

Christian Nobility
Isaiah 32:1-8

March 21, 2010

A. Introduction

- 1. Chapters 28-33: 'The Folly of Trusting in Egypt
- 2. The 5 repeated themes

3. 32:1-8

B. Behold the King and His Princes Isaiah 32:1

- 1. First requirement for Christian nobility^A
- 2. Who are the nobles of this kingdom?

C. Seek to Follow the King Isaiah 32:2

- 1. 'Each'^B ...
- 2. Pathways of imitating Christ^C

D. Be Guided by the Holy Spirit Isaiah 32:3-4

- 1. Spiritual Vision (verse 3a)^D

2. Spiritual Obedience (verse 3b)^E

3. Spiritual Knowledge (verse 4a)^F

4. Spiritual Speech (verse 4b)^G

E. Put Off the Old Man, Put on the New^H Isaiah 32:5-7

- 1. Put on Sincerity (verse 5)^I
- 2. Put on True Religion (verse 6a)^J
- 3. Put on Kindness (verse 6b)^K
- 4. Put on Fair Dealing (verse 7)^L

F. Conclusion Isaiah 32:8

- 1. a text to set your life by^M

^A John 3:3
^B 1 Corinthians 11:1
^C Philemon 1:7
^D Ephesians 1:18, 1 Corinthians 2:12

^E Romans 8:4
^F John 16:13
^G Mark 13:11
^H Ephesians 4:22-24, also, Colossians 3:8-14
^I Matthew 6:2, 5, 16
^J James 1:27
^K James 2:8, Galatians 6:2
^L Matthew 5:3-10
^M Philippians 4:8

A. Introduction

1. Chapters 28 to 33 form a section in this book of Isaiah
 - a. addressed to the people of Judah and its capital, Jerusalem
 - b. which could be entitled, 'The Folly of Trusting in Egypt'
 - c. in these chapters there are five repeated themes
 - (A) 1. their sins as a people
 - (B) 2. the specific sin of trusting Egypt rather than God
 - (C) 3. the judgement that will come on them for this
 - (D) 4. how God will still deliver them from Assyria
 - (E) 5. their blessed restoration as a people
 - d. this 32nd chapter has, as you will have noticed as we read it, that theme of judgement sandwiched between the theme of their blessed restoration as God's people; we had
 - (A) verses 1-8: the blessedness of the kingdom
 - (B) verses 9-14: the causes for sorrow, and,
 - (C) verses 15-20: the causes for joy
2. This morning we shall look at those first 8 verses
 - a. they describe a much different kingdom from the kingdoms of Ahaz and Hezekiah that Judah had in Isaiah's time,
 - b. even that of Josiah coming almost a century later, was but dim foreshadow of this coming kingdom
 - c. this kingdom will be radically different in the character of its king, of its court and of its people
 - d. later on in the chapter we read the cause of this change: the pouring out of the Spirit from on high
 - (A) OT: the Holy Spirit temporarily came upon men and women endowing them for some work of God
 - (B) NT: through the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ, the Spirit permanently indwells every believer
 - e. the Holy Spirit makes the radical change in this kingdom
3. This passage is, therefore, Messianic; it's about Jesus Christ

- a. for the Holy Spirit's permanent presence shows
- b. the kingdom it describes is Christ's kingdom
- c. which will be revealed in its fullness upon Christ's return
- d. some question this being a Messianic prophecy, because the character of the king, the Messiah, is not the focus
- e. rather Isaiah 32 is about the character of His kingdom
- f. a character that agrees with the sermon on the mount, Christ's manifesto or public declaration of His kingdom
- g. a kingdom marked by the nobility of all of its citizens

4. If I had a single verse for today's text it would be verse 8:

- a. **But the noble man devises noble plans; And by noble plans he stands.**– the AV uses the word 'liberal' instead of 'noble' but both words fail to convey wholly what is meant
 - (A) underlying this word is the thought of being impelled
 - (B) of a person who in the face of a need, has the impulse to volunteer, either in giving or in serving
 - (C) he or she is the willing worker with the willing spirit
 - (D) so this nobility is not the belonging to a certain class of society, but the giving of oneself without self-interest
- b. Christ must return for this to be completely fulfilled
- c. but that makes it no less the goal and objective of the church and of every believer today
- d. so, with that background, let us look again at this passage to see the nobility that should mark every believer in Christ

B. Behold the King and His Princes: **Behold, a king will reign righteously And princes will rule justly.**

..... Isaiah 32: 1

1. 'Behold' – this does not simply introduce a new subject

- a. it is a command: stop! look at the King!
- b. if you are to see this wonderful kingdom, it is as Jesus said to Nicodemus: **'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.'** (John 3: 3)

2. do you want to live a life of true Christian nobility?
 - a. first you must belong to the King!
 - b. first you need to accept Christ as your own personal Saviour; then you can live for Him
 - c. Jerome, who first translated the Bible into Latin, thought the princes here were the twelve apostles
 - d. but as I apply these verses in analogy to the church,
 - (A) the princes or nobles of this kingdom are not prelates, nor bishops, nor ministers: those are only titles
 - (B) these princes 'rule justly;' they lead others in God's way
 - (C) the nobles of this kingdom consists of those who follow the King and lead others to Him
 - (1) the faithful Sunday School teacher
 - (2) the one helping out at Awana
 - (3) the Christian in her home to other ladies
 - (D) the nobles are those faithfully relaying the gospel story

3. a life of Christian nobility begins by making Jesus Christ, your King of Righteousness, as Saviour and Lord in your life

C. Seek to Follow the King: *Each will be like a refuge from the wind And a shelter from the storm, Like streams of water in a dry country, Like the shade of a huge rock in a parched land.* Isaiah 32:2

1. 'Each,' 'a man' or 'a person'
 - a. it does not necessarily refer to any particular individual
 - b. but examining what the person is like shows that it must primarily be describing the King himself, Jesus Christ, the Rock of whom we sing

*The Lord's our rock in Him we hide:
A shelter in the time of storm!
Secure whatever ill betide:
A shelter in the time of storm!
Oh, Jesus is a Rock in a weary land!*^{-(2)}}.
 - c. and yet, the words apply beyond the King to his princes
 - d. those whom we can follow because they follow Christ

e. as Paul said, 'Be imitators (or, followers, 'mimics') of me, just as I also am of Christ.' (1 Corinthians 11:1)
– be like Christ

2. this verse suggests 2 ways in which we should be Christ-like

a. the first way is to be a protector

(A) like a refuge from the wind And a shelter from the storm

(B) the winds of this world blow hard upon Christ's church and the storms of life are difficult upon its members

(C) Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd stands in the gate in order to protect His flock; imitate Him to do the same

(D) Christian nobility will impel us to protect the flock

b. the second is to be a refresher

(A) Like streams of water in a dry country, Like the shade of a huge rock in a parched land

(B) we do not live in a land like Palestine which can be hot and exceptionally dry, when the body craves for water

(C) but we do live in a place where the spiritual springs of the truth are few and far between; where neighbours and friends and workmates – and yes, even those in the church – are athirst for the water of life, for Jesus Christ who alone can satisfy the soul's deep longing

I tried the broken cisterns, Lord,

But, ah! the waters failed!

E'en as I stooped to drink they'd fled,

And mocked me as I wailed.^{—{3}}

(D) Christian nobility will impel us to be like Philemon, of whom Paul said, 'For I have come to have much joy and comfort in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother.' (verse 7)

3. the life of Christian nobility continues by following Christ, by seeking to be like Him, in being Christ-like

D. Be Guided by the Holy Spirit: Then the eyes of those who see will not be blinded, And the ears of those who hear will listen. The mind of the hasty will discern the truth, And the tongue of the stammerers will hasten

to speak clearly. – there are four works of the Holy Spirit found here Isaiah 32:3-4

1. Spiritual vision: **Then the eyes of those who see will not be blinded** – this is an ongoing work in the Christian's life
 - a. Paul prayed for the Christians in the Ephesian church, **'I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,'** (1:18)
 - b. this is the work of the Holy Spirit: **'Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God'** (1 Corinthians 2:12)

2. Spiritual obedience: **And the ears of those who hear will listen.**
 - a. the word there is stronger than **'listen'** – it's too bad that the old word **'hearken'** has gone out of style – this is a sign of the times – because it comes closer to the meaning: pay attention and then take action upon what you have heard
 - b. but we also need to recognize that we cannot perform that obedience in our own strength
 - c. to follow Christ, to walk the path of obedience, calls for dependence upon the Holy Spirit: **'so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.'** (Romans 8:4)

3. Spiritual knowledge: **The mind of the hasty will discern the truth**
 - a. false religions are rampant from the eastern mysticism to the western pseudo-scientific: they spring up daily; why? The mad pace of our society has people frantically looking for any solution to escape it, to grasp at any possible straw
 - b. Jesus' disciples were facing a similar anxiety when He gave this promise: **'But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.'** (John 16:13)

4. Spiritual speech: **And the tongue of the stammerers will hasten to speak clearly.**
 - a. for a number of years I served in another church alongside a dear Christian brother who had worked all his early life in the far north. Long after coming to Christ he struggled longingly, seeking to give up his smoking habit. Yet almost overnight the Holy Spirit took away another habit, that of cursing, and gave

to him a sanctified tongue.

- b. some of the people of Judah with a stammering tongue mocked Isaiah and his message: in the new kingdom all that will be replaced by the clear message of the gospel
- c. listen to Jesus' words about this: *'When they arrest you and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but it is the Holy Spirit.'* (Mark 13:11)

5. the life of Christian nobility is sustained by allowing the Holy Spirit free course to work in your life

E. Put Off the Old Man, Put On the New Isaiah 32:5-7

- 1. The fads that come and go in raising children are interesting
 - a. positive reinforcement is an important tool, but ...
 - b. you may have been told, 'Thou shalt not say "no!"!' yet sometimes children have to hear that word
 - c. the Bible does say, 'no'; it does use negative expressions, because sometimes that is the only way we will understand
 - d. the next 3 verse express the truth in negative terms, which will but better illustrate the positive expression of nobility
 - e. which is how the truth is presented in Ephesians 4:22-24, that we lay aside our old corrupt nature, and put on our new nature created in righteousness.
- 2. Put on sincerity: *No longer will the fool be called noble, Or the rogue be spoken of as generous.* . . 32:5
 - a. I recall with affection a dear pastor who spoke about those who were eager to assume the *'pips and badges of office'* but were unwilling to take the responsibility with them
 - b. the fool – the Biblical term for the person desiring to stay ignorant of God – and the rogue are delighted to assume the lovely acknowledgements and praises of men
 - c. Christ spoke of the people of his day like this, and summed it up, *'They have their reward'* (Matthew 6: 2, 5, 16)
 - d. Christian nobility consists of those who are in deed
- 3. Put on true religion: *For a fool speaks nonsense, And his heart inclines toward wickedness: To practice*

ungodliness and to speak error against the Lord, 32:6a

- a. just to pick out one word: 'ungodliness' – it is profanity, not of speech, but of life; of living a life which is totally opposed to and out of touch with God
- b. that is what is being spoken of in this verse: the person who rejects God and leads others into the same error
- c. James, in part gives to us the converse: 'Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.' (James 1:27)
- d. Christian nobility seeks after Biblical godliness.

4. Put on kindness: To keep the hungry person unsatisfied And to withhold drink from the thirsty. 32:6b

- a. so it is no wonder, that the fool denying God and His kindness, denies kindness to those made in God's image
- b. that is the earthly man's rule of life, but the Christian has another rule: 'If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself," you are doing well.' (James 2:8)
- c. Christian nobility bears one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2)

5. Put on fair dealing: As for a rogue, his weapons are evil; He devises wicked schemes To destroy the afflicted with slander, Even though the needy one speaks what is right. 32:7

- a. this world teaches 'it's every man for himself,' 'do to others before they do it to you,' and 'it's dog eat dog.'
- b. no, it's not a fair world: but, Christ in His kingdom manifesto taught otherwise: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, ... those who mourn, ... the gentle, ... those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, ... the merciful, ... the pure in heart, ... the peacemakers, ... the persecuted' (Matthew 5:3ff)
- c. the rogue or knave, you see, is interested only in himself, only in his own progress – in climbing his ladder
- d. 'love,' said Paul, 'does not seek its own', so also Christian nobility is not self-seeking, but rather self-denying

6. the life of Christian nobility means stripping off the old man and putting on clothing of the new man given to us in Christ

F. Conclusion – *But the noble man devises noble plans; and by noble plans he stands* Isaiah 32:8

1. this is a text to set your life by

a. impelled and impulsive to serve and to follow the King

b. setting our plans, ideas, thoughts on what is good: *'Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.'* (Philippians 4:8)

c. and taking a firm stand on these, that we may be made a savour of Christ, a blessing to the world where we live.

2. closing hymn, 'Make Me a Blessing'.

1. © 2009 by Garth Hutchinson, Faith Fellowship Baptist Church of Aurora (Ontario): may be distributed or quoted freely, only let this be done to the glory “of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13). Except as noted otherwise, quotations are from the New American Standard (NAS) version of the Bible, © 1960 ... 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

Various other English versions of the Holy Bible may be used in this sermon. Some (for example, the AV, ASV, and NAS) seek to be strictly translations, while others (and especially PHIL) contain paraphrasing which involves a certain amount of subjective interpretation. Nevertheless, there is little material difference in meaning among these. Some prove slightly clearer on some verses than others. Looking at more than one version sometimes sheds additional light on any particular verse. Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in {braces}. The versions are identified as:

ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version
ERV	The Revised Version of 1885
NAS	New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
NLT	1996 New Living Translation © 1996 by Tyndale Charitable Trust
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Further sermons and illustrations may be found at the web-site, www.holwick.com. Materials in this sermon from Rev. David Holwick's database are identified by “Kerux” followed by a sermon or illustration number.

2. 'A Shelter in the Time of Storm!' by Ira David Sankey (1840-1908)
3. 'None but Christ Can Satisfy!' by James McGranahan (1840-1907)