

The Prophecy of Isaiah  
**Comfort for God's People**

Isaiah is divided into two sections:

Chapters 1-39 contain oracles and warnings of judgment.

Chapters 40-66 focus on the deliverance and restoration of God's people.

God said He would send His rebellious people into exile in Babylon.

Isaiah 40-66 was written as though the exile were already near its end.

Isaiah looks beyond the time of judgment to a time of blessing.

Isaiah prophesied several astonishing and specific events.

He declared that Cyrus would deliver the exiles from Babylonian captivity.

He also prophesied that Messiah would come and suffer for the sins of His people.

As before, your eschatology will interpret Scripture for you.

Is Isaiah referring to a millennial reign of Christ on earth or to heavenly bliss?

Nine chapters are way too much to cover in a single lesson, but my intent is to glean highlights from chapters 40-48.

**The Good News of Deliverance**

**Isaiah 40:1-11**

"Comfort" is a key word that means "to speak tenderly to the heart, in pity."

God will deliver them from Babylon after the time determined for their rebellion.

In these ancient times heralds were sent ahead of a royal procession to make sure the road was clear of all obstacles. As is often the case with prophecy, there is a near fulfillment and a distant application.

The first application refers to the Lord leading the Jewish remnant back from Babylon to Jerusalem. But its primary application was to the ministry of John the Baptist as he prepared the way for Jesus of Nazareth, who is the Christ, by calling His people to repentance.

Matthew 3:1-3

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea,

<sup>2</sup> "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." <sup>3</sup> For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said,

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness:

'Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.'"

Salvation is a word that is used to mean deliverance from tragic worldly events or personal redemption. In either case salvation does not come from human effort and ability but from the Word of God.

Peter quotes this passage in Isaiah and applies it to the Gospel.

1 Peter 1:22-25

<sup>22</sup> Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, <sup>23</sup> since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; <sup>24</sup> for

"All flesh is like grass  
and all its glory like the flower of grass.

The grass withers,  
and the flower falls,

<sup>25</sup> but the word of the Lord remains forever."

And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

## **Our Incomparable God**

## **Isaiah 40:12-26**

### Isaiah 40:12-14

Isaiah may have been thinking of Job 38-39 when he wrote this passage.

After all of Job's complaints God asked Job 38 questions that no man can answer.

Job 38:1-5

Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said:

<sup>2</sup> "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?

<sup>3</sup> Dress for action like a man;

I will question you, and you make it known to me.

<sup>4</sup> "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?

Tell me, if you have understanding.

<sup>5</sup> Who determined its measurements—surely you know!

Or who stretched the line upon it?

And the Lord continues to ask these unanswerable questions.

After this stinging rebuke Job answered:

Job 40:1-5

And the LORD said to Job:

<sup>2</sup> "Shall a faultfinder contend with the Almighty?

He who argues with God, let him answer it."

<sup>3</sup> Then Job answered the LORD and said:

<sup>4</sup> "Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer you?

I lay my hand on my mouth.

<sup>5</sup> I have spoken once, and I will not answer;

twice, but I will proceed no further."

And so, like in the case of Job, Isaiah expresses the unfathomable depths of God's knowledge and His greatness.

Note that both Job and Isaiah begin with Creation.

In my study of the Book of Revelation I became convinced that believing in biblical Creation is a singular article of faith for the redeemed of the Lord.

Revelation 4:6-11

And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: <sup>7</sup> the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like an eagle in flight. <sup>8</sup> And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say,

"Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty,  
who was and is and is to come!"

<sup>9</sup> And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, <sup>10</sup> the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

<sup>11</sup> "Worthy are you, our Lord and God,  
to receive glory and honor and power,  
for you created all things,  
and by your will they existed and were created."

See also Revelation 10:6.

Further support for this emphasis on Creation is what Paul writes in Romans.

Turn to Romans One and listen as I read and notice the context of what is revealed in Creation and the judgment of those who suppress the truth.

Also notice the play on words: They gave up on God and God gave them up.

"God gave them up..." sounds like clods of dirt being thrown on a coffin.

## Romans 1:16-32

<sup>16</sup> For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. <sup>17</sup> For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

<sup>18</sup> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. <sup>19</sup> For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. <sup>20</sup> For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. <sup>21</sup> For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. <sup>22</sup> Claiming to be wise, they became fools, <sup>23</sup> and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

<sup>24</sup> Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, <sup>25</sup> because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

<sup>26</sup> For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; <sup>27</sup> and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

<sup>28</sup> And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. <sup>29</sup> They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, <sup>30</sup> slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, <sup>31</sup> foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. <sup>32</sup> Though they know God's decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.

## Isaiah 40:15-17

God is exalted over all the nations, which are as insignificant as a drop of water in a bucket. All the trees of Lebanon and all of the animals within its boundaries would not be a sacrifice worthy of God's magnificence.

## Isaiah 40:18-20

In the midst of trials believers should remember that God is greater than circumstances. To what will you compare God? Some idol made with human hands?

Isaiah 40:21-24

God has the power to uproot earthly princes; there is no one like Him in the entire universe [25].

Even the stars, which the Babylonians worshipped, are known and named by God.

Think about the arrogance of the promoters who try to sell you a deed to “Name a star,” around the Christmas season. God has already named all of the stars.

There is a seemingly casual phrase in Genesis 1:16:

And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: **he made the stars also.** KJV

Nothing to it! God can make innumerable galaxies as a “toss off.”  
**he made the stars also.**

Isaiah 40:27-31

It is sometimes easy to complain that God is not concerned with our suffering. [27]

But Isaiah offers encouragement; God does not get tired or grow weary. [28]

Then Isaiah presents a paradox [a seeming contradiction]. The weak become strong by trusting in the Lord. Eagles can soar for a long time on rising currents of warm air and are here a symbol of strength and endurance.

The weary will gain strength to soar above their circumstances – even exile and slavery. They will exchange their weakness for God’s own strength. [29-31]

Isaiah 41:1-29

Chapter 41 is about God summoning the idolaters to His court. The nations and their gods are challenged to display comparable wisdom and power to His own. [1]

God presents His evidence in court. [2-4]

Have no confidence in idols; but trust in the Lord. [5-10]

Do not fear; God will help you. [11-16]

When you need refreshing it will be God who provides. [17-20]

Idols cannot explain anything nor predict the future. [21-24]

Only God can foretell and He always delivers. [25-29]

## Isaiah 42:1-17

### **The Ideal Servant of the Lord.**

Only Jesus, the Christ, can be the subject of this passage.

Consider what is recorded about the deeds of Jesus.

“I have put My Spirit upon Him...”

## Matt 3:13-17

<sup>13</sup> Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. <sup>14</sup> John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" <sup>15</sup> But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. <sup>16</sup> And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; <sup>17</sup> and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

## Isaiah 42:18-25

### **The Imperfect Servant of the Lord.**

Israel also, is the servant of the Lord and is contrasted with Messiah.

Israel was supposed to bring the knowledge of the Lord to the nations but in this they failed.

## Isaiah 43:1-44:5

The Lord reminds the people that He created them and that He formed them as a nation. Thus He has the power to restore them. [43:1-7]

Only the God of Israel is the true God and no idol can deliver them. [43:8-13]

God will send an army against Babylon. [43:14-17]

God has sent armies against Israel and Judah and He will defeat the oppressors. [43:18-28]

The promise here occurs spiritually every time someone is born by the Spirit of God.

The latter fulfillment is either a Millennial Reign of Christ or heaven. [44:1-5]

## **The Uniqueness of God**

### Isaiah 44:6 -45:25

This is the classic passage in the Bible on idolatry. How can a human with the intelligence and skill to make an image believe that the thing he fashioned be his god? [44:6-20]

The Lord is the Creator. [44:21-27]

Note that God named the pagan king who would allow the exiles to return to Judah over a century before that king was born. [44:28-45:8]

Dr. John Whitcomb, speaking at our church, pointed out that 45:18 shows us that the universe is void of life except on this earth which He created to be inhabited.

## **The Fall of Babylon**

### Isaiah 46:1-47:15

The Lord used the Babylonians to take Judah into captivity. But God will also return them to their homeland. No Babylonian idol can stop God from bringing about His purpose.

God will use Cyrus, the Persian king, to overthrow Babylon. Babylon will be judged for their cruelty. Suddenly, disaster will strike Babylon, and all of their magic and charms will not prevent it from happening. Nor will the advice and counsel of the astrologers and stargazers save them from calamity.

## **The Lord's Exhortation**

### Isaiah 48:1-22

The Lord had long before foretold the defeat and captivity of Judah. They would not grasp that it was their idolatry that was the cause. [48:1-8]

The lesson for the Jews and for all who will listen is that only God is worthy of trust. God has never failed to deliver His people.