

Rev Kenny Ferguson - Isaiah 32

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Preacher: Guest Preacher

[0 : 00] Now, as God enables us, let us turn and consider the words we have in this chapter which we have read together.

Prophecy of Isaiah in chapter 32 and again reading at the beginning of the chapter, 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, like the shade of a great rock in a weary land.

One or two thoughts on this word. We bow our heads in prayer once more to ask a blessing on the word. We ask, O Lord, now as we have come before an open Bible, that you would lead us and guide us by your holy and enriching spirit.

We acknowledge that without you we can do nothing. But another said, I am able to do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

[1 : 18] We seek that strength, that guidance in spiritual things this evening so that the word we expound will be a word in season to our souls.

Remember us then we ask and forgive sin in Jesus' name. Amen. The prophecy of Isaiah chapter 32 and the first two verses in particular.

The prophet Isaiah, he ministered around 700 BC, 700 years before Christ.

And he ministered in very difficult times and to very difficult people. If you see for example at the beginning of the prophecy chapter 1 and verse 4, the Lord says, ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, children who deal corruptly.

They have forsaken the Lord, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are utterly estranged. Well what a congregation of people to minister to.

[2 : 50] And what's more he goes on in the same chapter, chapter 1 at verse 18, when the Lord says, come now, let us reason together says the Lord, though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they are red like crimson, they shall become like woolly.

The Lord himself identifies the heinousness of the sins of these people, people who had so many wonderful privileges from the Lord down through the years, but they have turned their back upon him in a particular way and the Lord says that their sins are like scarlet in their being so public and they are as crimson in their being so deep rooted in their hearts and in their society.

And in this prophecy in chapter 28 to 32 in particular we have many indications that the people of Judah had forsaken their God.

For example in chapter 30 at verse 1 it says again, 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.

And then also in 31 onwards they cry to Egypt for help, their help should come from the Lord but they go to other nations, nations who have strong armaments and who are mighty in military terms.

- [4 : 47] And these are the people to whom the people of Judah lean and to whom they look for help. Whereas their help and counsel should be from the Lord himself.
- Those who rely on the human arm will find that the human arm will let them down sooner or later. And it says elsewhere in this prophecy, cease ye from man whose breath is in his nostrils.
- We in our own day see man seeming to be set up on a pinnacle and the power and attractiveness of man lauded highly.
- Whereas the Lord and his word and his day trodden underfoot and the counsel of the Lord set at naught and as if it were worthless.
- And that's the way people were in the days of Isaiah. But in chapter 32 and verses 1 and 2 we find the prophet looking ahead as it were.
- [6 : 01] And he's looking to a reign of a king who will reign righteously. Now it was King Ahaz who ruled in the days of Isaiah.
- He did evil in the sight of the Lord as it says in the scriptures. King Ahaz did evil in the sight of the Lord and as the king was so were the people.
- But we see here that better days lie ahead. Probably at one level Isaiah is looking for the better days that will exist under the king Hezekiah who will come down the line.
- He was a God fearing king. Hezekiah he was a God fearing and a gracious man.
- But I think here the prophet looks beyond even godly Hezekiah to another king. Even the king of the church himself the Lord Jesus Christ.
- [7 : 12] A king will reign in righteousness. Princes will ruin it justice and each or the translation also could be a man shall be like a hiding place from the wind and a shelter from the storm and so on.
- So I'm going to take it that this king who's going to reign in righteousness is the Lord Jesus Christ and the prophet is looking forward to the ultimate kingship and monarchy of Christ and the effects of it in the lives of individuals.
- And it says here that one will be as a hiding place from the wind, a shelter from the storm, homes of water in a dry place, shadow of a great rock in a weary land.
- Of course Isaiah has mentioned this coming king already in his prophecy. See Isaiah chapter 9 at verse 6 when he says unto us a child is born and unto us a son is given and the government shall be upon his shoulder and his name shall be called wonderful counselor the mighty God the everlasting father and the prince of peace of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end.
- This is the one he's talking about I believe in the chapter 32 before us and the upheaval in the nation described throughout this chapter talking about scoundrels and wicked schemes and people who do ignoble acts and people who speak foolishly and the fools speak folly and so on and so forth.
- [9 : 05] When this king comes these things are going to be set right. And this is not a picture of individuals like yourselves.
- We by nature speak foolishly, we are scoundrels by nature, we're not God fearing, we're not respect, we pay no respect to God's law really.
- Nevertheless when this king comes to sit upon the throne of our hearts things get straightened out and then there will be peace.
- But I'd like to say a few words in particular under these four headings that we have in chapter 32 verse 2, 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.

This king, this prince, this Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the mediator, the Saviour, he is the one who fits the bill in each of these descriptions of him.

[10 : 18] He is a hiding place, he is a shelter, he is like streams of water, he is like the shade of a great rock in a weary land.

Firstly then one or two thoughts on what it means for him to be a hiding place from the wind, hiding place from the wind.

What do you think the prophet is talking about when he's talking about wind? Well I believe the wind he's talking about is the wind of sin, the wind of sin.

It's the most destructive wind of all. When did this wind begin to blow? And from what direction has it come?

Well you go back to the beginning of the Bible to the book of Genesis and you'll find there that Adam and Dee were created in a holy and a happy condition in the Garden of Eden and all things were going well but then this wind began to blow, the wind of sin.

[11 : 41] And you remember the way Satan came in the form of a serpent and he started a dialogue with Eve putting doubts into her mind as it were as to the accuracy of what God had said.

Surely God did not say you will not eat of this fruit of this tree, surely you will not die. The wind of sin came sweeping from the darkest parts of creation and it blew into the mind and into the thinking process of Eve and Adam and it blew them away.

What does it say in the Catechism regarding the sin of Adam? Well it says concerning him that we sinned in him and fell with him in his first transgression.

Not only did this wind of sin deal with Adam as an individual in causing him to sin and to fall into a state of sin and misery but all those who have come into this world by ordinary generation, you and me sinned in him and fell with him in his first transgression.

The wind of sin started blowing then and it has blown all the way down the centuries in every society, in every mind and in every heart and in every circumstance of life among the sons of men because sin prevailed upon mankind.

[13 : 48] However good things might be in our society there is always something wrong somewhere. When you read in the Old Testament elsewhere about Neyman, the Syrian, you find that he was a mighty man of valor and through him the Lord had given victory to the kingdom against their enemies but then we have but he was a leper.

There's always something. The wind of sin has left a rottenness somewhere in every aspect of our society.

Doesn't matter how we try and improve things socially and we're thankful for the social improvements we have in our nation and so on, so many things to be thankful for.

Nevertheless things aren't ever exactly right and however well we get on as individuals in life and however qualified we might become and so on and however happy our family circle might be there's always something that leaves us a little bit unsettled.

A little bit seeking a little bit more of something to make us completely happy but that will never be outside of Christ.

[15 : 20] That will never be outside of Christ and this is what the prophet is here saying. A man is a hiding place from the wind.

The wind of sin which blows in my mind and blows in my heart and blows in my life as well as in your life and if the wind of sin catches us it can bring us all the way to our lost eternity.

Unless we look to this man who is the only hiding place from this wind of sin. Can I ask you, have you felt the power of this wind?

See when you go out on a very stormy day you have to be careful that you don't get blown off your feet. While the wind of sin often blows us off our feet we lose our composure, we lose our temper, we don't understand things and we make wrong judgments.

We sin in thought and word and action all because of the power of this wind that blows throughout our soul and our body and our life, our society and our world.

[16 : 57] If the Saviour Jesus Christ hadn't come to save his people from their sins and to be a hiding place for them none of us would have any hope for eternity.

The Gospel is all about this Saviour, this one who is the hiding place, this one alone who has been set up from all eternity to be the Saviour of the lost.

And he says, look unto me, all the ends of the earth and be ye saved, for I am God and there is none else.

Come unto me, all you who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. We labour against sin, we labour because sin is on every hand, sin is everywhere we look and its power to slay us is always there.

Do you remember the thief on the cross I mentioned in the morning the little prayer that he offered in the closing moments of his life.

[18 : 17] Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom. He was addressing this man who is the hiding place from the wind and he's addressing him at that very point where Jesus himself is standing in this wind and the wind of God's wrath and the power of Satan and the fallen world is directed particularly towards him.

And the thief on the cross earlier on that particular day of his crucifixion agreed that he was suffering justly because of the sins of his life.

But now he realises there is one beside him who is the only place to hide himself and the only one in whom he can hide from the power and the consequences of his sin.

And that is Jesus Christ, O Lord. No other name is given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved but the name of Jesus, Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God and he is the one in whom we can hide ourselves.

How can we do that? When we come and commit ourselves to him by faith, when we rely on him alone for our salvation, when we look to his shed blood as the only way by which our sins can be cleansed, look to his righteousness as the only way we can have a standing place before God.

[20 : 23] He fulfilled every aspect of God's law. He didn't come short in one iota of what was required of him.

He fulfilled the law perfectly. He magnified the law and made it honourable. What did we do with the law? We broke it and we constantly break it.

But if we come to him who has fulfilled all things for us, we will find that the wind of sin will not destroy us ultimately.

We will have forgiveness of sin and we will have a place where we will know the peace of God through believing in Jesus, a man, a hiding place from the wind.

Secondly it says here, a shelter from the storm. In the authorised version it says, a covered from the tempest and the word tempest literally means a storm with pouring rain.

[21 : 41] It's as if there is an intensity in the storm that isn't really in the wind of itself.

And what intensity is this? Well I believe that it may be the storm of persecution.

When people are persecuted for their faith, when people suffer for their faith, it's as if there is a storm directed to them and that they find it so difficult to continue.

When you think of the persecution in the first century, for example in the days of the apostles, remember the way Stephen was stoned to death.

Remember the way Saul of Tarshish persecuted the church. Remember the way Ananias responded to the Lord when the Lord spoke to him and told him about Saul of Tarshish and he says, behold he is praying.

[22 : 56] Oh Lord do you not know? This is the man who was persecuting your people and taking them to prison and agreeing with those who were stoning them to death.

The Lord said, he's had chosen vessel for me to bear my name before kings and before Gentiles. See there was a storm of persecution and it was so difficult for the people of God to survive.

When you think of the persecution in the days of the Covenanters in Scotland, how difficult it was for them to survive. They used to have to go right out into the Moorland and their gather with all the discomforts involved in that kind of setting because they weren't allowed to use the church buildings.

A lovely story I heard one of the elders in Crossable's mentioning. I'm sure some of you have heard of it.

This young girl and she was going to one of these meetings, a way out on the Moorland and the soldiers came around her and they asked her where she was going.

[24 : 17] And she said, well my elder brother has died and today they're going to read the will and I want to go and see if my brother has left anything for me.

Of course she was going to a Gospel meeting and it's as if she was using a language that they didn't know, a language that was very accurate, theologically.

She was talking about Christ had died and the Gospel was going to be declared and she just wanted to hear what the Lord was saying to her through the Gospel message and they let her go.

Remember the story of the two Margaret's at Wigtown? They put the tide one of them out there where the tide was coming in and tried to get her and the one on floor to recant and of course they didn't recant.

If you ever go to Wigtown there's a grave there, a cemetery there with this very well kept gravestone with the names of Margaret Wilson and Margaret McLaughlin.

[25 : 41] They died for their faith because there was a wind of persecution. I hatred expressed by those who didn't love the true Gospel of Jesus Christ and where did these people find their shelter in that storm?

Well surely there is only one place when the young girl was dying there tied to the stake and the sea was coming in. She sang Psalm 25, my sins and thoughts of youth, O Lord, do thou forget after the loving kindness.

Show me mercy. She ran in her heart and in her affections to this man who was the shifter from the storm and the waves came over her.

And she was safe in the arms of Jesus. Thankfully we don't have persecution of that nature today.

But did you ever consider that it's an aspect of persecution when people disregard the Gospel, when people speak ill of Jesus and of the word of God and of the Lord's day?

[27 : 06] It's as if it cuts right into your heart like a knife going through your heart when people speak ill and act in adverse ways towards the Gospel.

That's an element of persecution. Where do you run when you feel that awful feeling? Well you run to the Lord Himself and you tell Him, Lord you are in control.

We pray that you would bring your blessing upon our nation and upon our day. What about the awful storm of temptation when there is temptation to sin?

Something happens and there is something within you that says, I want to be involved with that.

Maybe it's an old sin of your life trying to reassert itself. Maybe it's something completely new. You know the devil has a way of placing people at the outer eddies of a large whirlpool.

[28 : 24] And you think, well in the outer eddies you'll never be drawn into the middle but if you are long enough in the outer eddies the movement is toward the centre all the time.

And you eventually sucked into the temptation and you sinned. Sometimes the temptation comes abruptly.

Peter again and again denied his Lord. All of a sudden he realised he had been trapped and he had sinned.

Storm of temptation, storms and providence, maybe a storm due to illness in your own personal life.

Things really aren't going well. Maybe illness in the family. It's like a storm has engulfed you and you feel like Jonah in that ship.

[29 : 27] The waves as it were seeking to drown you completely. What about the illness that leads to death? Death in the family.

Isn't that like a storm? An emotional storm? A draining storm? A storm that brings so much darkness and sorrow?

Well we have here that Jesus Christ is a shelter from the storm. Who experienced a storm like he did?

When in Psalm 22 it says, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? What a storm that was. A storm of hiding of God's face.

Illuminous, surrounded by enemies, looking death in the face.

[30 : 25] The Lord Jesus understands what you're going through when you miss a loved one. He wept at the grave of Lazarus and the Jews said, behold how he loved him.

He has a heart of compassion and he knows how to comfort those who are grieving and those who are bereaved. He knows how to heal those who are ill and we run to him that we might have healing if that is his purpose for us.

We flee to the almighty person of Christ who is able to put his arms around us in the storms of life. Thirdly it says here that he is like streams of water in a dry place.

Streams of water in a dry place. Dry place could also be translated desert place and it's as we're saying well life really sometimes is as if you're walking through a desert and a desert can be a very dangerous place.

When you think of the number of dangers that appeared before the children of Israel as they walked through the desert, scorpions, fiery serpents, lack of water and so on and so forth.

[31 : 52] All of these dangers in their own way come our way as well. There are dangers from all kinds of things as we walk through life, through the desert of life.

But think of the believer's desert experience. I'm going to suggest that the believers in Christ feel a real desert experience from time to time when they're on a spiritual low, when every means of grace seems to be empty for them, when every time they open their Bible it's as if they're not connecting with it at all, when every time they go to private prayer it's as if as I mentioned in the morning it's like a battleground because the world seems to pour in upon you, the flesh seems to come alive and the devil seems to dance upon you trying to discourage you from continuing in prayer.

Now what a difficult situation that is. It's like a personal desert situation, dryness within and difficulties without and we see here he is like streams of water in a dry place.

When he sends his word it's as if he renews and refreshes our spirit, the word of God appropriate to our situation, the word of God's tailor made for the circumstances you have and he gives you relief, you reach an oasis just like the children of Israel reached Elim where there were 12 wells of water and 70 palm trees and there they sat beside the water.

They were refreshed, they were renewed, they were built up all because Jesus Christ by his word spoke a word into their mind, into their soul and gave them relief.

[34 : 28] But before I go on what about the dry place that is the unconverted state of man. A man in his unconverted state, a woman in that unconverted condition, it's as if for all that they may have by way of qualifications, by way of money and property and position their life really is a desert spiritually speaking because the Lord has not brought the water of life into their experience.

If that is your case this evening why will you not call upon him, call upon him to send shows of blessing upon you, call upon him who charged Moses to take his rod and strike the rock and out of that hard rock water gushed forth the most unseemingly and unlikely situation turned to the advantage of these people.

And our heart is so hard by nature it is like flint. We need the Lord's intervention so that the streams of water from heaven will make their way into our hearts, break our hearts in true penitence and in true confession of our sins and in a true turning unto the ways of holiness through faith in Jesus, streams of water in a dry place.

And finally we have this reference, the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, a land where tiredness prevails, where the burdens are so heavy, where the heat of the day saps our energy, a land where weariness is the order of the day.

Can I go on another day? Can I go on like this another day? Surely I can't. And the people of God often feel that kind of experience, the weariness of the way, the long distance runner feels loneliness when he gets out there into the country away from the stadium and the wind is against him and the hills seem to be so steep and maybe the rain comes and he's all alone.

[37 : 45] That's the way sometimes the people of God feel. Maybe that's the way you feel this evening, that there's a sense in which you're lonely and tired and struggling and weary with life.

But you see there is one who is able to come to your aid and this is the way it's described here, that he is like the shade of a great rock in a weary land, a great rock, the rock that is Christ casting such a refreshing shadow over you in your weariness.

And isn't it interesting that Christ isn't a stationary rock if I can use that picture? He himself says, I will never leave you, I will never forsake you.

And as he walks with us in our weariness, his shadow always is cast over us. It's not as if we come to him and then after we go away his shadow doesn't follow us.

His shadow follows the people of God. He is like the shade of a great rock who casts his shadow over the weariness of our life.

[39 : 18] The church in the song of Solomon said this, I sat under his shadow with great delight and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

Have you ever sat for a moment under the shadow of Christ relying upon him, trusting in him, believing in him as the only saviour able to save you from your sins?

Have you ever experienced moments of the sweet fellowship of heaven as you read the word, as you hear it being preached, as you pray before God?

Has this sweetness, this refreshing shade that bears the aroma of heaven come around you in your heart and life?

Well, so Christ is in our day as he was in Isaiah's day and in the experience of all those who look to him and call upon him in truth.

[40 : 42] It will be like a hiding place from the wind, a shelter from the storm, streams of water in a dry place, the shade of a great rock in a weary land.

Where are you this evening? Do you know this saviour who is so qualified that whatever circumstance you have, whether you are in this wind or storm, whether you are in a desert or weary, doesn't really matter.

The Lord is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by him. He is fully qualified as prophet to teach you, as priest who offered himself for the sins of his people and who makes presently intercession at the right hand of God for all of his people.

And also as the king who is able to subdue you unto himself, rule you, defend you and conquer all his own and your enemies.

The whole package is there in the one person, the God-man mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ. Talk to him this evening and be saved all the ends of the earth, for he says, I am God and there is none else.

[42 : 21] Let us pray. Help us, O Lord, this evening to take to heart the words which we have read and considered together.

We praise you for this word of hope that is laid before us, this encouraging word that we find in the Bible.

That there is one who is able to deal with us at the very point of our need. And we pray that you would deal with us graciously and savingly.

Let us know as we sing your praise in conclusion and forgive sin in Jesus' name. Amen.