

Until The Spirit Is Poured Out On Us From On High – Isaiah 31-32

Introduction – Isaiah doubles the woe upon Judah for trusting in Egypt (30:1-2, 31:1). This is because the heart of rebellion against God is not trusting God when you claim to know God (Gal 4:8-9). A great judgment is falling down upon Judah. That is the consequence of her rebellion. Yet as that judgment comes, the voice of the LORD still calls them to repent and return to Him in faith and obedience. And in that judgment there is still the promise of another “falling down,” which is the Spirit poured out from on high.

Flesh or Spirit? (31:1-9) – Judah, settled in her wise counsels, is sure that the best decision is to trust in Egypt. With sarcasm the prophet seems to say, “You know, God knows a little something too” v2. They were turning to something other than the promises of God. There is a way to use intermediate means that does not conflict with a prior and ultimate dependence upon God. But this “return to Egypt” decree was not one of them.

Repeating chapter 30, the LORD again declares that He will defend Judah like an undistracted lion (v4) or a protective mother-bird (v5). Assyria is going to fall, but not by the sword of a man (vv8-9). Sandwiched in between (vv6-7) is the call to repent and return to the Lord. The “Assyrias” in our lives are never the real crisis. The real danger is unbelief in a good God when “Assyria” threatens. “Let not your hearts be troubled” (John 14:1), and “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Heb 13:5) are not verses for when life is going well and easy. Rom 8:35-39 is a promise while in the midst of trials and before those trials are gone.

A King and His Spirit – In the flesh, they trust the wrong king and men rather than God and His Spirit (31:3). But this all changes, God declares, when He pours out His Spirit from on high (32:15) and this is the heart of the message.

A King Reigning in Righteousness (32:1-8) – A new Davidic king is promised who will reign in perfect righteousness. His princes will rule with Him. He will be a shelter in any storm, and will provide living water in a dry place. Judah-with-faith would remember Moses and the Exodus out of Egypt in these words. They would remember the water that came from the rock in the dry wilderness. Paul would instruct us that this Rock was Christ (1 Cor 10:4) and tell NT believers that this is all for our example as well (1 Cor 10:6-13). In Isaiah 32:3-4, through these just rulers, the body of His people will be restored. In vv5-8, a nation formerly ruled in foolishness, exploitation and extortion will be replaced with nobleness, generosity, and justice for the oppressed.

The Sin of Complacency (32:9-14) – Some refuse to hear any sign of coming judgment because things are so good (for them) right now. These are represented by the “women at ease” in this section. Yet everything they trust in is going to fail them, especially their power (these are most likely the elite women of the cities of Judah), their riches, their pleasures. Cities are feminine in Scripture and these women may also symbolically represent the towns of Judah that will be decimated by Assyria’s invasion (v14).

When the Spirit Falls (32:15-20) – Everything changes when the Spirit is poured out, a great reversal of the fall (v15). Principally this occurred at Pentecost (Acts 2) when a new temple was filled, the temple of Jew and Gentile together, filling the earth. The City of God then has arrived, the Spirit is turning the land back into Eden, and the Word is flowing freely to the world.

When the Spirit from on High is Poured Out Upon Us – what does it look like? It is powerful indeed.

Repentance unto Life and Renewal – Repentance can sound like such an angry word. But it is actually a word of release and salvation. “Return to Me, I am your Deliverance!” “Be freed from those dead idols and lying demons!” When we have deeply revolted (31:6) and God grants repentance unto life, it is a sweet and joyous experience (Acts 11:18, 2 Cor 7:10).

We See God/We See the King – The work of the Spirit directs us to Jesus where we see Him as King and Lord of the world and our lives. The Spirit also opens our eyes and ears to understand all that Christ has for us (Isaiah 32:3-4, Eph 1:17ff).

Society Changes – When the Spirit is poured out, the effect is not hidden in our individual hearts. That Spirit, testifying to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in everything, changes the way a civilization governs itself (Isaiah 32:17-18).

There is No Complacency – Spirit-filled people find true rest in the Lord, but they are not at ease because they think they can manipulate God or because the harvests are so full right now. They refuse such false security while giving thanks to God for all things to enjoy, share, and use to His glory now.

The Gospel Goes Out and More Come in – Jews were not to plow with an ox and a donkey together (Deut 22:10) but in Isaiah 32:20 they are sent out freely together to harvest. Taking this chapter altogether, the declaration of a new King, the outpouring of the Spirit, and what the NT reveals to us of the fulfillment of these, this last verse intimates a sowing and harvesting of the world. The preaching of the Gospel will be efficacious. Fundamentally, we are to believe this – and we are to live as though we believe it. For you, be confident that “He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil 1:6). For the church and for this world, be confident that this King reigns “that the world through Him might be saved” (John 3:17).