

Isaiah Chapter 11 the King and the Man

by A.B. Simpson

The sermon emphasizes the coming of Jesus Christ as a righteous ruler, a hiding place from the storms of life, and a source of refreshing and quietness.

Scripture: Isaiah 32:1

Topics: "Righteousness of Christ", "Compassionate Savior"

Description

A.B. Simpson emphasizes the dual nature of Jesus Christ as both the righteous King and the compassionate Man, drawing from Isaiah 11. He contrasts the oppressive reign of kings like Ahaz with the promise of a King who will rule in righteousness and justice, providing hope and refuge. Simpson highlights that Jesus, as the Man, embodies human empathy and understanding, offering shelter from sin and life's storms. He encourages believers to reflect Christ's love and support to others, becoming sources of refuge and refreshment in a weary world. Ultimately, the sermon calls for a deeper relationship with Christ, who is both our King and our compassionate Savior.

Transcript

"Behold a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." (Is. 32: 1, 2.)

We have here Isaiah's fifth picture of the Lord Jesus.

I. The King.

"Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness and princes shall rule in judgment."

In this land of freedom it is hard for us to realize the cruel horrors of ancient despotism. The traveler who gazes with admiration on the splendid architecture of the cities of the past, can scarcely believe that these magnificent ruins were cemented by the blood and the tears of millions of toiling slaves, who spent their lives in unrequited drudgery to adorn the palaces and tombs of cruel tyrants. But an object lesson has just been presented to the world, even in this enlightened age, which gives a touch of realism to these nightmares of history. In the public squares of St. Petersburg we see a multitude of men, women and children assembled to plead at the footstool of their king for liberty and protection, in words so pathetic as to move a heart of stone, and met by squadrons of cavalry, batteries of artillery and a rain of murderous

bullets, drenching the snows beneath their feet with streams of innocent blood.

Such a king was the cruel Ahaz of Judah. After years of wickedness and oppression, he at last sold his country to Assyria for an alliance that would protect him from his northern neighbors; and finally crowned the wickedness of his life by setting up a heathen altar in the temple of Jerusalem, and making his own children pass through the fire as living sacrifices to the hideous idol of Moloch. The epitaph he left on the page of history is like a great black note of exclamation, "In the time of his distress he trespassed yet more and more; thus did that king Ahaz."

Out of the darkness and sorrow of such times rose Isaiah's vision of the King of righteousness and peace. Like a burst of sunlight or a rainbow arch, after a dark stormy cloud had passed, our text shines with celestial benignity, "Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness and princes shall rule in judgment." While, doubtless, the immediate reference of the prophecy was to the good king Hezekiah, who succeeded Ahaz; yet, remotely and supremely, it points to the coming Messiah. He is the only One that can completely fulfil the prophetic ideal. Solomon could draw the picture better than he could live it. The seventy-second Psalm, which probably he wrote, is God's portrait of earth's true King, coming, we rejoice to believe, before very long, when it shall at last be true, "He shall judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with judgment. He shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. In His days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endures. All kings shall fall down before Him. All nations shall serve Him; for He shall deliver the needy when he cries, the poor also, and him that has no helper. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence, and precious shall their blood be in His sight." (Ps. 72: 2, 4, 7, 11, 12, 14.)

Let us notice some particulars concerning this glorious King.

1. He will be a righteous ruler. Righteousness is the only true foundation for any throne. Selfishness, injustice, political corruption, the prostituting of political influence and high position for ambition or gain can bring only demoralization and ruin to any people. The declension of the world's decaying nations, as they have been well called, can all be traced to the corrupt fountains where the processes of demoralization began; and all history is but a commentary on the sacred words, "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people," or, Isaiah's own significant words, "The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever."

2. He will have a righteous court. "Princes shall rule in judgment." The officers of His kingdom shall be as upright as their King. These officers He is choosing and training today from all the ranks of His redeemed ones. The princes who are to share with Him that coming kingdom are being saved and sanctified, and educated in the church now. As David gathered about him, in the years of his exile, the refugees, who flocked to his standard from all the land, and had but one merit amid all their sins and crimes, namely, that they were true to David, and whom he welcomed, trained, and afterwards appointed as the princes and rulers of his kingdom; so Christ, today, our King in disguise, and almost exiled, is gathering around His standard the sinful men who accept Him as their Captain and Lord, and who are fighting the battles of His militant kingdom. But these shall, by and by, sit down with Him upon His throne and be the princes and rulers of the millennium, and He shall say to one and another, "You have been faithful over a few things, be a ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord."

3. His will be a reign of love. "A man shall be a hiding place from the tempest, and a covert from the storm; as rivers of water in a dry place, and as a shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

4. He will establish proper standards of character and conduct. Verses 3-8 describe a condition of things in which the masks of our present social system shall be turned away, and men and women shall stand out in their true character. "The vile person shall no more be called liberal, nor the knave bountiful." All disguises will be removed, all counterfeits will be detected and truth as well as righteousness shall evermore prevail. Today almost everything is false and the world is waiting for its true King to turn society upside down and put things in their true places.

5. The fruits of the Spirit will fill this blessed age with beauty and blessing. "Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest, then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field, and the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever" (Is. 32:15-17.)

II. The Man.

Human life is not all politics. We need more than a king and a good government. We need sympathy, love, help and a human heart to which we can go and on which we can lean with our sorrows and our needs. Back of this throne there is a Man, and His heart is as human as His nature is divine. How real and perfect that humanity appears in the gospel story of the Christ! Look at Him in the gradual development of His infancy, childhood and youth -- a real child! Look at Him in His boyhood as His mind begins to open to the light of truth and the knowledge of His Father's word and will like any other growing intelligence. See Him in the workshop at Nazareth, a working man like His toiling brothers! See Him as He sits upon the stone at Jacob's well, or sleeps in the "hinder part of the ship" worn out with weariness! Behold the Man as He weeps at Bethany, as He struggles in Gethsemane, as He dies on Calvary! Watch Him as He comes forth from the tomb, in His interview with Mary, in His walk to Emmaus, in His tender treatment of Peter and Thomas, and it will help you to realize how much we owe to the humanity of Jesus Christ. We have indeed in Him "a Daysman, who can lay His hand upon us both." He is bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, heart of our heart, brother of our race.

But the prophetic picture is even stronger than this. In the original it is "the man." There is but one Man who fully represents the race; one Man who has made it acceptable to God, and forever shall sit upon the throne of the universe in our likeness and our nature. He is the Son of Man, the Man above all other men who has met our obligations, paid our debts, settled our liabilities, worked out the problem of our salvation, and redeemed, and restored, and glorified the human race.

Three things are predicated of this wondrous Man in the prophet's vision.

1. He is a "hiding place from the wind and a refuge from the storm." He is a refuge from our guilt and sin. He saves us from the wrath of God and the penalty of our guilt. As a man He bore for all men the punishment of sin, and by accepting His atonement we are free. This is the old gospel of substitution. But there is no other way to escape the tempest which is surely gathering against all unforgiven sin, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness of men" and the sentence is "tribulation, anguish, indignation and wrath upon every soul of man that does evil." But this Man has come between us and our sins. For every soul that will receive Him, He offers a shelter, not only from the judgments of God but from the accusing of Satan, and the very memory of our own heart and the condemnation of our own conscience.

He is a "hiding place" from temptation, "a way to escape" into which we may run and hide while He meets the devil for us as our conquered foe.

He is a "hiding place" from our sorrows, a refuge from the storms of life, and a comforter and deliverer in every hour of trial and of need. Is there any one who reads these lines in a place of difficulty, perplexity or extremity, where all other help has failed? where you have lost confidence in yourself and no human hand can save and no human heart may care? There is One who loves, who understands, who pities, who can take us at our worst, and turn the curse into a blessing, and change the shadow of death into the morning of hope and victory.

Indeed, Christ cannot do much with us until we reach the end of ourselves. The greatest victories of His grace come to us when we reach the end of self.

A writer tells of the origin of the chrysanthemum; that the first chrysanthemum sprang from an abortion in the vegetable world. A little plant, that bore only leaves, failed through some blight to bring a leaf to perfection, and instead it grew into a tinted form half way between a leaf and a flower. A gardener caught the freak of nature and developed it until it became the glorious autumn flower which almost rivals the rose itself in variety and splendor. It was out of its failure that the new life was born. And so it is when we come to the place of despair we often emerge on the higher plane of resurrection life and victory. The same writer tells of a beautiful trailing plant that also owes its beauty to a similar cause. In its former life it was a stout and self-contained shrub, but under the stress of a storm its roots were almost washed away; and it was left trailing and perishing on the ground. Then it began to lean upon a supporting trunk, and gradually crept up its side until it developed into a trailing plant, slender and unable to support its own weight, but trained into forms of rich beauty and delicacy.

Even so, when we lose our strength, and are unable to stand alone, we grow into new strength by learning to lean on Him. Let us bring to Him our weakness, our sin, the things that no one else will take, and we shall find a friend who will do for us what no other friend could do, and turn life's failures into heaven's triumphs.

2. "As rivers of water in a dry place." Christ is the fountain of refreshing. These rivers of water represent the blessed influences of the Holy Spirit which all spring from Him. We know something, perhaps, of that heavenly Comforter. Perhaps He led you to the Savior and brought you the sense of His forgiveness and acceptance. But there is much more for you. Perhaps He has come to abide in your heart as a personal indwelling presence. But there is still much more for you. There are rivers of living water. It is one thing to receive the Spirit. It is another thing to be filled with the Spirit in every avenue of our being and in every attribute of His being. It is still another thing to have these rivers of water in a dry place. We expect the Holy Spirit to come to us in the high places of life, in the closet, in the sanctuary, in the hour of holy ecstasy. But life is largely made up of very different places, hard places, places of toil, failure, conflict, desertion, discouragement. These are the dry places where the rivers of water are promised to flow. Do we need them? Have we received that blessed Comforter, who gives zest to drudgery, joy in sorrow, and enables us even to glory in tribulation? Have we, with Achsah learned to claim not only the upper springs of heavenly communion and high achievement, but the nether springs that run through the streets of toil, the marts of trade, the monotony of the kitchen and the pain and agony of sickness, bereavement and wrong? All this is for us in the friendship of the Man of sorrows, the Man that not only knew what sorrow was Himself, but still comes to be with us in our sorrows too.

3. The "shadow of the great rock in a weary land." This speaks to us of quietness and rest. Life is not all in the open. It needs its quiet hours, the place of retreat, silence and shade. Have we found and proved this promise? "The Lord is your shade upon your right hand. The sun shall not smite you by day, nor the moon by night."

The figure of a great rock is beautiful and expressive. A little rock becomes heated in the burning sunshine and only heats you the more. But the great rock absorbs the heat on one side, and has on the other the cool shade where you can sit down and be refreshed and rested. So human friends are like the little rock, filled with their own troubles, and with little leisure or sympathy for us. But He is always at leisure to hear our complaint and bear our burden. In that night when the shadow of the cross was hanging heavily over His heart, not one word escaped His lips about His troubles, but His own message was, "Let not your heart be troubled." It is not until we reach the dry place and the weary land that we ever know the preciousness of Christ and the sympathy of this blessed Man.

In conclusion let us not forget that if Jesus has been all this to us He expects us to be all this to others. Are we places of refuge to whom poor sinners come? Are we rivers of water refreshing the sad lives that are all around us? Are we as a shadow of a great rock in a weary land to the fainting pilgrims who need our sympathy and help? Lord, help us to know this blessed Man and to minister Him to a broken-hearted world.

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