

Righteous Kingdom

Isaiah 32

By Scott Huckaby

3/26/2023

BIG BEND
BIBLE
FELLOWSHIP

Isaiah 32:1-8 – *The Kingdom of Righteousness* (NIV)

See, a king will reign in righteousness and rulers will rule with justice. ² Each one will be like a shelter from the wind and a refuge from the storm, like streams of water in the desert and the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land.

³ Then the eyes of those who see will no longer be closed, and the ears of those who hear will listen. ⁴ The fearful heart will know and understand, and the stammering tongue will be fluent and clear. ⁵ No longer will the fool be called noble nor the scoundrel be highly respected.

⁶ For fools speak folly, their hearts are bent on evil: They practice ungodliness and spread error concerning the Lord; the hungry they leave empty and from the thirsty they withhold water. ⁷ Scoundrels use wicked methods, they make up evil schemes to destroy the poor with lies, even when the plea of the needy is just. ⁸ But the noble make noble plans, and by noble deeds they stand.

v1 – Who is this king who will reign in righteousness?

Ultimately this can only be Jesus Christ. But since this is in the far future (but closer today), God blessed Judah with a promise...

- Most commentators believe that the king who will reign in righteousness mentioned here was Hezekiah
- It is likely that the prophecy of Isaiah 32 and 33 was given at the beginning of Isaiah's prophetic career, during the reign of King Ahaz, the predecessor to King Hezekiah.
- Another possibility is that the prophecy of Isaiah 32 and 33 was given during the reign of Hezekiah, and this announcement refers to the latter part of his reign.
- It is also possible that it prophesies the coming of King Josiah, the great-grandson Hezekiah, who reigned during the emerging Babylonian threat. Josiah was a righteous king (2 Kings 22:2).

Who would be the princes will rule with justice?

It wasn't enough — it is never enough — to have a righteous king. The king must have helpers, princes under him, who will also rule with justice. Hezekiah had such loyal princes, such as Eliakim, Shebna the scribe, the elders of the priests, and Isaiah himself (2 Kings 19:2).

- These weren't princes in the literal sense of being sons of King Hezekiah. The Hebrew word for princes can mean any ruler under a king.

If Hezekiah, the righteous king, points to Jesus, then who are Jesus' princes?

His people are His princes...

1 Peter 2:9 – *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.*

Our being princes of the King of kings is a spiritual reality now and will physically realized during the Millennial Kingdom...

Revelation 5:10 – *And [You] have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.*

Many of the seemingly unnecessary trials and pains of this life have a wonderful purpose in the world beyond: training us to be princes, faithfully ruling with King Jesus.

v2 – What will be the blessings of restoration from the king?

Like cover from the wind or rivers of water in the desert or a shadow from the intense sun.

- This described how wonderfully refreshing the spiritual renewal was during the reign of Hezekiah.

v3 – How else would those who are spiritually revived be blessed?

By God's blessing, those who see could see better than ever, and those who hear will listen.

v4 – How would the heart of the rash [come to] understand knowledge?

The spiritual renewal during the reign of Hezekiah promoted trust in God's Word, and because of that, hearts were changed. God also would bless in miraculous ways (the tongue of the stammerers will be ready to speak plainly).

v5-6 – How would people see the foolish person under the righteous king?

The foolish will be seen for what they are... *the foolish person will speak foolishness*: The spiritual renewal during the reign of Hezekiah meant that spiritual reality would be exposed for all to see. No more would there be deception by appearances...

- If a man was foolish, he would be exposed as such and not considered to be generous.
- If a man was a miser, he's be recognized as such and not considered bountiful.

What characterizes a foolish person?

- *his heart will work iniquity* – cannot avoid sin
- *To practice ungodliness* – acts as an enemy to God
- *To utter error against the Lord* – speaks as an enemy to God
- *To keep the hungry unsatisfied* – does not show any mercy
- *And he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail* – withholds what others need

v7 – What else does the foolish person do?

devises wicked plans: It is planning for one's own advantage at whatever cost to others. This term occurs nineteen times in reference to sexual misconduct. For example:

Leviticus 18:17 – *You shall not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter, nor shall you take her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedness. They are near of kin to her. It is wickedness.*

v8 – How is the noble man contrasted with the foolish?

Instead of wicked plan, the noble person devises generous things... and the good works have lasting benefit.

- Wickedness shall be discovered and punished while virtue shall be manifested and rewarded during the Millennial Kingdom.

What does it mean to be a fool?

The word fool today usually means "a senseless fellow, a dullard." The biblical definition has the added dimension of "someone who disregards God's Word."

What else does the Bible reveal about fools?

Ecclesiastes 10:2 – *The heart of the wise inclines to the right, but the heart of the fool to the left.*

The wise will act righteously will the fool will go the other way.

Proverbs 26:11 – *As a dog returns to its vomit, so fools repeat their folly.*

Fools do not learn their lessons from the mistakes they make. They continue doing the same foolish things over and over again, to their own destruction (Proverbs 18:7).

The following is a partial list of some characteristics of a fool from the book of Proverbs:

- hates knowledge (Proverbs 1:22)
- takes no pleasure in understanding (Proverbs 18:2)
- enjoys wicked schemes (Proverbs 10:23),
- proclaims folly (Proverbs 12:23)
- spurns a parent's discipline (Proverbs 15:5)
- speaks perversity (Proverbs 19:1)
- is quick-tempered (Proverbs 12:16)
- gets in trouble with proud speech (Proverbs 14:3),
- mocks at sin (Proverbs 14:9),
- is deceitful (Proverbs 14:8),
- despises his mother (Proverbs 15:20).
- brings grief to his or her parents (Proverbs 17:25; 19:13)
- commits sexual immorality (Proverbs 6:32; 7:7-12)
- tears down their own house (Proverbs 14:1)

The ultimate description of a fool is one who "says in his heart, 'There is no God.' They are corrupt, and their ways are vile; there is no one who does good" (Psalm 14:1; 53:1).

- The Bible warns against associating with fools (Proverbs 14:7).

Proverbs 13:20 – *Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm.*

What does it mean to call someone a fool?

Matthew 5:22 – *whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire.*

The term *raca*, spoken with contempt, implied utter worthlessness. Jesus was not saying that we cannot call the choices of another foolish. But to call someone "raca" was saying that this person was beyond the reach of God and therefore condemned forever.

- To say, "You fool!" to a brother or sister is like saying, "Damn you!" to someone today. We do not have the power or the right to condemn anyone to hell. That position of judgment belongs only to God.
- A born-again Christian cannot be "damned" because he or she has been purchased by the blood of Christ (Colossians 1:14).
- We should, however, do all we can to turn the hearts of those exhibiting foolishness toward wisdom and possibly save their lives and eternal souls (James 5:20).

Isaiah 32:9-15 – Consequences of Complacency (NIV)

⁹ *You women who are so complacent, rise up and listen to me; you daughters who feel secure, hear what I have to say!* ¹⁰ *In little more than a year you who feel secure will tremble; the grape harvest will fail, and the harvest of fruit will not come.* ¹¹ *Tremble, you complacent women; shudder, you daughters who feel secure! Strip off your fine clothes and wrap yourselves in rags.* ¹² *Beat your breasts for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vines* ¹³ *and for the land of my people, a land overgrown with thorns and briars— yes, mourn for all houses of merriment and for this city of revelry.* ¹⁴ *The fortress will be abandoned, the noisy city deserted; citadel and watchtower will become a wasteland forever, the delight of donkeys, a pasture for flocks,* ¹⁵ *till the Spirit is poured on us from on high, and the desert becomes a fertile field, and the fertile field seems like a forest.*

v9 – Who is Isaiah calling to hear his words?

The complacent women... Before the righteous king would come, the people had to prepare themselves. Those who are comfortable with how things were under an ungodly government should get ready for the righteous king.

Why were the women singled out here as being the ones who were complacent?

One commentator suggested this might have been due to the indifference of a group of women, gathered at some little distance from the men to whom Isaiah was addressing which provoked the prophet to suddenly turn to them with a warning.

- It also occurred to me that men often reflect the state of mind of their wives... if the wife is uncomfortable about something, it is not long before the husband becomes uncomfortable about the same thing.

v10 – What is the time frame for the coming of the righteous king?

In a little over a year... so this dates when this prophecy was written, about a year before Hezekiah rules.

Why would the complacent troubled under a righteous king?

If you are comfortable under an unrighteous king, you will be convicted to make some changes with a righteous king.

What is wrong with being at ease or complacent in your situation?

There is nothing wrong with feeling secure and undisturbed as long as one's trust is solidly based on the Lord.

v11 – What did Isaiah call the complacent to do?

Instead of an indulgent, self-focused life, they should tremble, be troubled, and put on the clothing of mourning.

This would show repentance and readiness for the righteous king.

Do we have a complacency problem today?

Yes, most people are oblivious to the growing evidence that we are rapidly coming up on the end of the Age. They were anxious to “get back to normal” after Covid and that is now the dominant view of things...

1 Thess 5:3 – *For when they say, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.*

Jesus indicated that complacency would be a sign of His coming in the Olivet Discourse just like in the days of Noah when they would be carrying on business as usual *eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage* to be caught by surprise when the flood came (Matthew 24:38).

If complacency is more of a problem of unbelievers, what is the related problem for believers?

Apathy... indeed, love for the Lord going lukewarm is a characteristic of our Laodicean Age which leads to apostasy in the most extreme cases.

What is the difference between being complacent versus being apathetic?

According to Merriam-Webster, a person who is apathetic displays a “lack of interest or concern” or a “lack of feeling and emotion.” Complacency is “a self-satisfaction especially when accompanied by unawareness of actual dangers or deficiencies.”

- While apathy seems to reflect plain disinterest, complacency is more smug and selfish.
- Apathy is a lack of urgency, whereas complacency is a lack of conviction to strive for anything better.

What does being apathetic in our spiritual life look like?

Spiritual apathy, coldness, or indifference can affect Christians at one time or another. Human emotions are fickle, feelings of apathy or disinterest can sometimes replace the fervor we once felt for the things of God.

How can a person overcome spiritual apathy?

First of all, make sure he is a true believer in Jesus Christ (see 1 John 5:13; Romans 8:16).

- If he knows that he is a true believer in Christ, he needs to then ask himself this question: “What caused me to lose my love and passion for the Lord?”
- One cause of spiritual apathy is sin in the believer's life.
- Another cause of spiritual apathy is allowing dead orthodoxy to replace a true love for the Lord.

The word to the spiritually apathetic Ephesian church was, “Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first” (Revelation 2:4). The spiritually apathetic person needs to remember, repent, and renew.

How can a person renew their relationship with the Lord?

By cultivating a renewed commitment to Him—not just serving the Lord, but knowing Him, praising Him, and fellowshiping with Him...

- Through daily Bible reading and prayer.
- Let the indwelling Holy Spirit help display the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23).
- Have fellowship with a Bible-believing local church (Hebrews 10:25).

How does Satan encourage apathy?

Satan loves apathy. We must stay alert to the temptations of the old nature, the world, and the evil one.

- As we begin to worship and praise the Lord and let Christ control our lives each day, we will rediscover a life of adventure filled with joy and eternal purpose.
- We will wonder how we ever became spiritually apathetic in the first place.

v12-13 – Why would the people mourn?

for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine: Because of the Assyrian invasion to come, God would use the tough economic times to wake Judah up. *For the vintage will fail, the gathering will not come* (Isaiah 32:10). The tough times touched everyone (*all the happy homes in the joyous city...the palaces will be forsaken*, v13).

v14 – How would the forts and towers be lairs?

The technology they trusted in for protection would fail them.

v15 – When would Judah again be considered a fruitful field?

When God pours out His Spirit on Israel... this happened in Jerusalem at Pentecost (former rain) and ultimately will happen during the Tribulation when Israel as a nation is saved (latter rain).

How would the wilderness become a fruitful field?

When the Holy Spirit is poured out, what was barren and desolate before is now full of life and fruitfulness. True fruitfulness comes from the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

How would the fruitful field be counted as a forest?

When the Holy Spirit is poured out, what was good before (a fruitful field) miraculously becomes even better (a forest).

Isaiah 32:16-20 – The Peace of God’s Reign (NIV)

¹⁶ The Lord’s justice will dwell in the desert, his righteousness live in the fertile field. ¹⁷ The fruit of that righteousness will be peace; its effect will be quietness and confidence forever. ¹⁸ My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest. ¹⁹ Though hail flattens the forest and the city is leveled completely, ²⁰ how blessed you will be, sowing your seed by every stream, and letting your cattle and donkeys range free.

v16 – What would be the result of God spiritually restoring Israel?

There will be true justice in the land that was formerly deserted. And righteousness will remain in land bearing spiritual fruit as well as physical fruit.

v17 – To what would righteousness in the land lead?

Peace, quietness and assurance forever. This is more than just a cessation of hostilities; this is true lasting friendship between people and with God.

v18 – When would Judah have peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places?

Ultimately this is referring to the Millennial Kingdom. There is no such true peace until the Prince of Peace reigns on the earth.

v19 – Will bad stuff happen in the Millennial Kingdom?

It will still be a fallen world even though most of the curse is removed. Though most of the bad stuff that happens will be a direct result of mankind’s sin... yes mortals who are even believers in Christ still sin and there will be plenty of unbelievers who cannot avoid sin as well.

v20 – Who are the blessed?

Those who sow where the seed would be watered and let their cattle range free. The point is you are wasting seed planted where is cannot receive what it needs to grow (the Lord’s provision). And everyone knows free range grass-fed beef is the best.

What applications come to mind from our discussion?

- We are the Lord’s princes... we need to start acting more like it.
- Be wise, not as fools who do not know the Lord.
- Don’t be either complacent or apathetic, renew your relationship with the Lord daily.
- The Millennial Kingdom will be glorious... we should look forward to it and strive to help others be there.