

Isaiah Ch 31-32:1-20
"A Future And A Hope"

* How easy it is to lose sight of the hope that we have in Christ. Trials come upon us, tough times & turbulent seasons... & we can begin to wonder, "God where are You at in all of this?" Sometimes we're in situations that we bring upon ourselves. We've made poor decisions; the harvest begins to come home & we find ourselves in a desperate way. As I say from time to time, everyone likes to sow to the flesh, but no one likes the harvest... But don't be deceived, God will not be mocked, whatever a man sows, that will he also reap.

Other times we may be in a season of pruning, of purifying. God is clipping back those parts of our lives that are unfruitful, that we might bring forth even more fruit. Or He's placed us in the "purifying furnace", we're being "melted down" as it were that He might scoop up & discard the impurities in our lives... Still other times there may be nothing out of order in our lives, but the enemy is harassing & attacking us & we're in that place of having to rely on the fact that God takes what the enemy means for evil & He turns it for our eternal good & His eternal glory.

& Ultimately, through it all, God's heart isn't against us, it's for us. He has thoughts of peace & not of evil toward us, to give us a future & a hope. *

But when you're in those seasons of struggle, of stress, pressure & duress, *where do you turn, or to whom do you turn for help in your time of need?* – I want you to think about that. I'm not asking for the "right" answer. I'm asking for the "real" answer. Of course, if the right answer *is* the real answer, PTL. But it's so easy to fall back on the familiar when we're in that season of struggle, rather than turning *toward*, drawing comfort/strength *from* & relying *upon* the Lord.

That was Judah's dilemma in Ch 31. The Assyrian army was quickly encroaching upon the capital city of Jerusalem, placing them in a panic. So they did what seemed to make sense. They reached out to the nation of Egypt (a larger/stronger, more abled [militarily] nation) to help them. The problem (however) was they *didn't* seek the Lord in any form or fashion. As we read in the 1st Vs of the previous Ch, they took counsel, but not of God, they devised plans, but not of His Spirit.

* Family, I would remind you that though you are *in* the world, you are no longer *of* the world. Therefore, you no longer approach things like you did *when* you were in the world. When you were in the world, God... prayer was a *last* resort if a resort at all! In Christ, we don't go to God "if all else fails". He's to be the One we turn to & seek after 1st. *

Vs1

If you remember right, last week Isaiah charged Judah w/adding “sin to sin”. The sin of *not* trusting in the Lord & add to that that they *were* trusting in Egypt. They felt like they could trust the words of the Egyptians, but not the words of God!

Perhaps they felt their problem was a practical one, not a spiritual one. They could see very practical reasons to trust in Egypt. “They have chariots which are many! They have horsemen who are very strong... But I just don’t see how ‘seeking God’ or ‘trusting God’ brings about a practical solution here.”

& We do this don’t we? Somehow, when the chips are down, we can tend to forget all about God’s past faithfulness. How He’s delivered us time & time again. & We fall back on the familiar logic & rationale of the world. (Let’s remember that Egypt is also a type of the world, a type of the flesh, it points back to our days before God saved/delivered us).

So, let’s not get this twisted & think that God is simply against anyone helping you w/anything, anytime. That’s simply not true. We’re grateful that God has given us advancements in medicine, in technology & all the rest. * The principle at hand here is that God doesn’t want us (when the pressure is on, when we’re under stress or duress, or *anytime* for that matter) to resort to worldly ways rather than trusting in Him.

There someone is, they’re struggling w/anxiety. I mean, there’s a real battle on their hands. Now, this person is a believer. How are they to handle it? Do you turn to any ol’ therapist or psychiatrist? Do you “eat your feelings”? Do you decompress through shopping or hooking up to the ol game console? Maybe turn to drugs/alcohol, or some illicit relationship? Or maybe just try to sleep it off?

& I’m not saying that all those things are bad in & of themselves (some obviously are). I would never recommend a secular counselor or psychiatrist, I would never recommend drugs/alcohol, illicit relationships (& the like). But going to the mall, playing a game, exercise, or a good night’s sleep. Those things aren’t bad in & of themselves. **But are they God’s way of dealing w/anxiety? We have various escape routes whereby we check out from reality. But God would have us to cast our cares upon Him, to pray & seek Him & find our help, our confidence, our security in Him.** Remember these words? **“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”¹**

& I’m not standing before you pretending to have every detail of my life dialed in. I’m simply saying, we’re to turn to the Lord 1st. *

¹ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Php 4:6-7]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

* Listen, it's human nature, you're going to trust in something. If you're into finance, you're trusting in market forces (though I wouldn't recommend it 😊). Perhaps you trust in the fact that we have the greatest military force on earth (for now). Some trust in science or technology. – Judah was trusting in political alliance; they were trusting in Egypt.

How much better to have the heart of the psalmist as found in Ps 20? *"Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; But we will remember the name of the Lord our God."*² Some trust in the military, some trust in the economy, some trust in science & technology... but we will remember the name of the Lord our God. *

Vs 2-3

Egypt was a strong nation, wise in warfare. God says, "You've forgotten *My wisdom*. & The fact that though heaven & earth will pass away, My words will by no means pass away." I love that passage in the book of Numbers that says, *"God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?"*³ God will not call back His words. But will arise against the house of evildoers, & against the help of those who work iniquity.

The idea here is that when God promises to do something, He's going to do it. Egypt (on the other hand) was full of promises that they wouldn't deliver on. That they *couldn't* deliver on. They were men, & not God. Their horses were flesh, not spirit. Again, God is rebuking them for trusting in the arm of flesh rather than the Spirit of the Lord.

I'll give you another reference out of the Psalms, *"Do not put your trust in princes, Nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help. His spirit departs, he returns to his earth; In that very day his plans perish. Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, Whose hope is in the Lord his God,"*⁴ I trust you're picking up on a theme here. & It's not like God is saying you should never go to the Dr. or exercise common sense. He's saying that you should find your help & your hope in Him & Him alone.

Vs 4-5

God says, "You might look to Egypt, but your only deliverance will come from Me." We might tuck tail & escape into the world, but our only true help comes from the Lord! He's our Deliverer, our ever-present help in time of need!

Isaiah says, "As a lion roars, & a young lion over his prey, He will not be afraid of their voice." The picture is that of a lion standing over a lamb,

² *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Ps 20:7]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

³ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Nu 23:19]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁴ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Ps 146:3-5]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

& all these shepherds gather around it & they're yelling, hooping & hollering trying to unnerve & rattle the lion into retreating. But the lion isn't intimidated at all by the shepherds.

God is saying, "The enemy doesn't impress nor intimidate Me at all... They may gather around Jerusalem, make all kinds of threats, hoop & holler, I'm standing over you & I'm going to fight for you & for this city w/the ferocity of a young lion. Like a bird diving down protecting it's young." You & me, we might be terrified, God's not worried at all.

Vs 6-9

We spoke last week about the fruit of repentance. God is here, calling them to repent, to "return" to Him. The evidence of their repentance would be getting rid of their idols (anything that stood between them & a relationship w/the Lord, having the Lord as the highest priority of their lives).

God was going to rescue *them*, He bid them to return to *Him* (which they did for a season but fell back into idolatry again & a little over 100 yrs later they would be taken into captivity by Babylon).

But here's the take home from this section of scripture (we'll see the fulfillment of Vs 8-9 when we get to Ch 37). In Vs 4-5 God tells them what their future reality will be. Then He says that should morally/ethically & spiritually impact their lives presently (Vs 6). They should repent of their sin & return to Him.

Future reality should impact our manner of living presently. Peter put it like this, *"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. (That's the future reality) Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God,"*⁵ That should be the impact upon us presently. Future reality should impact/influence, have a direct effect on how we lead our lives presently (in holy conduct & godliness).

Chapter 32

Vs 1

Ok. As I've mentioned to you in times past, one thing we need to always keep in the back of our mind when we're studying prophecy is that prophecy can act kind of like a rubber-band.

⁵ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [2 Pe 3:10-12]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

It can stretch way out (it's called prophetic telescoping) & suddenly snap right back. It jumps back & forth, there are foreshadows & fulfillments...

Here in Ch 32 we have such an incident. The 1st 8 Vs speak to a foreshadow & a future fulfillment. Then Vs 9-14 snap back to Isaiah's present day, beginning in Vs 15 it starts looking again toward the future.

He's been speaking of the Assyrian invasion, but here he's looking past all of that into the future. Now, some speculate that Ch 32 may've actually been written *before* Ch's 30-31 (we know that Isaiah's writings aren't strictly chronological). But they speculate that Isaiah wrote of the king reigning in righteousness during the beginning of his prophetic career under the reign of the wicked king Ahaz, looking forward to the godly king Hezekiah.

It's certainly possible, after-all we read of Hezekiah in 2nd Kings Ch 18, *"He trusted in the Lord God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him. For he held fast to the Lord; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the Lord had commanded Moses."*⁶ What a wonderful testimony to have, wouldn't you agree? That there were none like you, in all the lineage of your family, either before you or after you because you held fast to the Lord, didn't depart from following Him, but kept His word & did as He commanded... Wow, that's an impressive statement to memorialize you!

Others think that this refers to Hezekiah's great grandson, Josiah, who was also a godly king (2 Kings 22:2). But, for as interesting as it is to speculate on the historical foreshadowing, I want to focus your attention on the future fulfillment! Because this is most certainly pointing us to the time in which Jesus (the King of kings), who will reign in *righteousness* over all the earth throughout His Millennial Kingdom.

What does it mean that He will "reign in righteousness"? It means that when Jesus is on the throne, we don't have to worry about corruption in the government, bribes, or special favors to sway the ruling of the court. He will always & *only* do the right thing. – Jesus isn't concerned w/public opinion polls, what it takes to keep the people happy, He's concerned w/righteousness & truth. & Notice, He'll have a "governmental body" w/Him.

"Princes will rule w/justice". Who are they? I'm looking at them right here! You & me! In Rev 5 we find the church singing a new song, worshiping before the Lamb saying,

*"You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth."*⁷

I think that we often lose sight of the fact that the Lord is preparing us *now* for various responsibilities we'll have *then*. We go through trials, situations, circumstances & pains in this life for which we have no idea why. But we can't see the big picture. Somehow & in some way the Lord can use them to prepare us now for His plan for us then. You will be ruling on the earth w/the Lord J.C. How incredible is that?

Vs 2-4

Eyes will be opened, ears will hear (in other words people will see the Lord for who He is, they will hear God's word in truth) & things will be as they're intended to be. "A man will be as a hiding place from the wind, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary place." & Of course Christ fulfills all these things but this could just as easily be a reference to our role under His reign. & Truth be told * you don't have to wait for Jesus to come back to be a source or shelter, security & refreshment for others. Yes, we find rest in Jesus, but God would have to learn to refresh the souls of others as well.

I guess the question that should confront us here is this... In what way do you contribute to others? Are you continually pointing out what's wrong, droning & draining people? Or do people find you a source of encouragement, of building up the good things that God is doing in them & working w/them to strengthen the things that need some attention? Seek to be one that when people see you coming they think, "Awesome ___ is here!" Rather than, "Oh great ___ is here..." ☺ *

"The heart of the rash will understand knowledge & the tongue of the stammerers will be ready to speak plainly." People who speak 1st & listen last will knock that off & gain true understanding. How many of us have fulfilled this proverb? *"He who answers a matter before he hears it, It is folly and shame to him."*⁸ ☺ All that will be a thing of the past. In that day everyone will understand each other. Real communication. Won't that be a miracle?

& Obviously, not only is this a reference to what'll happen practically, but spiritually... People will understand God's word & communicate it clearly/accurately.

Vs 5-8

Allow me to put this in a nutshell. When Jesus is reigning over the earth.

⁷ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Re 5:9-10). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁸ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Pr 18:13). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

When righteousness reigns, when communication is clear & understanding is accurate, things will be seen & understood for what they truly are. People won't fall prey to gaslighting, propaganda won't even be possible. The mask of hypocrisy will be removed, no one will be able to "put on a front" or pretend to be something they're not.

If someone is trying to take advantage of others or pretending to be generous when (in reality) pursuing their own gain... it'll be plain. The NLT translates Vs 5, "In that day ungodly fools will not be heroes. Scoundrels will not be respected." Character, motives, ungodly methods, they'll all be exposed & judged for what they are.

& This essentially circles us back to that principle "Woe to those who call good evil & evil good. Who put darkness for light & light for darkness. Who put bitter for sweet & sweet for bitter." Causing people to question reality, calling good evil & evil good. None of that will fly when Jesus is on the throne. Someone who is truly generous & seeking to do right will be seen in truth, people won't be able to spin their motives & make them the bad guy, while the bad guy is held up as a hero. (Exactly like we're seeing our media handle what's happening in our nation today).

Ok, at this point Isaiah comes back to the lax mentality in his day & has a warning & rebuke for some of the women who are too careless & confident in their idolatrous culture.

Vs 9-11

Quickly here. I'm not certain why Isaiah calls out certain women specifically. But what I can tell you is that typically the moral restraint of women is like the last line of defense in a corrupting society. I'm not in any way seeking to justify men's behavior (sin is what it is). But (generally speaking), by the time you're seeing the women of a society flaunt themselves immorally, it's a sure sign of a people who have lost their way.

& Isaiah is here rebuking them for a false sense of security, being at ease & feeling good about things because perhaps things were fine economically. But morally, spiritually, in reality they should be rising up, giving heed to God's word & readying themselves in repentance because things were going to get bad.

To me this sort of has overtones of what Jesus was talking about when in speaking of the last days He said that it would be like the days of Noah. People marrying, given in marriage, carrying about business as usual oblivious to the fact that judgment was coming.

Vs 12-14

Assyria would ravish the land & God would use those tough economic times rattle their cage & wake them up.

“Happy homes”, “Palaces” no one would be exempt from the economic strain that would weigh on them. A rude awakening was in store for all.

Vs 15

Let's note again how that God can take what the enemy means for evil & use it for good. God would take these tough times, the invasion of the enemy to lead His people to repentance & prepare them for the outpouring of His Spirit!

& When God pours out His Spirit we note total transformation. But let's be sure & notice the very 1st word of Vs 15, “Until”. Tough times were simply a reality for the people, “Until” God poured out His Spirit from on high. The idea here is that nothing can effect true change, bring lasting fruit or genuine transformation apart from the Spirit of God! Bountiful blessings would come w/the outpouring of God's Spirit, but until such times there would be no such thing.

Let me cut straight to the chase here. This is *exactly* what we desire in our lives personally, in this church body, in our community, nationally & we would even beg God, globally! That God would pour out His Spirit, bringing life, fruitfulness & transformation. Perhaps you're in a place where your life seems dry, no real fruit to speak of. Cry out to God that He might pour out His Spirit upon *you*!

I'll let you in on a little secret, I do this on the regular! I ask God to pour out His Spirit upon my life, to lead me in the way I should go. I don't want Him to *sprinkle* out His Spirit, or *drizzle* out His Spirit, I want Him to *pour* out His Spirit, in an overflowing abundance upon my life, my home, my family, this church body & beyond! That He might gain & glean much fruit, that we would become more & more fruitful for His glory.

Vs 16-20 Close

Btw, here in Vs 18, we see the same words used as previously when Isaiah was rebuking the complacent women. He speaks of dwelling secure & resting in quiet places. God has no problem w/us being at rest & being secure. The problem is what we rest *in*. We're to find our peace in J.C. (through the outpouring of His Spirit, not in the pseudo peace & complacency found in this world).

The work of *righteousness* will be peace, & the *effect* of righteousness shall be, quietness & assurance forever... don't you love that? Hail may come down. The city may be brought low in humiliation. God's people aren't exempt from tough times. But there's peace in the midst of it...

It's that old adage, I don't know what the future holds, but I know who holds the future. I know the thoughts I think toward you (says the Lord), thoughts of peace & not of evil. To give you a future & a hope. "The work of righteousness shall be peace, & the effect of righteousness, quietness & assurance forever." Amen? Amen.

Prayer Points:

Father we long for the fruit that results from the outpouring of Your Spirit upon our lives. Search us, see what wicked way may be in us & lead us in the way we should go. May our hearts be eager to repent & may Your Spirit rest in power & peace in our lives. Help us that we not resort to worldly rationale in times of trouble, but seek You & honor You w/the fullness of who we are.

Peace, quietness & assurance. Sounds much better than conflict, noise & doubt. Those are the kinds of things that reside in our heart apart from J.C. Jesus wants to give you peace. Perhaps there's been trouble, turmoil in your heart/life, has it readied you to repent? God wants to pour His Spirit out upon you. Turn from your sin, trust in Him & be saved.