

Hope for Those Who Suffer

Key Verse: “His mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.”
—Luke 1:50

Selected Scriptures:
Isaiah 53:1-3; Luke 1:47-55

FOR MANY YEARS THE

Jewish people longed for Messianic deliverance from the persecution and suffering they had been enduring. This hope was sustained by Old Testament prophecies which foretold of a coming ruler who would establish peace throughout the earth.—Isa. 9:6,7; Ps. 72:8,11

A pure, unmarried virgin named Mary was selected to be the mother of Jesus, who in God's due time would establish a kingdom of peace, not only for Israel, but ultimately for the entire family of mankind. The honor of delivering this message to Mary was given to the angel Gabriel. As he revealed the details concerning this matter, Mary was puzzled as to how this could occur since she had no husband, but was informed a miraculous conception would take place within her through the power of the Holy Spirit.—Luke 1:26-35

After being told that her previously barren and aged cousin Elizabeth was with child, Mary went to visit her. Speaking under inspiration, Elizabeth confirmed that Mary was indeed blessed among women in that she would have the privilege of bearing the Messiah.—vss. 39-45

Mary's response to the sentiments expressed by Elizabeth was an outburst of joy and praise to the Heavenly Father for the magnificent honor bestowed upon her. She acknowledges her humble state, and with gratitude speaks of God's great might and holiness. (vss. 46-49) Our Key Verse expresses a truth that should inspire reverence and adoration by all who look to God for his favor—and 'mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.'—vs. 50

Mary continues her hymn of praise by asserting that God puts down those who are haughty and powerful, but exalts those who are lowly, and concludes by magnifying the LORD for his faithfulness to Israel and for keeping the promises made to Abraham and his seed.

The fulfillment of the promised blessings to Israel and mankind was not realized during the First Advent of Messiah. Instead, another prophecy declared he would not be received as Israel's Savior, but would be rejected and put to death as a blasphemer.—Isa. 53:2-9

The glorious outcome of his sacrifice is yet future as it awaits the completion of the church, who will share in his exaltation and bless all mankind. "It pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."—Isa. 53:10-12 ■