. God alone can save us from His own laws, His own judgments

E. Clear Depiction of the Blessings of Eternal Life... Now and Forever

1. First: forgiveness of sins

***Isaiah 33:24 No one living in Zion will say, "I am ill"; and the sins of those who dwell there will be forgiven.***

2. Second: freedom from the terror of everlasting burning (vs. 14)

3. Third: the gift of imputed righteousness (vs. 15)

***Isaiah 33:15 He who walks righteously and speaks what is right,***

4. Fourth: the delights of seeing Christ and the New Heaven and New Earth, and in dwelling in Zion with God free from death and illness

- F. Clear Depiction of the Sovereign Initiative in Salvation (vs. 10)

***Isaiah 33:10 "Now will I arise," says the LORD. "Now will I be exalted; now will I be lifted up.***

- G. Clear Warnings of the Wrath of God for All His Enemies (vs. 11-14)

1. The terror of hell is so clearly depicted here
2. It is spoken of as a SURPRISE that comes upon the SINNERS IN ZION

***KJV Isaiah 33:14 The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?***

3. They had no terror of the wrath of God before
  - a. Nothing made them afraid... no fear of death troubled them
  - b. They were not easily moved by warnings; they cared little for the word of God and disregarded it
  - c. They trusted in their own righteousness or perhaps that God either didn't really exist or that He would accept them just as they were
  - d. But suddenly, they become aware of the eternal danger facing them... and they are SURPRISED BY TERROR
  - e. Ultimately this will seize them when they hear the dreadful words spoken by Christ the Judge:

***Matthew 25:41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.***

f. Then the terror will truly seize them

Jonathan Edwards, “Sinners in Zion Tenderly Warned”: “When the soul is carried to hell, and there is tormented, suffers the wrath of the Almighty, and is overwhelmed and crushed with it, it will also be amazed with the apprehensions of what shall *yet remain*. To think of an eternity of this torment remaining, O how will it fill, and overbear, and sink down the wretched soul! How will the thought of the duration of this torment without end cause the heart to melt like wax! How will the thought of it sink the soul into the bottomless pit of darkness and gloominess! Even those proud and sturdy spirits, the devils, tremble at the thoughts of that *greater* torment which they are to suffer at the day of judgment. So will the poor damned souls of men.”

g. Edwards labored to heighten a sense of the “everlasting burnings” this text describes

The flames of a very great fire, as when a house is all on fire, give one some idea of the fierceness of the wrath of God. Such is the rage of the flames. And we see that the greater a fire is, the fiercer is its heat in every part. And the reason is because one part heats another. The heat in a particular place, besides the heat which proceeds out of the fuel in that place is increased by the additional heat of the fire all around it. Hence we may conceive something of what fierceness that fire will be, when this visible world shall be turned into one great furnace. That will be devouring fire indeed. Such will be the heat of it, that, as the apostle says, “the elements shall melt with fervent heat,” 2 Pet. 3:10.

Men can artificially raise such a degree of heat with burning glasses, as will quickly melt the very stones and sand. And it is probable that the heat of that great fire which will burn the world, will be such as to melt the rocks, and the very ground, and turn them into a kind of liquid fire, so that the whole world will probably be converted into a great lake, or liquid globe of fire, a vast ocean of fire, in which the wicked shall be tossed to and fro, having no rest day nor night, vast waves or billows of fire continually rolling over their heads.

But all this will be only an *image* of that dreadful fire of the wrath of God, which the wicked shall at the same time suffer in their *souls*. We read in Rev. 19:15 of “the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.” This is an extraordinary expression, carrying a terrible idea of the future misery of the wicked. If it had been only said of the wrath of God that would have expressed what is dreadful. If the wrath of a king be as the roaring of a lion, what is the wrath of

God? But it is not only said the wrath of God, but *the fierceness and wrath of God*, or the rage of his wrath; and not only so, but the fierceness and wrath of *Almighty God*. ... And is it any wonder that fearfulness surprises their hearts when they see this about to be executed upon them

#### H. Clear Statement of the Path of Salvation for “Sinners in Zion”

### V. Applications

#### A. Come to Christ!

##### 1. Jonathan Edwards’s sermon: “Sinners in Zion Tenderly Warned”

Now, now, then, is the time, now is the blessed opportunity to escape those everlasting burnings. Now God has again set open the same fountain among us, and gives one more happy opportunity for souls to escape. Now he has set open a wide door, and he stands in the door-way, calling and begging with a loud voice to the sinners of Zion: Come, saith he, come, fly from the wrath to come. Here is a refuge for you. Fly hither for refuge. Lay hold on the hope set before you.

#### B. Understand God’s Patience in Deferring Judgment on Destroyers and Traitors

#### C. Marvel at the Humility of God in Willing to Be Our “Last Resort” When He Should Have Been Our First!

#### D. Seek the Fear of the Lord and the Godliness That Comes from It

#### E. Worship Christ for His Perfect Government... in a Time of Imperfect Government

#### F. Anticipate the Joys of Heaven Depicted Here