

God Comforts

Nov. 8, 2020

Isaiah 49:1-13

The older we get, the more we realize that our God is a God who comforts His people. He comforts us through His Word and His presence with us. He also comforts us through His people, the body of Christ.

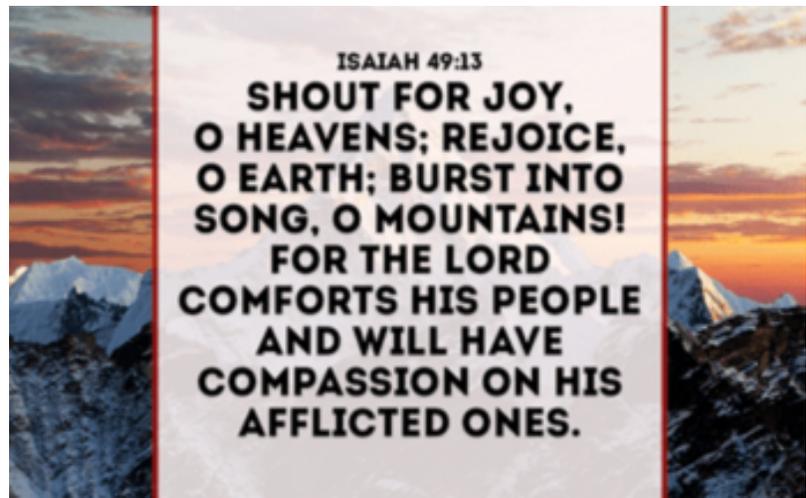
Paul, in writing to the church in Corinth, says to them, *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”* 2 Cor. 1:3-4

In our lesson this week, Isaiah comforts God’s people with the message that He would send a Servant who would accomplish His purposes. After telling them about the decades of Babylonian captivity and exile from their land, God promised to rescue the remnant nation. When the exile ended, God would accomplish the restoration of His people in a way that would make the nations stand in awe. He would bless His people, and the nations would worship God.

Many people today are treading water, and they don’t know how much longer they can hang in there. People are tired and feel all is lost. As God’s servants, may we find comfort in knowing He includes us in His redemptive plan, calls us to spread His message of salvation, and justifies us now and for eternity. [excerpts from Glenn Metts and John McClendon]

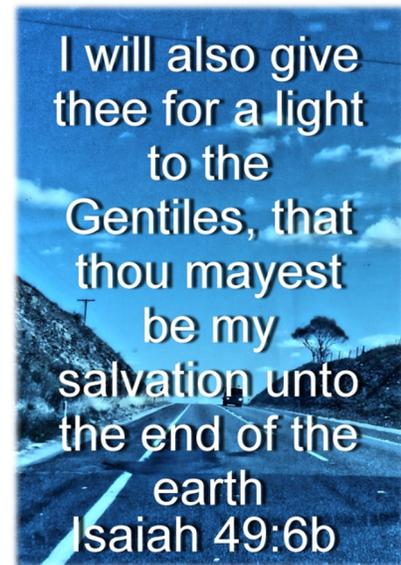
Included (Isaiah 49:1-4)

- Isaiah points to the **‘servant of the Lord’** sometimes as an individual (Chapter 42), sometimes as the nation Israel, and ultimately as being fulfilled by Jesus (our passage today).
 - **“Coasts and Islands”** – to the people of lands everywhere. **“Listen to me”** – pay attention!
 - God’s promise to redeem His people led to the question how He would do so.
 - The answer lies in the person of the Servant.
 - Called prior to His birth and named while still in the mother’s womb.
 - The Servant had a special mission, was known by God, and belonged to God.
 - The Servant would use God’s words to bring about deliverance from their enemies.
 - The Servant was God’s weapon by which the Israelites would be set free from captivity.
 - **“he hid me”** – The weapons, like the Servant, would be revealed at God’s predetermined time.
 - The Servant glorifies God. He would reveal God’s perfect character through perfect obedience.
 - Was the Servants work in vain? Israel had rebelled against God. Now they were captives of Babylon.
 - **“Judgement is with the Lord”** - Even though the Servant was frustrated, success would be determined by God.
 - God would determine the value of the Servant’s work.
- **Have you been frustrated when doing something you knew that God wanted you to do?**
- **How does the response of the Servant encourage you?**



Called (Isaiah 49:5-7)

- **“formed me from the womb”** – recalls the fact that the Servant is doing what God called him to do – **“to bring Jacob again to Him”**
 - Not only would Israel be restored, they would be reconciled to God.
- When Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden of Eden, they were cast out of God’s presence. Likewise, when Israel went into exile, they were out of God’s presence. (But never completely cut off from God.)
 - God’s redemption of His people through the Servant was more about restoring the relationship with God than just a return to their land.
- Israel should have been a **“light to the Gentiles”** and brought others to the Lord. Since they failed, the Servant would now perform this task.
 - The Servant would solve the core problem of Israel and the whole world – sin and separation from God; **“salvation unto the end of the earth”**.
- How would God accomplish this through the Servant? Verse 7 says the Servant would become despised and abhorred. Some would view him as worthless.
 - Of course, this would not remain so; **“kings shall see and arise”, “princes also shall worship”**
 - The highest rulers would take notice of the Servant and humble themselves before Him.
- We know that the Servant is Jesus. But Isaiah’s words must have been startling to his audience.
 - The marvel and surprise of how God would bring salvation to the world is amazing.
- **Do you ever take God’s plan of salvation for granted?**
- **Is His plan different today than in the time of Isaiah?**



Vindicated (Isaiah 49:8-13)

- God provides such comfort for His people.
 - Even when things seem impossible, we must trust Him.
- These verses record the success of the Servant
 - **“in an acceptable time”** – during the Jubilee year (every seven years), slaves were freed, and land that had been sold reverted back to the original owner.
 - The Servant of the Lord would bring about the **“day of salvation”**.
 - Jesus would bring about a new **“covenant”**. The Servant would be a living covenant.
 - The Servant’s work would yield a time when people would no longer break the covenant.
 - In addition to restoration of the land and relationship with God, the Servant would release the **“prisoners”** and those **“in darkness”**. (Those who are captive and spiritually blind)
- God can be counted on because He is the Creator.
 - Nothing can stop God from rescuing His people.
- God commanded the “heavens, earth and mountains” to rejoice. So should we!
- Jesus, God’s Servant Son, initiated this salvation. Praise be to God!
- **Does the story of redemption help you in hard times?**
- **Do you trust in the power of God and His control over all things when you are facing challenging times? Even now?**



Biblical Truth:

***The one true God is compassionate;
He comforts His people.***

“And in that day you will say: ‘O LORD, I will praise You; though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me.’ Isaiah 12:1

