

# GRACE GAZETTE

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*Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*

*Hebrews 12:12-13*

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## COMFORT MY PEOPLE

*Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Isaiah 40:1*

Most modern Christians, if asked, would probably say that the main purpose of preaching the gospel is to gain converts from among the unbelieving world. This is not surprising considering the fact that for the last one hundred fifty years, we have been inundated with (so called) evangelists, crisscrossing the globe who have, by and large, turned the preaching of the “gospel” (which often times has very little true gospel in it) into a side show, oft times accompanied with advertising, entertainment, the altar call, and the ever-present offering plate.

We do believe that the preaching of the gospel will sometimes be accompanied with the conversion of sinners as we see illustrated in Peter’s discourse on the day of Pentecost and Philip’s interaction with the Ethiopian Eunuch. *“How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” (Rom 10:14-15)*

Yet we must never lose sight of the fact that the preaching of the gospel has as its primary purpose, the magnification of the glory of JESUS CHRIST as the KING of kings who has purchased eternal redemption for those HE came to save by the shedding of HIS blood. In that work of redemption HE has declared HIMSELF to be the SON of GOD by HIS resurrection (see Rom.1:4) and has, by HIS ascension to the throne of GOD, manifested the acceptability of HIS sacrifice. *“But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.” (Heb 7:24-27)*

The gospel message is one which is designed and sent by the LORD into the Earth. When HE is pleased to open the ears of men to hear it, then it becomes that which enlightens the minds of those who are thus enabled to hear it and hearing it believe it. Paul described the preaching of the gospel and the fruit which it bears: *“But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.” (2Tim 1:10-11)*

So, we can surely say that as the gospel of the Glory of the Blessed GOD is preached then it will bring comfort and peace to those who are caused to rejoice in its sound. This is not simply true when men are first brought out of darkness and into the LIGHT but it remains the constant source of comfort to the sons of GOD at every juncture of their life. Thus, we see Isaiah record the words of the LORD, *“Comfort ye my people.”*

The religious custom in which I was raised placed great emphasis upon marking the day and hour when a man first believed. This was vitally important because, should he ever begin to doubt his salvation, he could then gain great comfort in having a record of the day and hour when he “gave his heart to the LORD.” This “comfort” rested squarely upon remembering what he did, since his activity of faith supposedly formed the basis of his hope. While religious men might find comfort in such a

thought, the man who has been thoroughly acquainted with his own sinful and fickle heart, can find no rest at all in anything that he has performed. He has no faith in his faith. Such a man as this needs a BASIS or FOUNDATION which will stand the test when all else is failing and darkness closes in.

Thus, the LORD declares the message through Isaiah, the Prophet, which HE has designed to give HOPE to the hopeless and help to those who cannot help themselves. HE said "Speak ye comfortably," which literally means to "breath upon the feelings" of those to whom this message is given. The gospel is not just an exercise of the mind, but of the heart and soul as well. While sound doctrine is vitally important in preaching the gospel, no man has ever "learned it" solely by his intellect, rather the power of the gospel is applied to the emotions as well as the mind. The man who is not stirred in his soul to give glory and thanks to GOD for HIS redeeming mercy, has likely never been given an ear to hear the gospel, but has become enamored with "preachers" and "preaching".

That word of COMFORT is not indiscriminately given to the world at large, rather HE said "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem". The LORD would have this word of consolation given to those whom HE has chosen out of the world. HE prayed for them in Gethsemane (see John 17). HE knows them and calls them by name. They are HIS sheep and HE is their SHEPHERD. HE told them that HE would send them a COMFORTER. "*But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.*" (John 15:26)

HE instructed Isaiah to tell HIS people, "that her warfare is accomplished". When the LORD JESUS hung upon Calvary's cross and breathed out these words, "*It is finished*", HE was not merely speaking about laying down HIS life. Rather HE referenced the fact that HE had fought valiantly to secure an atonement for HIS people's sin and HE had accomplished HIS purpose. There is no warfare to which the sons of GOD are called whose outcome has not already been decided. CHRIST JESUS is HE who rides upon the white horse. "*And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.*" (Rev 6:2)

HE instructed Isaiah to tell HIS people that, "her iniquity is pardoned." There is none that can bring an accusation against the sons of GOD because HE who declares the end from the beginning, has borne her condemnation and has removed her sin as far as the east is from the west. If HE remembers it no more then it does not exist. She deserved death, but HE has given her LIFE. She deserved destruction but HE has made her a "*joint heir*" with CHRIST. Truly she has received "*double for all her sins*"; exactly the opposite of what she earned.

HE has already sent one as "the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness" specifically having reference to John the Baptizer. Yet even as John was sent for a specific purpose, he is also the illustration or type of those who are sent into the world to proclaim the glad tidings of CHRIST to those that daily long for the presence of GOD. The mouth that is open shall be filled, for HE is both the PROVIDER of SUSTENANCE and the ONE who causes HIS people to hunger and thirst after RIGHTEOUSNESS.

This comforting message continues as the sons of GOD are reminded, "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain." (Isa 40:4) There is nothing that can separate the children of GOD from HIM who has loved them from the beginning. "*I will make waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their herbs; and I will make the rivers islands, and I will dry up the pools. And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.*" (Isa 42:15-16) "*Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? Thou stretchedst out thy right hand, the earth swallowed them. Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation.*" (Exo 15:11-13) Can there be any greater COMFORT for the sons of GOD?

The ultimate "*comfort*" for the sons of GOD is in the knowledge that HE will not leave nor forsake them even as HE told HIS disciples in the 14 chapter of John. HE will come again. Though these bodies sleep in the dust. HE will yet reclaim that which is HIS and these corruptible bodies shall put on incorruption. "*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) Do you receive comfort and hope from the Gospel? The sons of GOD surely do.