

## God's Everlasting Comfort for His Elect (Part 1)

*Isa 30:18 Therefore the Lord will wait, that He may be gracious to you; and therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you. For the Lord is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for Him.*

Verses one through fifteen speak of the rebellion and sinful response of the non-elect within the visible church who in time will know the wrathful judgment of God. They who have placed their trust in Egypt rather than in the God of Israel will soon be either killed at the hand of Nebuchadnezzar's army or be taken away as captive slaves to Babylon. Now at the same time, there will be within that number taken into captivity those elect of God who have put their trust in the Lord alone. And God would comfort them with words of encouragement, even as today although we may be surrounded in the church visible with tares, but as Jesus taught in a parable that the kingdom of God was like a good man who had sowed good seed but in the night an enemy had sown bad seed. And we know that the servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest he will send his reapers and at that time he will gather the tares and burn them in the fire, but he will gather the wheat into his barn. (Matt 13:28-30) And thus in this life because of the tares around us we may know trials and conflict but they will never know what it is to be cast away from the presence of God's loving providence. We shall always hear the voice of our Good Shepherd saying to us, "In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

Now as we read the passage before us this morning it might appear as though God is saying that in this life you will only know prosperity and comforts, but I am in full agreement with Calvin, these words are not to be taken in the literal sense but in the spiritual and emblematic sense. The blessing that we know may not be material or physical blessings as such but speak of the blessing all saints rich and poor alike have in Christ. Paul clearly tells us that in the church that not many wise according to the flesh, *not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God — and righteousness and sanctification and redemption — that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord."* (1 Cor. 1:26-31) What I trust we will begin to understand is that the teaching found in Isaiah is applicable to the church prior to the flood in Noah's day, prior to the giving of the law in Abraham's day, prior to the coming of Christ in the days of Moses and David right up to the coming of the Messiah, and are equally applicable to the church from the days of the Apostolic church down to our day today. And in the light of such instruction and in the light of the awareness that as His people in this world we may suffer want and loss, yet, let us consider this passage under these headings this morning, 1. God will be exalted in His relationship with His people, 2. God will be attentive to the cry of His people, 3. The blessings of God will always abound upon His people.

A. God will be exalted in His relationship with His people - *Therefore the Lord will wait, that He may be gracious to you; and therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you.*

1. He will be gracious to us not because of any good seen in us
2. This is as true under the Old Covenant as it is under the New Covenant

*Eph 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.*

3. And the reason is made clear - therefore **He will be exalted**

- a. It is God who has mercy on us
- b. It is not gained by merit but by faith alone

4. This was just as true in Isaiah's day under the old covenant as it is today

- a. Just as true in Noah's day for we read "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord".
- b. Just as true in Abraham's day for we read, *For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."* (Rom 4:3,4)
- c. Just as true in Moses day for we read that *by faith when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the **reproach of Christ greater riches** than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.* (Heb. 11:24-26)
- d. For we know that the law giver Moses was not saved by the works of the law, *knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ.* (Gal 2:14)
- e. Just as true in the day of the law breaker David when he cried out "according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." Ps 51:1-2

- f. Just as true in David's day when he wrote, "*Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin.*"
  - g. Just as true in Paul's day when he proclaimed, *moreover the law entered that the offense might abound but where sin abounded, grace abounded much more* (Rom. 5:20)
  - h. Just as true in the days of the Reformers when they proclaimed that we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, to the glory of God alone.
  - i. Just as true for us here this morning who have been redeemed by that same grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone to the glory of God alone.
5. It is indeed to the exaltation of God alone for God is a God of justice, thus He must either condemn us or redeem us in a manner consistent with justice. - *For the Lord is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for Him.*
- a. When one thinks upon the justice of God, one can only think upon the guilt of all men

Rom 3:10 There is none righteous, no, not one

Rom 3:23 ". . . for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

- b. When one thinks upon the guilt of man and the justice of God one can only think upon judgment and condemnation

*Num 14:17 The Lord is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but **He by no means clears the guilty.***

c. Therefore when one thinks upon the justice of God one must hope for mercy and grace alone for indeed. . . . . the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature **children of wrath, just as the others.** (Eph 2:2-3)

- d. Therefore when one thinks upon the justice and mercy of God one must look to Christ alone for God has laid upon Him our guilt and shame.

*Isa 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*

- e. When one speaks of the necessity of their righteousness in order to gain an entrance into heaven one must think of grace alone, of unmerited favor, and therefore one must think upon Christ alone as the means of that grace

*2 Cor. 5:20 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

CONCLUSION: For there is no other means whereby God may be gracious to you and at the same time God alone be exalted.

Thus we may understand the words of Isaiah when he wrote that the Lord will wait, that is, He will hold back His judgment "*. . . that He may be gracious to you; and therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you. For the Lord is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for Him.*"

For when one thinks of God's justice and one's hope of being justified before God one can only look to God by faith alone in Jesus Christ alone for his redemption

*Rom 3:24-26 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, **that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.***

*1 Cor 1:29-31 That no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God — and righteousness and sanctification and redemption — that, as it is written, **"He who glories, let him glory in the Lord."***

For indeed - *For the Lord is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for Him*