



February 17, 2008

Continuation Of Hope

Isaiah, like other prophets who were sent to warn the people of Israel and Judah during their twilight, wrote many things concerning judgment and destruction. These were consequences for the neglect of God and their betrayal of the blessings and spiritual debt they owed the Lord. In the midst of these things there is also the reminder that while there are to be judgments against them for their sin, there will also be peace and the continuation of the work that God has set forth to accomplish. Ultimately that work is to save all of mankind, as many as will listen, through the sacrifice of Christ. It is necessary during the days of Isaiah and following, that the evil that had been brought into the land should be purged. God extends assurance and comfort to those who will see these things happen and reminds them that he can and will deliver. One of the most frequently quoted passages that addresses this is the reminder of God's power to save in the midst of the worst circumstances. ***"Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear..." (Isa 59.1)***. Foretelling of the coming of John the baptizer and the Messiah, God provides comfort and the sign of these things that are to come. God states, ***"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins."*** (Isa 40.1-2). This will occur as God sends one who will prepare the way for the Lord. ***"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."*** (Isa 40.3). Following this the purpose of God shall be revealed as the Messiah comes into the world. ***"And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it."*** (Isa 40.5). All of these things are fulfilled as John comes to prepare the way of the Messiah (**Matt 3.3**) and the revelation of the light that was to be the salvation of all mankind (**John 1.1-5**). God speaks of the grandeur and

power of this as he describes the restoration of a spiritual bond with himself and his people. ***"Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel."*** (Isa 41.14). Their spirit shall be revived in this as well; ***"...and thou shalt rejoice in the LORD, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel. When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them."*** (Isa 41.16-17). This would be accomplished as God would provide the knowledge that they needed to have in order to serve and please him. ***"That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the LORD hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it."*** (Isa 41.20). We know that these things were fulfilled as God brought Christ into the world and allowed him to make the sacrifice for the sins of all time. The kingdom of the Lord, which was to save all mankind was established and all nations were invited to be one with the Lord (**Isa 2.2-4**, **Acts 2**, **Acts 10**). This kingdom would be one which would therefore not have the boundaries that had been marked before by the physical nation of Israel but would meet the needs of all people. Isaiah states that God's people would also have a new identity as well. ***"And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name."*** (Isa 62.2). We find that the disciples indeed were called by a new name as the church, the new kingdom under the Messiah, grew and spread. ***"...And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."*** (**Acts 11.26**). The book of Isaiah is amazing in that it shows how God used the spiritual and physical downfall of his own people to be the salvation of themselves and all nations.

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