

The Millennium Forecast

The Book of Isaiah

Text

Isaiah 31:1 - 32:20

Topic

Isaiah warns the women of Jerusalem about their spiritual complacency

Title

“The Real Housewives of Jerusalem”

Who did not say, “Let them eat cake?”

That would be Marie Antoinette. True, the queen of France was given to excess. She, for example, purchased 300 dresses every year. Historians quip, “she dressed for excess.”

As the story goes, when she was told her subjects had no bread to eat, she said, “Let them eat cake.” It exposed how out of touch she was.

It certainly sounds like her, but she never said it.

It is regarded as a cliché whose authentic origin is difficult to trace.

The women of the southern kingdom of Judah may have given her inspiration. In chapter thirty-two, verses 9,10 & 11, the LORD accuses them of having grown “complacent.” It can mean *careless* or *carefree*. At least one Bible version translates it as *overconfident*.

One of the major themes of this entire section of Isaiah is the overconfidence they had in the world and the 'under' confidence they had in the LORD. It is summarized in 31:1, where we read, "Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, *And* rely on horses, Who trust in chariots because *they are* many, And in horsemen because they are very strong, But who do not look to the Holy One of Israel, Nor seek the LORD!"

Our look at Judah's history gives the Lord an opportunity to check our confidence - whether it is overconfidence in the world, or 'under' confidence in Jesus.

I'll organize my comments around two questions: **#1 Do You Put Any Confidence In The World?**, or **#2 Do You Put All Of Your Confidence In The Lord?**

#1 - Do You Put Any Confidence In The World? (31:1-9 & 32:9-14)

"Faith is deliberate confidence in the character of God whose ways you may not understand at the time," said Oswald Chambers.

We therefore will often find ourselves in circumstances that test our confidence in Jesus versus the help of the world.

Pastor Alistair Begg suggests the following illustration: *"A preoccupation with psychological theory has in many cases eroded confidence in the Scriptures. When the essence of the human predicament is redefined in terms of lack of self-esteem, it is almost inevitable that people will be directed toward a couch but not a cross, a psychologist but not a Savior."*

Keep that equation in mind - couch or Cross. You can substitute any worldly source for "couch."

Isa 31:1 Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, *And* rely on horses, Who trust in chariots because *they are* many, And in horsemen because they are very strong, But who do not look to the Holy One of Israel, Nor seek the LORD!

The southern kingdom of Judah, like every kingdom in that region, was afraid of the advancing Assyrian army. They were the proverbial juggernaut. They had already destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel. To meet the threat, Judah entered a mutual protection agreement with Egypt. God, Who had parted the Red Sea and drowned Egypt's army, was ignored in favor of a new Egyptian army.

The underlying problems are spiritual, and you can't fight the spiritual with carnal strategy and weaponry.

Ask yourself, "What spiritual resource or resources do I require to be an overcomer in my situation?" If you are in Christ, *those resources are yours.*

Often in an action movie there is a scene in which the hero chooses his or her weapons from a larger arsenal. The choice is based on the operation & the opponents.

Let's say you are feeling pressed at work. There are lots of carnal things you could try. But it's probably patience, or forgiveness, or the joy of the Lord, that will effect the situation. It becomes a thing between you and Jesus - *not* between you and someone else.

Isa 31:2 Yet 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 work iniquity.

God would dispatch the Assyrian army by sending the Angel of the LORD (Jesus) to kill 185,000 soldiers in one night.

He said He'd fight for them and He kept His word. Is there some 'word' you think God has not kept? Start by maintaining the certainty He cannot renege on His Word. Then wait. But remember: According to Hebrews, chapter eleven, you may not receive certain promises until you're with the Lord.

Isa 31:3 Now the Egyptians *are* men, and not God; And their horses are flesh, and not spirit. When the LORD stretches out His hand, Both he who helps will fall, And he who is helped will fall down; They all will perish together.

Why look to mere men when you can go to God?!

Chances are, the situation you are in has been orchestrated by God to show you your 'Egypt' and get you back to being confident in Him.

John Newton wrote, "*The Lord is my strength - yet I am prone to lean on reeds.*"

Isa 31:4 For thus the LORD has spoken to me: "As a lion roars, And a young lion over his prey (When a multitude of shepherds is summoned against him, *He* will not be afraid of their voice Nor be disturbed by their noise), So the LORD of hosts will come down To fight for Mount Zion and for its hill.

Isa 31:5 Like birds flying about, So will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem.
Defending, He will also deliver *it*; Passing over, He will preserve *it*."

Forty-six of Judah's fortified cities would be destroyed. God would, however, protect Jerusalem.

Isa 31:6 Return *to Him* against whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted.

Isa 31:7 For in that day every man shall throw away his idols of silver and his idols of gold - sin, which your own hands have made for yourselves.

They worshipped the gods of their pagan neighbors. It wasn't only that they had the images they made for themselves. They adopted the practices of their neighbors:

- Their rituals involved perverted sexual behavior. It was deemed OK because it was considered worship.
- Another practice they adopted was killing their babies by sacrificing them to Moloch, burning them to death.

How far gone are you? Or someone you know? Jesus can rescue you. He is a greater Savior than you are a sinner.

Isa 31:8 "Then Assyria shall fall by a sword not of man, And a sword not of mankind shall devour him. But he shall flee from the sword, And his young men shall become forced labor.

Isa 31:9 He shall cross over to his stronghold for fear, And his princes shall be afraid of the banner," Says the LORD, Whose fire *is* in Zion And whose furnace *is* in Jerusalem.

You don't pull the mask of an old Lone Ranger, and you don't mess around with the Angel of the LORD.

We'll come back to the opening verses of chapter thirty-two. For now, to maintain continuity, skip to verse nine.

Isa 32:9 Rise up, you women who are at ease, Hear my voice; You complacent daughters, Give ear to my speech.

I read this synopsis: "*Stereotypical Barbie and a wide range of fellow Barbies all reside in Barbieland, a matriarchal society where all women are self-confident, self-sufficient, and successful.*"

[SPOILER ALERT] In the new movie, Barbie has an existential crisis and chooses to become human.

Think of the women of Judah as Barbies going around in pink chariots as if they hadn't a care in the world, telling everyone to eat cake.

Isa 32:10 In a year and *some* days You will be troubled, you complacent women; For the vintage will fail, The gathering will not come.

Their wealth derived from the harvest. It would fail the next year. Do you realize how quickly you could wake up and have no money, because it has all been seized? Once cash is eliminated, you will be at the mercy of those in charge. A story this week out of Florida claims that *"Employees of a Florida-based retail health company said JP Morgan Chase Bank suddenly terminated their personal and company bank accounts without an explanation. One of the employees believes the account shutdowns were politically motivated and due to their employer's controversial stance on COVID19."*

Isa 32:11 Tremble, you *women* who are at ease; Be troubled, you complacent ones; Strip yourselves, make yourselves bare, And gird *sackcloth* on *your* waists.

Isa 32:12 People shall mourn upon [beat] their breasts For the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine.

I'm pretty sure there isn't a *Sackcloth Barbie*, but there would be sackclothed ladies in Judah's future.

Isa 32:13 On the land of my people will come up thorns *and* briers, Yes, on all the happy homes *in* the joyous city;

Isa 32:14 Because the palaces will be forsaken, The bustling city will be deserted. The forts and towers will become lairs forever, A joy of wild donkeys, a pasture of flocks -

Assyria would not succeed against Judah. The LORD would intervene. His people stubbornly refused to repent. Babylon would come, acting on the LORD's behalf, and succeed in overrunning them.

Because we remain in these unredeemed bodies, we have the inclination to trust in things that are like our bodies - fleshly, earthly, worldly, material, physical. The answer to our outline question, "Do you put your confidence in the world?", is "Yes." Start there and ask the Lord to show you where your overconfidence in the world lies.

#2 - Do You Put All Of Your Confidence In The Lord? (32:1-8 & 15-20)

Horatio Spafford's four-year-old son died. Not long after, the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 ruined him financially. His business interests were further hit by the economic downturn of 1873. Spafford planned to travel to England with his family on the SS *Ville du Havre*, to help with D. L. Moody's upcoming evangelistic campaigns. In a late change of plan, he sent the family ahead while he was delayed on business. While crossing the Atlantic Ocean, the ship sank rapidly after a collision with another sea ship. All four of Spafford's daughters died. His wife Anna survived and sent him the now famous telegram, "Saved alone."

As Spafford traveled to meet his grieving wife, his ship passed near where his daughters had died. He was inspired to write these words:

*When peace like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to know
It is well, it is well, with my soul.*

Can you say, "It is well with my soul?"

- You cannot if you remain in unbelief that Jesus died, was buried, and rose from the dead in order to save you.
- If you are in Christ, you can always say it. More than that - **you can live it.**

The verses that remain catapult Judah, and us, into the far future.

Isa 32:1 Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, And princes will rule with justice.

Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum explains, "*The king will be the Messianic King. The princes are the other members of the Messianic government. They will be characterized by righteousness and justice.*"

Isaiah saw past our time, the Church Age, to the seven-year Time of Jacob's Trouble, and to the Second Coming of Jesus. He will set up a Kingdom on Earth that will last 1000 years before giving way to something much better - Eternity with God.

Isa 32:2 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 "man" is the men in verse one who aid Jesus. Among others, *it's you & me!* We are going to co-rule with Jesus.

Listen again to how we will be empowered: "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."

I was thinking how wonderful it would be if we could help one another now in these same ways. Then I realized we *can* to a certain extent because we have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Isa 32:3 The eyes of those who see will not be dim, And the ears of those who hear will listen.

Isa 32:4 Also the heart of the rash will understand knowledge, And the tongue of the stammerers will be ready to speak plainly.

Everyone will be able to see, hear, understand, and repeat spiritual truth.

I'm going to read verses 5, 6 & 7 in the CEV:

Isa 32:5 Fools will no longer be highly respected, and crooks won't be given positions of honor.

Isa 32:6 Fools talk foolishness. They always make plans to do sinful things, to lie about the LORD, to let the hungry starve, and to keep water from those who are thirsty.

Isa 32:7 Cruel people tell lies - they do evil things, and make cruel plans to destroy the poor and needy, even when they beg for justice.

The Bible more than once encourages us to pray for our leaders. It does not preclude our recognizing when they are fools and crooks. All over the world leaders could be described this way. It doesn't bode well.

Isa 32:8 But a generous man devises generous things, And by generosity he shall stand.

Your Bible may have the word "noble" for generous. According to E.W. Bullinger, "generous" means *freehearted, freehanded*. What a great description of a person serving the Lord in the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Your heart is set free from

sin, worry, anxiety, and guilt. Your hand is willing to give all that you have, or to come alongside, and help, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Last Sunday Geno explained how as Christians we can be *free spirited*. Add that to being *free hearted* and *free handed*.

Now to verse fifteen:

Isa 32:15 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 forest.

The future Kingdom is characterized by the Holy Spirit ministering in overdrive. Look at nature, look at us, in that time and you see incredible restoration.

Isa 32:16 Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, And righteousness remain in the fruitful field.

Isa 32:17 The work of righteousness will be peace, And the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever.

“Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness” is a well-known phrase from our Declaration of Independence. In the future Kingdom, the following superlatives will apply: Justice, righteousness, peace, quietness, and assurance. And they will continue on into eternity, “forever.”

Isa 32:18 My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation, In secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places,

Peace & Quiet. Security. Rest. If you are in Christ, you ought to be weary in this world. The times of refreshing are coming.

Isa 32:19 Though hail comes down on the forest, And the city is brought low in humiliation.

Isa 32:20 Blessed are you who sow beside all waters, Who send out freely the feet of the ox and the donkey.

The Millennial Kingdom will be a utopia, *but it will not not be perfect*. There can still be things like freak hail storm accidents. While hail may destroy, it will not do so to believers.

When Jesus returns in His Second Coming, we read that “all Israel will be saved.” Elsewhere we are told that, tragically, $\frac{2}{3}$ of the nation will die, while $\frac{1}{3}$ remain to live in the Kingdom on Earth.

Multitudes of Gentiles will believe the Gospel and get saved. These are the subjects of Jesus dividing the sheep & the goats (in Matthew 25).

- The unbelievers are goats, taken away to await their resurrection and the Second Death by being cast into the Lake of Fire
- The sheep - they are believers who survive, and they enter the Kingdom.

Do you put all of your confidence in the Lord? Do I? No; but I want to!
A vote of “No-confidence” shows that a majority does not support the policy of its leader. They seem to occur regularly in the British House of Commons.

It’s one thing to vote “No-confidence” in PM Boris Johnson. (He survived a vote in 2022). It’s something else entirely to vote “No-confidence” in Jesus.

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones said this: *“I sometimes think that the very essence of the whole Christian position and the secret of a successful spiritual life is just to realize two things: I must have complete, absolute confidence in God and no confidence in myself.”*