

THE SURETY OF GOD'S DELIVERANCE OF THE RIGHTEOUS: A PICTURE OF THE MESSIAH'S KINGDOM ISAIAH 33: 15–24

Introduction

God gave a strong promise to the righteous of the earth, those who truly believe in the Lord and follow Him: He will deliver them from the violent oppressors and betrayers of earth. A glorious day of salvation is coming for God's people, a day when the Messiah will set up His kingdom on earth and rule in righteousness. Isaiah painted a graphic picture of what life will be like in the Messiah's kingdom. Although some of what he described could possibly apply to the Jews after the withdrawal of the Assyrian forces, most of his description could not apply to life in a corruptible world. Thus, Isaiah is definitely describing the future kingdom of the Messiah.

The citizens of the kingdom will be the righteous of this earth (v. 15). Only the righteous will be delivered from the tyranny of those who persecute God's people. Who are the righteous? Isaiah leaves no doubt about their identity. They are the people who believe and follow the LORD and walk uprightly before Him. They obey God's commandments, His Holy Word. Specifically, the righteous...

- speak the truth, never lying to or deceiving people
- do not seek gain through oppression or extortion and do not accept bribes
- refuse to listen to or take part in plots of murder or any other evil act that would harm people
- shut their eyes to all the seductions and enticements to do evil

God will greatly bless people who truly believe the Lord, who walk righteously day by day and seek to follow the commandments of God. Isaiah spelled out eleven very specific blessings. These blessings describe what life will be like when Christ returns to establish God's kingdom on earth.

1. The righteous will dwell on high with the LORD Himself (v. 16). "On high" means the place where God lives, the place of His residence or dwelling. Once Christ returns to earth, righteous believers will live with Him forever. They will never again be separated from Him. This is one of God's great promises to righteous believers:

John 14:1-3 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."

Phil 3:20-21 *But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.*

1 Pet 1:3-4 *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. And into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade kept in heaven for you.*

Rev 21:27 *Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

2. The righteous will be secure and well fed, lacking nothing (v. 16). All necessities of life will be met with an inexhaustible supply of provisions to meet every need. Furthermore, the Messiah's kingdom will be a refuge providing perfect security, a place far more secure than a mountain fortress. This is God's wonderful promise to righteous believers:

Mat 6:33 *"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."*

Phil 4:13 *I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*

Heb 4:15-16 *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

Psa 18:2 *The Lord is my rock, and my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, and my stronghold.*

Psa 125:2 *As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds his people both now and for evermore.*

Psa 31:19-21 *How great is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you, which you bestow in the sight of men on those who take refuge in you. In the shelter of your presence you hide them from all human intrigues; you keep them safe in your dwelling from accusing tongues. Praise be to the Lord, for he showed me the wonders of his love when I was in a city under siege.*

3. The righteous will see the King, the LORD, in all His glory and splendour. They will live with Him as He rules over all the land that stretches across the face of the earth (v. 17; also see v. 22; Mt. 5:8). Righteous believers could have no greater privilege than to see the LORD face-to-face and to be allowed to live with, worship and serve Him. This is one of the great promises God gives the righteous:

Mat 5:8 *"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God."*

1 John 3:2-3 *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. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.*

Psa 17:15 *And I — in righteousness I will see your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness.*

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

John 17:24 *“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.”*

1 Cor 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.*

Rev 22:3-4 *No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city [New Jerusalem], and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.*

Acts 1:10-11 *They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”*

Phil 1:20-21 *I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.*

1 Th 4:16-18 *For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.*

4. The righteous will be forever free from the terror of oppressors and destroyers (vv. 18-19). Universal peace will sweep the earth because of the government of the Messiah. The righteous will remember the terror of evil military officers and political leaders, but those evil, arrogant people will no longer be present to oppress them. Note that Isaiah contrasted the terror of the Assyrian siege with the universal peace that will exist in the Messiah's kingdom. In His kingdom, officers will no longer plot to attack the towers of the city or estimate how much wealth they can plunder after they conquer it. No longer will foreign invaders speak in a strange, unknown language. The LORD will remove all evil oppressors from the earth, and there will finally be universal peace.

Psa 46:9 *He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire.*

Isa 2:4 *He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war any more.*

Isa 9:7 *Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.*

Isa 11:9 *They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.*

Micah 4:4 *Everyone will sit under their own vine and under their own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid, for the Lord Almighty has spoken.*

Zec 9:10 *I will take away the chariots from Ephraim, and the warhorses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.*

5. The righteous will worship in Jerusalem, which will be a secure, quiet and peaceful place (vv. 20-21). Jerusalem will be a centre of worship, not a centre of terrorist attacks or war. It will never again know trouble or unrest.

During the Messiah's reign, peace will blanket the city like a tent whose stakes cannot be pulled up nor any of its ropes cut or moved. The LORD Himself, the Mighty One, will rule over the city, and He will be like a wide river that protects the city from all enemies (v. 21). Peace and protection are two of the great promises the LORD gives to righteous believers.

Lk 21:18 *"But not a hair of your head will perish."*

John 14:27 *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."*

John 16:33 *"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."*

1 Cor 15:24-25 *Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.*

Phil 4:6-7 *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Psa 125:2 *As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds his people both now and for evermore.*

6. The Lord will govern the righteous, for He is our Judge, Lawgiver and King (v. 22). It is *He* and He alone who will save us. As our Judge, the LORD will accept us into His kingdom if we have truly trusted Him and lived righteous lives. As our Lawgiver, the LORD expects us to obey His holy commandments and live under His government. As our King, He expects us to serve Him by working diligently and making the greatest contribution we can to His kingdom. Note that all the functions of government are covered in this threefold title of the Lord: the judicial, the legislative, and the executive. (*The New Scofield Reference Bible*. Edited by C.I. Scofield. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1967), Isaiah 33:22.
7. The righteous will be brought through the storm of life despite almost sinking (v. 23). Life is so fragile that it is like a sail-boat caught in a severe storm — its riggings hanging loose, its masts insecure, and its sail not yet spread — ready to sink at any moment. But the LORD will save the righteous from the storms of life and usher them into His wonderful kingdom.

Luke 23:43 Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

John 12:26 "Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honour the one who serves me."

John 14:2-3 "In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."

1 Th 4:16-17 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

2 Tim 4:18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Psa 73:24 You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory.

8. The righteous will receive the spoils — the wealth and possessions — of their enemies (v. 23). Just as the Jews recovered all the plunder the Assyrian army left behind when the soldiers fled, so believers will inherit all the riches of both heaven and earth. This is the wonderful promise of the LORD.

Mat 6:20 "But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal."

1 Cor 3:22 Whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future — all are yours.

Heb 11:24-26 *By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.*

James 2:5 *Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?*

Rev 3:18 *I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.*

Isa 57:18-19 *"I have seen their ways, but I will heal them; I will guide them and restore comfort to Israel's mourners, creating praise on their lips. Peace, peace to those far and near," says the Lord. "And I will heal them."*

Isa 58:8 *Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.*

Jer 33:6 *"Nevertheless, I will bring health and healing to it; I will heal my people and let them enjoy abundant peace and security."*

9. The righteous will never again be sick or unhealthy (v. 24). The LORD will do away with all disease and sickness when He establishes His kingdom on earth. No longer will the righteous shed tears due to sickness and disease.

Rev 7:17 *"For the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."*

Rev 21:4 *"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."*

Isa 25:8 *He will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The Lord has spoken.*

Isa 51:11 *Those the Lord has rescued will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.*

Isa 60:20 *Your sun will never set again, and your moon will wane no more; the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of sorrow will end.*

Isa 65:19-20 *"I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more. Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years;*

the one who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere child; the one who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed."

Jer 31:12 *They will come and shout for joy on the heights of Zion; they will rejoice in the bounty of the Lord — the grain, the new wine and the olive oil, the young of the flocks and herds. They will be like a well-watered garden, and they will sorrow no more.*

10. The righteous will be forgiven all their sins in the Messiah's kingdom. All the citizens of His kingdom will be cleansed from every evil thought that has crossed their minds and from every sinful act they have ever committed. They will be counted righteous and accepted by the Lord.

Luke 24:46-47 *He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*

Acts 13:38 *Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you.*

Acts 5:30-32 *The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead — whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Saviour that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.*

Rom 8:1 *Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.*

Eph 1:7 *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.*

1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

Isa 55:7 *Let the wicked forsake his ways and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.*

Jer 31:34 *"No longer will a man teach his neighbour, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the Lord. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."*

Jer 33:8 *I will cleanse them from all the sin they have committed against me and will forgive all their sins of rebellion against me.*

Jer 50:20 *"In those days, at that time," declares the Lord, "search will be made for Israel's guilt, but there will be none; and for the sins of Judah, but none will be found, for I will forgive the remnant I spare." ■*