

The Lord's Comfort

The OT reading for this coming Sunday (Last Sunday in the Church Year) is Isaiah 51:4-6. The Lord will send his Servant to bestow the gifts of eternal salvation. The people of Israel were in exile awaiting their return to their home land. The Lord comes to His waiting people, not the other way around.

Verse 4 begins with the phrase: *give attention*. It means that the Lord is about to make a solemn pronouncement to which He wants His people to give strict attention. It means to hold the coming message in high regard. That concept is expanded a bit with the phrase in the same verse when it says: *Give ear to me, my nation*. This, means to expand or broaden out one's ear so as to take in everything that is said. All growth and development is to begin with instruction from the Lord.

The word "law" here, is the first five books of the Bible. This includes both Law and Gospel. When it speaks of "justice" it is God's justice which is salvation by grace through faith in the Christ's death and resurrection.

The Lord will send: *light to the peoples*. Jesus is that light that is to be shared with all people. The light kindled for Israel's use will also throw light beams to people all over the world. We have been brought into that light through the Word and the Sacraments. It allows us to look forward to Jesus' Second Coming.

The Lord says: *righteousness draws near*. Righteousness is equivalent to salvation. Ultimately, salvation through Christ will come to all nations. It can also be thought of as "victory." This is a forensic righteousness where by we are declared innocent by God. It is not earned by us. Ultimately it is the salvation which we have through Jesus.

Arms is mentioned in verse 5. It illustrates mighty power, strength and help for those who need it. God's successful overall rule could hardly be described more simply and clearly than in the words "my arm." All issues of history lie in the hollow of God's hand.

Verse 6 very pointedly speaks about the Second Coming of Jesus. The Lord invites His people to consider things that seem unalterably fixed and sure – the heavens above and the earth beneath. Nothing appears to be more stable than these works of the Lord's hands. But they are not among the things that endure to all eternity. God will be faithful to all of his promises. The word of God will endure forever. That will let us go into each day in great confidence.

Prayer: Dear Lord God Heavenly Father, help me to be ever vigilant to your speaking so I won't miss any message that you have for me. Amen