

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, March 26, 2023

Passage: Isaiah 40:1-11

Memory Passage: Isaiah 40:1-2

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Is. 40:1-11.** Isaiah 40:1-11 serve as an introduction to the second major section of Isaiah, chapters 40-55. Though Isaiah is speaking to his late eighth-century audience, he speaks in these chapters about God's comfort provided for His people while in the Babylonian captivity, which was prophesied and foreshadowed in chapter 39, and became a reality starting in 586.
- (b) Thinking back on last week's study of chapters 38-39, how do they effectively transition us to chapter 40's setting?
- (c) As you read through 40:1-11, note repeated words or phrases, changes in speaker, tone, etc.
- (d) Explain the reasons God's messenger is to speak tenderly to His people, bringing them comfort (v. 2: "that, that, that").

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Is. 40:1-11.** To what does "the wilderness" (v. 3) refer in the time about which Isaiah speaks?
- (b) What is the purpose (v. 5) of the way/highway of God (vs. 3-4), and why is it important?
- (c) How does this voice (vs. 3-5) bring "comfort" to God's people in Isaiah's day as well as their future captivity in Babylon?
- (d) All four gospels quote v. 3 (Matt. 3:3; Mark 1:2-3 with Mal. 3:1; John 1:23) and Luke quotes vs. 3 and 4, along with an allusion to v. 5 (Luke 3:4-6). Read all these accounts and contemplate (1) how each gospel writer uses Isaiah and (2) what their usage tells you about Isaiah's ultimate meaning.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Is. 40:1-11.** What two "voices" speak in v. 6a, b?
- (b) What is the meaning of the message to be cried out in vs. 6c-8?
- (c) Peter quotes verses 6 and 8 in 1 Pet. 1:24-25, and James quotes v. 8b in James 1:11. Read these citations and explain how each author uses Isaiah's words.
- (d) How does the message of this voice (vs. 6-8) bring comfort to God's people, both in Isaiah's day and in the future Babylonian captivity?

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Is. 40:1-11.** Who is called to “herald good news” in v. 9?

- (b) Why might this call be considered surprising or ironic?

- (c) What is the “good news” Jerusalem is to herald (notice the three-fold “behold” in vs. 9-10)?

- (d) What two metaphors describe Yahweh in vs. 10-11, and how do they bring comfort to those in future Babylonian exile?

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Is. 40:1-11.** Explain how each of the four messages points to Christ (vs. 1-2; 3-5; 6-8; 9-11).

- (b) How do you experience God's two “arms” in your life (cf. vs. 10-11—His powerful arm both rules and tenderly shepherds)?

- (c) Write down at least three ways each message brings you comfort in your walk with Christ.

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Voices Bringing Comfort