

# The Cup Of Trembling

The Lord speaks of a people who feel their need of righteousness and follow Christ seeking what He alone can supply. These are God's elect people and Isaiah calls them to listen to the word of God. It is a fitting instruction. In this world the Lord's people suffer at the hands of enemies who make them drink 'the cup of trembling'. God's purpose is to show us salvation in Christ, bring to an end the hurt of His church and gladden the hearts of those He calls 'my people' and 'my nation'.

## **An urgent cry**

The chapter divides into three sections. In verses 1-8 God promises salvation and deliverance to those He loves in Christ. In verses 9-16, God's people cry to Him to come quickly and fulfil these promises. The Lord replies that though He carries they need fear no man; He will defend them. From verse 17 to the end the Lord re-confirms the end of suffering for His church and judgment upon their persecutors.

## **What we were, what we are**

Reflecting on Abraham and Sarah is a twofold reminder that God's elect have been digged from the pit of fallen, corrupt humanity and raised to glory by sovereign grace. Abraham and Sarah were idol-worshippers but they were called by divine mercy to follow God and trust in Christ. It is always good for us to remember what we have been saved from and how God's distinguishing love has brought redemption by the blood of Jesus Christ.

## **Hard times will come**

The Jewish nation, including God's remnant amongst them, must endure the destruction of Jerusalem and the Babylonian captivity. Spiritual life and true faith is a guarantee of fierce battles and tough times. However, the remnant are taught to persevere in faith and seek the Lord's daily help. Through all their trials these Old Testament saints carried with them the promise of the soon-coming of the Messiah. His work would secure gospel expansion and a great ingathering to the kingdom of God of believers from the Gentile nations.

## **God's promises are sure**

In verses 4 and 5 we have a clear Messianic promise concerning the gospel. The 'law' that will proceed from God is not the law of Moses – that had been given long ago – but rather the gospel of God which reveals the person of Christ to save and the judgment of God on sin. Christ is the Lord our Righteousness and the Lord our Salvation. Christ is the light for whom the isles, or the Gentiles, wait. Together with these remnant Jews, the elect from the ends of the earth would, and will yet, trust Christ for His enduring righteousness and everlasting salvation.

## **Awake, Awake!**

Verses 9 and 10 contain an eager request from God's Old Testament people who believe the good news of Christ's coming. They call on the Lord to fulfil His promise speedily as in the days of their slavery in Egypt and the crossing of the Red Sea. The exiles did return from Babylon, however this new and higher redemption is spiritual and eternal. The Lord's people shall be brought to Zion, the kingdom of God, as the church of Jesus Christ. In their Redeemer they shall obtain spiritual happiness and everlasting joy. Then all their sorrow and mourning shall flee away.

## **God's gospel on our lips**

The Lord calls for faith and patience. He promises to personally comfort His people through their trials. He who is 'the Lord of Hosts'; Lord of the armies of heaven and earth says, 'I am he that comforteth you'. Furthermore, the Lord has work for His church, we are called to preach the gospel, comfort one another and evangelise the world around us, 'I have put my words – the gospel – in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may ... say unto Zion, Thou art my people'.

## **Leaning on Jesus**

The Lord's people in every age have known trouble in this life, however the cup of trembling and the cup of fury, though placed in our hands by the Lord Himself, will not remain there longer than absolutely necessary. He who can remove it will remove it in His good time when it has served its purpose. That purpose is always to encourage

dependence on the Saviour and bring us closer to Jesus Christ for help and comfort.

**The glory that awaits**

Brothers and sisters, amid the perplexities of life let us remember the testimony of those who have gone before, who have proved the Lord's faithfulness and now enjoy all His promises in glory. Soon glory will be our portion, too, who trust in Him. This world can do no lasting harm to those of whom the Lord says, 'you are my people ... that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law'.

Amen

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