

Comfort For God's People

Isa 40:1-2

40 "Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" Says your God. 2 "Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, That her warfare is ended, That her iniquity is pardoned; For she has received from the Lord's hand Double for all her sins." NKJV

Isaiah lived a little around 100 years before the fall of Jerusalem. And this passage will mean much more to you and me if we have read Jeremiah and Lamentations.

Because comfort is only useful in the aftermath of a tragedy such as Isaiah constantly foretold of in his book.

God works all the angles. He covers all the bases. So when Isaiah warns Judah concerning their sin and tells of impending judgment, he knows that God will one day comfort His people whom He has had to discipline so severely.

- I. The situation in Isaiah's day.
 - A. The Assyrian empire
 1. What God had already done and would do later.
 2. See Isaiah 1:1-20
 3. They had taken all the defended cities of Judah and had completely removed the northern kingdom from their land.
 4. But yet for all that the people continued to rebel against God's Word.
 - B. The forsaking of God's Word by God's people.
 1. Isa 5:20 Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! 21 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, And prudent in their own sight!
 2. What happens when a people forsake the word of God?
 - a. See Rom 1:18-32
 - C. The stubbornness of the people.
 1. God described them as stiff-necked, having foreheads of stone.
 2. Let us look at just one example in Jeremiah 42:1 - 43:2
- II. God's cure of Judah.
 - A. He will bring them into captivity for 70 years.
 - B. He will destroy His beloved city, Jerusalem and His temple.

- C. He will defile the land with the bodies of the slain.
 - D. He cause them to serve the Babylonians who will force them to serve their gods.
- III. God is not angry forever His purpose is to comfort the repentant returnees.
- A. The whole purpose of God is to get His people to return to Him.
 - 1. Isaiah 44:22 I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions, And like a cloud, your sins. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you." NKJV
 - 2. Isaiah 55:11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. NKJV
 - 3. Jeremiah 3:7 And I said, after she had done all these things, 'Return to Me.' But she did not return. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. NKJV
 - 4. Jeremiah 4:1 "If you will return, O Israel," says the Lord, "Return to Me; And if you will put away your abominations out of My sight, Then you shall not be moved. NKJV
- IV. America has turned away from God, but God has His had stretched out still.
- A. Isaiah 5:25 Therefore the anger of the Lord is aroused against His people; He has stretched out His hand against them And stricken them, And the hills trembled. Their carcasses were as refuse in the midst of the streets. For all this His anger is not turned away, But His hand is stretched out still. NKJV
 - B. Isaiah 9:12 The Syrians before and the Philistines behind; And they shall devour Israel with an open mouth. For all this His anger is not turned away, But His hand is stretched out still. NKJV
 - C. Isaiah 9:17 Therefore the Lord will have no joy in their young men, Nor have mercy on their fatherless and widows; For everyone is a hypocrite and an evildoer, And every mouth speaks folly. For all this His anger is not turned away, But His hand is stretched out still. NKJV
 - D. Isaiah 9:21 Manasseh shall devour Ephraim, and Ephraim Manasseh; Together they shall be against Judah. For all this His anger is not turned away, But His hand is stretched out still. NKJV
 - E. Isaiah 10:4 Without Me they shall bow down among the prisoners, And they shall fall among the slain." For all this His anger is not turned away, But His hand is stretched out still. NKJV

His hand is still stretched out to you still today.