

# Isaiah Ch40v1-31

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Preacher: Stephen Wellum

[ 0 : 00 ] Isaiah chapter 40. So we're going to read the beginning and the end of Isaiah 40.

So you can follow along. Isaiah 40 starting in verse 1.

Let us hear God's words. Comfort, comfort my people, said your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for.

That she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. A voice of one calling. In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord.

Make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low. The rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain.

[ 1 : 25 ] A voice says, cry out. A voice says, cry out.

And I said, what shall I cry? All people are like grass and their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field.

The grass withers, the grass withers, the flowers fall because of the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flowers fall.

But the word of the Lord endures forever. Let's turn to the end of Isaiah 40 verse 25.

And we'll read to the end. Verse 25. So to whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?

[ 2 : 22 ] Says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens. Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls forth each of them by name.

Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing. Why do you complain, Jacob? Why do you say, Israel, my way is hidden from the Lord.

My cause is disregarded by my God. Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth.

He will not grow tired or weary. And his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary. Increases the power of the weak.

Even youths grow tired and weary. Young men stumble and fall. But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.

[ 3 : 25 ] They will soar on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not be faint. Well, you can keep your Bibles open there.

Stephen, if you'd like to come up. I'm just going to ask you a couple of things. I know I didn't tell you this, but don't worry. It won't be anything too dangerous. And then we'll pray for you.

But you've been here a number of times before. But the last time, 2019, before COVID. But so just very briefly, how has the last couple of years been for you guys and your family?

Yeah. Any updates? So four years, right? So let's see. In four years, let's see how many got married. So five children. All four married now.

Last one was married in October. So that's the most recent. Added some grandchildren. So here I'm a grandfather now. I feel very young. So five grandchildren. So they started.

[ 4 : 25 ] When did they start coming? Did I have those before? Some of them. Yeah. No, no. They're all recent. So since 2021 or so.

Because they're just over two years. So five of them now with two different families. And continuing to teach at the seminary. And continuing to try to meet my promises, right?

Of writing and all that kind of stuff. Okay. And your wife, Karen? Yes. Yeah. She's doing fine. She's still working, you know, enjoying the grandkids. And then also working as the clinic director at the seminary.

So COVID was a lot of fun where she had to do all this testing. And so she kept the seminary going during that time. Yeah. Well, it's great to have you with us.

I'm just going to pray for you. And then we'll listen. Let's pray. Father God, thank you for your gifts to us. Thank you for the gift of Steve.

[ 5 : 25 ] For his understanding. And we pray that you will fill him with your Holy Spirit. Give him strength for today. And strength for this coming week.

For all us, the teaching he will do. Father, may he be blessed. And may we this morning be blessed as we hear your word through him to us today.

Encourage us. And build us all up. And it's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Thanks very much. Thank you. All right. Well, just great to be with you.

And as we were just reading that passage, Isaiah 40, you can turn there. That's what we're going to look at this morning together. I've entitled this just to look at this passage.

There's lots in this passage. So no fear. We'll run through it. We'll run through it quickly. But it's important to see the entire passage. And we'll put it in context and so on. But I've entitled this message, Renewing Our Confidence in Our Promise-Making and Keeping God.

[ 6 : 36 ] And you sort of say, well, why is this a promise-making and keeping passage? Well, we'll find that out. Right? So we'll look at that. But we're renewing our confidence in God. Right?

Now, why are we needing to do that? Well, if we listen to all the polls and pundits and what is reported, right? We live, all of us are experiencing, we're told, a lot of anxiety, a lot of depression, right?

We've come through three years of COVID and we're still living on the effects of that, right? And we look at the world scene and there's a lot of anxiety over, is there World War III coming?

Is there challenges before us in our nation's world, country, challenges globally and so on? And of course, we need to always, as Christians, be reminded that we need to find our confidence in the Lord.

We need to constantly go back to his word and remind ourselves that he is the sovereign Lord who's in charge. That he is the one who not only makes promises but keeps promises.

[ 7 : 42 ] And our lives can be lived even in the midst of anxiety and depression and turmoil by trusting him and knowing that he is working out all of his purposes.

We are part of those purposes and those purposes are centered in the Lord Jesus. Well, where can we be reminded of these great truths? Well, a lot of places in scripture we could turn to.

Isaiah 40 is where we're going to go. It's one of my favorite passages in the Bible. It's also one that was made famous by Handel's Messiah, right?

So if you've enjoyed Handel's Messiah, Isaiah 40 runs through that great oratorio. And it's also, now this, you may have not seen this movie, I don't know, but Chariots of Fire, right?

Did everyone see Chariots of Fire? Chariots of Fire, 1981. So that is a while ago. But that great movie, it's classic, right? Because it presents track and field and running, right?

[ 8 : 42 ] That's the sport of the Bible, if you didn't know. It's not soccer or football or anything else. Everywhere you have track and field. But that Chariots of Fire, the contrast between Harold Abrahams, who was running for England in the 100 meters, and Eric Liddell, the famous Scottish missionary that won the Olympics in the 1920s and then eventually served in China as a missionary and lost his life there, right?

And in the passage in that movie, he wouldn't run on Sunday. That was part of the movie. And he was in France. It was the Paris Olympics.

And he was standing in the pulpit on Sunday and he was reading Isaiah 40, right? So if you haven't seen that movie, you need to look at that. And as he's reading this passage, it goes off to those who are stumbling and falling.

And he says, those who renew their strength in the Lord. It's a great passage. It reminds you of who God is and his glory. And that's why we're going to look at this passage this morning.

Now, we're going to look at it in three steps, right? So if you're taking notes or you do that, we'll look at it first. So as you approach Scripture, and Johnny, I know, teaches you this, and the church here, right?

[ 10 : 00 ] But as you approach any particular passage, so we're looking at Isaiah 40, you've got to always set it in context, don't you? You always have to sort of say, what's the context of this passage? Not only in Isaiah, right?

So it's part of the entire prophecy of Isaiah. It's not just free-floating. It's actually part of a whole section, a whole. But it's also part of the Old Testament, right?

There's a lot that's already taught in the Old Testament prior to Isaiah 40. So to understand this text properly, right, we have to understand its placement in Isaiah, and in some sense, the Old Testament.

So that's the first thing we want to make some brief comments about, remind you a little bit about where this passage fits in the Bible.

And then secondly, turn to Isaiah itself. And we'll have to run through that, but get some sense of the flow of the text. It's all one text that is laying out for the people of God who God is, and asking them questions and calling them to trust in God as creator and Lord and promise maker and keeper.

[11:09] And then we want to just see how this passage, ultimately for us as Christians, we read the Bible as Christians. We don't just read Isaiah and sort of leave it there.

We have to see how it has been brought to fulfillment in Christ, right? We read this as Christians in light of what Jesus has accomplished. So those are the three areas to set it in context, to run through the text to see what it is saying in light of that context, and to see how it has been brought to fulfillment in Christ, and in many ways will serve for us as greater incentive to believe, greater confidence to have, greater trust that we can have in the sovereign God who is working out his purposes for his church in the Lord Jesus, right?

So let's look first at the first area, setting context. Isaiah 40, right? Where is it in Isaiah? Where is it in the Old Testament, right? So if you know anything about Isaiah, right?

Isaiah is one of those prophets that writes after the coming of David, right? So we got everything from creation through the fall, through the promises of God centered in the coming of a Redeemer, and all of that now centered in Israel, and the coming of David, and so on.

He writes 700 years before Christ. So it's a long time before even the New Testament era. And at this time in the nation of Israel, right? Israel as a nation is divided, right?

[12:41] It's got Israel to the north, Judah to the south, and at this period of time, Isaiah lives in the time when those ten northern tribes, he is going to witness the entire destruction of those ten tribes.

The superpower of the day is Assyria. And you read a lot about Assyria in the book of Isaiah, and Assyria will wipe out the ten northern tribes. They will never, ever exist again.

And so all you'll be left with is the two southern tribes, Judah and Benjamin. That's what will eventually constitute Israel. That moves into the time of the New Testament. And Isaiah will also anticipate, and we'll see this in this chapter, you'll anticipate the Babylonian exile.

That's still, from his time, 130 or so years down the road. So he's living in a crucial era. Assyria is going to wipe away the north. The southern tribes eventually will experience the loss of those ten tribes, and they will then anticipate that they will go to exile.

That they will then be preserved, and of course they eventually come back. And then we then have 400 years of silence, and then the coming of the Lord Jesus. So that's sort of the time of Isaiah, right?

[13:55] He writes over four kings of the north and the south. You see him particularly, early on in the book, deal with Ahaz. Ahaz, the king of the north where he is then, or the king of the south where he is Isaiah 7, and he's interacting with Ahaz, and then eventually Hezekiah.

And both of these kings, as most of the kings of Israel, were useless. All the kings of the north, not one good one. Maybe a few in the south that were okay.

Hezekiah was okay. Yet they always refused to trust God. They always refused to trust His promises, and eventually destruction comes to their house.

Destruction comes to the nation. And in chapter 40, we particularly see God giving comfort in light of the failure of Hezekiah.

So we'll come back to that just in a moment. Now, at this point in time, as you can say, the north is divided from the south. The nation is in total disarray. So if you read the first five chapters of Isaiah, there's nothing good said about Israel.

[15:05] Religious leaders, the kings, the people, are all under judgment. And that's why Isaiah 6, you're probably familiar with Isaiah 6, Isaiah's called to ministry. What does Isaiah see?

Why is he called to ministry in chapter 6 versus chapter 1? I think you'd begin with this call to ministry in chapter 1. But no, after five chapters of the nation in total destruction, the only hope for the nation is Isaiah 6.

And what's Isaiah 6 about? Isaiah goes into the temple, and he sees the Lord. Right? The only hope for Israel, and of course this runs through the entire book, all of the Old Testament prophets, the only hope for Israel is that God himself does something.

God himself saves them. God himself will act on their behalf. God himself will keep his promises. That's the only hope for the nation.

The Holy One who's high and lifted up. And of course that theme and that truth is going to come into Isaiah 40 strongly. The only hope for the nation is that God will rescue his people, keep his promises, and in this point in Isaiah, it's important to see, so I understand that you're studying now Genesis 12 through 50.

[16:26] And you're entitling your Genesis 12 through 50 about the promises of God, that promised seed. All the way back from Genesis 3.15, you have the promise of a Redeemer.

And by the time you get to Isaiah, that promise of the Redeemer has taken on a lot of definition.

And ultimately, the promise of a Redeemer is the promise of a coming king.

A coming king who will come from David's line. And this is why the Davidic house is so important.

The Davidic house, out of David's line, will come the promised one, the promised seed.

You have to have David's house existing. Otherwise, the promises of God will not be realized and fulfilled.

And all that's very important as we then zero in on Isaiah 40, right? So here's the context of Isaiah, something of his time. Here's something of, in some sense, the larger context of the Lord who must come and rescue his people.

[17:30] He must provide the seed, the king. And this is why, as we approach Isaiah 40, one other last sort of introductory point to realize is that you must not read Isaiah 40 isolated from the larger chapters that precede it.

Right? That sort of makes sense. But we often, right, in Isaiah 40, we just start with verse 1.

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. But you have to ask the question, why is God calling the people to, someone to say comfort to them?

Comfort assumes that something is in distress. God is in verse 1 saying, and we'll see just in a moment here, where he says comfort, comfort. These are what we call imperatives.

These are commands. God is commanding for someone to give comfort to the nation. And that's why we'll have three voices that give comfort.

But why is there the need for comfort? Well, chapter 39 is why the reason for comfort. So we often divide when we read the Bible.

[18:43] We break it up into chapters and verses. But of course, that's all later added, isn't it? The book of Isaiah is a book. And we then have to sort of look at, as we read the book, how it unfolds, and how it is put together, and so on.

And chapter 39 is crucial to link to chapter 40. And what's going on in chapter 39? Well, just look at 39, verse 3, and then verse 5, and so on.

We'll just set the context here of chapter 39. Hezekiah is the king. And Hezekiah, right, is refusing to trust God. And what is he doing?

He's making alliances with Babylon. Now, Babylon is not yet the superpower, but Babylon is on the rise. And instead of trusting the Lord, he's making alliances with Babylon.

He's trusting them more than trusting God. And so he opens up his entire palace to the Babylonians. They come in, and he's showing them all that he has.

[19:49] He's showing them all of his military and all of his, you know, what's in the nation. And this is where the Lord then comes, right, in verse 3 of Isaiah 39, and he says, what did these men say?

Where did they come from? Right, so Isaiah's coming and saying, what's going on here? Who are you letting into this kingdom? And the prophet says, well, the prophet then asked in verse 4, what did they see in your place?

And Hezekiah says, they saw everything. There's nothing among the treasures that I did not show them. And then verse 5, and this is what will lead to the need for comfort. Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, hear the word of the Lord Almighty.

The time will surely come when everything in your palace and all that your fathers have stored up until this day will be carried off to Babylon, right? So here is the prediction of what will happen 130 years later.

Because you have done this, you will eventually be carried off to Babylon. All of Israel, the two southern tribes will eventually be put into exile.

[ 20 : 52 ] Nothing will be left, he says in verse 6, says the Lord. And some of your descendants, your own flesh and blood, who you will be born to, you will be taken away. They will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon, right?

Now you say, why is that so serious? This is why you have to understand the context of this passage and see the context of the Old Testament, right? Hezekiah is part of the Davidic house, right?

The hope of the entire promise of God is tied to the coming of the Davidic king, right? If the Davidic house is destroyed, there's no king.

That's why this is, you know, a huge issue here, right? So God is saying to Isaiah, because of what you've done, Hezekiah, the whole Davidic house is going to be destroyed.

You're going to be taken off into Babylon, you're going into exile, and then of course, if the Davidic house is destroyed, then the question comes, are God's promises good?

[ 21 : 56 ] Will God keep His word that He has promised all the way back from Genesis 3.15 that there's coming a Redeemer? Will that actually happen?

And if it doesn't happen, then is God trustworthy? Have the nations won? Has God been defeated? Right? Has His word ultimately failed?

Now that's what's raising the issue here, and of course, that will make a lot of sense of why Isaiah 40 will then start with comfort. Give comfort to Israel because God's promises have not failed.

The nation has failed. Hezekiah has failed. Ultimately, the nation will be taken into exile. It'll look like everything has failed. Yet, God has not failed.

God will keep His promises. And that's what Isaiah 40 is all about, right? So that's why we have to have this larger context here. So when we come to Isaiah 40 now, right, so we've set the context.

[ 23 : 00 ] Comfort, comfort my people now is set in the context of is the God of Israel the true God? Is the God of Israel the one who can keep His promises? Is the God of Israel really going to defeat the superpowers and the nations and bring all of His saving promises to pass?

Or is He not? Now, it's interesting to look at Hezekiah's response. This rings so true to our leaders. It doesn't seem Hezekiah is just a typical leader, right? The word of the Lord you have spoken is good, he says in verse 8. Hezekiah replied, for he thought there will be peace and security in my lifetime.

What a witless, feckless leader, isn't he? What is he saying here? He's saying, oh, the nation will be destroyed. That's great. At least it won't happen to me. We'll push it off to the next generation.

We'll push it off to the 130 years later and so on. What a wicked king. Yet in the midst of that, he's no different than Ahaz earlier on and so on, in the midst of that, God says to the people of Israel, ah, there's going to be comfort.

[ 24 : 09 ] But your comfort is not going to be found in Hezekiah. It's not going to be found in the kings. It's going to be found in the Lord who will provide the king.

And so on, right? Now, let's turn to Isaiah 40. So that's sort of the context. Important to see that as we then think about what now Isaiah 40 is all about, right?

So in the midst of God saying, the whole Davidic house will be destroyed. Nothing will be left in 39.6. All of that will be taken off.

Now we have, and this text moves in the sense of sort of four kind of steps, right? Verse 1 and 2 gives you God's command for someone to speak comfort to Israel, right?

So that's what we have in verse 1 and 2, right? There's a command that's given. Give comfort to the people in the midst of what now will happen in the future to them, right?

[ 25 : 10 ] Then in verses 3, ultimately through 11, right? We have voices, three voices that now come to the surface and give comfort.

And three messages of comfort that they give. And the third message of comfort will ultimately be a comfort to behold God.

Trust in Him. Trust in the One who is the Sovereign Lord, Creator and Lord of the nations that will not fail. And so we then move in verses 12 through 24 to really a glorious presentation of the God of the Bible.

The God who is Creator. The God who has power. The God who has wisdom. The God who has no rivals and so on. And this is why this passage is so famous for its presentation of the glory of God.

But it's functioning here to give comfort to the nation of Israel. Behold your God. This God who is the Creator and Lord and the Promise Maker and the Promise Keeper.

[ 26 : 13 ] And then the chapter will conclude where Johnny's already read from 25 to the following where questions are asked. Questions that are calling the nation of Israel to faith, to trust, to confidence, right?

And this is what they will ultimately need to go back to. So, you know, later on when they're in Babylon, later on when 130 years later all of this occurs, they'll go back to this and say, right, to whom will we compare God to?

And God will keep His promises. It's looking pretty bad, but He is the one who will be faithful and true. We're going to have to wait. We're going to have to be patient. We're going to have to, even though we're weak and we have no strength, we're going to have to renew that by trusting in the Lord.

Right? Well, that's how the chapter 40 moves. And let's now just run through that and get some sense of this glorious text. So verse 1 and 2, God is now in light of His judgment upon Hezekiah and ultimately the nation of Israel, the destruction of the Davidic house, He says, He calls for comfort.

So He says, Comfort, comfort my people. This is a command. Someone come and give comfort to my people in light of this message of judgment. Speak tenderly to them.

[ 27 : 37 ] Proclaim to them that their hard service has been completed. Their sin has been paid for. That they've received from the Lord's hand double for all their sins.

I mean, it's setting you up for now these voices that come. God says, I may have announced judgment upon them, but give comfort that my promises will not fail.

My people will experience not only deliverance, right, from that which will occur in terms of the Babylonian exile, but they will receive the forgiveness of sins.

Right? I will bring double forgiveness. I will bring grace to them. Right? There's a message already of I will be the faithful God who keeps my promises and so on.

Now, ultimately for us, obviously this is now fulfilled many, many, many years later in the coming of Christ. The dawning of the new covenant. But that's what's being anticipated here. Now, we then move to these voices.

[ 28 : 34 ] So verses 3 through 11 give us three voices. So God has said, somebody now give comfort. And three voices emerge that now give messages of comfort.

And all of these messages of comfort is centered in, God will keep His promises. So the first voice, verse 3, verse 3 through 5, a voice of one calling in the desert, or a voice of one calling, it says, in the desert, and here's the voice, in the desert, prepare the way for the Lord.

Make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low, the rough ground shall be level, the rugged places plain, and the Lord in all of His glory will be seen.

And all of mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken. Well, that's the first voice of comfort. Give comfort to the people. The Davidic house will be destroyed.

Give comfort. What's the first word of comfort? The first word of comfort is the Lord's coming. That's what he's saying here. In the desert, prepare the way for the Lord.

[ 29 : 42 ] The first voice of comfort says, the Lord is coming. The Lord will keep His promises. And the imagery here is that He will make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God.

There's Exodus imagery. So you go back, only Israelite would think of the Exodus. Just as God freed the nation out of Egypt in the past, He will ultimately bring a new deliverance, a new Exodus. It's going to look bad, but God will bring salvation to His people, and He will come to them in the wilderness and He will keep His promises and He will raise, these mountains will be made low, the roads will be made plain.

I mean, this speaks of God's certainty of this, right? God will come. God will rescue His people. And what will we see? In the end, you will see the glory of the Lord revealed.

It doesn't look like God's glory is being revealed now. It looks like the nations are ruling over everything. But God will display His glory, right? Well, even as we will come back to the fulfillment of this, but even in the New Testament, you're reminded of this, right?

[ 30 : 46 ] How this is brought to fulfillment in John the Baptist, right? This is what's quoted in the New Testament, right? After many of those long years, right? Who's John the Baptist? The John the

Baptist is the one who announces, finally, the way is made plain.

The Lord has come, right? The glory of God has now been revealed in Him, and so on. But this is the first voice of comfort, reminding them that God will save His people.

God will come. And then, of course, in verse 6 through 8, a second voice arises. And the second voice arises centered in God's word will not fail.

And of course, it's important to say that because in light of chapter 39, with the anticipation of the destruction of the Davidic house, it looks like God's word will fail. But God says, nope, it may look like it, but my promises will never fail.

Right? And so that's why we read in verse 6, a voice says, cry out, and I say, what message of comfort do I give? What do I cry? Well, all men are like grass.

[ 31 : 51 ] Their glory is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers, the flowers fall because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely, the people are grass. the grass withers and the flowers fall.

Just think of that in the context of Hezekiah. This witless king. Right? He's the one who doesn't trust God's word. Right? He's the one who comes and goes.

You look all over the history of the nation. Right? Men come, men go, we come, we are all, you know, the springtime, the flowers come, fall, they all go down and we are so transient.

We are just creatures. The word, our word fails. Ahaz earlier on, his word failed. Hezekiah fails.

Our, constantly in the Old Testament, our human word always fails, but, verse 8, the grass withers, the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever.

Right? Again, context here, right? What is this word ultimately? This word is a gospel word. Right? This word is the promise of a coming king. This word is the promise of the Davidic house.

[ 33 : 03 ] May look like it's destroyed, but there will come out of that house. There will come a true seed. There will come the root and the branch.

Isaiah speaks of that in other contexts. Right? This word of God that will never fail is the promises of the covenant. It's the promises that God has made all the way back to Genesis 3.15 through Abraham and through Israel and so on.

Right? That's the word that looks like it's about to fail, but it will never fail. And then a third voice arises. Right? A third voice arises in verses 9 to 11.

Right? This is now a third word of comfort. So the first word of comfort is the Lord is coming and will display his glory. He will not abandon his people. Second voice of comfort. God's word will never fail.

The third voice of comfort. Verse 9. You who bring good tidings to Zion, to Jerusalem, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up your voice. Right? So here's the third voice.

[ 34 : 01 ] Right? What are you to announce to Israel? Right? Well, you are to lift up your voice. You are to say to Judah, behold, you're God.

So the third voice says not only the first voice, right? The way the Lord will come. God's promises will not fail. Second voice. The third voice says, look to God. Look to his glory.

Look to who he is. Remind yourself of the God who is the creator and the Lord. He has no rivals.

You can trust him. Behold your God. Here is your God. See, the sovereign Lord comes with power.

His arm rules for him. See, his reward is with him. His recompense accompanies him. And then you have this verse 11. He tends his flock like a shepherd.

He gathers the lambs in his arms. He carries them close to his heart. He gently leads those who have young. I mean, this is a constant theme that is in the Old Testament, right?

[ 34 : 59 ] The God, behold your God, the God who is sovereign but also the shepherd. The God who is the Lord of the nation, the creator of the universe, but also the one who cares for his people, the shepherd of his people, the one who will keep his word fully, right?

Well, that's the voices that give message of comfort. The Lord is coming. His word will not fail. The shepherd of Israel will keep what he has said. And of course, this is what they must take to heart as the years will unfold, as they go into exile, as they think the days look dark.

They'll have to remind themselves of these truths, this message, and so on. Now, on the heels of that third voice, we then have this majestic presentation of God, God.

Right? So, in verse 9, behold your God, that's really what we get in verses 12 through 24. Right?

And really, in this area, we have God presented as creator, as the sovereign Lord of history, as the one who is the designer, the one who rules over nations, the one who can be fully and completely trusted.

[ 36 : 13 ] Right? So, let's just run through this quickly as we look at the presentation of God. Verses 12-14 gives us the creator who has all power and wisdom.

And what's that? How's that helping the, you know, serving here? Well, if he has all power and wisdom, you can trust him. He can do something for you. He can meet your need. Right? He can ultimately bring salvation.

Right? So, it says here, who is measured, in verse 12, the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breath of his hand, marked off, or the word here is fine-tuned the heavens.

He designed the heavens so specifically. Fine-tuned it. Right? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket or weighed the mountains on the scales? The hills in a balance.

Right? So, that's power. Who is the God who has created and designed and purposed and who weighs all things? It speaks of his mighty power. Right? And then it turns in verse 13 to his wisdom.

[ 37 : 12 ] Who has understood? The same word understood is where we had that marked off. Fine-tuned. Who's fine-tuned the mind of the Lord? And of course, the answer is no one.

Right? Who's instructed him? Whom did the Lord consult to enlighten him or who taught him the right way? Who was it that taught him knowledge or showed him the path of understanding?

And of course, the answer is no one. Right? How is it functioning here to give comfort? Right? It's functioning to give comfort your ways. You may think, right, as you look at what's happening in the nation, it looks like everything's lost, but you're going to have to trust God.

He knows what he's doing. Right? Very similar to what he does with Job. Right? As Job goes through difficulties, what does God say to Job? Who are you, Job? Who are you? Did you design the universe?

Do you not know, you know, do you not, the one who made all these things? Do you not know that what I have done, I know what I'm doing, you can trust me, I'm the one who designed things, I'm the one who rules over things, my understanding is not limited, I'm not dependent upon the latest, you know, in scholarship and tell me what I need to do.

[ 38 : 19 ] No, you can trust me. Right? That my promises are good, that's how this is functioning. It's to give incentive for the nation of Israel to say, yeah, we're going to have to trust you, you are good on your word, you are the one who can bring it about.

Right? And then in verses 15 to 17, we have another sort of building on this presentation of God. Behold, the nations are a drop in the bucket. And of course, that's going to be important for the Israel to know, right?

Assyria will destroy the north. Babylon down the road is going to exile the south. It looks like those nations have all power. But you need to be reminded, they may rise, but they're going to fall.

Right? The nations are a drop in the bucket. They're regarded as dust in the scales. They may speak with a loud voice now, but eventually Assyria will be a blip on the screen of history.

Babylon will be no more. Right? As you walk through history, right? Persia, Greece, Rome, the United Kingdom, the United States, I mean, China, I mean, all of these are blips on the screen of history.

[ 39 : 31 ] Nations are like a drop in the bucket. They're regarded as dust in the scales. He weighs the islands as though they are fine dust. Lebanon is not sufficient for altar fires, nor animals enough for burnt offerings.

Before him, all the nations are as nothing. And they're regarded by him as worthless, less than nothing. Now, if you were to ask the nations who they think they are, they will be very proud and they'll tell you we're everything.

But in the big scheme of things, right, they're nothing. The Lord is even using those nations to bring about his purposes. He uses Assyria to bring his purposes about. He uses Babylon to bring his purposes about.

And so on and so on, right? And so you have, again, this majestic presentation, this God who is the one who's in control of history functioning to give comfort to the nation.

And then verse 18 and 20, you just have God alone is God. I mean, as the idols are then, to whom will you compare God? Do you compare him to idols?

[ 40 : 33 ] Do you compare him to images that people make? Verse 19, as for an idol, a craftsman casts it. Goldsmith overlays it with gold, fashions silver chains to it. A man too poor to present such an offering selects wood that will rot, will not rot.

He looks for a skilled craftsman to set up an idol that will not topple, right? This is part of the whole Old Testament presentation of God's judgment against idolatry, right? Idols are just man-made creaturely things.

They are not real, right? God, to whom will you compare? I'm not an idol. He is the one who alone is God, who can bring about these purposes. Nothing compares to him. And then in verse 21 through 24, it's emphasized even further.

He has no rivals. He's the king of king. He is the lord of lords. That people will come and go, but his promises will remain forever because he remains forever.

So we read in verse 21, do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told to you from the beginning? Have you not understood since the earth was founded? God sits enthroned above the circle of the earth.

[ 41 : 41 ] He's above these nations. He's above all of the creation that he has made, right? He's above the circle of the earth. It's people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy.

He spreads them out like a tent to live in. He brings princes to naught. Reduces the rulers of this world to nothing.

No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than he blows on them and they wither.

And the whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff. Often in the scripture, right? We are spoken of as chaff. People, opposition to God, is spoken as a chaff, right?

The byproduct of wheat or corn, right? When I lived in South Dakota in the prairies of the United States and was a pastor there, right? All the farming community, they would get their major combines out and harvest their corn and harvest their wheat and all you would see is huge dust as they did so.

[ 42 : 45 ] It was all the blowing of the chaff in the wind, right? It wasn't that which had any substance to it. And in fact, the word for God's glory in scripture is often in contrast to this chaff, right?

God's glory. You remember back in, even here where he says in verse 5, the Lord in all of his glory will be revealed. This is in opposition to the chaff, right? Because glory in scripture speaks of a God who has weight and substance and reality in contrast chaff, right?

And that's what Isaiah, where the Lord is reminding the people about. Nations come, princes come, but they eventually, they rise, but they are nothing but chaff, right?

It's the Lord who has no rivals. Now that's building on that word of comfort. And what is God giving to the nation of Israel? He's giving them a picture of himself, right?

That's the hope that they are to have. They cannot put their trust in humans. They cannot put their trust even in the leaders of Israel. They have to look to the Lord who will save, the Lord who will redeem, the Lord who will provide, the king.

[ 43 : 58 ] Now we finish in Isaiah 40 with these questions. And all of these questions are to stir the people to trust. They're to stir the people to say, you I can trust.

You I can put my confidence in. I can't put my confidence anywhere else, but I can put it in you. And they also serve to rebuke us. To rebuke us to say, why don't you trust more?

Why don't you have confidence in God? Why do you think so little of him? Right? And so it's these questions often, right, are asked, right, to drive us to trust, confidence, and to rebuke us.

So we read in verse 25, three questions asked, 25, 27, and 28. To whom will you compare me? Who is my equal, says the Holy One.

And that language of Holy One goes back to Isaiah 6. Isaiah saw in the temple the Holy One. And God's reminding them, who are you going to compare me to? The one who is the Lord, who is the Holy One of Israel.

[ 44 : 58 ] Lift up your eyes, look to the heavens who created all of these, who brings out the starry host one by one. Calls them each by name because of his great power and mighty strength. Not one of them is missing.

To whom will you compare me? Right? What is this challenging them to do? It's challenging them to think rightly about God. To not reduce him to something that cannot save.

To not make him in our image, but ultimately to see that he is the God who is great. He is the creator. He is the Lord. He has no rivals. He is self-sufficient.

He is the one that we can trust. So it's rebuking our wrong thoughts about God. Verse 27. Now not only rebukes our wrong thoughts about God, but it rebukes our wrong thoughts about ourselves. Which is interesting. So he says in verse 27, Why do you say, O Jacob? And complain, O Israel. My way is hidden from the Lord. My cause is disregarded by my God.

[ 45 : 57 ] Right? That's what the complaint will be. But who are the people complaining? Well, it's O Jacob. O Israel. Who is this? This is covenant language, isn't it? This is the covenant people of God.

Right? They're saying, God has abandoned us. Right? He's forgotten about us. It's as if, right, he's just has no interest in us again. And so this question here, well, why do you say, O covenant people?

Why do you say the ones that I have chosen, that I've made promises to, that I will not keep my promises to you? I am the one that ultimately loves my people, will keep my promises to my people, and so on.

Right? So it's rebuking wrong thoughts about themselves. Do you not know that you are the people of God? Do you not know that God will keep all of his promises to his people? Right? He will not let any of them fail.

Right? And then in verse 28, right, this question here that runs all the way to verse 31 is challenging us to not be slow in believing the promises of God, in trusting him.

[ 47 : 04 ] Right? So he says here, do you not know, have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the heavens of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary. His understanding no one can fathom.

Right? You may not understand what he's doing in the world, but he does. Right? He gives strength to the weary. He increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary. Young men stumble and fall.

But those who hope in the Lord. What's the hope here? God will keep his promises. God will not fail. God will bring his saving work to this world.

God will send his king. Those who hope in that. Right? God who hope in his promises. Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles.

They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not be faint. Right? What is this whole section doing here? It's to rebuke our slowness to trust him. Right?

[ 48 : 00 ] It's to say, God, you think you can't bring it about? It's his own timetable. Yes. But he will do it. You can trust him. Renew your strength in him.

Those who do renew their strength in him will have confidence and they will run and they will not grow weary and so on and so on. Right? So that's Isaiah 40.

Glorious passage. And then, of course, you could then develop this in the rest of Isaiah. Isaiah 41 and so on. We're over and over again. Right? God presents himself as the creator, the Lord, the covenant God of his people who will not fail.

Right? Now, as we bring this now to ourselves and a conclusion here, right? I mean, how does this reach fulfillment in us? We don't just leave this to, well, this is a good message for the nation of Israel and ancient people that were experiencing this many, many years ago.

But how does it apply to us? You know, in 2023 type of thing. Right? Well, right? We have to see that all that Isaiah and what the Lord is giving here in terms of these promises, right?

[ 49 : 10 ] will await a future fulfillment that is now passed to us. Right? As I already mentioned, right? The opening verses of Isaiah 40 of the Lord preparing the way as we go through Old Testament history.

Right? What Isaiah is announcing here that God will keep his promises, that God will save his people. That's precisely what he has done in Christ.

700 years later. That's a long time. Right? The God who is the sovereign Lord of the nations, the God who is working out his purposes sends his son.

And his son is the one who displays the glory of God. The son is the one who in his very coming, in his life, death, resurrection, all that he has achieved brings all these promises to pass.

Right? The son of God is the one who brings all of God's sovereign purposes to pass, in himself, so that as we read this today, we don't just read this as, well, here's a great presentation of God.

[ 50 : 14 ] We need to be reminded this is the same God that we have. And we need to be reminded that in some sense, a far greater way, what God announced here in terms of his promises will come to pass, we can look back on and say, yes, God kept those promises.

Those promises have come about. And that even as we look to the future, right? So we now live in light of these promises, but we anticipate the second coming of the Lord Jesus, we can now renew our confidence in a greater way.

We can then say, well, God not only kept his promises in the sending of his son, he certainly will send him again. He will come again. That we as the people of God, as we live now, awaiting the coming of the Lord Jesus in light of his first coming, we can now trust him more, no matter what circumstances we see in history and what's happening in the world and what's going on, we can say God will bring this history to its consummated end.

We as the people of God will experience all that he's promised to us in Christ Jesus. He can say to us as we read these questions in verse 25, to whom will you compare me?

To whom is my equal? We can say that in a far greater way. We can say, no one is your equal and you've demonstrated that even more so in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Or we can say, why do you say, oh church, in verse 27, complain people of God that God has hidden his way from you.

[ 51 : 42 ] He's not hidden his way from you. If we are Christ's people, then all that Jesus has achieved for us will be ours. We may not see it now. It may look bleak.

God's church will survive. That gates of hell won't prevail against his people. God's work will not eventually be in vain. The work that we do as God's people will ultimately result in a consummation and fulfillment and so on.

And even more so, we can say, do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God. He'll keep his word. We can renew our strength. We can find our confidence in him.

Well, that's how Isaiah 40 should be then encouraging to us today, right? So we said this passage is about renewing our confidence in the promise-making, promise-keeping God.

That's what this is all about, right? And we today as Christ people, right? Hopefully, right, each one of us here, right, as we see this about this same sovereign God who has worked out his promises, right?

[ 52 : 50 ] We need to find our salvation in Jesus, right? We need to realize that we need to trust him and know him. Our only hope in this life is found in him, right? Nothing else, right? But we as God's people, if we have trusted Christ, we can say this is our God, right?

That God has not changed. He's the same God who is creator and Lord and has no rivals. But even in a greater way, we can say he's the one who is the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He's the one who sent his son. He is the one who has redeemed us in him. That these promises that he made to Israel of old, this presentation of his glory and his majesty that he made of old, right, should be ours today.

Even this week as we live our lives, as we read the newspapers, as we watch the news, as we turn on our phones and so on, right? We can say, I can have confidence in the Lord. I can trust in him. In a day of anxiety and depression and frustrations and so on, we can say, I won't look to myself. I'm not going to just look to what's going on around. I'm also going to look to the Lord who's the one who I know loves me.

[ 53 : 55 ] I'm his people. He has not forgotten me. He has not forgotten his people. And he will bring about all of his purposes in his good time in due course, right?

And we can have confidence in that even this week as we live. There can be joy in our journey. There can be joy in our work. There can be joy as we interact with others, right?

And that would be a glorious testimony of the gospel to them. That even in the midst of difficult times and difficult circumstances, they can say, where is your hope found? It's found in the Lord. It's found in the gospel promises. And we can invite them to know the Lord Jesus as well. Well, Isaiah 40, great passage of Scripture.

Trust that we'll encourage you this morning as you think of the glory of our great God in the face of our Lord Jesus. Well, let's pray.

[ 54 : 52 ] Heavenly Father, thank you for your word. Thank you that you are the one who is the Lord on your throne. You are the creator. You are the one who rules over all things.

We even see that in a greater way now in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. This glorious passage of old that stirs us to confidence, stirs us to trust, stirs us to remove from us false ideas of yourself and to think rightly about you in a greater way.

We should do that as your people in light of all that you have done for us in Christ Jesus our Lord. Help us to have as your people a week, even this week, where we renew our confidence that we will grow tired and weary but those who hope in the Lord, that you will renew our hope in you, will be those who then run the race that's set before us in confidence looking unto Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.

And may we do so for your glory and for our good and for the witness of the gospel. And it's in Jesus' name that we ask these things. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Thank you very much. We're going to sing in response about the God...