

May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018

**“The Stability of Your Times”**

**Isaiah 31-33 (ESV)**

**Focal Passages: 31:4-8, 32:15-18, 33:5-6**

**BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN**

May 13 2 Chron. 9-12	May 17 2 Chron. 25-27
May 14 2 Chron. 13-17	May 18 2 Chron. 28-31
May 15 2 Chron. 18-20	May 19 2 Chron. 23-34
May 16 2 Chron. 21-24	May 20 2 Chron. 35-36

**Cross References: Genesis 12:1-3, 1 Corinthians 12:3, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Galatians 5:22-23, Hebrews 5:9, James 1:5, Proverbs 2:6, Hebrews 5:9, James 1:5, Proverbs 2:6, 2 Timothy 3:16-17**

**Lesson Introduction:** Over the last two weeks, we have considered the problem of disingenuous worship (**Ch. 29**), and looked at how we often misplace our trust in things that are of this world, rather than turning to the Lord for our hope and strength (**Ch.30**). This week, we will see some of the incredible promises of God in midst of His people’s unfaithfulness by examining a selection of **chapters 31-33**. We have seen throughout our study of Isaiah that the people of Israel and Judah have continually turned to other nations (such as Assyria and Egypt) to fix their problems, only to realize that they will be no help at all. However, God still promises His faithfulness, and points His people to where true hope lies. In our lesson this week, we will consider that **The Lord fights on our behalf, The Lord pours out His Spirit, and The Lord is exalted, and dwells on high**. The cure to disingenuous worship and misplaced trust is found in these truths.

**Key Memory Verse: Isaiah 33:5-6**

**FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS OF THE PASSAGE:**

- The Lord fights on our behalf (**Ch. 31:4-8**).
- The Spirit of God produces righteousness, which leads to peace (**Ch. 32:15-18**)
- What brings stability to our times is the fact that God is exalted on high (**Ch. 33:5-6**).

**Isaiah 31:4-8 English Standard Version**

4 For thus the Lord said to me,  
 “As a lion or a young lion growls over his prey,  
 and when a band of shepherds is called out against him  
 he is not terrified by their shouting  
 or daunted at their noise,  
**so the Lord of hosts will come down  
 to fight on Mount Zion and on its hill.**

5 Like birds hovering, so the Lord of hosts  
 will protect Jerusalem;  
 he will protect and deliver it;  
 he will spare and rescue it.”

6 Turn to him from whom people have deeply revolted, O children of Israel. 7 For in that day everyone shall cast away his idols of silver and his idols of gold, which your hands have sinfully made for you.

8 “And the Assyrian shall fall by a sword, not of man; and a sword, not of man, shall devour him; and he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall be put to forced labor.

**Isaiah 32:15-18 English Standard Version**

**15 until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high,  
 and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field,  
 and the fruitful field is deemed a forest.**

16 Then justice will dwell in the wilderness,  
 and righteousness abide in the fruitful field.

**17 And the effect of righteousness will be peace,  
 and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever.**

18 My people will abide in a peaceful habitation,  
 in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.

**Isaiah 33:5-6 English Standard Version**

**5 The Lord is exalted, for he dwells on high;  
 he will fill Zion with justice and righteousness,**

**6 and he will be the stability of your times,  
 abundance of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge;  
 the fear of the Lord is Zion’s treasure.**

**Discussion Section 1: The Lord Fights on Our Behalf (Ch. 31:4-8)**

-Why would God fight to “**protect Jerusalem**” (V.5)?

-What had the Israelites done to deserve His protection?

**Note:** In **verse 1 of chapter 31**, we see again the Lord chastising His people for turning to Egypt rather than looking “**to the Holy One of Israel.**” Yet **verses 4-8** still speak to the incredible faithfulness of God to fight on behalf of Israel, even after their rebellion. The fact is, God fights for His people not because of anything they have done to deserve it, but to show the incredible faithfulness and grace that only He possesses. In **Genesis 12**, God promised to make a great nation from the line of Abram, by which “**all the families of the earth shall be blessed**” (**Genesis 12:1-3**). He did not owe Abram such a promise... In fact, Abram and his family worshipped false God’s before God lavished His grace on him (**Joshua 24:2-3**).

In his sermon “**The Covenant of Abraham**,” John Piper speaks of God’s incredible and peculiar plan to create and fight for the nation of Israel: “**In completely sovereign grace God comes to this undeserving idolater and says, with life-creating authority, “I am going to bless you, and through you bring blessing to the whole world.” And with that begins the history of the people of Israel. To see how amazing this beginning is, contrast it with what might have been. For example, why didn’t God send Christ into the world to die for sin and rise again in Genesis 12, instead of enduring the 2,000 year roller-coaster relationship of Israel’s apostasy and repentance? Why didn’t God then issue the Great Commission to go to all the nations, instead of dealing almost solely with Israel for two millennia? I raise these questions only that God’s mysterious freedom might strike us. Remember He is not following someone else’s script. He wrote the book! He could have designed redemptive history anyway He pleased. And, contrary to all human expectations, for His own wise purposes, God set His favor on a single man, Abram, and commenced an amazing 2,000 year history that would, in the fullness of time, bring forth Jesus Christ the Redeemer for all the world.**”

How does seeing God’s faithfulness to fight for Israel encourage you? How has He fought for you in the past?

In what ways are you attempting to fight battles that can only be won by the Lord?

**Discussion Section 2: The Lord Pours Out His Spirit (Ch. 32:15-18)**

-What do these verses teach us about how we come to a place of peace in our lives?

**Note:** Last week we saw clearly that placing our trust in world powers and earthly goods will in no way bring about peace in our lives. These verses tell us that “**The Spirit is poured out upon us from on high.**” As we see, the Spirit will produce righteousness and justice, “**and the effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever.**” We are made righteous through trusting in Christ and His work on the cross, and His resurrection from the dead (**2 Corinthians 5:21**). The Spirit gives us the ability to call on Him as Lord (**1 Corinthians 12:3**), and continually produces righteousness in us (**Galatians 5:22-23**). Part of the fruit of the Spirit is “**peace.**” Our hope for peace and rest in this life, and into eternity, is in trusting in Christ, by the Spirit of God. Glory to God for pouring out His peace-producing Spirit on us!

**Discussion Section 3: The Lord is Exalted, and Dwells on High (Ch. 33:5-6)**

-What about today feels unstable to you? What are some things that we often hope will produce stability in our lives?

-What does this passage tell us about where we should turn for stability?

**Note:** Verse 5 tells us, “**The Lord is exalted, for He dwells on high.**” That sentence alone should produce immense stability in our lives. Trusting in Him means trusting in the One who “**does all that He pleases**” (**Psalms 115:3**). He is exalted above all circumstances, and not only is He above them, but He is in complete control of them all (**Ephesians 1:11**). He is the source of **salvation, wisdom, and knowledge** (V. 5, **Hebrews 5:9, James 1:5, Proverbs 2:6**). He is infinitely wise, and His ways are better than ours (**Isaiah 55:8-11**). Our only hope for stability is to look upward, and trust in the promises of our Great God and Savior.

-Why is it that we have a tendency to trust the unstable things of this world, rather than look upward?

-How can we grow in trusting Him this week? (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**)