



Isaiah 31-32

Tape #7256
Isaiah 31-32
By Chuck Smith

Let's turn now to Isaiah chapter thirty one, as we continue our journey through the Bible. The situation is this, Assyria has a conquering army that has conquered the northern kingdom, and is now moving towards Jerusalem, conquering all of the cities in the path. Those that are in Jerusalem are fearful because no city has been able to stand against the forces of Assyria. The Assyrians are very cruel. They are inhumane, they are known to mutilate their captives physically, gouging out an eye, cutting off an ear, cutting off the nose, cutting out tongues. Thus, those in Jerusalem are fearful.

Egypt has a powerful army. It has probably more chariots, which in those days were sort of the tanks of their warfare, they have more chariots than any army. They have a very powerful and numerous cavalry units, and so the logical strategy at this point would be to try to hire the Egyptians to come and to help in this impending struggle against the Assyrians. Yet the prophet Isaiah is counseling king Hezekiah to just trust in the Lord. That the Lord will deliver him from the Assyrians.

It is true that God always wants to work in behalf of His people and for His people. If you are a child of God, God will defend you. God will take care of you. He wants to defend you and take care of you! He wants to do it in such a way that it will be quite obvious that only God could have delivered you, so that when the deliverance comes, only God can receive the glory. God loves to set His people free. God loves to work in behalf of His people, to show Himself strong in their behalf. That they might rejoice in Him, and praise Him for His help, for His strength, and for His victory.

Years ago, when Calvary Chapel was at sort of a crisis period, we had been worshiping in the little church that is no longer there on the next corner that we had built. We had been worshiping it, in it, for two years. We had gone to triple services, we had doubled the capacity of the auditorium, and we were setting up five hundred chairs out on the patio. We knew that the facility was no longer adequate. We had to get something larger. The opportunity came up to buy this property here. One half of it, the southern half of this property. So we entered into escrow. It was a giant step of faith. The Lord had to comfort me many times, as I would begin to panic over the thought of the development of this property, the cost and all.

About that time, a Romaine said to me, "There's a man here that wants to talk to you about some money that he wants to donate". So I sat down with this man, and he said, "About ten years ago, I set aside a portfolio and I said, 'Lord that's your money. I'm gonna just invest it for you, and however it develops it's yours. It's your portfolio, it's your money'." He said, "It has grown so large I'm sort of fearful of it now. So the time has come I want to give it away." He said, "I've been observing what the Lord has been doing here with the young people and all. I'm impressed in this work, and so I am interested in perhaps giving it to you." He said, "It's a little over a million dollars." Naturally it was an exciting kind of a thing in that we were looking ahead to some pretty heavy expenditures. But I said, "You know that is a lot of money, and I can understand your being afraid of it. I think I would be too. So let me pray, and seek the Lord on this."

So I went home and I spent a lot of time in prayer, and the Lord spoke to my heart, and told me to refuse the money, not to take it. For the Lord said, "I am doing a work. I have provided up till now, I will continue to provide, and the work that I am doing is an amazement to the world. If you will just trust in me, I will continue to supply. There will never be a lack of funds. If you receive this man's money, in years to come, when I have done my work, and people look at the work that I have done. They will always say, 'But don't you know a very wealthy man gave them over a million dollars?', and the glory will be going to this man, and not to me. I want to do a work, for which I will receive the glory. If you refuse it, I will do my work."

The man came the next morning with his checkbook, and I said, "I don't think you're gonna understand this"! "But, I cannot receive your money." I gave him the reason why, and suggested other places where he might invest it for the Lord. The Lord was faithful, and is faithful, and the Lord has done a work, a marvelous work. We have never lacked funds for the work of God.

When we finished this building, it was totally paid for, we didn't owe a dime. The church doesn't owe a dime. God has continued to bless in marvelous ways, in such ways that only He can receive the glory.

Now I said all of that as a prelude to the opening verse of chapter thirty one, where as they were considering going down to Egypt, they were gonna send their ambassadors, and emissaries down to Egypt, to hire the Egyptians to come, and to help them in the battle against the Assyrians. The prophet Isaiah said...

Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and trust on horses, and in chariots, because they are many; and the horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, and neither seek the Lord (31:1)!

Now in the scripture, Egypt is always a type of the flesh. The warning here is against trusting in the arm of flesh. The exhortation is to trust in the Lord. Woe unto them who trust in the flesh, who go down to Egypt to seek their help, because they have a lot of chariots, and they have a lot of horsemen which were powerful weapons in warfare in those days. People who would rely upon the strength of the flesh, rather than upon the Lord. So we are constantly being exhorted in the scriptures to put our trust in the Lord. "It's better to trust in the Lord than to have confidence in man." We sing that song, "The arm of flesh will fail you, ye dare not trust your own!" So the prophet is pronouncing this woe, because they are going down to make this league with Egypt, in order to solicit their help against the Assyrians. Verse two is speaking of God.

Yet he also is wise, [God is wise, you can trust in the counsel of God.] he will bring evil, and will not call back his words: but will arise against the house of evildoers, and against the help of those that work iniquity (31:2).

"If you go down for Egypt to help, evil will come of it. They will not be a help to you. You rely upon the flesh, it will fail you. It's evil, they are evil people. Do not look to them for your help, or for your strength, but look to the Lord."

For the Egyptians are men and not God; their horses are flesh, and not spirit (31:3).

"So you're gonna be relying upon man, rather than relying upon God. You're gonna be relying upon flesh, rather than upon the Spirit."

And when the Lord stretches out his hand, both he that helps shall fall, and he that is helped shall fall down, and they shall all fail together (31:3).

If you trust in the flesh, it's gonna fail you, and you will fail with it. Put your confidence in the flesh, it's gonna let you down. It'll fall, and you will fall with it. So this very pointed warning by God against this alliance that would bring to them that trust in the flesh.

Now they didn't listen, they did go down to Egypt. They took money out of the treasury, and they hired the Egyptians to come and help them. But the Assyrians went down and wiped out the Egyptian army, and then came back and continued their siege of Jerusalem. The Egyptians did not help. The arm of flesh failed them.

For thus hath the Lord spoken unto me, Like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his prey, with a multitude of shepherds who are called forth against him, he will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them: so shall the Lord of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof (31:4).

So the first figure of God, is like a lion that has, say taken, and pounced on one of the sheep, from the shepherd's fold. The shepherds gather together with their sticks, and they come yelling, waving the sticks at the lion and throwing rocks. But he just, the lion stands there on the prey, not leaving the prey, but just standing there, and disregarding all of the noise that the shepherds are making as they're trying to frighten them off. He's got his prey, he's gonna keep it. So the Lord of hosts will come down and fight for mount Zion. Like a lion, a young lion, roaring on his prey! The multitude of shepherds may make a lot of noise, but they will not frighten the lion off. He'll come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof.

And as birds flying, so will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver it; and passing over he will preserve it (31:5).

Now this is an interesting prophecy and it just seems to be put in here, but the, the allegory is, is a little difficult perhaps to understand. But there was a very interesting thing that took place in 1917, in Jerusalem. It was sort of the end of WWI, and the Turks, were occupying at that time, the land of Palestine, and the

Turks were occupying the city of Jerusalem. General Allenby had come with the British forces, and he was taking the promised land, and he, driving out the Turks, and he had come to Jerusalem, and was setting up his siege against the city of Jerusalem. But being a Christian he, it hurt him to think of, of firing the artillery into the city and all, to drive the Turks out. But yet it was necessary to take the city of Jerusalem. But he want, didn't want to just destroy indiscriminately. So he sent some observation planes, flying over the city of Jerusalem, the old, and all there was, was the old city at that time, within the walls, and the Miashirim, the quarters that the Jews had built just outside. He sent these reconnaissance planes over Jerusalem in order to spot the encampments of the Turks within, in order that he could direct the fire of the artillery, and keep the damage to a minimum. However when these reconnaissance planes were flying over, the Turks felt that they were perhaps gonna be dropping bombs on them.

So in the night the Turks fled from Jerusalem. And he was able to take Jerusalem without firing a shot, and without destroying the city. The city was completely preserved. In light of that, the scripture becomes very interesting. "As birds flying, so will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem, defending also, He will deliver it, and passing over, He will preserve it." The city of Jerusalem was preserved, as the result of these observation planes frightening the Turks, and causing them to leave the city without a fight.

Turn ye unto him from whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted (31:6).

Now this is quite an indictment against Israel! Turn again, actually to God, they had revolted against God, they had revolted against the word of God. God had said, "Trust me I will deliver you! Don't go down to Egypt! Don't trust the Egyptians. Don't trust their army. Don't trust in their chariots. Trust me!" Their refusal to trust God, their insistence on this alliance with Egypt, is a revolting against the commandment of God. So the exhortation of the prophet is, "Turn back to Him, from whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted."

For in that day every man will cast away his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which your own hands have made unto you for a sin (31:7).

"When you see the work of God, when you see the deliverance of God, then you will forsake your idols that you have made." Now it is true that the Egyptians did not help. It is also true that when the Egyptian army was defeated, and they realized there could be no help, they did turn to the Lord. They did seek the Lord. There was a revival. There was a putting away of their idols, even as Isaiah predicted here.

God miraculously delivered them from the Assyrians. God wiped out the Assyrian army. We'll get that in a few more chapters, thirty seven, thirty eight. We'll also see the effect of the sinners in Zion when they saw what God's presence did to the Egyptians, I mean, to the Assyrians. Great fear came upon the sinners in Zion, when they saw God's devouring fire that destroyed the Assyrian army. So the prophecy of their getting rid of their idols that they had made, their idols of silver and gold.

Unfortunately as time went on, they went back to their idols, they returned to their idolatry, and ultimately their idolatry was their ruin. Any nation that forgets God, or any nation that forsakes God and turns to idols, turns to materialism, begins to worship materialism, or begins to worship pleasure, that nation is destined to go down. Those in Jerusalem did go back to idols, the worship of the idols. Jerusalem was destroyed by Babylon. The ruins of that city, remain to the present day.

You see, they had a custom of not rebuilding a city in the sense of you just come back and rebuild the houses and all, what they would do is just cover over the old city, and build on top of it. That is what the Tels are, the Tels are one city built on top of another, through the succeeding years. As the city would be destroyed, when they'd rebuild the city, they'd just sort of cover over the old city, and build on top of that. Thus in some of the Tels, their artificial mountains, you can dig down seventeen different civilizations, or, or cities, that were built on top of another over the years of time. You can count, and you can look at the various layers.

So when they came back from the Babylonian captivity, they followed that same practice. They just covered over the ruined houses that had been destroyed by the Babylonians, and they built on top of it. But you can go back, and you can dig down, and find those houses. They have dug down on the hill of Offal, to the houses that were destroyed by the Babylonians. Actually you can see a layer of charcoal from the fire of the Babylonians, when the Babylonians burned the city.

But the interesting thing, in the excavation of these houses in Jerusalem, they found hundreds, hundreds of idols. It, it confirmed what Jeremiah was saying that, “the people had turned to idolatry”. It’s there in the archeological digging.

Another interesting thing, in the diggings, in one of the houses they, they realized it was the house of a, a scribe, because they found the seal of the scribe. When the scribe would, he’s sort of a notary public of sorts, and when he would you know, attest to a document or whatever, they’d put the wax seal on it, and he had this little imprint, clay kind of a, pottery kind of a thing, with an imprint, his own imprint that he would press into it. Much like we have our corporate seals today. They found the seal of Shaphan, who is mentioned in Jeremiah. That, that seal is now in the museum of natural history there in Jerusalem. But it’s fascinating, because it’s the same fellow that Jeremiah spoke about. Just a few years ago they discovered the seal that he used.

I’ve been trying to get one of those enterprising Arabs over there to make up a copy of that. Because you know, those guys are clever, they can make copies of ancient coins, and ancient little artifacts and all. Of course you have to be careful when you buy stuff over there because it looks like it’s a thousand years old. But they just came, brought it from the factory that morning. They’re very clever at making antiques! But, I, I said, “If you would make a copy of that seal”, because they do have it there in the museum. “Now if you would make a copy of that”, I said, “every Christian tourist that came to Israel would want to take one of those home! Because it’s so significant!” Mentioned in the Bible in Jeremiah, and here they found it just recently, this Shaphan, the scribe. So, “In that day will they put away their idols.”

And then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword, but not of a mighty man; [The Assyrians will fall with the sword, but not the sword of a mighty man.] and the sword not of a man, shall devour him: and he will flee from the sword, and his young men will be taken captive (31:8).

Interesting prophecy, it was literally fulfilled. The Assyrians were slain. Two hundred thousand plus! But not with the sword of man. The angel of the Lord came into the camp of the Assyrians, and destroyed them. Those troops that did remain fled. The king fled back to Assyria.

And he shall pass over to his strong hold for fear, [He passed back into Assyria.] and his princes shall be afraid of the signs, saith the Lord, whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace is in Jerusalem (31:9).

So the fire of God, destroying and devouring the adversaries of God. The furnace of God in Jerusalem. We’ll get to that in chapter thirty seven, as we talk, as, as they talk about this devouring fire of God.

Chapter 32

Now in chapter thirty two we again have one of those glorious prophecies concerning the Messiah. It is a prophecy that looks ahead. Now from a biblical scenario, the earth has at least seven years left, maybe longer, but at least seven. For there were seventy sevens determined upon Israel, of which sixty nine have already been fulfilled. The seventieth seven remains to be filled. A seven year period, a seven year period. That seven year period will begin when God raptures the church. It will be a period in which the Holy Spirit will be again working directly with the Jewish people, in the Jewish nation. The end of that seven years will end in a great tribulation.

The last three and a half years, great tribulation, culminating in the battle of Armageddon, at which time, Jesus will come again with His church, and with His saints, to establish God’s kingdom upon the earth. He will set His foot that day, on the mount of Olives, it will split in the middle, a river will flow from out of the temple that’ll go on down to the Dead sea, and part of it will go over the Mediterranean. As it comes into the Dead sea, the waters of the Dead sea will be healed, and Jesus will reign there on mount Zion, in Jerusalem, for a thousand years. His church will live and reign with Him for that thousand years, in a renewed earth, in renewed bodies, in ideal perfect conditions. He will rule with a rod of iron. That is, it will be an enforced righteousness. People won’t be able to be bad, even if they want to.

We will be in our renewed bodies, or in our new bodies, our glorified bodies. We will have capacities of the glorified body, one of which I think, as we will be enforcers of righteousness, we will be rulers upon the earth with Him. We will rule, live, and reign with Him upon the earth, for a thousand years. In this righteous rule, we will be apportioned the area of the earth, over which we will be ruling, or controlling. I believe that

we will have the capacity of, of being able to know what is going on in a person's mind. There will be people who will live through the great tribulation, live into this kingdom age, will bear children and so forth, and will serve the Lord. Because, they will be forced to serve the Lord. I mean, it'll be a righteous reign, and a rod of iron.

So I think that when a person is thinking, "Hmm, maybe I'll rip that off!", but you'll be able to know what's in their mind, and say, "Hey!" So it will be an enforced kind of a reign. But it is going to be glorious in that the earth will be renewed, there will, the animals will no longer be wild. They will all be domesticated. There will be no wars. There will be no fears. There'll be no crimes. Every day will be a perfectly beautiful day. Ideal, God's reigning!

So here is the prediction, and it tells us some of the things we can expect. As we get to chapter thirty five, again he'll talk about this reign of Christ in this kingdom age, and some of the glories of the reign. But here in thirty two, he gives you some insights.

Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes [That's you!] shall rule in judgment. [The King, Jesus Christ, reigning in righteousness, and the princes ruling in judgment.] *And a man shall be as a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest;* [Or from the storm, a shelter from the storm.] *and as rivers of water in a dry place, and as a shadow of a great rock in a weary land.* [So Jesus will be the hiding place from the wind, the shelter from the storm, like a river of water in a dry place, like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.] *And [Physical conditions of man.] the eyes of them that see shall not be dim,* [Gonna get rid of these glasses, won't need them!] *the ears of them that hear shall hear.* [You won't be losing your, you won't have the aging problems and defects, perfect health, strong, healthy.] *The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be able to speak plainly.* [No physical infirmities.] *And in that day the vile person shall no more be called liberal (32:1-5),*

And the Bible says it, these liberal politicians, these liberal theologians. "The vile person will no more be called liberal." You'll call them what they are, vile!

the churl [The churl is a, is a person who is stingy, a person who is out for himself, gathers for himself, takes from others, the churl.] *will not be said to be bountiful. For the vile person will speak his villainy, and his heart will work iniquity, to practice hypocrisy, and to utter error against the Lord, to make empty the soul of the hungry, and he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail. And the instruments also of the churl are evil: for he devises wicked devices to destroy the poor with lying words, even when the needy speaks right (32:5-7).*

That vile person will be exposed for his villainy. That churl person who takes advantage of the poor people who enrich himself, who devices these wicked devices to destroy the poor.

But the liberal deviseth liberal things; and by liberal things he shall stand. So rise up, ye women that are at ease; [Now as, as Isaiah is making these prophecies, these gals are probably just lounging around there, and sort of you know, maybe treating the prophet in a rather snide way, and so he turns to them and says, "rise up ye women that are at ease".] *hear my voice, ye careless daughters; and give ear to my speech.* [So calling directly to these women that were just there making fun.] *Many days and years shall you be troubled, ye careless women: for the vintage fails,* ["You're gonna run into problems, there'll be no vintage, the crops are going to fail.] *the gathering, [The crops] will not come.* ["You're gonna go through some hard times!] *So tremble, ye women that are at ease; be troubled, ye careless ones: strip you, and make you bare, and gird sackcloth upon your loins.* ["Times of sorrow are coming for you who sort of take lightly the warnings of the prophets of God."] *You shall beat on your breasts,* [A more literal translation, as a person who is often distraught over circumstances, just, "Oh no!", you know the beating on your chest is what is meant here.] *for the pleasant fields,* ["As you look at what were once pleasant fields, and you see the barrenness, you see the, the emptiness."] *and the vines that were once fruitful, that are now bare. Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briars; yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city (32:8-13).*

The houses of the city will be left desolate. The Jews will be carried away captive. "Upon the land of my people", where there was once crops, it'll just be weeds, thorns, and briars, instead of a fruitful field.

And the palaces will be forsaken; [The leaders will be taken away captive, and houses empty, it'll be a very doleful place.] *the multitude of the city shall be left; the forts and the towers shall be for dens for ever,*

[That is the wild beasts, the foxes and so forth, will occupy the forts and the towers.] *and the fields will have wild donkeys upon them; Until [This desolation, until,] the spirit be poured upon us from high, when the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for the forest. [So this desolation until God pours out His Spirit, and His blessing.] Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness in the fruitful field. And [I love this verse, one of my favorites!] the work of righteousness shall be peace (32:14-17);*

That is always true, the work of righteousness is peace. Righteousness is being right with my fellow man. Godliness is being right with God, but righteousness is being right with my fellow man. That is, living with my fellow man as God would have me to live. Living right, doing the right thing. The effect of righteousness is peace. If you're living in a right relationship with your fellow man, which depends upon living in a right relationship with God, then you have peace. The effect of that is peace in your heart, in your life.

and the effect of righteousness [The work of righteousness was, is peace, the effect of righteousness,] is quietness and assurance for ever (32:17).

You know, if you're doing the right thing, you can just have that quietness and assurance. I love that quietness and assurance that God gives to us, when we've done the right thing. "Well you know, God will take care of it. I've done what was right." The effect of that righteousness just is, is quietness, this rest, this assurance that I have that God is gonna work.

And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places; So when it shall hail, coming down on the forest; and the city shall be [a low] in a low place. Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, [That is, sowing in an area that's well watered.] that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the donkey (32:18-20).

So the blessings of living in righteousness. The peace, the assurance, and the fulfillment, the prosperity that one experiences when they live for God, doing the right thing.

We'll continue chapter thirty three next week, and then chapter thirty four, we get into the day of the Lord, and Armageddon. Interesting studies coming up.