

The Savior Will Bring a Promised Blessing

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. (Isaiah 40:1-2)

They had gotten themselves into quite a predicament. They had become complacent, at best, toward his goodness and favor. They had taken for granted his grace-filled promises. They had forgotten about his call to love, serve, and obey him before anyone and everything else. And in spite of warning after warning after warning, they chose to remain faithless to their faithful God.

And so, through Isaiah, God's judgment was foretold to his chosen people: Destruction was coming for their disobedience; punishment for their waywardness; pain, sorrow, and loss for their faithlessness. They had brought this judgment upon themselves.

Yet God never would, and never could, forsake his chosen people. God had a solution to his people's problem. Even

before the punishment would be doled out, he used Isaiah to proclaim his faithful love that would act on their behalf.

In tender words of comfort, God speaks to his people. Their hard service of living under the sentence for their complacency toward him would come to an end. Their sins of disobedience and faithlessness would all be paid for, every one of them. Instead of receiving retribution for their sins, they would receive a double portion of relief, rest, and assurance of peace—not punishment.

But it would be, and could be, nothing that they would do. It would be nothing on their part that would bring them comfort or peace or relief. It would be nothing they could ever contrive or carry out. It would have to be God's solution.

And his solution wasn't to just forget about the punishment and let it slide. It wasn't to give them another shot to get it right the second time. His solution was to place it all upon someone else. Someone else who would

willingly do their hard service for them and finish it. Someone else who would perfectly pay for their sins. Someone else who would bring blessing upon blessing instead of punishment. It was God himself who would do it, and he uses words that proclaim that it's as good as done. Because with a faithful God, when he speaks, it must be and will be done.

And it was done, just as Isaiah had foretold it. Because that someone else did come, and he took not only the hard service, sins, and punishment of his Old Testament people upon himself, but that of an entire world of sinners like you and me.

And so it still brings believers great comfort centuries later, as our God speaks tenderly to sinners like us. Comfort, comfort for us, his people. Comfort that someone else took our place so we could have peace.

Gracious God, forgive us for our disobedience, faithlessness, and complacency toward you and your Word. We look to the perfect Savior you sent into the world who took our punishment and paid for our sin, so that we might have the comfort of being called your people. Amen.

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