

Subject: *God's Comfort in Troubled Times*

Scripture: *Isaiah 40:1-8*

This chapter has great comfort for God's people (vs. 1). We have special comfort in troubled times that other people don't have because we know God and His Word. Back in the 1950s, J. B. Phillips wrote a book titled, *Your God is Too Small*. In that book he compared wrong ideas about God with the correct biblical view of God. If we don't understand what the Bible says, then our God will be too small. We must have a big view of God like the one we find in Isaiah 40.

1. COMFORT FROM GOD'S MERCY (vs. 1-2)

The prophet's job, in a word, was to disturb the comfortable and to comfort the disturbed. Isaiah has warned the people about their sins and God's impending judgment. Now he reminds the people of God's forgiveness and restoration. Isaiah states that Jerusalem and the nation have been punished because of their rebellion and they have been pardoned.

2. COMFORT FROM GOD'S ARRIVAL (vs. 3-5)

These verses have a double fulfillment: the first coming of Christ and the second coming of Christ. The prophet predicts the king's arrival. This refers to John the Baptist's ministry and his preaching of repentance in preparation for Jesus and his ministry (Mt. 3). In ancient times before kings would make their appearance in an official capacity, a team would go ahead of him to prepare the roads and, as we say, pave the way for his arrival. The "glory of the Lord" (vs. 5) refers to the Lord Himself. This also refers to a second fulfillment when Elijah will come before the return of Christ, prophesied in Malachi 4:5.

3. COMFORT FROM GOD'S WORD (vs. 6-8)

These verses compare the transient nature of men to the permanent nature of Scripture. Human flesh is compared to grass in the field that eventually withers and dies. Here today and gone tomorrow, as they say. God's Word guarantees that His plan and purpose will not fail. God will fulfill every promise that He has made. We can stand on the Word because the Word will always stand.

*How firm foundation, ye saints of the Lord
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word?*

4. COMFORT FROM GOD'S ATTRIBUTES (vs. 9-26)

This is the heart of the chapter in which Isaiah describes some of God's attributes. God is compared to His creation. He is compared to the great nations of the earth. He is compared to idols or false gods. He is compared to the world's great leaders. As we look at these verses, see if this matches up with your concept of God.

A. W. Tozer: "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us."

A. God's power (vs. 10)

B. God's compassion (vs. 11)

C. God's greatness (vs. 12, 15-17)

D. God's wisdom (vs. 13-14)

Paul quotes verse 13 twice in the New Testament (Rom. 11:34 and 1 Cor. 2:16).

E. God's uniqueness (vs. 18-20)

F. God's sovereignty (vs. 21-26)

God is the creator and the sustainer of all things. God revealed this from the beginning of history through general revelation (the physical world) and through special revelation (the Scriptures).

He deserves our love, trust, worship, and obedience. Because God is great, He deserves great worship. We could not begin to bring an offering big enough for Him. Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised. Our God is a big God. There is none like Him.

5. COMFORT FROM GOD'S PROVISION (vs. 27-31)

These final verses remind us that God knows and He cares about our situation and our needs. We need to be reminded that God is able and He is willing.

A lady had car trouble on her home from work one day. She pulled over and called a wrecker service for help. The driver asked her if she knew what was wrong. He looked under the hood and checked wires and cables. He then got behind the wheel, turned the key, and then he saw the problem. He said, "Lady, you're out of gas." How many Christians are just like that woman...they're trying to get home on an empty tank?

Notice in verse 31, the Bible tells us to wait upon the Lord. It doesn't say just to wait until He gives us strength. It says to wait upon Him and He will renew our strength. We must know Him and draw near to Him.

This chapter begins with the promise of God's comfort and ends with His promise of strength. Every person eventually runs out of gas, even the young eventually wear out. All human strength is limited, but the Lord's strength is unlimited. That's why we need to realize who He is and what He can do.