

## **Review**

We began a very different section of Isaiah last time, with chapter 40, verse one:

**Is. 40:1 “Comfort, O comfort My people,” says your God.**

We talked in depth about this command, and about how we can practically - biblically - comfort God's people. Now, we will see how God will use Isaiah to comfort His people...

## **40:2 Speak Kindly To Jerusalem**

This must have been a breath of fresh air to Isaiah. After all, God had originally told him,

**Is. 6:9 He said, “Go, and tell this people: ‘Keep on listening, but do not perceive; Keep on looking, but do not understand.’”**

**Is. 6:11 Then I said, “Lord, how long?” And He answered, “Until cities are devastated and without inhabitant, houses are without people and the land is utterly desolate”**

We've had many chapters of warnings and rebukes. Of judgment being foretold against Jerusalem. But now Isaiah is being told to speak kindly to Jerusalem. To tell her of the day when her punishment will be past, her warfare will end, and her iniquity will be removed.

How would all this happen? Well, first, the glory of the Lord would need to be revealed...

## **40:3-5 The Voice In The Wilderness**

Certainly these words must sound familiar to any reader of the New Testament.

The priests and Levites came to John the Baptist in the wilderness and asked him who he was. He reassured them that he was neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the expected prophet like Moses.

**John 1:22-23 Then they said to him, “Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?” He said, “I am A VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, ‘MAKE STRAIGHT THE**

**WAY OF THE LORD,' as Isaiah the prophet said."**

John's ministry was to tell people to clear the way for the Lord in their hearts.

The description is clear: the Lord is on His way, and the road is in terrible shape. Isaiah would tell the Israelites, just as John the Baptist would say in his day to the people, "Examine the access that God has to your hearts! Is it a rocky road? Are there potholes that need to be filled in? Steep grades that need to be leveled? Make the path straight and smooth!"

Of course, that roadwork involved repentance - turning from their sin. And when that work was complete, then the Lord would show up.

In John's day, the roadwork was done in individual hearts, and immediately after, Jesus showed up. In the future, it will be done nationally in the hearts of Israel, and immediately after, Jesus will show up - the glory of the Lord revealed, and everyone on the earth will see it:

**Matt. 24:27 "For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be."**

**40:6-8 All Flesh Is Grass**

I must admit, I've always been a bit disappointed in the whole idea of giving flowers. They're beautiful and usually smell nice, but I'm always aware that within a couple of days, they're going to wilt and start looking pretty shabby. Soon, there will be dead petals on the table, and a dead mess to throw away.

Here, the Lord points out to us the futility of trusting in the beauty and strength of our flesh. Our flesh is a lot like those flowers - it can be lovely, but will soon fade and die. Just like the green fields of Wyoming, it's only a matter of time before the dry wind blows and turns them brown and dead.

David wrote in Psalm 103,

**Psa. 103:15-16 As for man, his days are like grass; As a flower of the field, so he flourishes. When the wind has passed over it, it is no more, and its place acknowledges it no lon-**

**ger.**

By the time winter hits, you can't even tell that the flowers were ever there.

### **The Word Stands Forever**

In contrast to grass and flowers and flesh that fade and die, we have the Word of God. It stands forever. Peter calls it "the living and enduring Word of God," and then quotes this passage (1Pet. 1:23-25).

The psalmist wrote,

**Psa. 119:89 Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven.**

It's settled in heaven, and will actually outlast heaven! Jesus told us,

**Mark 13:31 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away."**

God has truly given us His eternal Word. And, in case we need the reminder, it is eternal in its entirety. He said,

**Luke 16:17 "But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the Law to fail."**

Truly, the Word of our God stands forever.

### **40:9 Good News: Here Is Your God**

We have had the opportunity to discuss this a number of times in our studies of the prophets: Jesus Christ is coming back, and will establish the center of His kingdom in Jerusalem.

You may recall that Ezekiel 40 describes the prophet being taken to the location of Jerusalem, but there was a high mountain so big, an entire city-size temple was built on it (Eze. 40:1-2).

This is the temple that Zechariah told us Jesus would build Himself.

**Zech. 6:13 "Yes, it is He who will build the temple of the LORD, and He who will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne. Thus, He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices."**

When Jesus returns, His base of operations will be in Jerusalem

- at this temple on this high mountain. In that day, it will be the highest one on the entire earth:

**Is. 2:2-3** Now it will come about that in the last days the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it. And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways and that we may walk in His paths." For the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

And God said through the psalmist,

**Psa. 2:6** "...as for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain."

Truly, the inhabitants of Jerusalem will be able to say to the whole world, "Here is your God!"

#### **40:10 His Reward**

Jesus is coming. When He appears, it will not be in meekness or weakness - He's coming in power, ready to rule. As John wrote,

**Rev. 19:15** From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.

"His reward is with Him, and His recompense before Him" is a phrase which is only used twice in the Bible: here, and in Isaiah 62:11. No one seems to be sure as to what it means. Is the reward one He has received, or one He is giving away? It seems to me that this is a reward He is giving, not receiving. At least, that seems to be the context of Isaiah 62...

**Is. 62:11-12** Behold, the LORD has proclaimed to the end of the earth, say to the daughter of Zion, "Lo, your salvation comes; Behold His reward is with Him, and His recompense before Him." And they will call them, "The holy people, the

**redeemed of the LORD”; And you will be called, “Sought out, a city not forsaken.”**

You can see how the reward being spoken of is sandwiched between "your salvation comes" and "the redeemed of the Lord." And so my understanding of this would be that He is bringing a reward of salvation to those faithful who made it to the end of the Tribulation, and to the Jews who finally called out to Him while in hiding.

This reward of salvation is what Jesus was talking about when He said,

**Matt. 24:13 “...the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.”**

#### **40:11 Shepherd And Flock**

The Scripture often refers to God's people as a flock of sheep.

**Psa. 78:52 But He led forth His own people like sheep and guided them in the wilderness like a flock**

**Mic. 2:12 ...I will put them together like sheep in the fold; Like a flock in the midst of its pasture...**

**Is. 53:6 All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way...**

The Bible also makes it clear that God is our Shepherd:

**1Pet. 2:25 For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.**

He is called...

**John 10:14 ...the good shepherd...**

**Heb. 13:20 ...the great Shepherd of the sheep...**

**1Pet. 5:4 ..the Chief Shepherd...**

God is the Shepherd of His people, His sheep. And when Jesus returns to this earth to sternly rule the nations with a rod of iron, He is also going to gently shepherd His sheep. He will gather them, carry them, tend them, and lead them. What a blessed time that will be!