

# A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

## An Expository Study of **The Gospel According to Luke** **Chapter 3- Luke 3:1-6** 32- A Voice in the Wilderness- Part 2

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June 7, 2009

### **Luke 3:1-6**

Now when we were last in our study of **Luke**- 2 weeks ago- we saw that Luke's choice of OT quotations that he used here in verse 4 was very powerful and one that has enormous ramifications for us today. And by using this particular passage to quote from- this shows us the theological grasp that Luke had concerning just Who Jesus is and how the coming of the Lord fits in with the entirety of the OT Scriptures.

The mystery of Inspiration is at work here with Luke as the Holy Ghost moves upon him and carries him along as a sailboat is carried along the water, and God gives Luke supernatural understanding and the correct and full interpretation of a 700 year old prophecy, and he explains it here for us.

Now as I said last time- here in **Luke 3:4-6**- Luke is quoting from **Isaiah 40:3-5**- and I want to go back there with you this morning.

**3 A voice is calling, “Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.**

**4 “Let every valley be lifted up, And every mountain and hill be made low; And let the rough ground become a plain, And the rugged terrain a broad valley;**

**5 Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, And all flesh will see *it* together; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”**

Now as I told you last time- by using this particular quote from the great prophet Isaiah- the good doctor Luke is saying several very important things to that Roman dignitary named Theophilus nearly 2,000 years ago and to us today:

- ✓ This man named John- the son of Zacharias and Elizabeth- is the fulfillment of what God gave to Isaiah some 700 years earlier- and that John the Baptist is in fact the voice that cries in the wilderness- *"Prepare the way of the Lord!"*
- ✓ That Jesus is the fulfillment of all the almost 400 OT prophecies that predicted Who Christ would be and what Christ would do.
- ✓ That Salvation is a result of what God Sovereignly did for us and *not* the result of us obeying the Law of God.

First of all- by linking John with Isaiah's prophecy- Luke is saying that what Isaiah saw at a distance- 7 centuries earlier- was fulfilled by this man named John the Baptist. But we can't stop there because this man- whom Luke says here in verse 4 is the fulfillment of a 700 year old Divine Promise- pointed to Jesus in **John 1:29**, and said:

**Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**

... and in **Luke 3:16a&17**, the beloved physician recorded the words of John the Baptist when *he* said to Jesus:

**16 ... I baptize you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.**

**17 His winnowing fork is in His hand to thoroughly clear His threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into His barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."**

So by quoting from this 700 year old prophecy- Luke is teaching us that because John was who Luke said that he was- the fulfillment of **Isaiah 40**- therefore, Jesus was also Whom the entire body of the 39 Books of the OT said that He was, and because *that* is true- therefore, Salvation has now come in, by, and through the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished Work- and the Judgment and the Damnation and the Curse that is guaranteed to come to all men as the result of our disobedience to the Law of God has been forever averted- and the Justice of God against our sins has been forever satisfied because all of God's Wrath, all of God's Fury, and all of God's Damnation against our sins has been poured out without measure on Jesus- and now the rest of

Isaiah's vision can be fulfilled and we can hear those marvelous words coming from God to us as recorded in **Isaiah 40:1&2:**

**1 “Comfort, O comfort My people,” says your God.**

**2 “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.”**

You see, as I told you last time- the average American in the 21st Century looks at this passage in **Isaiah** and flippantly says, *“Oh, that’s nice, I’m glad that God feels that way about comforting His people.”* Or others say, *“Look! God is saying, “Comfort” to me!”* And that is pretty much the extent of what we get out of this passage in because we have never known one second of living under anything other than the Grace of Jesus Christ.

But we need to remember, dear friends, that the great Vision of **Isaiah** has 66 chapters- not just this one. And the first 39 chapters of **Isaiah** focus on very severe Divine Judgment. For 39 continuous chapters- you will find repeated threats of severe and damning Judgment on the people of God precisely because they did *not* obey the Law of God- but went after their own lusts and did what was right in their own eyes.

By chapter 40 of Isaiah's prophecy- the *northern* kingdom, called "Israel", had already gone into captivity from which they would never returned. And the *southern* kingdom, called "Judah", in which the city of Jerusalem was located- was now the only "Israel" that there was.

Horrible, vicious Judgment has already fallen on the northern kingdom for their unashamed idolatry and they were carried off into captivity- never to come back. And the only Israel that is left by the time that God gave to Isaiah his prophecy- is the southern kingdom. And now through this golden tongued prophet- God has been pronouncing judgment on the southern kingdom for 39 straight Chapters- severe and frightening Judgment which was soon to be fulfilled in the Babylonian captivity of 586 B.C., and is still being fulfilled today as God brings judgment on unbelieving Israel even in our day- because- and here's the kicker- even *after* the southern kingdom saw with their own eyes the terrible Divine Judgment of God on the

*northern* Kingdom- the people of the southern kingdom were not doing any better about obeying God's Law than the northern kingdom did.

And this is something that we need to get into our heads in the 21st Century. Nobody obeys God's Law perfectly- nobody. Obedience to God's Law encompasses what you do and what you think and the condition of your heart every moment that you are alive, and the stark reality is that nobody born of woman keeps God's Law perfectly and continuously in thought, word, and deed 24 hours every day and 7 days every week- nobody.

You see- it isn't- as some people imagine- that *some* people obey God's Law while others don't- no, we have to know that *nobody* obeys God's Law- period. Everybody sins, everybody is sinful, everybody has a wicked heart, nobody is righteous, nobody is good, everybody lusts, everybody covets, everybody steals and lies and blasphemes and disobeys and hates. It isn't that *some* people forgive while others don't- no, *everybody* has a problem forgiving people- *everybody* struggles with pride, *nobody* is immune from arrogance and self righteousness and love for money and *everybody* struggles to refrain from lusting after more of this world's goods and more fame and more credit, and we *all* want to be wealthier and happier and healthier and have more stuff and to be more content and to live more self satisfied in this life.

It is a lie to think that if we just put forth more will power and more effort then we all could obey God's Law. That is simply not true. Obeying God's Law is not hard, dear friends; Obeying God's Law is not difficult, it doesn't take more effort or more commitment or more energy- no, obeying God's Law is *impossible* for any human being to do.

Sin is so overwhelmingly ingrained in the human nature- that no matter how frightening the Promise of Judgment is against disobedience- people will continue in their sin while standing and watching other people be judged by God with their own eyes. And sin is so pervasive in the DNA of fallen Man- that no matter how glorious the Promise of God may be to bless our obedience- we will continue to sin.

Now you don't have to believe what I just said and it is very simple to prove me wrong. It's real easy. All you have to do to prove that what I just said is wrong is for you to begin today and obey God's Law perfectly and continuously in thought, word, and deed- 24 hours every day and 7 days every week- and when you get to that place of perfect and continuous obedience- you call me- and tell me that you

have arrived- and I promise you, here and now- that I will publicly repent for teaching this.

But, in the meantime- we should know, Christian people, that in our lost and fallen condition- *nobody* loves God, *nobody* desires to follow after God, and *nobody* wants to please the Lord unless and until God Sovereignly and graciously gives us that Love and that Desire and that Power and that Ability. So we need to conclude that our love *for* God is a precious gift *from* God- and that we do not normally and naturally possess that kind of Divine Love in and of ourselves.

Our desire to follow after Jesus is a marvelous gift from God to us. And without God supernaturally gifting us with this kind of Love for Himself- *nobody* loves God or even *desires* to obey Him- regardless of the intensity of the Threats and regardless of the excitement of the Promises. That is what it means to be fallen.

Divine Threats and Promises only affect saved people in the long term. They have very little affect on those who are lost. Now it is true that lost people can and do temporarily *modify* their behavior- but only to the point of getting what they want. But as soon as they get what they want or as soon as they are relieved of the problem they are in- they will very quickly revert back to their old ways. That is because nothing has been done to change the nature of the beast.

We need to understand, dear friends, that Salvation is not measured by the abundance of wealth and the amount of material goods and the degree of healthy bodies that we possess. Salvation is not about us becoming great in the earth or about us doing powerful things. Salvation is not about God making much of us. Salvation is not about us "releasing" the "giant" that lives within us or learning how to tap into the inner power that resides within us so that we can escape a mediocre life and fulfill all of our dreams. We are not saved from low expectations or bad circumstances.

No, Salvation is us being rescued by God's Grace and Mercy from the frightening and eternal Wrath of God- that we entirely deserve because of our sin of which we are entirely guilty. Salvation is about the unbelievable and staggering privileged that God gives to His chosen people- whereby God imposes or inserts Himself into our lives; whereby God Sovereignly violates the stew out of the will of Man and comes down and inserts Himself into His Creation in the womb of a virgin girl and became flesh. Salvation is about this God/Man- who was fully God

and fully Man being tempted with every single temptation that has ever come on any human and yet never one time sinning. Jesus never lusted, He never coveted, He never hated, He never went one millisecond with unforgiveness in His Heart. He walked this world for 33-1/2 years without breaking one single Law of God in thought, word, or deed thus fulfilling the Promise of the Law that whoever obeys it perfectly and continuously earns enough Righteousness to enter into Heaven.

And on the Cross- God the Father imputed to God the Son every sin of every single chosen individual, and Christ became sin for us in a legal sense of that word- while at the very same time- He was, in fact, sinless. And Jesus died with all of our sins on Him- thus satisfying the Justice of God against our sins forever. And then three days later- Jesus rose triumphantly over Hell, Death, and the Grave forever sealing our Redemption.

So Salvation is then us making much of God, of us being able to know God with the very same knowledge that God has of Himself, and of being giving the gift of loving God with the very same Love that God has for Himself so that with that Knowledge and with that Love- we may worship God in the manner in which He is entitled to be worshipped - all to the end that God is glorified and our Joy is made full.

Listen to me- God is not truly glorified in us or by us unless and until we are fully delighted in God. As long as we delight in things of this world, as long as we place our trust and our hope in the world and the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life- God cannot and will not be glorified in us. In other words- unless and until we have become fully persuaded and fully satisfied in Jesus Christ and in His Death, Burial, and Resurrection- we will never know the fullness of Joy. And until our Joy is made full in Jesus- and not in this world or in this world's goods- until our Joy is made full in Jesus- God is not glorified in us.

So we must come to the conclusion that we are not doing any better at obeying the Law than did the Jews 2700 years ago- and that presents us with a huge problem.

Because, you see, obedience is not optional. Even though it is *impossible* to obey the Law of God- unless we *do* obey the Law of God perfectly and continuously in thought word, and deed, 24/7- we will fall

under the damnation of a holy and Righteous God. So, to quote the great 20th Century theologian, Satchel Page- "*we in a whole heap of trouble!*" because we have to understand, beloved, that this Damnation against our sin is not something that *might* happen- this eternal Damnation against all sin of every man, woman, and child on earth is *promised* by a God Who cannot lie. In other words- God's Wrath against our sin is guaranteed, it is certain, it is going to happen.

And for 39 chapters- God the Holy Spirit speaks through the prophet Isaiah and *promises* that He is going to judge all sin and so by the time you get to Chapter 40- it's pretty easy for you- to believe that there's not much hope for the future- and that all that's going to be left for you is doom and gloom and judgment and eternal damnation.

And all of this judgment is based on God's reaction to sin. And yet when you begin to read **Isaiah 40:1**- and your eyes land on these words-

**Comfort, O comfort My people," says your God**

... it is so very powerful and dramatic. After 39 chapters of promising doom and damnation this is a very powerful and dramatic moment here. This is an amazing shock and a radical transition. 39 Chapters of damnation and Judgment, and then out of the blue- God says, "**Comfort**"? So what happened that God changes so dramatically here? What happened that after 39 chapters of God promising to judge sin did He change and now says, "**Comfort!**"? Did Israel suddenly begin to obey God's Law? No. Did they begin to follow after God with a pure heart? No. So why did God change from damnation to blessing? Is it as some teach that sin no longer matters to God? No, sin matters greatly to God, and He has promised that by no means will He clear the guilty.

So what changed here in Isaiah? What is the great difference that Luke understood 700 years later and what is different now that we need to understand 2,000 years after Luke wrote this? The King has come. The Savior of the world has come, the promised Deliverer, the long for Messiah has come, and with Him- He alone has brought something that Israel nor us could get in a thousand lifetimes- Forgiveness and Mercy and Salvation. Please read again **Isaiah 40:2**:

**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."**

Luke is telling us here that when John the Baptist stood in the dirty river Jordan and pointed his finger and said,

**Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**

Luke was telling us that what God gave to Isaiah here in Chapter 40 700 years earlier was, in fact, fulfilled by this Man named Jesus- and that the warfare against our sin has been forever accomplished, and our iniquity has been pardoned, and God's horrific Wrath against our sin has been forever satisfied in the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of this one single Man- Jesus Christ, and our lack of Righteousness has been forever accomplished- because Jesus shed His precious Blood and He died with all of our sins on Him, and those sins went down into Hell with Jesus and yet on the third day- Jesus left our sins in hell and Christ triumphantly rose up from the dead *without* sin- once for all- paying our debt with God in full or in other words- as Isaiah says- we received *double* for all our sins.

You see, dear friends, Christ *did* obey God's Law- and He obeyed God's Law perfectly and continuously in thought, word, and deed- 24/7, and the result of that perfect obedience is that Christ developed His Own Personal Righteousness to the point where He literally earned or worked His way into Heaven. And it is that spotless Righteousness that God takes and *imputes* or credits to us through the agency of faith alone and by this imputation- we are made fit for Heaven- even though we are in fact still sinful.

500 years ago- Martin Luther- the great Reformer said that sinners who are justified by Grace through Faith in the finished Work of Christ alone are both justified and sinful at the same time. He used a Latin phrase, "*Simil Eustes et Peccator*", to illustrate this miracle. In Alabama English- we, who are marvelously saved by the Work of Christ alone and not by our own good works are both justified and sinful at the same time or simultaneously.

And that is true in the same way that it was true for Jesus Himself. Jesus was made to be sin for us- in a legal sense of that word-



even though He personally knew no sin. And we are made to be Righteous- in that same legal sense- by the Sovereign declaration of God- even though we are, in fact, still sinful.

You see, we are not made righteous and fit for Heaven by what we did- but by what God has graciously done for us- while at the same time- we still fall short of the Glory of God on a daily basis.

So this one Man- Jesus Christ- Who was the Son of Mary, and the Son of David, and the Son of Man, and the Son of God all at the same time- this Man- Who is 100% God and 100% Man at the same time, in the same Body without conflict or contradiction, this Man- Whom John said was with God and Who was God, this Man Who is the Savior of the world and the exclusive Way for all men under any system, from any country, who speaks any language, who lives under any custom, and who are raised under any religion or human philosophy- this Man- Jesus Christ is the *one* Way- the *only* Way, the *exclusive* Way for Isaiah's prophecy to be fulfilled, and Jesus is the only Way that our warfare against our sin can ever be ended, and the one and exclusive Way for our iniquity to be pardoned, and the One Way whereby we can receive double for all our sins. Luke understood this and I pray that you can see this, too.

You see, dear brothers and sisters- I tell you that Salvation is not given by or through the Church; you cannot find Salvation in the waters of baptism; it doesn't come by partaking of Communion; you cannot obtain Salvation by speaking in tongues or by giving money to the Church or by going through Confession or by making a decision for Jesus Christ. Mary does not grant Salvation to you; Paul or Timothy or Jude or Peter cannot open the doors of Heaven for you.

Regeneration is not Baptismal, it is not Decisional, and it is not Sacerdotal, or in other words- we are not born again through the Sacraments of the Church.

Regeneration is a Sovereign Work of God alone that is carried out by God alone based upon God's Own Good Pleasure alone in choosing us before the foundation of the world, and is based on nothing that we do, nothing that we believe, and nothing that we say.

We do *not* cooperate with God in our own Regeneration, dear friends, but God graciously and lovingly and supernatural- all by Himself- and of His Own free Will, and without coercion or a sense of obligation- grants to unworthy sinners Divine Mercy in choosing to set

His Love upon us and rescues us from our fallen state by violating our will and by imposing Himself on us and by inserting Himself into our lives as God the Holy Ghost comes inside our bodies uninvited and without our permission and Sovereignly gives us eyes to see, and ears to hear, and an heart to believe.

And in that born again or regenerated condition- having our old Adamic nature replaced by a new Divine Nature- we now see Jesus with our new eyes, and we now hear the Gospel with our new ears, and we now understand the Truth with our new heart, and we can now believe with the faith that God gives us and we are both able and willing to desire with the desire that God gives us, and we can now hope with the hope that God gives us, and we can now repent with the power that God gives us, and we can now trust in the final and full and finished Work of Jesus Christ with the confidence that God gives us, and God Almighty takes holy red Blood that was shed by the only sinless Lamb that ever existed- Jesus the Christ- the Darling of the Trinity- and God Himself washes our wicked black hearts and makes them whiter than snow!

And in that washed and forgiven condition- God- in the greatest act of Mercy and Kindness that the world has ever known- God takes the very same spotless Righteousness of Jesus Christ- that Christ earned by living a sinless life, and God imputes or credits that Righteousness to us by the agency of faith alone, and in that very instant- we are just as Righteous as Christ Himself is Righteous- Who was just as Righteous as God Almighty Himself is Righteous, and our inheritance in Heaven is at that very second guaranteed and undefiled and will never fade away, and in that condition- God Almighty in His shining and brilliant Perfect radiance says to us,

**Comfort, O comfort My people,” says your God.**

... and that is what Luke is telling us here. So because it is true that John the Baptist is the fulfillment of **Isaiah 40:3-5**- then it is also true that Christ is the fulfillment of all those other hundreds of OT prophecies and that also means in our own south Mississippi vernacular- that we have a home in Glory Land that outshines the Sun!

Now with all this information in your head, look with me and read **Isaiah 40** to see just what Luke was actually teaching us by using this 700 year old passage to describe John the Baptist and Jesus Christ:

- 1** “Comfort, O comfort My people,” says your God.
- 2** “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.”
- 3** A voice is calling, “Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.
- 4** “Let every valley be lifted up, And every mountain and hill be made low; And let the rough ground become a plain, And the rugged terrain a broad valley;
- 5** Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, And all flesh will see *it* together; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”
- 6** A voice says, “Call out.” Then he answered, “What shall I call out?” All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field.
- 7** The grass withers, the flower fades, When the breath of the LORD blows upon it; Surely the people are grass.
- 8** The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.
- 9** Get yourself up on a high mountain, O Zion, bearer of good news, Lift up your voice mightily, O Jerusalem, bearer of good news; Lift *it* up, do not fear. Say to the cities of Judah, “Here is your God!”
- 10** Behold, the Lord GOD will come with might, With His arm ruling for Him. Behold, His reward is with Him And His recompense before Him.
- 11** Like a shepherd He will tend His flock, In His arm He will gather the lambs And carry *them* in His bosom; He will gently lead the nursing *ewes*.
- 12** Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, And marked off the heavens by the span, And calculated the dust of the earth by the measure, And weighed the mountains in a balance And the hills in a pair of scales?
- 13** Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, Or as His counselor has informed Him?
- 14** With whom did He consult and *who* gave Him understanding? And *who* taught Him in the path of justice and taught Him knowledge And informed Him of the way of understanding?
- 15** Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, And are regarded as a speck of dust on the scales; Behold, He lifts up the islands like fine dust.
- 16** Even Lebanon is not enough to burn, Nor its beasts enough for a burnt offering.

**17 All the nations are as nothing before Him, They are regarded by Him as less than nothing and meaningless.**

**18 To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare with Him?**

**19 *As for* the idol, a craftsman casts it, A goldsmith plates it with gold, And a silversmith *fashions* chains of silver.**

**20 He who is too impoverished for *such* an offering Selects a tree that does not rot; He seeks out for himself a skillful craftsman To prepare an idol that will not totter.**

**21 Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been declared to you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?**

**22 It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.**

**23 He *it is* who reduces rulers to nothing, Who makes the judges of the earth meaningless.**

**24 Scarcely have they been planted, Scarcely have they been sown, Scarcely has their stock taken root in the earth, But He merely blows on them, and they wither, And the storm carries them away like stubble.**

**25 “To whom then will you liken Me That I would be *his* equal?” says the Holy One.**

**26 Lift up your eyes on high And see who has created these *stars*, The One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of *His* power, Not one *of them* is missing.**

**27 Why do you say, O Jacob, and assert, O Israel, “My way is hidden from the LORD, And the justice due me escapes the notice of my God”?**

**28 Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth Does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable.**

**29 He gives strength to the weary, And to *him who* lacks might He increases power.**

**30 Though youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men stumble badly,**

**31 Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount**

**up *with* wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.**

So let me quickly break this down for you. In **Isaiah 40:1&2**- Isaiah is saying under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost that there is going to be a radical and dramatic change that is coming whereby God is no longer going to pour out His Divine Judgment on disobedient sinners, but that the warfare against our failure to obey God's perfect Law is going to be ended, and our rebellious transgression against God's Holy Nature and Character is going to be pardoned, and we are going to be given much more than we deserve.

How is this going to happen? Verses 3-5 tells us:

**3 A voice is calling, "Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.**

**4 "Let every valley be lifted up, And every mountain and hill be made low; And let the rough ground become a plain, And the rugged terrain a broad valley;**

**5 Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, And all flesh will see *it* together; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."**

God promises here that He is going to raise up a forerunner who will go before the King and cry out to the people, *"The King is coming! Clean the roads and move the rocks and make the path for the King clear!"*

And God says that every obstacle to the King will be moved and every hindrance will be altered, and even the stubborn and wicked heart of Man will be Sovereignly transformed so that the King will have easy access.

And God's Glory which is best seen in the Person of Jesus Christ according to **Hebrews 1:3** will be revealed, or in other words- the Divine Revelation that God gave to Peter in **Matthew 16:16** that **"Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God"** which is the Rock on which the Church is built, will be given to Man, and sinful, unworthy people will be given the ability to see and understand that Revelation for no other reason other than the Mouth of God has spoken it.

**6 A voice says, "Call out." Then he answered, "What shall I call out?" All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field.**

**7 The grass withers, the flower fades, When the breath of the LORD blows upon it; Surely the people are grass.**

**8 The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.**

And all of this will be done Sovereignly by God alone- because no Man can do this- because all man is- is grass, and all of our righteousness is as filthy rags. But even though all of that is true and even though we are all sinners and even though we do *not* deserve this great Salvation, and even though we *do* deserve eternal damnation- we will receive this great blessing of eternal life because the Mouth of God has spoken it.

**9 Get yourself up on a high mountain, O Zion, bearer of good news, Lift up your voice mightily, O Jerusalem, bearer of good news; Lift *it* up, do not fear. Say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!"**

God Almighty will be manifest in the flesh on the earth in a particular time frame and in a physical nation, and the day is coming when the unbelieving Jew will be able to say, "**Jesus Christ is Lord!**"

**10 Behold, the Lord GOD will come with might, With His arm ruling for Him. Behold, His reward is with Him And His recompense before Him.**

**11 Like a shepherd He will tend His flock, In His arm He will gather the lambs And carry *them* in His bosom; He will gently lead the nursing *ewes*.**

**12 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, And marked off the heavens by the span, And calculated the dust of the earth by the measure, And weighed the mountains in a balance And the hills in a pair of scales?**

**13 Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, Or as His counselor has informed Him?**

**14 With whom did He consult and *who* gave Him understanding? And *who* taught Him in the path of justice and taught Him knowledge And informed Him of the way of understanding?**

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offering.

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**26 Lift up your eyes on high And see who has created these *stars*, The One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of *His* power, Not one *of them* is missing.**

In this passage- God is telling the Jews and us just how He is going to save them- even though they are still sinful and rebellious and disobedient. So here in these 17 verses- God describes His great Power and His Sovereignty and His loving Kindness to the people He has threatened to Judge for 39 previous chapters. Look at how God describes Himself:

**10 Behold, the Lord GOD will come with might, With His arm ruling for Him**  
(The Omnipotence of God verse 10).

**11 Like a shepherd He will tend His flock, In His arm He will gather the lambs And carry *them* in His bosom; He will gently lead the nursing *ewes***  
(The Goodness of God- verse 11).

And then from verses 12- 26 God goes to great length to describe His Own Power and Might and Magnificence and Glory, and in these 15 verses- God says that He counsels with nobody, that He doesn't feel obligated to meet up to our expectations, that He alone planned Salvation and carried it out, and He alone sustains it and guarantees its success.

**28 Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth Does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable.**

**29 He gives strength to the weary, And to *him who* lacks might He increases power.**

**30 Though youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men stumble badly,**

**31 Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up *with* wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.**

Now here is that magnificent and familiar passage where God- Who is the Omnipotent Creator, God- Who is the everlasting God, the Lord God is going to come- but when He comes- if you wait for Him to come- He's not going to come to judge you in the end- He's going to come to strengthen you. He's going to give you strength so you can fly like an eagle and run and never get tired and walk and never become weary.

In other words- God is going to Sovereignly infuse you with eternal life. So that's all about the blessings of Salvation.

Now quickly go to chapter 41, and we won't go beyond that, it's all through here, but just to give you some samples. And please look at verses 8-10 of **Isaiah 41**:



**8 “But you, Israel, My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, Descendant of Abraham My friend,**

**9 You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, And called from its remotest parts And said to you, ‘You are My servant, I have chosen you and not rejected you.**

**10 ‘Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.’**

God is going to take Israel from all over the globe, gather them back and they're still going to be His servant because that was His elective Purpose in the beginning. And then verse 10 says,

**Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.**

Isaiah speaks for God and says, **"Do not fear, for I am with you. Do not anxiously look about you for I'm your God, I will strengthen you; I will help you and I will uphold you** with- what? *Your* righteousness? No. Your obedience to my Law? No. Your goodness and personal sanctity? No. No, here Isaiah says that God will uphold us, he will sustain us, He will establish us with the "right hand" or the seat of power of His Own Righteousness.

So this Salvation that the Forerunner is going to announce and that the King Himself is going to bring is not going to be based on our obedience to the Law, but *this* Salvation is going to be based on the Righteousness of Jesus Christ. And then in verse 13- Isaiah repeats this wonderful and hopeful Promise:

**13 “For I am the LORD your God, who upholds your right hand, Who says to you, ‘Do not fear, I will help you.’**

**14 “Do not fear, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel; I will help you,” declares the LORD, “and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel.**

*"I am the Lord your God who upholds your right hand, who says to you, 'Do not fear, I will help you, do not fear, you worm, Jacob, you're lowly, you're earthly, but don't fear, you men of Israel, I will help you,'*

*declares the Lord, 'and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel.'"* So we see that the very same holy God- Who punishes our sin is also our Redeemer.

I tell you that God is compassionate and God is forgiving and God will bring comfort to those who repent. So this is where Luke gets all of this, and this is the theme of John's forerunner message.

So for 400 years there has been a silence in Heaven- no Voice, no angel, no miracle, and Israel is bowing down under the weight of their guilt and shame, and they are made to serve a pagan gentile Government that is ruthless and brutal.

Their religious leaders are evil and apostate and money hungry. But in the midst of all this - God's Word is sure and God's Word is strong and God's Word is certain and God's Word is eternal, and here is the forerunner of the Messiah coming out of the wilderness- preaching, *"Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand?"* Will you hear that Voice today and will you repent and turn to this merciful God for Salvation?

Let's come and pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.