

## **Commentary on Isaiah 40:1-5**

By L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

The *International Bible Lesson (Uniform Sunday School Series)* for December 5, 2010, on from Isaiah 40:1-5.

### **1 Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.**

After the Jews received their just punishment from God for their idol worship, rebellion against God as their King, and blatant disregard for God's law, Isaiah foretold that God would comfort His people, for their time of punishment would come to an end. Today, believers stand amazed that God claims us as His people when we receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.

### **2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.**

Just as in the days of old, God wants to comfort us when we suffer, either as just punishment for our sins or undeservedly at the hands of sinners. God sends His people to speak tenderly to us, just as He sent the prophet Isaiah to speak tenderly to Jerusalem. Sometimes God sends us to speak tenderly. The prophet Jeremiah foretold that the Jews would suffer 70 years in exile in Babylon after Jerusalem was destroyed. Isaiah foretold that after they had suffered what they justly deserved that God would comfort them. God fulfilled His promises when He raised up King Cyrus, the Persian, and he freed the Jews to return to Jerusalem. God is just. In His justice, they suffered what they deserved, "double for all her sins."

### **3 A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.**

About 400 years of prophetic silence covers the history of the Jewish people between the last book of the Old Testament and the first book of the New Testament, until John the Baptist appeared to preach in the wilderness and prepare the way for the coming Jesus the Messiah. The shortest distance between two points is a straight line. We want to aim our hearts directly toward God to prepare the way for Him to enter into our lives. John preached this message.

### **4 Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.**

This description reminds us to confess our sins, turn from our sins, and ask for God's forgiveness; exactly as John the Baptist preached. Our sins might be as high as a mountain, and our sins can lead us into the depths of despair. Any disobedience can lead to the creation of rough places in our lives and relationships that will hinder our

relationship with God and can bring great sadness to those with spiritual sensitivity.

**5 Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”**

After we have done what God requires, God will make Himself known to us. Just as John the Baptist preached prophetically, Jesus revealed Himself as Lord and Savior to those who had made themselves ready by responding rightly to the preaching of John, who preached a preparation message. Many people saw Jesus, and He spoke to them during his public ministry. Today, believers in Jesus come to know Him and recognize the truth of His words in the Bible.

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