

A King Will Reign in Righteousness

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 05 February 2017

Preacher: Rev Kenneth M Ferguson

[0 : 00] Let us turn together back to the chapter we have read in Isaiah, focusing particularly at the beginning of chapter 32.

Isaiah 32, and reading the first two verses again. Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, and princes will rule in justice.

Each will be like a hiding place from the wind, a shelter from the storm, like streams of water in a dry place, and like the shade of a great rock in a weary land.

The prophet Isaiah ministered to a people who didn't want to listen to what he had to say.

At the very beginning of the prophecy, chapter 1 and verse 4, we have these words addressed to the nation of Judah, to whom Isaiah was sent.

[1 : 21] And when we come to chapter 53 of this prophecy, Isaiah declares these words, It's as if they had stopped their ears.

They didn't want to hear the message that the Lord had laid upon Isaiah's heart. And we see in this section of the prophecy from chapter 28 to 32 particularly, we have many indications that the people of Judah had forsaken the Lord.

For example, in chapter 30 at verse 1, we find these very disturbing words. Ah, stubborn children, declares the Lord, who carry out a plan but not mine, and who make an alliance but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin, who set out to go down to Egypt without asking for my direction, to take refuge in the protection of Pharaoh.

And so on. That is just one example of the many pointers that we have in these chapters to the people's rebellion against God.

Isaiah describes in scathing terms what was wrong in the life of Judah. Isaiah. But at the beginning of chapter 32 and the first two verses here, the prophet, with the eye of the prophet and the leading of the Holy Spirit, looks beyond the present time in which he now lives.

[3 : 37] Isaiah looks beyond the reign of the Lord. But Isaiah looks beyond that bad and dark time.

Some people say, well, he's looking towards the reign of Ahaz's successor, King Hezekiah, who was a good man. Certainly he was a better man than Ahaz.

But I think the focus of Isaiah here is on a king higher than Hezekiah, even the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, the Lord Jesus Christ.

He is the one who was promised long ago. Isaiah, and now who is the focus of Isaiah's attention, when he says in chapter 9 at verse 6, For to us a child is born, and to us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace.

Isaiah's focus is heavenward on the heavenly King, on the glorious King of Kings, who is the King of his people, and the protector of his people in all the situations that come their way in life.

[5 : 11] So we have in these first two verses words of wonderful encouragement and peace to all of God's children. And we see that there are four things highlighted in these two verses.

Behold, it says, a king will reign in righteousness, and princes will rule in justice. Each will be like a hiding place from the wind, shelter from the storm, streams of water in a dry place, the shade of a great rock in a weary land.

It's as if he's talking about the government of Christ. He's talking about the great governor of his own people.

And he says, he is the one to apply his healing balm to the hearts that are broken and to the land that is full of sin and iniquity.

And he describes that land of Judah in these very gripping terms. He's talking, in verse 2, it's a place that's full of wind, a place that's full of storm, a place that is a dry desert place, a place that is

weary, a weary land.

[6 : 39] What a discouraging picture. You wouldn't want to go there. A place full of wind and storm, a desert place, a weary place.

Who would want to go there? But I'd like to highlight what may lie behind this imagery of a land that is so unattractive in itself, but nevertheless a land into which the Lord would come and apply his healing power to it.

First of all, this king will be like a hiding place from the wind. There is a storm blowing through the nation of Judah in Isaiah's day.

What wind is it? Is it a wind in relation to the kind of weather they're having? I'd think not at all. He's talking about a wind that is destructive in a spiritual sense. And where did that wind come from?

[7 : 58] Well, I believe if you go back to the book of Genesis, you'll find where that wind, first of all, began to blow.

It began to blow in the Garden of Eden. It's the wind of sin. It's a wind that is so strong and so destructive that when you consider Adam and Eve's situation before and after being exposed to this wind of sin, there's hardly any comparison in the situations.

When God created Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, he created them in a holy and a happy state. They were made in the image of God with knowledge and righteousness and holiness and dominion over the creatures.

It was a wonderful place, a wonderful situation with unbroken fellowship with their God. But the wind of sin blew strongly into their minds and into their lives.

What happened? Well, you remember that they fell from the state in which they were created by sinning against God.

[9 : 26] It's as if this wind of sin stripped them of all the beauty that they had in godliness, stripped their minds of the knowledge of God as they had had it before, stripped their moral character, stripped them bare so that they realized that something awful had happened to them.

And they said about trying to cover themselves with the foliage of the trees of the garden. And God said to Adam, where are you? He was trying to hide himself because he had been left naked by the power of this wind.

And you see, that is the way it still is in our world. That is the wind that blows so strongly in the world today.

The wind of sin. And each one of us experiences the power of that wind because we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God.

We have been stripped of our saving knowledge of God. We have no righteousness but self-righteousness.

[10 : 50] We have no hope for eternity in ourselves. We have no true fellowship with God. Sin has done that to us and for us.

You see what it says in the Catechism. Because of sin, man lost his communion with God.

He lost his fellowship with God. His friendship with God. Remember that the end of chapter 3 in Genesis, God ejects Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden because they had sinned against God.

And God put a flaming sword and cherubim blocking Adam's way back to the tree of life. Because he had sinned.

And the justice of God required that he be punished for his sin. And that's the way we still are. We lost our communion with God. We are under his wrath and curse.

[11 : 55] And we are liable to all the miseries of this life. To death itself and the pains of hell forever. What a wind was blowing in the land of Judah.

See when the fools, it says in chapter 32 verse 6, The fool speaks folly and his heart is busy with iniquity to practice ungodliness and to utter error concerning the Lord, to leave the craving of the hungry unsatisfied and to deprive the thirsty of drink.

It's as if sin has maligned us. We are out of thought. We are out of line with what the Lord really requires of us. And we are living a life off center and off through.

How can all this be corrected? Well, the Lord says at the beginning of chapter 32, Behold. And every time you come across this marvelous word in the scripture, behold, he is calling us to attention because he's going to say something particularly significant in relation to the context.

And he says, In this land of Judah that has this wind of sin blowing through it, and in this land of Scotland, and in this land of my own life and my own heart, where sin seeks to dominate, the Lord says, I have a solution.

[13 : 32] And what is the solution? A man shall be a hiding place from the wind. Not King Hezekiah.

He can only do so much by way of correcting the ills of his nation. King Josiah did much, but he couldn't do everything. These two good kings.

But only the king of kings can rectify the situation at its very root. And this is what it says. He will be a hiding place from the wind.

Who is this man? Well, of course, it's the God-man, the mediator, the saviour of sinners. And he is the one who came, and he is a hiding place from the wind of sin.

Listen to what Isaiah says in chapter 45 and verse 21. There is no God else beside me, a just God and a saviour.

[14 : 45] There is none beside me. And he says, look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else.

And Isaiah says, this is the one who alone is able to deal with the wind of sin that blows throughout your life so destructively and leaving such wreckage.

In the New Testament, John the Baptist knew the problem of sin and he knew the solution when he saw Jesus Christ walking one day and he said to all who are within earshot, behold, the Lamb of God, he taketh away the sin of the world.

Christ Jesus alone can deal with the sin of your life. He alone is the sinner's saviour. He is the one who negotiated the wind of sin in all its foot and in all the consequences of sin.

He went to the cross of Calvary and there is satisfied divine justice and made reconciliation or atonement on behalf of his people. And there is perfect peace now in Christ for those who truly come.

[16 : 08] For he is the end of the law unto righteousness to everyone who believes. the peace. Listen to the confidence of the psalmist in Psalm 32 at verse 7.

You are my hiding place, he says, and you shall preserve me from trouble. You shall compass me about with songs of deliverance.

Who is able to say that? Oh, those who come to Jesus Christ, those who see his open arms and who hear his beckoning voice when he says, come unto me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest unto your souls. My yoke is easy and my burden is light.

What an amazing provision in a world that is full of the storms of sin that is one who is able to afford a hiding and a place of safety.

[17 : 28] They look to him enlightened where, not shamed where their faces. This poor man cried, God heard and saved him from all his distresses.

So a man, a hiding place from the wind of sin. Secondly, he talks here about another element that prevails in the land of Judah, and he is saying it's a storm, a storm.

In the authorised version, this word storm is translated tempest, a tempest. Now if you look up the word tempest in the dictionary you'll find something like this, that it's a storm with pouring rain.

So, it's a kind of a situation in the wind where there is a particularly powerful focus of discomfort and danger.

And what does this mean? I'm going to suggest two or three things. What this storm might mean. It may very well mean the storm of persecution.

[18 : 51] The people who were godly in Judah in Isaiah's day, they didn't find it easy to live. Isaiah himself didn't find it easy.

You find him repeatedly complaining of the poor reception his message received and his mourning over the way people are turning away from God.

It's a sort of an illustration of the power of persecution upon the people of God. And when you look at our own day, you don't have to look far until you find reports of churches, the church of Christ being persecuted in various countries of the world.

It's as if they're at the center of a storm of persecution because they highlight in their life that they love Jesus Christ, because they read their Bibles, because they pray, because they follow the path

of righteousness, and they take hit after hit, some of them in prison, some of them put to death. It's a storm of persecution. And when you think back to the Scottish church history, for example, in the time of the Covenanters in the 17th century, or the number of people who were persecuted then because of the faith, and when you think also of the first century, during the years of Nero, who was the emperor, he hated the church, and he would cover some Christians who were in Rome with tar and set them alight, and use them as torches to lighten the dark alleys of Rome.

[20 : 38] What a storm of persecution. And we see also, in our own experience maybe, the storm of temptation.

temptation. It is one thing to be aware of sin and its power. It's another thing to be aware of the power of temptation.

And the evil one will try and draw you away from Christ, draw you away from following after Christ, and he will manufacture various kinds of scenarios whereby he will seek to draw you either gently or suddenly.

Think of how gently Peter was drawn away by the questioning of the young woman at the time of Jesus' trial.

And it's as if he was reprieved after the first and after the second time when he was asked, do you belong to this man's group of disciples? And he said, no, I don't know the man.

[21 : 50] And he ought to have thought, shall we say, did I say right or did I say wrong? But the next time the temptation came and he denied again, and he denied three times.

It's as if the devil was coming with waves of temptation, and eventually he fell, and he went out and he wept bitterly. Other kinds of temptation come suddenly.

Think of the life of David when he went up to the roof of his house, and he saw a woman washing herself, and immediately the tempter got him, and he committed adultery with her.

A storm of temptation can come our way very quickly or very gradually, but we ask the Lord to keep us in the hour of temptation.

Another storm might be the storm of a hard providence that's come your way, maybe as a family, maybe in your own personal life, with illness, or death, or something that you never even thought of, and the providence is so hard, you find I'm not able to cope in this situation at all.

[23 : 11] Ah, but you see, there is one here who is highlighted for us by the Lord himself, and it says here that he is a shelter from such a storm, a shelter from such a storm of persecution, who was persecuted like the Lord Jesus.

Persecuted and afflicted. He is also a shelter from the storm of temptation. Who was tempted like him?

The devil, forty days and forty nights, tempting him. But he couldn't fall in the temptation because of who he was.

Nevertheless, the temptation was real. You know, only those who are able to stand in the temptation know the full power of it.

we who fold up in the temptation fold up before the full power of it reaches us. But he was able to stand because he was Jehovah in human nature.

[24 : 22] And therefore he has sympathy and empathy with those who are tempted. He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. temptation. And here he says, I am a shelter in the storm of temptation.

I am a shelter in the storms of providence that come my way, that try me and almost break me. I am a shelter. see what the psalmist says in Psalm 57, at the beginning.

Have mercy on me, O Lord. To you my soul holds fast. Your covering wings will shelter me until the danger is past.

See, he has availed himself of this shelter. when you see a shower coming, you run for shelter, don't you? Well, this man in the middle of the storm, he has run to the best shelter of all.

And what does it say, Psalm 27, where we were singing a moment ago? O let me dwell within your tent, forever there to live.

[25 : 40] O for the shelter of your wings, the refuge which they give. If you are tempted today, if you are persecuted today, if you are tried today, if you are at the end of your tether today, in the storms of life, there is one who invites you to come.

Come unto me, and I will give you protection and safety, even the Lord Jesus Christ. Shelter from the storm.

Thirdly, he is like a stream or streams of water in a dry place. Streams of water in a dry place. What a discouraging kind of land it must have been, with the way sin had overtaken every department of life in public affairs and in the private lives of people. It must have been a barren land indeed. Ah, but you see, the barren land has water running through it.

[26 : 55] I believe that this highlights not only the barrenness of unconverted lives, but also the dry periods through which the people of God must pass in this wilderness journey.

We people of God aren't always on the top of the mountain in their experience. They have valleys to walk. They have dark days and dark nights. Maybe they come to the scripture and there's no word for them there to encourage them.

Maybe they come to the means of grace. It's like a sermon or a prayer meeting and they seem to go back out the door as hard or harder than they were coming in.

It's as if they have lost the joy of the Lord altogether. When they come to pray in private, it's as if the earth is as iron and the heavens are as brass above them.

They don't seem to be able to connect. When they come into the fellowship of other Christians, not the same as it used to be, they feel as if they're in very, very dry, arid land, spiritually speaking.

[28 : 10] But what does the Lord say? Well, if that is your case, feeling that dry and that empty, he is like streams of water in the desert.

What an amazing provision that is. psalm 61, when the psalmist experiences that dryness and far awayness, hear my cry, O God, he says, and listen to my prayer, from the end of the earth I call to you when my heart is faint.

They feel at the end of the earth. Ah, but you see, the Lord hears their call. And what does he say? When the poor and the needy seek water and there is none, and their tongue is parched with thirst, I, the Lord, will answer them.

I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. Wait upon the Lord, who hides his face from the house of Jacob.

Wait for him until he comes. And when he comes with his word in season, his word will brighten your darkness and cast all your sorrow away.

[29 : 28] Streams of water in a dry place. And finally, he's the shade of a great rock in a weary land. What an amazing picture that is.

Maybe you're weary of sin. You're tired fighting in the fight of faith. You're tired of temptations. You're tired of your failures.

You're tired visiting dry places. You're tired of fruitlessness within your own heart and life. You're tired, but then you have to go on.

And what does he say? There is a rock there in this dry, weary land. And you go to it. And in the oppressive heat of your situation, you'll find such relief in the shadow of this marvelous rock that is Christ.

Christ. In another setting, in Song of Solomon chapter 2, we read these marvelous words.

[30 : 39] The church says, with great delight, I sat in his shadow, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.

When we come to Jesus, and commit ourselves to him, in the middle of the trials, and heartaches, and disappointments of life, we find that he is more than adequate for the situation in which we find ourselves.

Have you found him to be so? Have you found his caress encouraging when you come? Have you found his words sweet to your taste?

Going back to my few words in the children's address, when Jesus knocks at the door of the church of Laodicea, he says, if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and sup with him, or eat with him, and he with me.

And what the Lord there is saying is, it's the evening meal he's talking about. The lavish meal, not just a sandwich and a cup of tea, but the most lavish provision, because that's when the Jewish people had their main meal in the evening, and that's the picture the Lord has for those who hear his voice and who open the door of their life through faith.

[32 : 24] May we all do so, because this man is a hiding place from the wind, a shelter from the storm, rivers of water in a dry place, and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

Let us pray. Help us to be thankful for your great kindness today. glory. We thank you for this glorious promise and the provision we have in Jesus Christ for the needs of each one of us as sinners journeying through this world.

Bless us now as we sing your praise in conclusion and forgive sin. In Jesus' name. Amen. I will sing from the Scottish Psalter in Psalm 17.

Psalm 17, verses 5 to 9. This is page 217. Hold up my goings, Lord, me guide in those my paths divine, so that my footsteps may not slide out of those ways of thine.

I call it have on thee, O God, because thou wilt me hear, that thou mayest hearken to my speech, to me incline thine ear. Verses 5 to 9.

[34 : 01] And we stand to sing. O God, my goings, for me guide in those my paths divine, so that my footsteps made of sight, and of those waves of thine.

I call it have on thee, O God, because thou wilt me hear, hear, a love which harpeth to my speech, to me in life I hear.

hear, my wondrous loving kindness show a love by thy right hand, since is have heard of in Zionist farther can send In my wings shape he goes On earth of Esther's compass day In our master he goes

I'd be grateful if you could give me a chance to get to the main door after the benediction. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit rest upon and abide with you all now and forevermore. Amen.