

Notes

The Reign of the Righteous King (32:1–20)

- Isaiah 31 rebuked Judah for trusting Egypt instead of the LORD. In Isaiah 32, Isaiah points beyond Judah's failed human leadership to a glorious future when Jesus Christ, the Messiah, will reign in righteousness. The world will know true and lasting peace only when the King of kings rules.

1. The Reign of the Righteous King (32:1–8)

- Isaiah begins with the glorious promise: *"Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment"* (v1). Hezekiah provides a limited historical picture of such a righteous ruler (2 Kings 18:3). The ultimate fulfilment points to the greater Son of David, Jesus Christ (Jer 23:5; Isa 9:6–7; 11:1–5). When Christ returns, He will personally reign over the earth and establish righteousness and justice. Those who are united with Him will also share in His righteous rule (Rev 2:26–27; 5:10; 1 Cor 6:2).
- Isaiah uses four pictures to describe the blessings of the King's reign (v2):
 - "An hiding place from the wind"* - protection from danger.
 - "A covert from the tempest"* - refuge in the storm.
 - "Rivers of water in a dry place"* - life and refreshment in a barren land.
 - "The shadow of a great rock in a weary land"* - shade, rest & security.These pictures point to the peace, protection, refreshment and abundance that will characterise Christ's kingdom. Yet believers can experience these blessings even today (Ps 46:1; John 4:14; 7:37–38; Matt 11:28–29).
- Under the righteous King's rule, spiritual confusion and blindness will give way to understanding and discernment. The eyes will see, the ears will hear, and the heart will understand (vv3–4). Jesus' earthly ministry gave a foretaste of this messianic restoration when He opened blind eyes and healed the deaf (Isa 35:5–6; Matt 11:4–5).
- The Messiah's righteous reign will also bring moral clarity (vv5–8). Isaiah says: *"The vile person shall be no more called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful"* (v5). In the KJV, "liberal" means generous or noble. The "vile person" is morally corrupt, while the "churl" is selfish and ungenerous. When the righteous King reigns, people will be recognised for what they truly are. The vile person speaks wickedness, works iniquity, speaks error against the LORD, and leaves the hungry and thirsty without help (v6). His life is characterised by rejection of God (Ps 14:1) and disregard for the needs of others. The churl uses evil methods and deceitful plans to take advantage of the poor and needy (v7). In contrast, the truly noble person

"deviseth liberal things" and practises what is good and generous (v8). Our character is revealed not merely by what we say, but by our actions and how we treat those who are weak or in need. If Christ is our King, our lives should increasingly reflect His righteousness and generosity.

2. The Danger of Spiritual Complacency (32:9–14)

- After describing the future righteous kingdom, Isaiah returns to Judah's present spiritual conditions: *"Rise up, ye women that are at ease; hear my voice, ye careless daughters; give ear unto my speech"* (v9). Their comfortable circumstances had produced spiritual complacency and a false sense of security (3:16–24). Comfort itself is not sinful; the danger is when comfort makes us careless about God. Sometimes prosperity is a greater spiritual test than adversity.
- Isaiah warns that their present ease would not last: *"Many days and years shall ye be troubled, ye careless women: for the vintage shall fail, the gathering shall not come"* (v10). The vineyards and harvests they had taken for granted would fail. Mourning would replace celebration (vv11–12), and the land would become overgrown with *"thorns and briers"* (v13). Even places that appeared secure would be abandoned: *"Because the palaces shall be forsaken... the forts and towers shall be for dens for ever"* (v14).
- Spiritual complacency often develops gradually. The danger comes when God's blessings make us forget the God who gave them (Deut 8:11–14; Rev 3:17). Prosperity is not the danger; self-sufficiency is. Enjoy God's blessings with gratitude, but never allow His blessings to replace dependence upon the God who gave them.

3. The Outpouring of the Spirit and Kingdom Peace (32:15–20)

- Isaiah now turns from judgment to glorious hope: *"Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high"* (v15). *"Poured upon us"* speaks of an abundant work of God's Spirit, while *"from on high"* reminds us that this renewal comes from God, not human effort.
- The Holy Spirit was active in the Old Testament (Gen 1:2; Judg 14:6; 1 Sam 16:13) and worked through God's prophets. Yet the prophets also looked forward to a greater outpouring of the Spirit. Joel prophesied: *"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh..."* (Joel 2:28–29). God promised a future outpouring in which the Spirit's work would be manifested in a broader and more public way. At Pentecost,

Peter applied Joel's prophecy to the coming of the Holy Spirit: *"But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel"* (Acts 2:16). Pentecost was therefore a fulfilment of the promised outpouring. However, Joel also spoke of events connected with *"the great and terrible day of the LORD"* (Joel 2:30–31) and Israel's future restoration (Joel 2:26–27; 3:1–2). These aspects point beyond Pentecost to God's future dealings with Israel, consistent with Paul's teaching that *"all Israel shall be saved"* (Rom 11:26).

- When the Spirit is poured out, *"the wilderness [shall] be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field [shall] be counted for a forest"* (v15). The transformation is both spiritual and physical. The land will experience renewal and abundance. Isaiah then gives the key principle: *".....And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever"* (v16–17). True peace is the fruit of righteousness. Human governments, treaties and diplomacy may restrain conflict, but they cannot remove the sin that produces hatred, greed, violence, and oppression. Only the righteous King can establish lasting peace.
- The security of God's people is described in verse 18: *"And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places."* God assures His people that they will enjoy lasting peace, safety, and rest because their security is grounded in His presence and provision.
- Verse 19 reminds us that God's kingdom also involves judgment upon evil: *"When it shall hail, coming down on the forest; and the city shall be low in a low place."* God will judge those who oppose Him while giving His people the blessings of His righteous rule. Finally, Isaiah describes peace and prosperity: *"Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters...."* (v20). The picture is one of agricultural abundance, security, and freedom from the disruption that had marked Judah's troubled days.
- Every believer is indwelt by the Spirit, who works in us and helps us live for Christ. Therefore:
 - we have present assurance because the Spirit is at work in us.
 - we have future hope because Christ is coming again.
 - we should live now under the authority of the coming King.
- The full kingdom blessings described in Isaiah 32 still await Christ's return. The righteous King is coming. Righteousness will prevail. Peace will be established. And everything God has promised will be fulfilled. Until that day we are to live under the rule of the coming King, remain spiritually vigilant and walk in daily dependence upon the Holy Spirit.