

# Speaking comfort to Jerusalem (i) (Quality: Very good)

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[ 0 : 00 ] For the Lord's help, I will direct your attention to the prophecy of Isaiah, chapter 40, verses 1 and 2.

The prophecy of Isaiah, chapter 40, verses 1 and 2. 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. 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.

[ 1 : 05 ] For she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins. The church of God is not always in need of these precious words to be spoken.

Comfort can only be properly received where distress abounds.

There are many occasions when we may not appreciate comfort, even if comfort was given.

We must therefore conclude that the words here are spoken specifically to those that were in distress, and that would need and appreciate comfortable words from God.

Though the word of God is divided up into chapters, yet the actual books may be read as one.

[ 2 : 41 ] And therefore we should not disassociate the previous chapter with the present one. Now in the previous chapter, the prophet was moved to speak to Hezekiah concerning the ultimate captivity that would take possession of Israel and Judah.

ol neuros Angeles, nor a prophet's hand double- repericed.

Then said Hezekiah to Isaiah, Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken. He said, Moreover, for there shall be peace and truth in my days.

There was the prospect then of this prophecy which would be fulfilled sometime. I do not think we should be wise to consider that Hezekiah was selfish in his expression, For there shall be peace and truth in my days.

He had appreciated the rightness of God's work, good, is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken.

[ 4 : 35 ] Even though when the Lord speaks unto his church, respecting hard times, respecting times of captivity, times of trial, there must of necessity be a sadness and a concern falling upon those that hear those words.

We may therefore look at this scripture in that context. How needful for the Lord to speak. Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God, in spite of the impending captivity, in spite of your being carried down into Babylon, in spite of all that may seem so ill and so bad and so contrary, yet, Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God, and if we turn to the prophet Jeremiah, we shall read these comfortable words, I know the thoughts, I think toward you, thoughts of peace and not of evil to give you an expected end.

This was to be a real shaking up of Judah when everything that would be removed and could be removed would be removed.

Their comfortable way of going on, even to some extent their religious worship was impeded. But, even so, we have these precious words spoken from the Lord himself, Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people.

Now, it is our benefit and privilege to read the history, to see the outcome, and to know that the great comfort of the people of God was contained in this, that he orders all things according to the counsel of his own will.

[ 7 : 08 ] And none can stay his hand or say of him, what doest thou? at the same time, we have this assurance too, that the expectation of the people of God shall not be cut off.

Surely, there is an end, and thine expectation shall not be cut off. But we may come to our own personal experience in respect to that which is prophesied in our own lives.

And you know, even today, the people of God do not always go on without any pattern spoken to them in words from God.

And they are such words of solemn prophecy that we need God to speak correspondingly words of comfort to support us in the prospect of bitter and solemn trial.

Hence, we are reminded of the words of Peter where he says that the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth though betrieffed with fire might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

[ 8 : 57 ] Then in the fourth chapter we read, Beloved, think it not strange, concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as though some strange thing happen unto you.

But rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings that when his glory shall be revealed ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

glory. Here then we may draw a conclusion. The fiery trial may be delivered into Babylonish captivity and the people had to stay there the time that God appointed.

There was no getting out of it. False prophets could rise up and endeavor to countenance Jeremiah's prophecy of 70 years.

They could say as Hananiah did two years and everything will be over but 70 years would be appointed time and 70 years it had to be.

[ 10 : 12 ] It wasn't to be a day beyond God's appointed time neither was it to be a day less than God had appointed and so it is with respect to everyone of the trials which are brought upon the people of God.

Would you remember this that every trial that comes into your life and mine if we are God's children is by divine appointment. It is by divine appointment as to when it comes and it is by divine appointment as to how long it lasts.

But in the meantime God speaks to his children and he says through the words of the scripture comfort ye comfort ye my people saith your God even though the time appointed may be sure and the thing may be certain and the time long but nevertheless there will be an end to even the long time.

Hence we may see it in the word of God in various circumstances and situations again and again. We should not overlook this important word in Peter's epistle beloved not spoken just generally not spoken in such terms that would have no powerful or specific impact the word is beloved think it not strange concerning the fiery trial that is to try you.

Now some of you this morning may be able to look upon this in a measure of retrospect. You may have just come through this fiery trial.

[ 12 : 18 ] Now can you see that it is that trial which is to try you God purposes in it. It's not a question of perhaps it will or perhaps it won't but the word of God is clear and powerful.

Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you. And when these people of Judah were carried down into Babylon it was for a purpose.

It was to try them. God does not trifle in anything. God is never playing. God does that which will be profitable to our souls.

But do look at the end. But rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings that when his glory shall be revealed ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

Hence the years of captivity we look at another aspect and we see a woman in the scripture that was bowed down with a great infirmity for many years and the Lord loosed her on the Sabbath day.

[ 13 : 48 ] Now the Lord says and shall not this woman whom Satan hath bound all these years be delivered from her infirmity on the Sabbath day.

I read a remark the other day which I found very striking. When we have health and strength the days go so quickly.

But when our days are encompassed with affliction how they drag out. And some of you I'm sure would understand that.

Imped it with affliction but health and strength how quickly we may move. Now it has pleased God to bring upon his people afflictions of varying sorts.

Some are seen and others are not seen. But who can really enter into the feelings of any person that is afflicted whatever that affliction may be.

[ 15 : 10 ] But the Lord can himself. So therefore we bring these words this morning comfort ye comfort ye my people. Seth your God in the day of their affliction in the day of their trial in the day of their bitterness.

And Hezekiah was to know something about this. He had known something about this in the 38th chapter where we read of Hezekiah's sickness and the painful spiritual experience that he endured but he came through.

We look back over our lives and we have a long life of dealings with God and God dealing with us.

Must we not find hope and strength in the comfortable words of the Lord in speaking unto his people that they will surely be brought forth out of all their troubles.

Many are the afflictions of the righteous but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. Is this not a word that would come within the concept of this great truth comfort ye comfort ye my people saith your God.

[ 16 : 39 ] we would notice too that the word comes from God and the word is specifically directed to my people.

None others will appreciate the words at all but my people will. My people will need God to breathe comfort.

What an expression that is of the hymn writer breathe comfort where distress abounds. Now the matter of this speaking is to speak ye comfortably.

Now the margin gives this word for comfortably speaking to the heart. the gospel and I've often felt and do feel it very strongly that if there's to be any benefit in the preaching of the gospel it is a speaking to the heart.

There can never be any comfortable speaking unless that speaking is speaking to the heart. Now the speaking to the heart will be the application of the gospel to the distressed and broken hearted sinner.

[ 18 : 13 ] The purpose of our reading the second chapter of the Acts was to bring forth yet another day of preparation whereby these words will be surely applicable comfort ye comfort ye my people saith your God.

It was a solemn day when those people were gathered together at Jerusalem from all quarters. Josephus tells us that there were probably a million people in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost and they came from all quarters and they each heard the speeches of the apostles in their own tongues.

But it was not a day of fancifulness it was a day of solemn truth. Ye men of Israel hear these words Jesus of Nazareth a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you as ye yourselves also know him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain whom God hath raised up having loosed the pains of death because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

What a solemn thing it must be for a person to realise that they have been guilty of taking another person's life.

there is a finality in it and they have been guilty of being the instrument in bringing about that which at its end must be heaven or hell for the person killed.

[ 20 : 50 ] God this is no small consideration but under such power of condemnation in respect to the death of our Lord Jesus Christ we see that there are comfortable words spoken to the heart to these Jerusalem sinners that even though they had killed the Lord of life and glory God hath raised up having loosed the pains of death because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

What a comfortable word this is. If we should feel this morning any of us guilty but by our acts and by our sins the soldiers fiercest side is true but we have pierced him through and through yet their act though it seemed to be final though it seemed to put us down as murderers of our Lord Jesus Christ yet in this particular case we have set before us the comfortable words of the resurrection whom God hath raised up having loosed the pains of death because it was not possible that he should be holden of it comfort ye comfort ye my people saith your

God speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem you see Jerusalem sinners appear to be sinners of a great depth they were as it were scarlet sinners thus they are purported to be and we have in the chapter in the prophecy of Zechariah in that day there shall be a fountain open to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness specially mentioned the inhabitants inhabitants of Jerusalem the house of

David comfortable words words speaking to the heart that there was a fountain open for sin and for uncleanness prior to the wonderful work done on the day of Pentecost these people's hearts were hard unfeeling but on this day by the power of the Holy Ghost their hearts were pricked it will be of little use speaking to anybody's heart whose heart is unrelenting whose heart is hard whose heart is unfeeling so we see the wonderful preparation that was affected by the Holy

Ghost on the day of Pentecost when the Lord Jesus sending forth his spirit pricked the people's hearts then the words of our text became suitable comfort ye comfort ye my people saith your God your God whom ye have crucified Jesus Christ the eternal son of God whom ye have crucified but speak ye to the heart of these people and they will receive the words that are spoken this is not the only occasion in the scriptures where this word comfortable is used we find it also in the prophecy of

[ 25 : 46 ] Hosea therefore behold I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness and speak comfortably unto her this is the case again where comfort is needed where Hosea describes the solemnity of backsliding a spiritual adultery we may just refer briefly to it therefore behold I will hedge up my way with thorns and make a wall that she shall not find her powers and she shall follow after her lovers but she shall not overtake them and she shall seek them but shall not find them then shall she say I will go and return to my first husband for then was it better with me than now for she did not know that

I gave her corn and wine and oil multiplied her silver and gold which they prepared for bail sad though the situation was yet God was overruling still this sad person in the prophecy of Hosea therefore will I return and take away my corn and my wine rather the Lord is speaking to her still therefore will I return and take away my corn in the time thereof and my wine in the season thereof and will recover my wool and my flax given to her to cover her nakedness and so we begin to see how the

Lord deals with a wanderer from the Lord by solemn judgments secret judgments judgments which are felt only in that person's soul you see when you have plenty God begins to take one thing away and then another thing away and then yet another thing away and it ends up with this I will destroy her vines and her fig trees whereof she hath said these are my rewards that my lovers have given me and I will make them a forest and the bees of the field and eat them and I will visit her upon her the days of Berlin wherein she burned incense to them and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels and she went after her lovers and forget me saith the

Lord how hard the heart can be and we may indeed depart and be so absorbed and so saturated with other lovers as to completely forget God and yet when others would dispatch us to prison and keep us bound there for the rest of our lives yea we might go as far as to save eternity itself yet God says God says speak ye comfortably unto her but not before this has been accomplished therefore behold I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness and speak comfortably unto her what is the effect of the wilderness instruction teaching and you know we're ready to listen when God cuts off the supplies men use this kind of means sometimes in dealing with criminals but not so efficiently as God does neither so kindly or so tenderly cuts off their supplies

I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness and speak comfortably unto her here again it is speaking to the heart the heart now is brought into a place where it is mourning where it is contrite where it is sad and therefore it is in some measure softened and in consequence is capable of being spoken to but who can do this rightly in the right measure of things but God himself comfort ye comfort ye my people saith my God saith your God speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem

[ 31 : 43 ] God looks down and looks upon his people so differently from what we may judge the matter at times because of the legality of our carnal mind we cannot envisage the great love wherewith he loved us what he should bear with our manners in the wilderness and what does that what happens when God touches our hearts with his love strange is the manner that God brings us about sometimes a time of desertion a time of need a time of conviction a time wherein it appears that our hope is perish from the

Lord is it possible that there can ever be any comfortable words we do not speak so much of outward things those things which are apparent as those things which are felt in the soul how we come to the house of God this morning we may see your outward faces but we cannot penetrate to what you're feeling and we are warned in the scriptures that whatever we feel that we should wash our faces and appear not unto men to pass but God knows what our feelings are God knows what our heart exercises are God knows if we are troubled because of what

God has told us concerning the future it's going to be a long time of trial God knows if guilt has been fixed upon our hearts and we need the consoling words of the Holy Ghost to assure us that though we have killed the Lord of life and glory by our sins yet there is this wonderful glorious truth that Christ has been raised from the dead by the power of God and if we should be in the sad place of backsliding in our soul then what a mercy to know this that God will speak comfortably to us even in the wilderness and not only so I will give her a vineyard from thence and she shall find a door of hope in the valley of achor and she shall sing there as in the days of old a time when under these circumstances they could take their harps down from the willows and sing unto the

Lord why because of the hope that was before them because God has spoken comfortably to them and God has said but there shall be an end and when that end comes you will be delivered the Lord didn't take the children of Israel out of Babylon before they could rejoice but they had to rejoice in seeing the Lord's hand in delivering them and bringing this and that to pass influencing men's minds raising up Cyrus to be a remarkable deliverer in the hand of God speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem will this come forcibly unto us or shall we disassociate ourselves with the Jerusalem sinners shall we say but I'm not as bad as they are or as they were in that case you may not appreciate and value the trustfulness of these words comfort ye comfort ye my people saith your

God you see it is when we're black sinners that we enjoy comfort all the more no we cannot make ourselves black sinners but God can make us feel that we are black sinners all fear my love there is no spot in thee the words of

[ 38 : 49 ] God sometimes are so fair powerful that we can scarcely believe them we need to make a distinction between unbelief and a feeling that results from incredulity now when God brings glorious truth into the souls of his people sometimes it seems too much for them and they may say I cannot think it's for me now that's not the spirit of unbelief but the blessing is so great that the very soul seems incapable of absorbing the tremendous truth that God has conveyed there is no art all fair my love there is no spot in thee comfort ye comfort ye my people saith your

God speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem now what God speaks here is spoken by the God of truth a God that cannot lie God that does that which is basically and in substance the glory of truth the Lord God will never speak to his people words of comfort in the same way that men may speak sometimes it is sometimes distressing when we hear people comforting another person and what they're doing are telling lies lies the words that they speak are just not true on the face of it it may appear that they are speaking comforting words no we shall never meet that situation from the God of Israel his words of comfort will always will always be based on truth eternal truth unchanging truth tried truth and that will add to the power of comfort that is conveyed comfort ye comfort ye my people now if we look at that word that I have mentioned again breathe comfort where distress abounds my people a reflection upon this breathing refers to the

Holy Ghost breathing into your soul and opening your mind to this great truth my people Jesus speaks and speaks to thee say poor sinner loves thou me is a comforting word to my people the people that are bought with a price the people that are saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation the people that are chosen by God the father not on account of their own worth or worthiness but because he set his love upon them why we should never be able to tell but how was that love demonstrated my people how was the love of God demonstrated to my people we have sometimes observed

God speaks by actions the promises of God are written in the scriptures but in the appointed time God speaks by actions hence we read in Genesis chapter three concerning the seed of the woman which had bruised the serpent's head the years passed by and the centuries rolled on at the time K when God reiterated what he had spoken for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life God's promise brought into action the sending his own beloved son comfort ye comfort ye my people saith your

God will not these be speaking to the heart of these desperate sinners in the old testament days speaking to the heart of desperate sinners in the days when the Lord Jesus Christ came upon this earth speaking to the heart of desperate sinners when we may consider it even in the present day God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten son and then there is evidence of the father's love and his gracious choice in this that he sends forth his spirit into our heart so whereby we cry abba father the holy spirit is a gift from God my people have we a hope in

[ 45 : 22 ] Christ have we been taught by the spirit of God have we been favored to go as far as to say abba father then be assured that if such is the case we have this comfortable breathing of the holy spirit bringing comfort where distress abounds that such may be determined my people comfort ye comfort ye my people saith your God speaking comfort to Jerusalem we will leave it here for this morning