

**CALVARY PANDAN
BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

DHW BIBLE CLASS

LESSON 32

ISAIAH

CHAPTER 32

Theme: "When the LORD reigns!"

THEME VERSE

Isaiah 32:3-4 (KJV) *"And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken. 4 The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly ".*

INTRODUCTION

Isaiah 32 jumps from the present to the future perspective. This is how prophecy is written on many occasions. Isaiah 32 is about the shift from the darkest pit and hopeless state to a mountaintop experience and glorious hope.

The LORD's kingdom will reign for it is only a matter of time when this glorious day will be upon us. All things will be transformed for the world to behold. At this moment, the children of God are despised and their future manifestations are hidden from the naked eyes. They are persecuted and forsaken by the world.

When the LORD comes, He will reign and His children will reign with

Him. Evil men and women will be punished and become a thing of the past. They will receive their just reward. The judgment and the righteousness of the LORD will cover the face of the earth. Safety and peace will permeate all the earth. The world will then know who the LORD is and who His people are. Quietness and assurance will prevail and there will be fruitfulness throughout the earth. Drought and famine will no longer exist.

Why did the LORD reveal this to His people? Because His people are the only ones who will listen and take heed of the blessed hope. In times of darkest trials, they must remain firm and stand true to their faith and not waver or give up.

In the past two chapters of Isaiah, Israel had been told to turn to the LORD and not to Gentile nations for help. There is no use in trusting nations who worship idols for they are like the idols they worship-- with hands that cannot help, eyes that cannot see and mouths that cannot speak!

The LORD is the One living and true God who can help. The promise of the power of the LORD reigning in the future should put some backbone to the faithless Israel of the present. This is what prophecies of hope and glory is meant to do for the people of God. Knowing the end serves to guide and control the present and point the people in the right direction of obedience, faith and trust in God. This is what the LORD desires of every believer today as they read and study Isaiah 32.

OUTLINE

1. Impact of the LORD's kingdom when it comes (vv.1-8);
2. Grievous desolation is coming! (vv. 9-14);
3. Blessed restoration follows! (vv. 15-20).

COMMENTARY

Impact of the LORD's kingdom when it comes – 32:1-8

From despair to blessed hope was how the LORD lifted up the spirit of His people. Isaiah 32 begins on such a hopeful note! Behold a king shall reign in righteousness! The identity of this king has to be the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no one who fits this prophecy other than Christ. The characteristic of His reign on this earth is that of righteousness which is what is absent on this earth today and throughout the ages. Our current world ruled by many kings and presidents is a world of unrighteousness and wickedness. One day, in the near future, all this will change forever. Christ will rule on earth in righteousness. Princes will rule with Him in judgment. These princes refer to believers who will judge the world and the angels (1 Corinthians 6:2-3). They will rule with Christ and, like Christ, rule in righteousness! What a glorious day it will be!

The detailed description of this rule is found in the next seven verses. A man shall be as a hiding place from the wind. This "man" is none other than Christ the king Himself. He will be like a refuge from the wind. The wind

is the judgment of God. The only way Christ can be a refuge to anyone is through salvation grace where the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the sinner and he is transformed into a saint. Christ will also be a cover or a protection from the tempest i.e. a storm that includes gushing flood waters. Not even a massive flood will be able to hurt those who belong to Christ.

To those who belong to Christ, He will be like rivers of water in a dry place. This refers to the great sufficiency of His grace in the lives of all His children. They will never lack anything ever again. Christ is also likened to the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. This refers to the great comfort and solace that belong to those who are in Christ. A land is said to be weary when the scorching heat of the sun beats relentlessly upon it. Christ is like the shadow of a great rock casting a huge and deep shadow in this weary land providing shade to all who come to Him.

He who has spiritual sight will never be dim again (same strength of prohibition as the Decalogue). He will see with spiritual eyes forever. This does not refer to physical sight. The ears that hear (Hebrew is "shamar") will be able to understand and obey forever. The word for "hear" means "obey" whenever it is used with reference to the LORD urging Israel to hear His Word (see Deut 6:4). He will no longer struggle to understand the Word of God. He who is "rash" i.e. hasty will be able to understand knowledge. He does not need to pay close attention or focus very hard in

order to understand. Everyone in Christ's kingdom will be like geniuses. He who stammers will be able to speak fluently. Everyone will have the gift of speaking in perfect syntax, tense and grammar. Everyone will be able to express himself well and understand others. Verse 4 emphasizes perfect communication and perfect understanding.

There will also be a perfect sense of justice prevailing over Christ's kingdom. Today, a vile person may be mistakenly considered as liberal or magnanimous and a miserly person may be thought of as generous. But there will come a time when such injustices and confusion of mind and heart will no longer be present. Man will be able to distinguish right from wrong and act accordingly. The reason is that the vile person will speak villainy and his heart will work iniquity. He will practise hypocrisy and utter error against the LORD. He will empty the soul of the hungry i.e. take away the bread of the hungry, and cause the drink of the thirsty to fail i.e. take away the drink of the thirsty. Such wicked behaviour will be no more when the LORD reigns.

The instrument of the miserly person will also be evil. He resolves to do wicked deeds to destroy the poor. He lies and does not care about those in need. As long as he holds on to his greed and wealth, he will ignore the needy around him. He will lie to take advantage of the needy. However, when the LORD reigns, the miserly will be no more.

In contrast, generosity will be the conduct of the redeemed. By such generosity, they shall stand forever. This ought to be the conduct of believers right now. They should not wait until the Lord returns before they show generosity.

Grievous desolation is coming!
– 32:9-14

The focus on the women seems out of place. Some commentators regard this passage as a euphemistic way of addressing the men who have become effeminate in their conduct and lifestyle. Yet when the passage is carefully considered, it is the women, not the men, who were being addressed, chastised and warned. These women depended on their men to protect and provide for them. They thought they could do whatever they wanted in life without the fear of being singled out by God for chastisement. This was not so.

The heads of the houses in Israel were soundly chastised. The women did not fare much better as revealed by the passage. The women were called to rise up as if they were in a courtroom. They were the defendant and the LORD was the Judge who commanded them to rise and give an account of what they had done. They were charged with being at ease i.e. haughty. They surrounded themselves with the fine things of life. They thought that they were untouchable.

The LORD commanded them to hear the voice of God i.e. to obey the Word of God. They were described as "careless daughters" which meant "women with self-confidence" who did

not have a care in the world. They went about their life as if there was nothing wrong. They did not care about what God or anyone else thought of them! Using synonymous parallelism the LORD commanded them to “give ear” i.e. to pay close attention to what He had to say.

Many days and years shall they be in trouble i.e. so afraid that they would tremble and quiver. Their care free worldly life would disappear from their eyes. They would be so filled with care that they would tremble for days and years! The LORD deliberately called them careless women from careless daughters! They would be disowned. Their good life would be over soon. The vintage i.e. the vineyard would no longer bear the fruit of the vine. Their fields would be barren with no harvest to gather. They would be destitute. Man’s utter and total dependence on the earth for survival would be vividly felt by these careless women.

The word “tremble” is a stronger word than “trouble.” It literally means “to shudder with terror.” The same phrase that was used in verse 9 is used again in verse 11. It refers to the same group of women. What would cause them to shudder in abject terror? The verse says that the careless ones would be stripped and made bare. They would be publicly humiliated. They would be dressed in sackcloth like mourners who had lost loved ones.

They shall lament i.e. beat their breasts and tear their hair! They shall lament for the teats i.e. they would not

be able to produce milk for their infants because of starvation. They shall lament for the pleasant fields and fruitful vines which were now desolate and empty. They would have nothing but sorrow and more sorrow. They would long for the good life which would be out of their reach forever.

Their land of milk and honey would be turned into a land of thorns and briars. The phrase “the land of my people” was deliberate. God gave the land but He could also take it away! All the houses in the city, probably Jerusalem, would be in ruins. The palaces would be forsaken. The multitude in the city would have fled leaving their belongings, homes and everything else behind.

This was the case in Israel! The forts and towers, once places of high security, would become dens for animals. Asses and flocks would find pasture there. It would take a long time for a city to be overrun by pasture, thorns and weeds. The description showed that the land of Israel would be left desolate because of the people’s sinful unrepentant ways.

The physical devastation would drive God’s people back to Him. This has been God’s approach for centuries as far back as the days of Noah and the global flood!

God will use the same approach today to deal with sinful man. The reason is that man is totally and completely dependent upon the earth for his survival. Without earth, he will die!

Blessed restoration follows!

– 32:15-20

Isaiah prophesied that this devastation upon the women of Israel would continue until the spirit was poured upon Israel. The spirit referred to the blessed Holy Spirit.

Man could never turn back to God without God's enabling. On that blessed day, the wilderness would be turned to a fruitful field (the Hebrew word is "Carmel"). The fruitful field would be counted for a forest. Some commentators interpret this second half of the verse to mean that the fruitful field would become a wilderness i.e. the "evil and wicked superpowers". The problem with this interpretation is that the word for forest is not wilderness. A better interpretation is that the fruitfulness would become great and resemble a forest! The thick lush growth of the fruitful field would be unlike anything that the Israelites had ever seen.

When that happened, the judgment of the LORD would remain in the wilderness and righteousness would remain in the fruitful field. In other words when Israel become a fruitful land, it would be filled with righteousness. The people of Israel would live righteous lives. They would be born again and know Christ as their Lord and Saviour. However, the judgment would remain in places where there was wilderness. This verse captures perfectly the meaning of the judgment of God and the blessing that come with repentance. When Israel changed, the LORD's dealing with Israel also changed accordingly.

This work of righteousness would bring peace. The end result would be that quietness and assurance i.e. tranquillity and a deep sense of safety would prevail across the land. God's people would dwell in peaceable habitations, secure and safe dwellings and quiet tranquil resting places. This is a description of paradise! Everyone on planet earth longs for such a blessed hope and eternal dwelling place. It is only possible through Jesus Christ!

What a wonderful perfect picture of the blessed state that God affords all men if only they will turn back to Christ in repentance.

The enemies of Israel would be judged and punished by the LORD like hail from heaven. The forest represented the Assyrians who were, at the time, the superpower. Their large armies were like a forest especially when they marched toward their enemies to intimidate them!

The city referred to Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrians. When the Assyrians were at the height of their power, the capital city was the centre of reign and conquest! The fame of the capital city had not changed. Likewise, the capital city of Rome was the centre of the Roman vast empire. But when the Assyrian Empire fell, the capital city of Nineveh would also be brought low and destroyed by the judgment of the LORD.

The contrast was that God's people would live in peace and free from the fear and uncertainties that come with being a vassal state of a foreign empire. Israel was called blessed here as her people sowed

beside the waters. The land would be well watered and therefore fruitful. The Israelites would send their oxen and the asses to do the harvesting and the back breaking work of bringing the harvest back to the barns respectively.

The route to blessing has not changed. Man must come before God in humble repentance of sin and complete obedience to His perfect and Holy Word.

PRACTICAL VALUE

Godly Impact!

An empire will impact the world under its rule. The kingdom of Christ will likewise impact the world. The world will be dominated by the very presence of the LORD. His Word will rule the world. There will be peace unlike any that the world has seen before. The transformation of the world will be so overwhelming that the presence of the LORD will not only be seen but felt throughout the four corners of the earth!

Vegetation, topography and the geographical earth will be transformed back to its original state i.e. before the fall of man, where there are no thorns or thistles. Evil and evil men will be removed forever. Holiness and righteousness will permeate throughout the length and breadth of the earth. Bountifulness and safety will be the norm throughout the earth. What a blessed earth awaits us all who are in Christ Jesus! As children of the living God, we must walk in holiness and truth as we await the return of Christ, our Lord and Saviour. When that day comes, all will be at peace!

No man can escape!

There was no escaping the wrath and judgment of God. All who lived a profligate lifestyle would be severely punished by God.

The women who lived in luxury and cared not for their spiritual state would regret their great folly for the rest of eternity. The LORD would not spare them just because they are women. They would not be able to hide behind their fortified cities and wealth. Sin will always be sin in the eyes of the LORD regardless of who commit them. The LORD would deal with them accordingly. They would be humiliated and justly punished by God for the many sins committed. Their homes and lands would be overrun by briars, thorns and animals.

This is a warning to all sinners to repent and turn from their lives of sin and luxury. It is foolish to think that earthly wealth can protect them against the wrath of God Almighty! This lesson and truth is very applicable today.

Glorious restoration!

God never does anything in half measure. When He restores His people, it will always be on His terms. The people of God must repent of all their sins. They must approach God in righteousness and holiness. There is great blessing that come with obedience.

Men turn to idols and they sin trying to get what only God alone can give. The idols can never give peace nor bring safety to Israel. The idols cannot even defend themselves. They have eyes but they are as blind as a

bat if not worse. They have hands but they can never help as they are made out of dead materials. They have feet that cannot walk as they are heavier than lead.

On the other hand, the LORD is the one living and true God who can do all things. The "paradise" He wants to give to His people is amazing. Peace, quiet and assurance will belong to God's people if only they will trust and return to the LORD. It is only a prayer away. Disobedience is the way of destruction and death. Obedience is the high road to heavenly peace and divine safety. Decide wisely. AMEN.

2. Do you consider yourself a person with understanding - not the understanding of the world but of the Word? If your answer is yes, then do you possess the description in verses 3-5? Please explain.

DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Daily Readings

MONDAY: Isaiah 32:1-14

TUESDAY: Isaiah 32:1-20

WEDNESDAY: Isaiah 32:1-20

THURSDAY: Isaiah 32:1-20

FRIDAY: Isaiah 32:1-20.

Discussion Questions

1. Who is the ruler of this earth today? Who is the ruler of your life and the lives of your family? Please explain.

3. Do you think that a luxurious lifestyle is a sinful lifestyle and an impoverished lifestyle is a holy lifestyle? Please explain.

4. What kind of spiritual church is Pandan Church? Is it above average or below average? Please explain your criteria for evaluation.

5. Do you have a peaceful home? Are you happy at home? Is there any way you can help make your home happier?

6. Do you feel safe at home? What about in your work place or when you go out or come home late at night? Do you long for the kind of peace and tranquility that is described in Isaiah 32:15-20? Please explain.

7. What lessons have you learnt from this chapter about God's Word and about yourself?