*DEVOTIONAL*

November 5 - 10

*The Messiah in Isaiah*

**Monday, November 5 Isaiah 32:1-20**

*“See, a king will reign in righteousness”*

 The reign of the Messiah king whom God promises through his prophet, Isaiah, will be characterized by righteousness and justice. In this new kingdom, instead of the deafness and blindness typical of human kingdoms, eyes will see and ears will hear truth about God. Instead of dullness and insensitivity, hearts will have knowledge and understanding of God. And, instead of fools and scoundrels being treated as honorable simply because they have gained power and wealth through their selfish schemes, the truly honorable will be those noble people who have shown themselves to be generous and giving.

 The prophet tells the complacent women (apparently because of a good harvest) that their complacency is terribly misplaced, for in only one year, all that will be changed. But that will not mean God has failed. He will pour out his Spirit. Just as the rain falls and the formerly barren earth springs to life, so the Spirit will fall on barren hearts and the justice and righteousness of Messiah’s kingdom will spring up.

*Jesus Messiah, you are righteous and you call me to right living through your Spirit. Amen.*

**Tuesday, November 6 Isaiah 33:1-16**

*“Woe to you, O destroyer”*

 The woe of verse 1 is probably directed at the nation of Assyria which was threatening Israel, but the fact that no particular nation is named allows the text to show that all the destructive and deceptive character of earth’s nations is radically different from the character of God and of the kingdom he will build. Consequently, verses 2-6 depict the people of God turning to him, placing their trust in him, and experiencing God’s deliverance. He will provide a foundation of justice and righteousness, and on it can be erected salvation, wisdom and knowledge.

 But, deliverance has not yet come, and verses 7-9 paint a picture of hopelessness in the face of current threats. But there *is* hope! There is no nation that is greater than God, and God will make that fact plain. All the great plans of the destroyer will one day be visited back on itself, and God will bring about its destruction. It is God’s power that rules the earth, not the power of the nations. What is required of us is to do and say “what is right,” that is, what is in keeping with God’s standard of treating others with honesty and fairness.

*I praise you, Lord, for you bring about justice and righteousness. Amen.*

**Wednesday, November 7 Isaiah 33:17-24**

*“The Lord is our king”*

 The promise of a divinely provided leader was fulfilled in multiple ways throughout Israel’s history. It was immediately fulfilled when Hezekiah, the anointed king, trusted God for deliverance from the Assyrians and experienced that deliverance in dramatic ways. It was fulfilled later when God delivered his people from Babylonian captivity and restored them to their own land. It was fulfilled in the more distant future when God revealed his Messiah in Jesus Christ. And it will be finally fulfilled in the last days, when the Messiah rules the earth.

 Isaiah describes the city of the Lord’s anointed king as a permanent tent. Perhaps the thought is that all our human habitations are as fragile as tents – and always will be. But if those tents are given over to God, he can make them more secure that the mightiest fortress that is only dependent on human power for its survival. From the metaphor of the tent, the prophet moves to water imagery. The city will have peaceful rivers and streams flowing through it, symbols of peace and abundance.

*You are our king, Lord, and provide for us all that we need. Amen.*

*DEVOTIONAL*

November 5 - 10

*The Messiah in Isaiah*

**Thursday, November 8 Isaiah 34:1-7**

*“Come near, you nations, and listen”*

 This passage contains a general announcement of judgment on the nations of the earth, using the language of the court. God calls the defendants, the nations and the peoples, to hear the decree pronounced against them. But the judgment does not merely involve the earth; it affects the entire cosmos, with the start being dissolved and the sky rolled up. God’s anger is particularly directed against the armies, which aptly symbolize the arrogance and pride of nations. He will devote them to complete destruction.

 The word used here for “destruction” is a particular word used for destruction as a result of offenses against God. It is the same term used of the destruction of the Canaanites in Joshua 6:17 and of the Amalekites in 1 Samuel 15:3. This is not merely a contest to see who is stronger; it is a conflict between the Creator and those who have rebelled against him, a conflict with cosmic consequences. In verse 5, the announcement of destruction is particularized by applying it to the nation of Edom (see tomorrow’s passage).

*The proud will fall, Lord, for you are Holy. Amen.*

**Friday, November 9 Isaiah 34:8-17**

*“Edom will be paid back”*

 Why is Edom singled out to represent the nations of the earth in their hostility to God and their eventual destruction? As early as the entry of Israel into the land of Canaan, Edom opposed God’s plan (Numbers 20:14-21). This hostility continued with one Israelite king after another having to face warfare with the Edomites. Ultimately, the Edomites would assist Babylon in their destruction of Jerusalem and the imprisonment of God’s people.

 The destruction of Edom is given in considerable detail. The language of these verses is reminiscent of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19. It is also appropriate to the region at the south end of the Dead Sea, where Edom is located. It is a barren land, where pitch and sulfur deposits can be found. This may be another reason why Edom is chosen to represent the destruction of the nations: Its territory is largely desert and portions are nearly uninhabitable. No human can live there, and if they could, they would not want to. Thus it fits what Isaiah wants to say about the result of trusting human glory.

*You, Lord, will see that justice is done in the end. Amen.*

**Saturday, November 10 Isaiah 35:1-10**

 *“Your God is coming”*

 This chapter is the mirror image of Isaiah 34. That passage spoke of the fate of the arrogant nations and all who trust in them. This one speaks of the destiny of those who turn from that path to a resolute trust in God. First of all, in a powerful contrast, God will turn the desert into a garden. The burning sand of chapter 34 will become a pool, and the places where jackals once lay will become grassy meadows. Even the desolation that went on from generation to generation because of the arrogance of the nations can be changed by God if we will let him.

 Those who are discouraged and fearful will be given courage and strength. They have remained faithful while the nations have gone down and down. They have seen evil triumph again and again, and they have wondered if God’s day would ever come. But, the Lord will balance the scales of justice, and they will see the day when both wickedness and righteousness receive their true reward from God. Further, for those who turn to him in trust, God makes a way through the most difficult circumstances – a Highway of Holiness.

*You prepare a way for me, Lord, and I walk in it. Amen.*