

Explore the Bible: November 8

God Comforts • Isaiah 49:1-13

By Don Hicks



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“For the LORD has comforted His People and will have compassion on His afflicted” (Isaiah 49:13b AMP).

Isaiah emphasized that real comfort comes from the LORD. As is always the case in Old Testament passages, the word LORD in all caps lets us know that the original verse had the proper name for God in it. The Old Testament Scriptures have such a high regard for the one real creator God that the writers would not say His name out loud. They did not want to carelessly show disrespect to God.

This tradition grew out of their respect for the Ten Commandments, especially: “Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain” (Exodus 20:7 KJV). We would be well advised to carefully consider how we use God’s name.

The prophet wants to emphasize that the deep compassion available to God’s people is only available at this level from God Himself. Isaiah also wants us to know that, “God will have compassion on His afflicted.” For 21st century Christians, this includes each follower of Christ in every need.

Why not follow the lesson writer’s suggestion and memorize:

“Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the LORD hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted” (Isaiah 49:13 KJV).

In one of the worship services I recently attended since we are back into public worship, I heard a joyful song that I believe expresses some of the sentiment of verse 13. The beautiful special was sung by the Joyful Praise ladies' quartet. Let me share some of the lyrics of, I'm Gonna Make It.

*Through so many dangers and toils of this life
I have already come.*

*But He keeps on giving the grace and the strength to just keep
pressing on.*

*He's given a promise and I'm gonna stand,
On every word His Holy Word has said.*

*And holding His hand, I'll never fear whatever lies ahead.
I'm gonna make it, He's already said that I would.*

This worship experience brought me the experience that Isaiah described in these words: “Break into joyful shouts! For the LORD has comforted his people” (Isaiah 49:13 CSB). Worshipping together in our churches should lead us to this point often. Actually, Isaiah said if the truth of God's comfort were even slightly understood, even the mountains would break into joyful shouts! This is similar to what Jesus told the Pharisees during his Triumphal Entry in Luke's Gospel: “Some of the Pharisees from the crowd told him, ‘Teacher, rebuke your disciples.’ He answered, I tell you, if they were to keep silent, the stones would cry out” (Luke 19:39-40 CSB).

Isaiah even said in verse 11 of our focal passage: “I will make all my mountains into a road, and my highways will be raised up” (Isaiah 49:11 CSB). God out of His love has made His compassionate care for us so complete that Isaiah even explains: “Kings will see, princes will stand up, and they will all bow down because of the LORD, who is faithful, the

Holy One of Israel – and he has chosen you” (Isaiah 49:7). Doesn't this sound like God's truth as Paul explains it in Romans 14:11, “For it is written, As I live saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God” (KJV)?

These truths are too important for us to keep them to ourselves. Isaiah prophesized, “[God] says ‘It is not enough for you to be my servant raising up the tribes of Jacob and restoring the protected ones of Israel. I will also make you a light for the nations, to be my salvation to the ends of the earth’” (Isaiah 49:6 CSB).

This is consistent with the explanation God gave Abram when He first called him in Genesis chapter 12: “And I make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. . . .and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed,” (Genesis 12:2-3 KJV).

We have the same commission from Jesus: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:19-20 KJV).

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