

Comfort, Comforter, and Helper

"Comfort, O comfort My people," says your God. "Speak kindly to Jerusalem; And call out to her, that her warfare has ended, That her iniquity has been removed, That she has received of the LORD'S hand Double for all her sins" (Isaiah 40:1-2).

Not all comfort in scriptures has to do with release from captivity, end of warfare, no more suffering, etc. Sometimes comfort was not being alone, not forgotten, or just a faith that God always keeps His promises, all of which apply to us today.

Abraham never had a permanent home, no promise that he would own anything. The comfort he had came from the knowledge that God would protect him and provide all that he needed. He would always have enough for himself and those that wandered with him to survive in their wanderings (Psalms 105:13-15). The comfort came from "knowing" that a final home awaited. Abraham was *"looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God"* (Hebrews 11:10).

Joseph suffered at the hands of his brothers, slavery, and imprisonment. The promises made to him in his dreams must have influenced him to remain strong until God's plan for him and his father's house was made known. Being raised to second only to Pharaoh in Egypt was comfortable, maybe, but it was not the ultimate comfort. Being restored to the family of his birth was comfort and satisfaction. But the return to the promised land still lay ahead for his bones. The bones of Joseph, became a comfort to Israel as they slaved in Egypt. The promise was with them that as God provided for Jacob's family through Joseph, He would provide for them. And finally, the day came. *"Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had made the sons of Israel solemnly swear, saying, 'God will surely take care of you, and you shall carry my bones from here with you'"* (Exodus 13:19).

When Job was in misery, and even his wife gave terrible advice, three friends came to comfort him. They were shocked by his appearance and were speechless. *"Then they sat down on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights with no one speaking a word to him, for they saw that his pain was very great"* (Job 2:13). Their presence was comforting, more so than the words they spoke later.

Sometimes when we are in distress, we might try to escape to our room, private place, or just go to bed. When Job tried escaping through sleep, he discovered his dreams and thoughts turned to nightmares and terrors in (Job 7:13-14). In contrast, the Psalmist pleaded for comfort in times of distress this way. *"O may Your lovingkindness comfort me, According to Your word to Your servant. May Your compassion come to me that I may live, For Your law is my delight. May the arrogant be ashamed, for they subvert me with a lie; But I shall meditate on Your precepts"* (Psalms 119:76-78). Meditating about God's promises to us and talking to God through prayer shares the burden with a loving and caring Father.

One of the significant passages on comfort is 2 Corinthians 1:3-7. The basis of Paul's comments is a mutual sharing of desires, adversity, and, most importantly, the love of Christ and the gospel. The faith, based on knowledge, possessed by Abraham, Joseph, Job, and David, is also responsible for the faith which comforts Christians in Paul's day and our day. If God is with us, and we with Him, nothing can separate us from his love and care (Romans 8:38-39).

Jesus Christ is the ultimate comforter described in Isaiah chapters 40 to 66. In the New Testament, Jesus said, *"If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever"* (John 14:15-16). That helper is the Holy Spirit through whom we receive the Word of God, our New Testament. In providing comfort to His children, *"The God of all Comfort"* (2 Corinthians 1:3-4), His Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit are all involved in comforting us. Jesus said in John 14:26, *"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."* The Holy Spirit is our advocate or counsel on earth through the message He gave in the gospel. Jesus is the advocate and mediator, seated at the right hand of God the Father. Directed by The Father, The Son and Holy Spirit provide truth for our minds and correct courses of action for our lives.

Who or what do you turn to in times of stress, affliction, loss, and sorrow?