

July 1st, 2018
"The Word of our God Will Stand Forever"
Isaiah 40:1-11

BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN

June 24 Psalms 58-65 June 28 Psalms 78-79
June 25 Psalms 66-69 June 29 Psalms 80-85
June 26 Psalms 70-73 June 30 Psalms 86-89
June 27 Psalms 74-77 July 1 Psalms 90-95

Lesson Introduction: As we enter into chapter 40, we begin a new section of the book of Isaiah. Up to this point, we have seen Isaiah prophesy concerning Judah and Israel's situation with the Assyrians during Isaiah's ministry. According to John MacArthur, "The prophesy we will see in Chapters 40-66 address Judah as though the prophesied Babylonian captivity were already a preset reality, though that captivity did not begin until 605-586 B.C." We will consider this week the hope and comfort the Lord promises His people in the future, as they prepare to face Babylonian captivity. As we go, we will consider how **the Lord brings comfort after sorrow**, how **the Lord foretold His redemptive plan**, and finally, how **we are weak, but His word gives hope**.

Key Memory Verse Isaiah 40:8

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH OF THE PASSAGE:

- **Comfort comes from the Lord (V. 1-2).**
- **The Lord's redemptive plan was foretold (V. 3-5).**
- **Mankind is weak and hopeless apart from God's redemption through Christ (V. 6-7).**
- **God's promises in His word are sure, and bring great hope (V. 8-11)**

Isaiah 40:1-11

1 Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that her warfare is ended,
that her iniquity is pardoned,
that she has received from the Lord's hand
double for all her sins.

3 A voice cries:

"In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord;
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
4 Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.

5 And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

6 A voice says, "Cry!"
And I said, "What shall I cry?"
All flesh is grass,

and all its beauty is like the flower of the field.
7 The grass withers, the flower fades
when the breath of the Lord blows on it;
surely the people are grass.

8 The grass withers, the flower fades,
but the word of our God will stand forever.

9 Go on up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good news;
lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good news;
lift it up, fear not;
say to the cities of Judah,
"Behold your God!"

10 Behold, the Lord God comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
behold, his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.

11 He will tend his flock like a shepherd;
he will gather the lambs in his arms;
he will carry them in his bosom,
and gently lead those that are with young.

Discussion section 1: The Lord Brings Comfort After Sorrow (V. 1-2)

-Why would Judah need comfort?

-What do we see as one of the reasons God brings comfort to us in **2 Corinthians 1:4**? How does that reason relate to God's comforting of Jerusalem in this passage (**V. 2, 9-11**)?

-What do we deserve to receive from the Lord's hand?
What is the pardon for our iniquity?

Note: As we begin this passage, we see that the Lord instructs His prophets to comfort His people. They would soon face Babylonian captivity, and Isaiah looks forward to a day when the Lord will bring about great comfort at the end of that captivity. In **2 Corinthians 1:4**, we see that one of the primary reasons the Lord brings comfort to us is so we might be a comfort to others who are going through some trial in the same way we have been comforted. We see this play out in our passage today, as the Lord brings comfort to Jerusalem, He then instructs them in **V. 9** to be the messenger of comfort to all the rest of the cities of Judah, that the Lord is bringing relief from their captivity and will gather them in like little lambs (**V. 11**). As we consider the incredible mercy of God in our own lives, to bring about comfort during our sufferings, may we never lose sight of the fact that we are called to extend that same comfort to others, and proclaim the goodness and loving kindness of our Father to a hurting world.

Discussion Section 2: The Lord Foretold His Redemptive Plan (V. 3-5)

-Who does Scripture identify as "**the voice crying in the wilderness**"?

-What was his role?

-In what way was the Glory of the Lord revealed through this messenger?

-What is the guarantee that His glory will be revealed (**V. 5**)? (See discussion section 3)

Note: All the gospels ascribe this prophesy about "**one calling in the wilderness**" to John the Baptist (**Matthew 3:3, Mark 1:3, Luke 3:4, John 1:23**). Andrew Davis, in commentary on Isaiah, states that, "**The leveling of mountains was done by blasting away at the self-righteous Pharisees and Sadducees who felt no need for a Savior. The raising of valleys was done by giving hope to wretched sinners who felt no Savior was possible. So, preachers today must do the same leveling and raising in their preaching, disturbing the comfortable, and comforting the disturbed!**"

John's primary role was to proclaim the hope of the coming Christ, and to call his listeners to repentance. The

Lord was gracious to foretell the coming of Messiah, as it gave hope to those who were longing for a Savior and served as a warning to those who felt that they were secure in their self-righteousness.

Discussion Section 3: We are weak, but His word Gives Hope (V. 5-7)

-In what ways do you hope in the flesh?

-What does this passage tell us about how much hope we have in and of ourselves?

Note: The Scriptures are clear that our lives are incredibly fragile and our flesh is incredibly weak and temporary (**James 1:10; 4:13-17, 1 Peter 1:22-25, 2 Corinthians 4:16-18**). We need to be reminded regularly of these truths. Too often our hope is placed in some physical possession or attribute that will one day soon be gone. Next week we will look at the grandeur of God in contrast with our frailty. What a comfort it is to realize that our hope cannot come from our flesh. Indeed, if it did, we would be hopeless.

-What do these verses tell us we can place our hope in?

-What does His word assure us of in these verses?

Note: What a firm foundation we stand on: "**The word of our God will stand forever**" (**V. 8**)! We see in these verses that God promises to come with power and might. "**The same arm that scattered the Jews all over the earth in judgment is to overcome Israel's oppressors (V. 10), and tenderly feed and lead His flock (V. 11)**" (**MacArthur**). What peace and joy abound in resting in God's words. They are always true, always right, and will always be transformative in the lives of His children (**2 Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 4:12**)

Lesson by Steven Richardson