

(Isaiah) Our Beautiful King

by David Guzik

The sermon explores the promise of a coming righteous king, Jesus Christ, and the spiritual renewal that will come through His reign, reminding believers to trust in God during times of trial and uncertainty.

Duration: 52:25

Scripture: Isaiah 32:1-33, Jeremiah 23:5

Topics: "Spiritual Renewal", "Gods Attributes"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of focusing on the Lord and His attributes. He encourages the listeners to meditate on the images of the Lord as a river, a sheltering rock, and a refuge from the storm. The preacher reminds the audience that knowing oneself or understanding one's situation is not the key to life, but rather knowing and experiencing more of the Lord through His word. He also highlights the blessings that come from spiritual renewal, such as improved vision, increased understanding, and the ability to speak clearly. The sermon concludes with a plea for God's grace and salvation in times of trouble.

Transcript

Isaiah chapter 32. We're talking in the broad context in the book of Isaiah of this time when the empire of Assyria was threatening the southern kingdom of Judah. Now again, we remind ourselves that at this time, the people of God, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, were split up into two nations because of a civil war.

The northern nation was known as Israel and its capital was Samaria. The Assyrian empire conquered the northern kingdom of Israel and dispersed them and sent them off to exile. The southern kingdom was known as Judah and the Assyrians invaded the land of Judah.

And of course, this was a tremendous calamity for the people of Judah, for the king, for the people, how they would respond to this, how they would deal with it. Would they trust in God? Would they trust in themselves? Would they trust in an ungodly nation such as the Egyptians? You know, a lot of times you never know what you really trust in life until some calamity comes upon you. And these are the kind of issues that Isaiah is dealing with.

Now, in the very end part of Isaiah chapter 31, he spoke of the end of the Assyrian invasion. And one of the characteristics of prophecy in the Bible is that it can jump forward and backwards from time to time. It's

not a in a line kind of thing.

It's not a strictly chronological thing. So when we read in Isaiah 32, verse one, behold, a king will reign in righteousness and princes will rule with justice. We understand the promise of a coming righteous king.

But it's likely that the prophecy of Isaiah chapters 32 and 33 took place before the prophecy of chapter 30 and 31. Now, both of them have in mind looking forward to this time of the Assyrian invasion. But Isaiah chapter 30 and 31 are set in the time of Hezekiah the king while the invasion is taking place.

Chapter 32 seems to look at the coming of Hezekiah the king. Most commentators believe that the king who will reign in righteousness, at least in the most immediate sense, is Hezekiah. And since it says that he will reign, this prophecy may have been given at the beginning of Isaiah's prophetic career during the reign of King Ahaz, who was the predecessor to King Hezekiah.

Now, Hezekiah certainly fulfills the prophecy that a king will reign in righteousness. Let me read to you from 2 Kings chapter 18 about this man, Hezekiah. It's written of him, and he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father David had done.

He trusted in the Lord God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any who were before him. For he held fast to the Lord, he did not depart from following him, but kept his commandments which the Lord had commanded Moses. Now, wouldn't you love that to be said of you? It's said of Hezekiah, truly, that a king will reign in righteousness.

But whenever you read that in the Bible, I know what many of you, hopefully, were thinking of. You were thinking of, you know, it's probably speaking of something even bigger than that, right? Something even more glorious. It's probably pointing us towards a righteous king, such as Hezekiah, to the righteous king, Jesus Christ, who's the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

Jeremiah chapter 23, verse 5, announces this about our Messiah, Jesus Christ. It says, Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, that I will raise to David a branch of righteousness. A king shall reign and prosper and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.

So, all in all, it seems that these chapters were delivered in the time when King Ahaz reigned, having in mind in advance the threat from the Assyrians that would come and the godly leadership of Hezekiah through it. But ultimately, it takes a look at the reign of Jesus Christ in His kingdom. I love what it says there in verse 1. Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, and princes will rule with justice.

You know, it isn't enough, it's never enough, to have a righteous king. The king must have helpers, princes under him, who will also rule with justice. Now, there's something you should know about this word, princes, in the Hebrew.

It doesn't necessarily have to do with someone who's the son of a king. It means a lesser ruler, not the ultimate ruler, who's known as the king, but a lesser ruler, a sub-ruler, that's a prince. And Hezekiah had such loyal princes in his day.

You go to 2 Kings 19, you can read about Eliakim, Shebna, the elders of the priests, even Isaiah himself was a man who was helpful to Hezekiah. Now, Hezekiah needed to have these men around him, these righteous princes. Friends, if Hezekiah, the righteous king, points to Jesus, then who are Jesus' princes? I'm looking at them.

You know, we are His chosen generation, His royal priesthood. It says in the book of Revelation that God has made us kings and priests to our God, and we shall reign on the earth. Friends, there's a destiny here, announcing about Jesus Christ, where it says a king will reign in righteousness, but there's also a destiny for you, where it says, and princes will rule with justice.

I want you to think just for a moment about this destiny that you have to rule and reign with Jesus Christ over an earth filled with the survivors of the great tribulation that are allowed to continue living on this earth. God has a place for you there. God has a role, a position for you to fulfill.

And I'm here to tell you tonight that some of the things that you go through in your life that don't seem to make any sense whatsoever. Do you understand what I'm talking about? You've gone through a trial, and you say, what's this? You know, sometimes you think, oh yeah, Lord, I know what you're trying to teach me in this. I know this and this.

You might say, you might be wrong, but at least you think you know, right? No, okay, I can connect the dots here, Lord. Other times you look at it, and you can't make any sense of it. And you cry out to the Lord.

Lord, I thought you loved me. I don't understand what you're doing. God, oh.

Friends, God's purpose in your life is a lot bigger than blessing you in the here and now. He's training you for a role in the world to come. And no wonder you don't understand.

You don't know what role you're going to play in the world to come. You don't know where and how Jesus Christ is going to use you in the administration of his world. But don't you think he knows how to train you? Corporations, they're real big on training, aren't they? You know, seminars and conferences and this and that.

And I suppose they probably miss as much as they hit, but at least they have the idea that you've got to be trained. Don't you think the Lord Jesus Christ knows how to train you for what your destiny will be in glory? Of course he does. There's a story about a man who was going through a terrible time in his life.

Just awful. Everything was falling apart. Job, home, health, everything was collapsing around.

And he fell into a severe depression. He cried out to God. God, why are you allowing all this? He couldn't understand.

He couldn't make any sense of it. Cried out to God day after day. He just seemed to grow more and more depressed.

But the only thing he could do to help was go out and take walks. So one day he was walking through his neighborhood and they were building a church. And it's going to be an old fashioned church with a pretty high steeple.

And they're building the steeple out of stone. And so they looked like the work was just about finished and the guy wasn't doing anything. He lost his job.

And so he's walking around and he said, just kind of sit down and watch the workers. And he watches this guy shape this piece of stone. And he's got a chisel.

He's got him chip, chip, chip, chip. And he's just working. It's down on the sidewalk.

There's nowhere else. What's he doing? Is this like practice? Just working on the stone? I don't get this. He watches him, watches him, watches him.

Finally, maybe after an hour, he goes up and he says, Mr. I just got to ask you, what are you doing? I mean, the building's all finished. And the guy says, no, no, no, no, no. The building's not finished.

The steeple's not done. And he says, I'm shaping this down here so it'll fit in up there. He points up to one solitary place up on the steeple that needed a stone to be filled.

Well, friends, the Lord's doing his shaping work in your life down here that you'll fit into the place that he has you in the world beyond. And so if you don't understand it, don't sweat it. That's OK.

God didn't tell you to understand. Just trust him through it. Behold, a king will reign in righteousness and princes will rule with justice.

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. The eyes of those who see will not dim and the ears of those who hear will listen. Also, the heart of the rash will understand knowledge and the tongue of the stammerers will be ready to speak plainly.

You know, the spiritual renewal that God was going to bring during the reign of Hezekiah would be glorious. It would be like rivers of water in a dry place. It would be like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

You say, what's that? Well, think of somebody walking through the desert and there's hills and there's things all around and the sun is just beating down on you and you're making your way along. The sun is so hot. Then all of a sudden, as you're walking along, you come into a place where the sun is shaded because of a big, huge rock that's up there in the sky, up there on the ground.

And the sun in the sky is being shaded. All of a sudden, for the next half hour, hour, you're walking in the shade. It's cool down there.

It's almost as if the coolness of that rock is radiating down and you're preserving the sun. It's just so refreshing. That's what the Lord is going to be to his people.

It's going to be like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. It's going to be like water in a dry place. And friends, that's the glorious reign of Jesus Christ in our lives.

He's a shelter from the storm. Did you read there in verse two where it says he'll be a cover from the tempest? Do you need a shelter from the storm? Jesus Christ, the righteous king, wants to be that for you. Do you need to have that water in a dry place? Maybe you're in a dry place tonight.

Jesus Christ, the righteous king, wants to be that dry place. Do you need a place where you're under the shadow of a great rock in a weary land? Maybe you feel like the heat and the intensity of God's anger and wrath is beating down upon you. Jesus Christ wants to put himself in the way.

You know, when the rock is making a shadow, the rock is catching the sun and it's providing you with a shelter. Well, Jesus Christ stood in the way, didn't he? He said, I'll stand in the way of the Father's wrath. He stood before you and the Father said, Father, shine your wrath, shine your judgment upon me.

I'll take it. Let the shadow come upon my child. Jesus Christ, the righteous king.

Friends, it's a glorious thing that he offers. And it's not only that, if you notice here in verse three, the eyes of those who see will not be dim. The ears of those who hear will listen.

It's a marvelous blessing. They'll be able to see better than ever. If you notice here, it even says, verse four, that the heart of the rash will understand knowledge.

This spiritual renewal will promote trust in God's word. And because of that, hearts will be changed and God's word will bless in miraculous ways. If you see at the end of verse four, the tongue of the stammerers will be ready to speak plainly.

That's glorious. People didn't speak. The people only stammered.

They'll speak. The blessings go on here. The foolish person will no longer be called generous, nor the miser said to be bountiful.

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. 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.

But a generous man devises generous things, and by generosity he shall stand. Friends, you know what this is basically saying here? You know what the blessing is that Isaiah is prophesying of? Not going to be more fakes and phonies. A foolish man, you're going to see him as foolish.

A generous, righteous man, you're going to see him as generous and righteous. Spiritual reality will be exposed for all to see. No more would there be a deception by appearances.

If a man is foolish, he's going to be exposed as foolish. Not only the foolishness of the foolish would be exposed, but so also would the generosity of the generous. Righteousness and wickedness will each be seen for what they are, and they'll be regarded accordingly.

Friends, that's a blessing. You know, when there's so much fakery and phoniness, and sometimes the foolish look righteous and sometimes the righteous look foolish, it's hard to figure it all out, right? God's going to sort it all out. Do you trust that? Right now, the tares are growing among the wheat, and we can pull our hair out trying to pull the tares out.

God says, don't worry about it. Let it grow. He'll sort it out at the end.

The righteous will be known as righteous. The foolish will be known as foolish. God knows how to do that.

And then he calls us to prepare for the coming of the Spirit. Look at it here, verse 9. Rise up, you women who are at ease. Hear my voice, you complacent daughters.

Give ear to my speech. In a year and some days you will be troubled, you complacent women. For the vintage will fail, the gathering will not come.

Tremble, you women who are at ease. Be troubled, you complacent ones. Strip yourselves, make yourselves bare, and gird sackcloth on your waists.

Now again, this seems to be before the Assyrian invasion ever touched Judah. And Isaiah looks and he says, you guys can't see it, but it's coming. Hey, you complacent women.

Hey, you, as he goes on there, the women who are at ease. You need to get ready for the righteous king. You need to get ready for the calamity that's going to come.

I think there's very interesting wording used here. Look carefully here at verse 9 where it says, rise up, you women who are at ease. Now, is that used in a positive or a negative sense? In this phrase it's used in a negative sense.

The idea is that they're lazy, they're self-absorbed, they're self-interested, they're indulgent. And then later on in verse 9 it says, hear my voice, you complacent daughters. Again, is that a compliment? No, it's a rebuke, it's a criticism.

Now, what's very interesting is if you take the Hebrew words that are translated at ease and complacent, those same two words are translated differently in the very same chapter. Look at verse 18 of this very same chapter. It says, my people will dwell in a peaceful habitation in secure dwellings.

At ease is the same Hebrew word used for secure in secure dwellings. And then when it says complacent, it's the same word used in verse 18 for peaceful habitation. Now, you know what I think this is showing us? Is that there's nothing wrong with feeling secure.

There's nothing wrong with feeling undisturbed. As long as your trust is solidly based in the Lord. You know, you can be at ease in the Lord, praise God.

You can be satisfied and peaceful in God, glory to Him. But you can be at ease in the flesh, right? You can be indulgent and lazy and self-absorbed. And just living your life for your own comfort instead of for the glory of Jesus Christ.

I think God wants us to have a sense of rest and peace and security in Him, but not in ourselves and not to live our lives for that. No, instead, these women of Judah that he speaks to, instead of an indulgent, self-focused life, they're going to be required to tremble, to be troubled. They're going to put on the clothing of mourning because of the Assyrian invasion.

Look at it here, verse 12, it describes it more. People shall mourn upon their breasts for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine. On the land of my people will come up thorns and briars.

Yes, on all the happy homes and the joyous city. Because the palaces will be forsaken. The bustling city will be deserted.

The forts and the towers will become lairs forever. A joy of wild donkeys, a pasture of flocks. He says, listen, there's going to come, because of the Assyrian invasion, whole communities are going to be wiped out and made ghost towns.

The only thing that's going to be there are a bunch of wild donkeys or a few flocks there. People aren't going to live there anymore. It's going to touch everybody.

Look at verse 13. Yes, on all the happy homes and the joyous city. And friends, the tough times are going to touch everywhere.

Isaiah is saying, look, the righteous king is going to come, but so are the Assyrians. And they're going to come and they're going to bring all kinds of trial, all kinds of trouble. It's going to look very dark, very desperate for the people of God.

It's going to look like everything's lost. Then look at verse 15. Circle this one.

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. You know, friends, God would use the invasion of the Assyrians. God would use the tough times. God would use the humble mourning of his people to prepare them for an outpouring of his spirit.

He says, listen, I know it's bad now. I know it's going to get worse and it's going to stay that way for how long? Until my spirit is poured out upon you. I love that phrase until the spirit is poured upon us from on high.

Friends, God would use all that, but I want you to notice the first word until. I mean, it was only the spirit of God that could make the difference. The tough times would last until the spirit was poured out.

That's going to be the critical difference. It's not going to be the engineering of man. It's not going to be a program.

It's not going to be a human plan. It's going to be until the spirit's poured out. Might I say the same is true in your life.

Your life's going to have an emptiness, a missing aspect, a lack of power. You're going to have a lack of vitality in your walk with the Lord until the spirit is poured out upon you. You say, well, how do I get that? Ask the Lord for it.

Have somebody help you ask for it. Lay hands on you. Pray for you.

Say, God, I want to receive the fullness of your spirit. I want everything you have for me. Lord, I think my life is going to be messed up until the spirit is poured out upon me.

Lord, I want it. I need it. Won't you pour out your spirit upon me? Jesus said, you ask God like that, you're going to get an answer.

Until the spirit is poured out upon us. It's poured out, my friends. God wanted to do more than scatter a few drops of his mercy and blessing.

You know, it's all him. Showers of blessings. Showers of blessing.

We need mercy drops around us or fall. But for the showers we plea. That's what here the prophets asking for is saying, Lord, pour out upon us your spirit.

He wants the spirit to be poured out upon us. And finally, I love this last phrase in here. Until the spirit is poured upon us from on high.

Friends, that's where the true outpouring of the Holy Spirit comes. It doesn't come from among men or because of men's efforts. It doesn't come because you whip a bunch of people up into an emotionalism.

It doesn't come through boulder roller or human engineering. It comes as the people of God simply come before God, their father, and ask him to send the spirit of God just as he promised. If it doesn't come from heaven, if it doesn't come from on high, then we don't want it.

But we say, Lord, pour out your spirit upon us from on high. What's going to happen when that happens? Look, verse 15. And the wilderness becomes a fruitful field and the fruitful field is counted as a forest.

Isn't that beautiful? When the Holy Spirit is poured out, what was barren and desolate before is now full of life. It's full of fruitfulness. True fruitfulness comes from the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

That's how you're going to have fruitfulness in your life. You've been sweating. You've been trying to make it.

We had a brother share with us this weekend. You don't see fruit made in a factory. It grows on a tree.

It's fruit. You've been working. You've been making your efforts.

God wants it to be the outpouring of the Spirit of God in your life. You say, well, okay, you know, I'm already fruitful. I guess I don't need the Holy Spirit.

I guess I don't need that outpouring of the Spirit. No, look at it here. And the wilderness becomes a fruitful field and the fruitful field is counted as a forest.

Well, you're a fruitful field? Fine. God will make you even more. He'll make you a forest.

That's a step up. You see, when the Holy Spirit is poured out, what was good before miraculously becomes even better. How we need to come before God constantly, say, pour out your spirit to receive it and to go forth boldly, trusting God that he's poured out his spirit upon us and living that bold kind of life before him.

If you want to see some blessings brought by the Spirit of God, take a look here. Starting at verse 16, then justice will dwell in the wilderness and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. The work of righteousness will be peace and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever.

My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation and secure dwellings and in quiet resting places. Though hail comes down on the forest and the city is brought low in humiliation. Blessed are you who sow beside all waters, who send out freely the feet of the ox and the donkey.

You see, my friends, when God's spirit is poured out upon his people, this is what it's like. Justice, righteousness, peace, quietness and assurance forever. And friends, this tells us something.

We shouldn't be satisfied with what claims to be of the Spirit of God, but isn't marked by justice and righteousness and peace and quietness and assurance forever. When the Spirit of God is at work, that's what you're going to see. Might I say, if you lack these things tonight, you can come and ask the Lord to pour out his spirit upon you.

Friends, are you lacking justice? Are you lacking righteousness? Do you need quietness and assurance in your life? Are you looking for a peaceful habitation, for a secure dwelling, a quiet resting place to get to the Spirit of God in your life? You notice he also says there that my people will dwell in a peaceful habitation and secure dwellings, though hail comes down on the forest and the city is brought low in humiliation.

When God's spirit is poured out, we live on a principle higher than circumstances. If others feel the pelting hail or are brought low in humiliation, it doesn't matter.

We're living on a different principle, aren't we? We're not living on the principle of circumstances. We're living on the principle of being blessed by the poured out spirit of God. And so you know how blessed you are? You're sowing beside all waters.

You know, if you're planting your crops right by a river, they're going to be watered, aren't they? It's always going to be water there. It's always going to be fruitful. That's what God promises, this blessing by His Spirit.

Chapter 33 carries on the same kind of thinking, but as is often the case, Isaiah is switching the scenes quickly. Now he's speaking to the Assyrians where he says in Isaiah 33, verse 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.

And when you make an end of dealing treacherously, they will deal treacherously with you. Now again, this prophecy, spoken before the Assyrian invasion, shows that this seemingly unstoppable army will be in fact stopped. Those who did the plundering will be plundered.

And those who dealt treacherously with others will be dealt treacherously. And those who dealt treacherously with others will be dealt treacherously by others, I should say. Now don't we find that this is a principle that we've been finding as we've been going through 1 Samuel on Sunday mornings.

Jesus said it in Matthew 7, Judge not that you not be judged, for with what judgment you judge, you will be judged. And with the same measure you use, it will be measured back to you. Friends, you plunder others, God will send a plunderer to you.

You deal treacherously with others, God will send something treacherous to you. God has every right to deal with us as we have dealt with other people. Now, there's some people here tonight, and I don't think of any particular individuals, I'm just thinking of the law of averages.

But I suppose there's some here tonight that if you really understand what that means, you're not going to sleep very well tonight. You mean the Lord's going to treat me like I've been treating others? Oh Lord, please, no Lord. Why don't you get on your face for the Lord, repent, and go out and start dealing with those people the way you would want the Lord to deal with you.

Verse 2. Oh Lord, be gracious to us. We have waited for you. Be their arm every morning, our salvation also in the time of trouble.

At the noise of the tumult, the people shall flee. When you lift yourself up, the nations shall be scattered. And your plunderers shall be gathered like the gathering of the caterpillar.

As the running to and fro of locusts, he shall run upon them. You know, in light of the Assyrian threat and the long for deliverance of a righteous king, God's people, they're no longer looking to the Egyptians. They're no longer looking to themselves.

Now they look to the Lord and they cry out, Oh Lord, be gracious to us. Then they say, we've waited for you. Can you say that before the Lord? Lord, I've waited for you.

And he says, be their arm every morning. Lord, we want you to be my arm. The arm is the limb of strength.

God, I want you to be my strength. I want you to act on my behalf. I'm going to show I'm going to trust in you, Lord, and let you show yourself strong.

And we can do this, my friends, if you take a look here, it says in verse three, when you lift yourself up, the nation shall be scattered. You know, God's people can have a confident expectation of the Lord. Their prayer is filled with a wonderful expectancy.

I expect it, Lord. I expect that when I trust in you, when I cry out to you, you're going to bless. You're going to extend forth your hand.

It's because you love me, God. And he goes on, verse five. Now he starts praising.

The Lord is exalted, for he dwells on high. He's filled Zion with justice and righteousness. Wisdom and knowledge will be the stability of your times and the strength of salvation.

The fear of the Lord is his treasure. You know, the tough times were hard, but they brought God's people to a different, better view of who he is. Now the Lord is exalted.

You know, there's two ways that the Lord can be exalted, right? You can be at the same level you are, right? And God can be lifted up before you. That's one way God is exalted in your midst. Or how about this one? God stays always where he was, and you lower yourself.

Then God seems taller, doesn't he? Maybe for some of us, we just look too big for our britches. We need to humble ourselves before the Lord. Humble them and realize that he's exalted, he dwells on high.

Look at it there in verse five. He's filled Zion with justice and righteousness. God's people pray this in anticipation of the answer.

I mean, he hasn't actually done it yet, but they're saying he has. He has filled Zion with justice and righteousness, wisdom and knowledge. This is before the Assyrians ever came.

They're saying he's done it already. My friends, you don't have to wait until God does it all to give him thanks. You can, by faith, give him thanks ahead of time.

You know, right now, whatever you're facing, whatever trial you're in, whatever you want the Lord to deliver you out of, thank God in confident expectation for his answer ahead of time. Lord, I'm just going to start getting the thanks out of the way right now, Lord. Before you've ever done it, you do this with people sometimes, don't you? You ask them to do a favor for you, and you say, you know, just thanks that you're going to do this for me.

Now, you never say, look, I would thank you, but you haven't done it yet. So, you know, I don't know, maybe you're going to welch on this. So when it's done, when it's completed, then I'll thank you.

No, you say, hey, thanks in advance for doing this. I really appreciate the help. You're trusting in them to help you out.

You can trust the Lord the same way. You can give God thanks in advance. One of the things you can give him thanks for, look at there in verse 6. The fear of the Lord is his treasure.

You'll honor and respect and reverence towards the Lord. It's his treasure. It's a gift God gives us, not so that we'll cower in fear, but that we will rightly honor him.

Now, while the Lord is exalted when God's people humble themselves, the earth is brought low. Take a look here at verse 7. Surely their valiant ones shall cry outside. The ambassadors of peace shall weep bitterly.

The highways lie waste. The wayfaring man ceases. He's broken the covenant.

He's despised the cities. He regards no man. The earth mourns and languishes.

Lebanon is shamed and shriveled. Sharon is like a wilderness. And Bashan and Kamal shake off their fruits.

When the judgment of the Lord comes to the earth, everyone is brought low before him. Even the mighty Lebanon, with her majestic forest of cedar, is shamed and shriveled. The valiant ones, they cry, the ambassadors of peace.

The ones who, well, tried to trust in other nations instead of the Lord, they're sent away disappointed. No, the Lord brings the earth low in his judgment, and now he's bringing his fire of judgment. Look at it here, verse 10.

Now I will rise, says the Lord. Now I will be exalted. Now I will lift myself up.

You shall conceive chaff. You shall bring forth stubble. Your breath as fire shall devour you.

And the people shall be like the burnings of lime, like thorns cut up, they shall be burned in the fire. Here, you who are afar off, what I have done, and you who are near, acknowledge my might. Pardon God, he's thumping his chest a little bit here.

He's saying, I'm doing this. I'm coming with judgment, and you better watch out. I'm going to rise.

I'm going to be exalted. I'll lift myself up. That's what the Lord says.

And then he looks at sinful man, wicked, rebellious man, and he says, you shall conceive chaff. You'll bring forth stubble. You know what that is? It's useless stuff.

Chaff and stubble. Chaff was the little outside part of a kernel of wheat that they would take off before they could grind the kernel of wheat into flour. Chaff was useless.

Good for nothing. Stubble too. God says, you wicked, that's what you're bringing forth.

Chaff and stubble. Not only is it tragic that the wicked are bringing forth chaff and stubble. Tragic in the sense that, you know, what good is that? This is what you've done with your whole life.

You know, here, look at my whole life. Look what I've produced. It's a big pile of chaff.

Great. Good for you. Not only that, I'll tell you what else about chaff.

It's highly flammable. And when the fire of the Lord's judgment touches it, boom, it's up. It's gone.

And then you don't even have a pile of chaff to be proud of. There's nothing there. It's gone.

You lived your life on your own. You lived your life in rebellion to God. God's judgment will come like fire.

And the wicked and worthless works of man will be like chaff and stubble. That's quickly and ferociously burned in the fire. Now, if the sinners look at it here, verse 14, 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 the everlasting burnings? He who walks uprightly 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, 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. See, my friends, of course the sinners in Zion are afraid.

The judgment of the Lord is coming upon them. But the one who walks righteously, the one who speaks uprightly, he will dwell on high. So here, Isaiah looks at it and has the Lord comes in judgment.

The sinners are afraid. The rebellious against them. They're cowering in fear.

But the one who walks righteously, speaks uprightly, they're set up on high. They're safe. They're secure.

Look at the blessing that comes to them, verse 17. I love this. Your eyes will see the king in his beauty.

They will see the land that is very far off. Now, the Lord will bless his righteous ones. They will have a place of defense.

They'll have a fortress. Bread and water. It's not going to fail them.

Look at verse 16. My friends, far above those material blessings, they will see the king in his beauty. Isn't that a glorious, glorious passage? You see, beyond all the material glory, beyond all the splendor and comfort of heaven, this is the greatest glory of heaven.

Not to be personally glorified, but to see the king in his beauty. Might I say that it isn't only seeing the king. It's seeing him in his beauty.

You know, it can be said now that we occasionally catch a glimpse of our king, Jesus. And sometimes you might say that we have a glance at his beauty. For me, perhaps it's a time when I'm just with the Lord at my desk and the Bible's open.

I'm just digging into God's Word and His Word is speaking to me. I'm not just filling my mind with facts. He's nourishing my soul.

He's drawing my heart closer to His. I'm feeding on God's Word. It's just so intimate and so close and I feel such a sense of communion.

It's almost at times like that, that the hours just slip away. And you feel like you're just catching a glimpse of the beauty of Jesus Christ and the closeness and the warmth of the tender fellowship and compassion and goodness and grace that He shows you. Perhaps it's a time when you're just so caught up in worship or in prayer.

You forgot where you were. You might have forgot that there's anybody around you. You're just so in love with the Lord and He seems so close and so powerful and so beautiful and you catch a glimpse of His

beauty.

Friends, the highest experience we could ever have now is like nothing compared to what we will experience when we see the King in His beauty. Paul said of our present life, for now we see an Amir dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

Friends, there's going to come a day when you're going to see Jesus with perfect clarity. You'll see Him in His beauty. Is Jesus beautiful to you now? Oh, just wait.

Just wait. Heaven is precious to us for many reasons. We long to be with loved ones who have passed before us, who we miss so dearly.

We long to be with the great men and women of God who have passed before us in centuries past. We want to walk the streets of gold. We want to see the pearly gates.

We want to see the angels around the throne of God, worshipping Him day and night. Friends, I'm saying you could have all of those things and heaven still might not be heaven because none of those things makes heaven heaven. It's the presence and the beauty and the glory of God that makes heaven heaven.

What makes heaven really heaven is the unhindered, unrestricted presence of our Lord to see the King in His beauty. It's going to be the greatest experience of your eternal existence. Now, when this verse is fulfilled and when your eyes see the King in His beauty, you still may see the scars of His suffering.

You still may look upon those hands and see the scars from the piercings. You may be able to see the face and detect a scar from the beating. The feet would show the nail print.

See, after Jesus rose from the dead in His glorified body, His body uniquely retained the nail prints in His hands and the scars inside. I say uniquely because that's not how it is normally for a resurrection body, would we say? You know, that unsightly scar you have now, you're not going to have in your resurrection body. You know, that poor person had an injury and had part of their finger cut off.

When they get to heaven, it's going to be restored. That poor man, that poor woman with cerebral palsy or some kind of birth defect, they're not going to have that in heaven. That poor guy was balding.

The Lord's going to restore you, brother. The Lord's going to restore you. But Jesus, in a very unique way, retained the scars of His passion.

In Zechariah 12.10, Jesus speaks prophetically of the day when the Jewish people turn to Him, see Him in glory. It says, Then they will look upon Me whom they have pierced, yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only Son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. Zechariah 13.6 continues the thought where it says, And one will say to Him, What are these wounds between Your arms? Then He will answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of My friends.

Friends, it's not going to look ugly. It's going to be beautiful. Beautiful.

Your eyes will see the King in His beauty. They will see the land that is very far off. Now, shift the scene.

Your heart will meditate on terror. Where is the scribe? Where is he who weighs? Where is he who counts the towers? You will not see a fierce people, a people of obscure speech beyond perception or stammering tongue that you cannot understand. Oh, you're worried about these things.

Your heart is meditating on terror. Where is the scribe? Where is he who weighs? Where is he who counts the towers? Do you know what those describe? Preparations for battle. Where are these things? We've got to prepare.

Where is the scribe? We need some records. Somebody count the towers. Help, help.

And your heart is meditating on this. You're panicked. You're thinking about this.

Forget it. You're going to behold the King in His glory and His beauty. It's a far more profitable thing for you to put your thoughts on.

You're not going to see the fierce people. You're not going to see the people of obscure speech, the Assyrians who come in to conquer Jerusalem and say this is our city now, but they don't speak Hebrew or they speak a funny version of it because they're Assyrians. No, my friends, instead of looking at all of that, my friends, take a look here.

Instead of looking at all that, verse 20, look upon Zion, the city of our appointed feast. Your eyes will see Jerusalem, a quiet habitation, 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.

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. For the Lord is our judge. The Lord is our lawgiver.

The Lord is our King. He will save us. Your tackle's loosed.

They couldn't strengthen their mast. They could not spread the sail. And the prey of great plunder is divided.

The lame take the prey and the inhabitants will not say, I am sick. The people who dwell in it will be forgiven their iniquity. This is glorious, friends.

First of all, God says, you know what, Zion, it's established. Jerusalem, it's not budging. Let that army of Assyrians come against you.

I don't care, God says. It's not moving. Zion's established.

It's like a tent that isn't moving one bit. And then he says, no, no, the majestic Lord will be there for us. No, the Lord is going to show himself strong.

He's going to show himself glorious. And what's he going to do? He's going to make Jerusalem into a place of broad rivers and streams. God's ultimate blessing on Zion, at least in the millennial earth, will bring broad rivers and streams to this once barren desert land.

There's something very strange about Israel and Jerusalem, especially when you go to more ancient civilizations. Ancient civilizations are almost always founded on a major river. Always.

I mean, because it just makes sense. Not Israel. Not Jerusalem.

You ever go to Israel and see the Jordan? Yawn. Man, that's not much. Now, flood stage, it can get pretty big.

But not usually. No. You don't have a big river yet, but God says, you know what, one day I'm going to install a river in Jerusalem.

Now, you might be speaking figuratively of the blessing and the goodness, but the Bible does indicate that in the millennial earth there will be a glorious river in Jerusalem. But now, what's the downside of having a great river? Well, now enemies can come in on a big warship. No, it's not happening.

Take a look here. In which no galley with oars will sail, nor majestic ships pass by. Those battleships, get them out.

God's not going to let them in. God's going to protect them. And I love this.

He says, I'm going to give you the blessing of the river, but you're not going to suffer from the downside of it. Isn't that beautiful? You know, God knows how to bless our lives without the downside. Take somebody whose heart is fixed on the Lord, who loves the Lord.

Now, friends, the Bible says that riches are a snare. The Bible says that he who desires to be rich falls into temptation in a snare. And there's a lot of people, I'm going to lay it on the line, there's a lot of people going to hell because their heart is in love with money.

But you know what? The Lord can bless you with riches and protect you from the danger of it. And have your heart so in love with him, just like this, he can give Jerusalem a broad river and say, nope, the danger inherent with that, the warships that come up there, they're not coming in. God can bless you and set your heart in the right place where the dangers will not come to.

You see how great it is? God's going to take those warships and he says, hey, your tackle's loose, you couldn't strengthen the mast, you couldn't spread the sail, he's going to wipe out those warships, send them back. And finally, don't you love this, in the middle of verse 23, when the prey of great plunder is divided, the lame take the prey. Now when does that happen? When did the lame take the prey? You know, the lame can't catch the prey, can they? The lame usually become the prey.

My friends, not in God's working. Not in God's world. God says, you know what, I'm in charge here.

The battle doesn't go to the swift or the strong. No. In my workings, even the lame can take the prey.

Maybe you feel tonight in some way, in some fashion, there's some lameness in your life. You're walking with a limp somehow. Maybe you feel like you're Jacob and you've been wrestling with God and he's struck you on the hip.

And now you're limping along in life some way. You think, well, maybe that means I'm disqualified. Maybe it means, you know, I'll never be disqualified.

No. In God's kingdom, the lame can take the prey. You can receive it.

God can give it to you. That's because he's ruling. And then not only that, the inhabitant will not say, I'm sick.

God brings healing. But then he brings the best kind of healing. The end of verse 24.

The people who dwell in it will be forgiven their iniquity. You want that, don't you? Anybody here want to have their sins unforgiven? No way. We'll take the forgiveness.

The forgiveness that comes from God. Well, friends, we're going to keep making our way through this marvelous, marvelous book of Isaiah. Might I say, I think the Lord has something precious to speak to us tonight.

So many pictures. It's like they flash up to us like some old, you know, Bergman movie or something. Just an image, an image, an image.

There's the Lord. He's the river for you. There's the Lord.

He's the sheltering rock. There's the Lord. He's the shelter from the storm.

There's the Lord. He's the one who gives the lame the prey. There's the Lord.

He's the one, the king that you're going to see in beauty. Over and over again. Let your heart feed on these pictures.

Let the Lord show you more and more of himself through his word. You you might think that the key to your life, the missing key. That you don't know yourself well enough or you don't understand your situation well enough.

Friends, you know what? You may not know yourself. You may not know your situation very well. But if you had to choose between knowing yourself, knowing your situation and knowing the living God, knowing Jesus Christ, I'll tell you where the answers are really going to lie with you among us three.

It's knowing Jesus. Because you know what? You know Jesus. He'll fill you in on the rest of it.

Put him first. Make the knowledge and pursuit of him number one. Let's pray.

Father, I want to pray especially tonight, Lord, for every heart here who's crying out to have your spirit poured upon them. They want your spirit poured upon them from on high. I know I do, Lord.

So I cry out to you, God, and I pray that every agreeing heart would come here tonight and receive from you. That, Lord Jesus, you would just fill and touch and exalt yourself. Be exalted on high in our midst, Lord.

Be lifted up. If we need to be lowered so you can be lifted up, that's fine with us, God. Be exalted, O Lord.

Be exalted in our prayers. We love you. We praise you.

We thank you tonight, Lord. And, Father, I pray that someone here tonight who feels lame, Lord, that you'd give them some prayer tomorrow. You'd give them some blessing, some reward, just as an emblem of your love.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

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