

The Coming Kingdom and the Future Defeated Assyrian

Isaiah 32-33

Isaiah 32 - *“Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, and princes will rule with justice. ² A man will be as a hiding place from the wind, and a cover from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. ³ The eyes of those who see will not be dim, and the ears of those who hear will listen. ⁴ Also the heart of the rash will understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers will be ready to speak plainly. ⁵ The foolish person will no longer be called generous, nor the miser said to be bountiful; ⁶ for the foolish person will speak foolishness, and his heart will work iniquity: to practice ungodliness, to utter error against the Lord, to keep the hungry unsatisfied, and he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail.*

⁷ Also the schemes of the schemer are evil; he devises wicked plans to destroy the poor with lying words, even when the needy speaks justice. ⁸ But a generous man devises generous things, and by generosity he shall stand. ⁹ Rise up, you women who are at ease. Hear my voice, you complacent daughters. Give ear to my speech. ¹⁰ In a year and some days you will be troubled, you complacent women; for the vintage will fail, the gathering will not come. ¹¹ Tremble, you women who are at ease. Be troubled, you complacent ones. Strip yourselves, make yourselves bare, and gird sackcloth on your waists. People shall mourn upon their breasts for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine. ¹³ On the land of my people will come up thorns and briars, yes, on all the happy homes in the joyous city; ¹⁴ because the palaces will be forsaken, the bustling city will be deserted. The forts and towers will become lairs forever, a joy of wild donkeys, a pasture of flocks - ¹⁹ though hail comes down on the forest, and the city is brought low in humiliation. ²⁰ Blessed are you who sow beside all waters, who send out freely the feet of the ox and the donkey.”

Background Notes

Isaiah 28-35 form a section of Isaiah that could be entitled “The Denunciation of Israel and Judah.” Six woes were pronounced in these chapters. Although judgment is the primary theme of these chapters, there is some good news. The good news comes when Isaiah looks to the far future and the Lord’s return. He will judge all the enemies of His people and establish His glorious earthly kingdom. That’s what we find in Isaiah 32.

Doctrinal Points

1. The coming kingdom will be established.

The Lord will reign in righteousness, accompanied by “princes” (v1) who will reign under Him in His kingdom (v1). Who are these “princes”? 2 Timothy 2:12 says that believers will reign with Him! Remember, this was not a description of the

Church, or of the **first** coming of Christ. The **second** coming of Christ and His future literal earthly kingdom was in view. His millennial kingdom will be established when the Lord returns.

This kingdom will be a place of security and refreshment for the people of God (v2). All human shortcomings, both physical and spiritual, will be eliminated (v3-4). The present unbiblical world value system and the present ungodly behavior of people will be changed and transformed, and brought into line with God's righteous standards (v5-8). There will be no calling evil good, or good evil, as happens today so frequently.

In verses 9-14, Isaiah appealed to the complacent women of Judah to change their ways. Women are essential to the moral well-being of society, and Isaiah specifically appealed to the women in view of the soon coming trouble that was in the horizon - "*in a year and some days*" (v10). This was speaking, of course, of the coming Assyrian invasion under King Sennacherib. Jerusalem itself was miraculously delivered (see Isaiah 36-37), but the Assyrian armies overran a number of Judah's fortified cities, and many people were captured and killed. The "Lachish Reliefs," uncovered by archaeologists in the ruins of Nineveh, document the accuracy of Isaiah's prophecies.

There is good news in verses 15-18, as Isaiah looked on to the End Times and the return of the Lord:

Isaiah 32:15-18 - "*...until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is counted as a forest. ¹⁶ Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness will remain in the fruitful field. ¹⁷ The work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever. ¹⁸ My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places...*"

During the coming millennial kingdom, the Holy Spirit will be poured out on restored Israel (v15). The Land, including the wilderness, will become fertile (v16). Justice and righteousness will dwell within the nation (v17). Peace, security, and assurance will bring quiet rest to God's people (v18). These characteristics certainly do not describe Israel today - but they will be true of Israel in the future when the Lord returns.

In verses 19-20 a contrast was drawn between the threat of the Assyrian attack in Isaiah's day, which was like a forest of soldiers and devastating hail, and the blessings and peace of the distant future when the coming kingdom will be established.

2. The coming Assyrian will be destroyed.

Isaiah 33:1 - "*Woe to you who plunder, though you have not been plundered; and you who deal treacherously, though they have not dealt treacherously with you! When you cease plundering, you will be plundered. When you make an end of dealing treacherously, they will deal treacherously with you.*"

The sixth woe is found in Isaiah 33, and it is pronounced upon Sennacherib and the Assyrian Empire of Isaiah's day. They were the enemy of God's people - the destroyer and plunderer (v1). Sennacherib had dealt treacherously with Judah by accepting a large sum of money from King Hezekiah - and then besieging Jerusalem anyway (2 Kings 18).

Verses 2-6 were the prayer of the faithful remnant in Judah at the time of the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem. *"O Lord, be gracious to us; we have waited for You. Be their arm every morning, our salvation also in the time of trouble. ³ At the noise of the tumult the people shall flee; when You lift Yourself up, the nations shall be scattered; ⁴ and Your plunder shall be gathered like the gathering of the caterpillar; as the running to and fro of locusts, He shall run upon them.*

⁵ The Lord is exalted, for He dwells on high; He has filled Zion with justice and righteousness. ⁶ Wisdom and knowledge will be the stability of your times, and the strength of salvation. The fear of the Lord is His treasure."

The faithful remnant in Judah was confident that the tables would be turned. They trusted that God would deliver them, and that they would gather the spoils from the defeated Assyrians, like hungry caterpillars and locusts. This all took place when the Lord miraculously delivered Jerusalem from the Assyrian siege.

Verses 5-6 looked prophetically forward to the End Time, when the Lord will again miraculously deliver His people from the End-Time Assyrian, who is also known as the "king of the north" in Daniel 11. Then the Lord will establish His righteous kingdom.

The entire Land of Israel was devastated as a result of the Assyrian invasion. All attempts at peace failed. Verses 7-9: *"Surely their valiant ones shall cry outside, the ambassadors of peace shall weep bitterly. ⁸ The highways lie waste, the traveling man ceases. He has broken the covenant, he has despised the cities, he regards no man. ⁹ The earth mourns and languishes, Lebanon is shamed and shriveled; Sharon is like a wilderness, and Bashan and Carmel shake off their fruits".*

Then the good news! The Lord will destroy and blow away the Assyrians, the enemies of His people, as mere chaff and stubble. It's as if the enemy was put in a limekiln or fire of thorns. *"Now I will rise," says the Lord; "Now I will be exalted, now I will lift Myself up. ¹¹ You shall conceive chaff, you shall bring forth stubble; your breath, as fire, shall devour you. ¹² And the people shall be like the burnings of lime; like thorns cut up they shall be burned in the fire. ¹³ Hear, you who are afar off, what I have done; and you who are near, acknowledge My might" (v10-13).*

In verses 14-24 Isaiah looked on to the End Times when the Lord will establish His righteous kingdom on earth. The ungodly will have been judged and all unrighteousness will be dealt with, so verses 14-16 concentrated on the godly people of that future kingdom. Verses 14-16: *"The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness has seized the hypocrites. "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" ¹⁵ He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, he who despises the gain of oppressions, who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, and shuts his eyes from seeing evil - ¹⁶ he will dwell on high; his place of defense will be the fortress of rocks. Bread will be given him; his water will be sure."*

Verses 17-24 did not concentrate on the people of the coming kingdom (as in v14-16), but on the **King** of the coming kingdom - the Lord Himself: *“Your eyes will see the King in His beauty; they will see the land that is very far off. ¹⁸ Your heart will meditate on terror: “Where is the scribe? Where is he who weighs? Where is he who counts the towers?” ¹⁹ You will not see a fierce people, a people of obscure speech, beyond perception, of a stammering tongue that you cannot understand.*

Notice there will be no more terror or military strategy or invading foreign armies speaking foreign languages, such as the Assyrians. These things will all be past. That’s the idea here. Verses 20-22, *“Look upon Zion, the city of our appointed feasts; your eyes will see Jerusalem, a quiet home, a tabernacle that will not be taken down. Not one of its stakes will ever be removed, nor will any of its cords be broken. ²¹ But there the majestic Lord will be for us a place of broad rivers and streams, in which no galley with oars will sail, nor majestic ships pass by. ²² (For the Lord is our Judge; the Lord is our Lawgiver; the Lord is our King. He will save us).”*

This is not a description of Heaven, and it is not a description of the present Church. This is a description of the future earthly kingdom of our Lord where He will be the King and Judge. He will rule and reign from the literal city of Jerusalem. There will be no more warships, and no more need for commerce and shipping.

In verse 23, Assyria’s defeat (both in Isaiah’s day and in the future) is pictured as a disabled ship that even the lame could plunder. *“Your tackle is loosed, they could not strengthen their mast, they could not spread the sail. Then the prey of great plunder is divided; the lame take the prey. ²⁴ And the inhabitant will not say, “I am sick.” The people who dwell in it will be forgiven their iniquity” (v23-24).*

In the coming millennial kingdom of Christ on earth, both physical and spiritual healing will be readily available. *“And the inhabitant will not say, “I am sick.” The people who dwell in it will be forgiven their iniquity” (v24).* The coming Assyrian will be destroyed.

Practical Application

Shut your eyes from seeing evil!

Verse 15 describes the godly people in the Lord’s kingdom: *“They stop their ears from hearing of bloodshed and their shut eyes from seeing evil.”* Can we say this about ourselves, in the present day? Do we *“shut our eyes from seeing evil”*? Do we regulate the movies and TV shows we see, the books we read, and what websites we link to on the internet? Job said that he made *“a covenant with his eyes”* that he would not look lustfully at a woman (Job 31:1.) We are to *“take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ”* (2 Corinthians 10:5).

Many times we have to deal with evil - but that’s different from deliberately looking at evil. Do you want to be characterized by godliness? Shut your eyes from seeing evil!