

Comfort for the Barren

Isaiah 40 – Luke 1

God comforts the barren through the good news of the gospel so that his glory might be displayed.

Context in Isaiah

A. Hezekiah – 715-686 BC

Isaiah 39:3-8

- Then Isaiah the prophet came to King Hezekiah, and said to him, "What did these men say? And from where did they come to you?" Hezekiah said, "They have come to me from a far country, from Babylon."
- He said, "What have they seen in your house?" Hezekiah answered, "They have seen all that is in my house. There is nothing in my storehouses that I did not show them."
- Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the Lord of hosts:
 - Behold, the days are coming, when all that is in your house, and that which your fathers have stored up till this day, shall be carried to Babylon. Nothing shall be left, says the Lord.
 - And some of your own sons, who will come from you, whom you will father, shall be taken away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon."
- Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "The word of the Lord that you have spoken is good." For he thought, "There will be peace and security in my days."

Context in Isaiah

A. Hezekiah – 715-686 BC

B. Babylonian Exile – 597-538 BC

C. Return and Rebuilding in Jerusalem – 537-433 BC

D. Birth of John the Baptist and Jesus – 5 or 4 BC

Luke 1:5-25

- In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.
- And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord.
- But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.
- Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty,
- according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense.
- And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense.
- And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.
- And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him.
- But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.
- And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth,
- for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.

Luke 1:5-25

- And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God,
- and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared."
- And Zechariah said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years."
- And the angel answered him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news.
- And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time."
- And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple.
- And when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he kept making signs to them and remained mute.
- And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home.
- After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying,
- "Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people."

Comfort for the Barren

A. The Message of Comfort (Isa. 40:1-2)

1. Compassion

2. Peace

3. Pardon

4. Mercy

Comfort for the Barren

A. The Means of Comfort (Isa. 40:3-4)

1. What is uninviting will be hospitable.
2. What is out of place will be put into place.
3. What impedes will be converted into an aid.

Comfort for the Barren

A. The Manifestation of Comfort (Isa. 40:5)

1. Glory Revealed

2. All Flesh

3. Surety

- *What period of barrenness might you be facing at this time?*
- *What needs to take place in your life to prepare the way of the Lord?*