

Zion, Established in Righteousness

Isa 54:14 In righteousness you shall be established; you shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near you.

The faithful saints here in Isaiah's day will soon undergo great trial. They shall be carried away into Babylon as a defeated people. The Israel that had been established under the reigns of both King David and King Solomon will be no more. Already they had been divided into the two separate kingdoms of Judah and Israel. The kingdoms that existed at this present time were anything but righteous kingdoms. The hope for a coming Messiah king is becoming more and more hopeless. Especially if they be carried away as captives.

God comforts them with these words. *In righteousness you shall be established.* For them as they looked forward this was spoken to give them comfort in trial and hope in God's promised future. For us as we look back, we see that hope fulfilled in the Church of Jesus Christ, and find comfort for us as we live in a hostile world that continues to despise God's kingdom. For us this morning it is quite evident that the world wants nothing to do with Jesus and really wants nothing to do with His church. Jesus told his disciple in His day that they would be "*hated by all for His name's sake.*" (Matthew 10:22) Our Lord has made it quite clear that we might, as His people, expect this anger of the world against us, listen to His guidance for His church, "*If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.*" (John 15:18-19) This anger against the church is evident in the history of the church given to us in the Book of Acts. It is evident in the history of the church that comes down to us to this day. And it is evident by the attitude of the world around now. So these words are written to comfort and strengthen us in our faith. Here is our comfort: 1. God will be the builder and architect of His Church and it shall be established in righteousness. 2. Isaiah's prophecy here proclaims that the church will be restored and established under God's guidance and protection. And finally, 3. Our confidence is founded in this; nothing can happen outside of God's perfect will for us.

A. God will be the builder and architect of His church - *In righteousness you shall be established.*

1. This is language that can be properly addressed to a commonwealth or a kingdom.
 - a. It will be a kingdom that will not be built up by fraud, plunder or the sword
 - b. We are told here that the kingdom of God, the church, will be built upon a foundation of justice.
 - c. It is a heavenly kingdom being established first here in this present world.

Phil 3:20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ

2. It is a kingdom founded upon a true righteousness for it is founded upon the moral Law of God.
 - a. At the same time it is made up citizens who have broken the laws of that kingdom.
 - b. The answer is justice has been perfectly met in that their penalty has been paid in full.
 - c. All this was done by the King of that kingdom Himself, in behalf of His subjects.
 - (1) He Himself lived a perfect righteousness of perfect obedience to that Law
 - (2) He Himself paid the penalty for their disobedience in their place
 - (3) In the payment of the penalty He shed His blood providing a covering for their sin and disobedience.

*Eph 1:7-8 In Him **we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins**, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence*

(4) Therefore He has rightly declared them righteous for has imputed to them His righteousness.

- d. Therefore all righteousness was fulfilled in His perfect obedience
- e. And then as the Sovereign of that kingdom He declares His obedience to be the righteous obedience of His subjects.

B. Isaiah's prophecy here proclaims that the church will be restored and established under God's guidance and protection. - *You shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near you.*

1. How can it be that she will be surrounded with violence yet she shall be far from oppression and need not fear?
 - a. First we must understand that this prophetic word is not talking about an earthly kingdom.
 - b. This passage cannot mean that the church will never know conflict

2 Tim 3:12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

Acts 14:22-23 strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, "**We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.**"

2. We must always be mindful - God has our eternal need in mind - not the present moment

Mark 8:36 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?

3. Here is the key; nothing can separate us from God's eternal tender care and love.

a. Must always be mindful - God has our eternal need in mind - not the present moment

b. God will keep her in the midst of her trials

Ps 46:1-2 God is our refuge and strength, **a very present help in trouble.** Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.

c. Our trials are only for the purpose of strengthening us in our faith

1 Peter 4:12-13 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; **but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed,** you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

1 Peter 1:6-8 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, **that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,** whom having not seen you love.

d. Nothing will be able to separate her from God's tender care and love

4. This is the promise found here for us, that in all conflict we will not know fear

a. This is founded upon our trust in the Lord.

Ps 118:6 The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?

b. This is founded upon our firm confidence in Christ

Rom 8:35-39 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For **I am persuaded** that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

CONCLUSION: He has told us that He will establish His kingdom in righteousness

Therefore our firm confidence must be in Christ

Our minds must be upon things heavenly not earthly

Col 3:1-2 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

Although we can expect the world to despise us because it despises our King

But nothing the world does can in any manner do harm to His kingdom.

It may affect the temporal element of His church, but it cannot in any manner harm our eternal standing in Christ, and our eternal hope.

Christian, do not look to the world for your comfort.

Do not love the world nor the things of the world, for they shall come to an end.

But take comfort - Nothing can separate you from the love of God

It is His church; He has established it upon this sure foundation

2 Tim 2:19 ". . . the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His."