

Isaiah 31–32
Hope and Joy, Now and Forever

Wednesday, December 6, 2023 • Read Isaiah 31–32

Questions from the Scripture text: Upon whom is the fifth woe pronounced (31:1a)? Upon what do these people rely (v1b–d)? But not upon Whom (v1e–f)? What aspects of His character make this negligence a disaster (v2a–d)? And what about the Egyptians makes choosing them a disaster (v3)? What will happen to whom? To what does the Lord liken the help that He would have given (v4–5)? So, what does He urge them to do (v6)? What will all do, when He displays Himself as the defender of His people (v7)? What will be unique about the way Assyria is destroyed (v8a–b)? How will the Lord do this (v8c–9b)? Who will this show has done this (v9c)? From where does He express this fury (v9d–e)? When the Lord does this (cf. 31:4–7) in the final, climactic way, what will happen then (32:1a)? What will rulers under Him be like (v1b–2)? What else will be perfected among man (v3–4)? What was currently happening in Israel (v5–7) that will be reversed in the last day (v8)? What else was the blindness and injustice of the current day connected with (v9)? What would happen to their self-indulgence and worldliness (v10–13)? Where will this especially be felt (v14)? Until what happens (v15a)? How do v15b–c describe the ultimate reversal? How does v16 describe righteousness being everywhere in that day (cf. 2Pet 3:13)? What will this righteousness produce everywhere (v17)? Who will enjoy this, where (v18)? What other action of God (toward the wicked) accompanies the arrival of this day (v19)? What sort of safety and peace will remain (v20)?

Why is it so dreadful to trust and delight in creatures? Isaiah 31–32 prepares us for the first serial reading in public worship on the Lord's Day. In these twenty-nine verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **trusting and delighting in creatures is foolish, not only because of how devastatingly they will fail us, but because the Lord is an infinitely able Helper and an infinitely pleasant Delight.**

Again, the Lord is condemning Israel's hoping in Assyria as an example of the problem with all humanity. The help that cannot stand in the day of Assyria (31:1–3) certainly will not stand in the day of the Lord! The pleasure that is so easily wiped out (v9–14) cannot satisfy and sustain for unending ages.

The tragedy of our sinfulness is that the Lord offers Himself to be our Defender (31:1e–31:2, 31:4–5). But trusting and delighting in creatures (31:7) is to revolt against the Lord (31:6). Who has offered to be our defense.

When the Lord stops, and then destroys, Assyria (31:8–9), as we will see Him do a few chapters from now, it will be not only a rebuke and warning against Israel who had hoped in Egypt, but against all men who hope in anything else or anyone else. Again, the promised King is proclaimed in 32:1a. Would that Hezekiah's reign would have produced civil stability and peace like that in v1b–2! But even if it had been, the repeal of the fall implied in v3–4 is something that no earthly king can produce. The opening of eyes, ears, hearts, and tongues is something that even Isaiah's ministry would not produce (cf. 6:10). The One being prophesied here is a King greater than Hezekiah and a prophet greater than Isaiah!

How desperately Israelites needed the reign of King Jesus and the ministry of Prophet Jesus! How desperately we need it as well. We need Jesus as Prophet because we are ignorant. We need Jesus as Priest because we are guilty. We need Jesus as King because we are weak and helpless. And the Israelites certainly were all of these things. They esteemed as nobility fools and misers (v5) whose sin against God were actually impoverishing the land (v6) and whose wicked schemes were destroying the poor and needy (v7). The reign of Christ will restore true nobility (v8).

The wickedness of the nobility was especially on display in the self-indulgent young women in v9–11. Rather than giving themselves to service of their families, the picture is of them waiting for the new crops to arrive, together with the most recent batch of wine (v10). But those who never did mourn over sin will mourn when the earthly delights for which they lived dry up (v12). This will hit hardest upon those wealthy who depended most upon their supply chain (v13–14).

Again, the failure of that in which Israel were delighting is contrasted with the refreshing and delight from the Spirit of the Lord (v15a). The King, and His Spirit, will bring in an age in which righteousness reigns in the wild (v16a) and in the garden (v16b). There will be peace and quietness everywhere (v17). Their homes will be peaceful and secure (v18), and country life will also be prosperous and secure (v20).

This is all in stark contrast to what the Lord brings upon the wicked, whose efforts are exposed not as gardens but as wild forest that the Lord destroys (v19a), and who are identified here not with the city of God but the worldly city from v14 which is humiliated in v19b. Just as both invading Assyria's army and indulgent Israel's nobility will be devastated in the near term, all enemies and wicked will be devastated on the ultimate day of God's restoring His people.

So that does put to us the questions below. The Lord's wise providence brings us through situations that expose to us whether our hope is in Him and whether our delight is in Him. By His poured out Spirit, let us have Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King to throw away our idols (31:7) and return to the Lord (cf. 31:6).

By what difficulties or threats has the Lord exposed what you are trusting in? And what have you been hoping in? What delights in life do you find yourself living for more than you ought? How easily can they be taken away? How does delighting in the Lord compare? What would it look like to be enjoying Him in those good things? Why wouldn't the joy disappear, if the things did?

Sample prayer: Lord, forgive us, for we have been like those who go down to Egypt for help and put our trust in horses. We have found our security in our own plans, and in the governments of men. Pour out Your Spirit to make us to hope in King Jesus as our Ruler and Defender. And forgive us for finding our contentment and joy in Your good gifts, rather than in You whose goodness has designed them for us and whose goodness sustain them to us. By delighting ourselves in the created thing, we have often had our joy interrupted, when it would have persisted if it had been in You. So, forgive us, we ask, through Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP46 "God Is Our Refuge and Our Strength" or TPH65A "Praise Waits for You in Zion"

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Isaiah, 31 and 32, these are God's words. Whoa, to those who go down to Egypt for help. And rely on horses, we trust in chariots because they are many. And then horsemen because they are very strong. Buddy, do not look to the holy one of Israel nor seek Yahweh.

Yeah, he also is wise and will bring disaster. And will not call back his words. But will arise against the house of evildoers. And against the help of those who are iniquity. Nothing, Egyptians are men, not God. Their horses are fleshed not spirit. When you always stretches out his hand.

But he who helps will fall and he who has helped will fall down. They all will perish together. For thus, Yahweh has spoken to me. As a lion roars and a young lion over his prey. When a multitude of shepherd's, a summoned against it, he will not be afraid of their voice nor be disturbed by their noise.

So, y'all live hosts will come down, To fight for Mount Zion, and for its ill. Like birds flying about so well, y'all have host defend Jerusalem. Defending, he will also deliver it. Passing over, you will preserve it. Return to him. Against him, the children of Israel have deeply revolted.

For in that day, every man shall throw away his idols of silver and his idols of gold sin. What's your own hands have made for yourselves? Then a serious will fall by a sword, not of man. And a sword not of mankind. So devour him. But he shall fall from the sword.

And as young men shall become forced labor, he's across over to his strong old for fear. And his princess shall be afraid of the banner. Says, Yahweh. Whose car is in Zion. Center is furnace. And Jerusalem. Behold of King. Will rain and righteousness. And princes. Will rule with justice?

A man will be as a hiding place from the wind and cover from the tempest. As rivers of water in a dry place. It's a shadow of a great rock and weary land. The eyes of those who see will not be them. The ears of those who hear will listen.

Also, the heart of the rash. Well, understand knowledge. And the tongue of stammers. He'll be ready to speak plainly. The fullest person will no longer be called generous. Nor the miser said to be bountiful, For the fullest person will speak foolishness in his heart will work iniquity. To practice ungodliness to utter error against Yapha.

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.

Rise up. You women, who are at ease here, my voice, you can play some daughters Give ear to my speech in a year and some days you will be troubled. You can play some women For the vintage will fall, the gathering will not come tremble. You women who are ease, be troubled.

You can place it ones. Stir up yourselves, make yourselves bear curd sackcloth on your waists. People show mourn up on 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 palace says, will be forsaken. The bustling city will be deserted. The forts and towers will become layers forever. Our joy of wild donkeys. A pastor of flocks. Until the spirit is poured upon us from on eye. And the wilderness becomes a fruitful field. And the fruitful field.

Is counted as a forest. Then justice will dwell in the wilderness. And righteousness, remain in the fruitful field. The work of righteousness will be peace. The effect of righteousness. Quietness and assurance forever. My people will dwell. And a peaceful habitation. And secured dwellings. And i'm quiet resting places. Though, hell comes down on the forest and the city has brought low in humiliation.

Luster. You whose so beside all waters? Who send out freely the feet of the aux? And the donkey, I'm in the sins. This reading of god's inspired, and And then tort

Again. Chapter 31 and 32. Repeats. The theme that we have seen throughout the book of isaiah. That man must not trust. In his own clever ideas. When man trusts in his own clever ideas. He finds out just how foolish and idiotic. He really is. Because he never comes up with the idea, trust in yahweh, according to what yahweh has said.

He comes up with ideas like Well. The egyptians have many chariots. And their horsemen and horses are very strong. We come up with ideas, that seem like wisdom to us. But they are falling. Our mind. There's blinded by our wicked hearts. Now, god is strong. And god isn't just many.

He literally is meaning. There is no existence. Apart from him. Part of what she illustrates that wonderful. Um, Picture of an entire flock of birds of defense. Descending upon a city. Except for, it's not birds. It is the presence in power of yahweh to defend. The, the current Geopolitical state.

That is not at all identified with the people of god, in the bible have something called the iron dome. Uh, is To describes for us. Something like, The yahweh dome. Hi, it is. As if a, Persistent perface of phase shifting force field. Of the lord himself, which He has creator, not creature.

Just trying to use. A creaturely. Uh, pictures of how to illustrate. The greatness of his defense. How stupid are we? When our trust is, That well as long as we can remember, the u.s was the dominant world power and we were always comfortable and could always get what we want and we're never really lacking or wanting for anything and Um, no one has invaded, and the hundred.

60 or so years since the north did and So, we're Uh, we're fine, we we Are safe. No. Our help, our safety, our strength. Our defense. Is in the name of yahweh. Who made the heavens? And the earth. And so low to those. Not just too go down to egypt for help.

Obviously we're not trusting in each after anymore. Who look for help according to our own wisdom. And particular in this case, because what the lord was bringing he was bringing as a discipline upon israel. So you don't just need someone stronger than a syrians. You need someone stronger than the lord.

But even if it is not a direct chastening, For particular sin. Which incidentally, How could the church not expect it. For all that, we've done to the worship of god, for hundreds of years now. Couples centuries. In our land. If the lord brings down. Famine or war. Or plaque.

Showing out. Look back on it. When we recount history before the face of god, And confess has justice to chase in his church like that. But even if it's not necessarily, They chastening of the church for any particular sin. It's still comes by the hand of god's providence. You still have to be stronger than god to turn it back.

Unless god is the one who turns it back. And so we think we are wise. And he says, he is also wise And Wolverine disaster. We think. Egypt and their army are strong in many. And he says, The egyptians are men but not god. Verse 3. Their horses are flesh, not spirit.

This is another. Symptom of our diluted state. That we actually think that. That which is spirit is somehow less real than that which is flesh. Flash switch the lord created. To communicate things. And Creating us also a flash. So that by interacting with the material world that he communicated, We may know his.

Reality within ourselves. And we can see even evidence of his divine nature and the things that are made. And yet, these are not the moral things. They are the less real things. It's only those who make their sight and their census. The standard of reality. Who could come to the conclusion?

That flashes more real more substantial, more effective, more strong. Than spirit. God is spirit. That should settle for us. Which is. More real. More effective. More lasting more substantial stronger. And so he says horses are flesh not spirit. When yahweh stretches out his hand. The helper will fall let alone out.

Little parish together. And then he sets before then. What it's like to have. The lord. As your help and as your defense, With the flock of birds that we're Um, referring to already in verse 5 with the young lion who When you add shepherds, Uh, to the onslaught, it's just more food.

We could drag home to the pride. Of lions, not. Concededness of men are haughtiness of men. And so the lord sets before them the option between himself and that in which he, they have trusted. Urges them to return. When there's a double in that day, in verse 7, There's an in that day of in the day that the lord.

Gives conversion. Brings a person out of themselves into christ. Out of the first item into the last item. So that if anyone is in christ, he has new creation. But in the last day, when the new creation itself arrives, Even those who are not converted.

We'll also throw away their idol of silver and gold tiding. The evidence. Realizing the futility. Crying out for what can't be done. That the mountains and the hills would fall upon them and hide them from god. That the mountains in the hills were not going to not going to comply because they're the lord's mountains and the lord's hills.

And so verses six and seven, potently describe. What happens at conversion? Is. The the one whom the lord is saving, has the last day experience in the middle of his life. They're hopefully at the beginning towards the beginning of his life. Where he realizes, who the lord is. He throws away as a detestable thing.

His own righteousness, his own efforts, whatever else he had hoped in, whatever else he had delighted in as the pleasure of his life. And the spirit giving him eyes to see the lord by faith. Who cannot be seen by sight. The now believer. Clings to the lord returns to him.

And the great defender. Of verses four and five. Become his defender. Whatever else you're living for, whatever else. Makes you feel safe. If it's not the lord cast it away. Enjoy, whatever. He uses to give you a defense. Instrumentally in this world. Enjoy whatever. Good things. He gives you to.

Further your health strength and enjoyment. Of him. And this world. But do not have your trust or your joy. Be something that must be cast away at the last day. Cast it away now. Have him now. Unless you find yourself. Not just under chastening in the midst of time.

But condemnation, at the end of time. Now, speaking of chastening in the midst of time, a series of becomes then, and example of that, at the end of chapter 31 When they fall by the sword. Not a sort of man. But the sort of god and their devastated. Now, chapter 32, introduces a king.

And in the short term, the example would be Hezekiah But his reign. Was never government mentally. Uh, like that in versus one and two. Where not only is our righteous king, but Every man who is in authority, is like a shade and a covering. Um, everyone dwells in peace.

No, there's a king greater than Hezekiah and versus one and two. And there's a profit greater than isaiah in verses three and four. Remember what was told? And i told isaiah chapter 6, That he would prophesy. So that seeing they would not see and hearing, they would not hear And their hearts would not understand.

And they would not repent. The profit described in verse 3 and 4 is actually being used to bring about repentance. The eyes of those who see will not be dim. The ears of those are here will listen. The heart of the rash will understand knowledge. And so this isn't just a short-term king and profit here.

This is king jesus and prophet jesus. You need jesus as a prophet because your ignorant. You need jesus as a priest. Because you're guilty. You need jesus as a king. Because you're weak and to helpless. And Isaiah 32 says, God will send jesus. To be the king greater than Hezekiah.

The prophet greater than isaiah. The priest. Who actually takes away our guilt. So, you may trust And the lord jesus and in the administration of christ, You will not have fools in authority. That people consider to be the nobility who are helping them out. That are actually just drawing them.

You know what? We see in our country. This is not something new. It does not just happen. Representative republics and democracies and with capitalism. It's actually worse. The more you concentrate. The authority and control of men. The worse it gets because men are evil. And apart from the rain of king, jesus, that begins in the last day.

You, it will always trend. Towards the what's described in verses 5 through 7? So we are not unique. Every generation of believers. For the last. 2500 years since this was written. Have been able to read isaiah 32 5 through 7 and say Ah, Our nation is like that. Fools are in authority.

And depressing. And those who are trusting in them. Are just being abused by them. Their plans always end up being wicked plans. Many of us in the churches, Our blind to that. Had many conversations. In which i pointed out the difference. Between the early documents of the american revolution.

Which hoped him god. And placed the seat of freedom and the rights of men. And the authority over them in god. And the constitution that we devised. Very cleverly. Which seats authority in the people. It's a evil scheme.

Takes into account. Much. That is true about man and the way men work it is. There was for a while with A godly people or A people that had echoes of godliness among them. An effective scheme. But even that you put in in Air quotes. But at the end of the day, it did not find.

Authority in the lord and help in the lord. And the definition of righteousness in the lord. Did not submit to the lord. It already denied. To a great extent, the first table of the law, As the first part or the middle part. Of verse 6 to practice on godliness and other error against Yahweh.

And then, of course, Whenever the first table is violated. The second table is not far behind. Put the rain of the lord jesus. Would not be like that. And so, you have these Wealthy women in the cities. And, The rest of the chapter. You have the, the wealthy would women in the cities who were indulging themselves?

The only interesting thing or the the interesting thing in their life was when the new vintage of wine. Came out so that they would stop drinking the good wine from the previous batch. And start drinking the good wine from the new batch and they thought they had it great.

But then Their pleasure wasn't something. That was actually very fragile. And as soon as, The Assyrians come and interrupt the supply chain. There's distress in the city's. Where the wealthy enjoyed themselves. While the poor were being oppressed. And just like at the beginning of 31. Why would you trust in something?

That is so easily devastated. Now, with the these Um, These wealthy ladies of nobility who are just self-indulgent and yeah have never worked today in their lives. The first work they do is morning, go over the loss of the wine. That's the point at which they trade. Their party clothes for work clothes.

Then they go to work morning over the loss of their wine. That's their work. So why would we have our joy? Something that can be So easily destroyed. But this. Pouring out of the spirit verse 15, brings the great reversal. We had the language before where you have The forest here, which Um, Indicates that, which is wild and untamed.

That man thinks is man thinks has, he's so cultivated Uh, but His most cultivated thing is still wild and unfamed. But that, which appears wild and untamed to man has actually cultivated by god. And in the great reversal, you actually have the rain. Of the verse one king of righteousness.

Verses 16 through 20? Yes. He destroys. Um, That which turned out not to be cultivated. But was a wilderness, not just a physical wilderness, but spiritual wilderness. And the city that was haughty. That's brought low in humiliation verse 19. But in the last day, the judgment of the king is paired.

With the righteousness. Of his reign among his own people. The great piece in which they live. When that is described in verses 16 through 18. And verse 20, And, Although, we don't have time to. Go phrase by phrase, opening that you can Read it, and just enjoy. The perfection of the righteousness and the peace.

That jesus brings. First, in the heart of those who are new creation, And then, at the last day, In the entire world. Which will then be new creation. Amen, let's pray. Lord, we thank you for your word. We thank you for how it disabuses us of. False hopes. And false joy.

Grant that your spirit. Him. The lord has already poured out. Would be continuing his new creation work in us. As he conforms us to scripture. And making us to serve christ. And display his reign. Even here in this creation. While we wait for that, which is to come. Even so, come quickly.

Lord jesus. And glorify yourself. We ask in your name, amen.