

1 **GOD'S ETERNAL WORD OF COMFORT**

Isaiah 40:1-8

2 **Isaiah 40:1-4**

► ¹ "Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" Says your God. ² "Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, That her warfare is ended, That her iniquity is pardoned; For she has received from the Lord's hand Double for all her sins." ³ The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God. ⁴ Every valley shall be exalted And every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough places smooth;

3 **Isaiah 40:5-8**

► ⁵ The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, And all flesh shall see it together; For the mouth of the Lord has spoken." ⁶ The voice said, "Cry out!" And he said, "What shall I cry?" "All flesh is grass, And all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. ⁷ The grass withers, the flower fades, Because the breath of the Lord blows upon it; Surely the people are grass. ⁸ The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever."

4 **1. THE GOD OF ALL COMFORT**

► Comfort for the suffering people of God:

► Isaiah 40:1-2: ¹ "Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" Says your God. ² "Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, That her warfare is ended, That her iniquity is pardoned; For she has received from the Lord's hand Double for all her sins."

5 **Isaiah's Message**

► Chapters 1-39 – a message of judgment and warning

► Chapters 40-66 – Comfort and Blessing

► Isaiah chapter 39 ended by announcing the coming Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem, and their 70 year exile in Babylon:

► Isaiah 39:6: "Behold the days are coming when all that is in your house, and what your fathers have accumulated unto this day, shall be carried to Babylon, nothing shall be left, says the LORD."

6 **A Bitter Blow**

► "Comfort, yes, comfort My people! Isaiah knew what it was to warn and chasten God's people; but the LORD also wanted His people to receive His comfort. 2 Corinthians 1:3 speaks of our Lord as *the God of all comfort*. God wants his messengers to speak comfort to His people.

► In any group – any number of hidden hurting hearts needing a word of comfort from God's messenger.

7 **V. 2 – "Speak comfort to Jerusalem"**

► Jerusalem needed a word of comfort – It also means that God commissioned His messenger to give comfort to them. God's comfort is not shallow meaningless words but come from His infinite goodness and mercy to give comfort to His people.

► "Speak comfort" literally means "speak to the heart." In other words, speak to the deepest needs and desires of my hurting and wounded people.

8 **ILLUSTRATIONS:**

► President Trump recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. Could this be speaking comfort to Jerusalem?

- This week President Trump was instrumental in bringing Israel and the U.A.E. and Bahrain together to establish diplomatic relations. Could this be fulfilling what God through Isaiah prophetically declared to *"speak comfortably to Jerusalem"*

9 **"That her warfare is ended"**

- At the time Isaiah spoke this prophetic word, they might still have been surrounded by the Assyrian army, but as far as God was concerned, *her warfare is ended!* This was a word of comfort to Jerusalem.
- It is in this same sense that God speaks to us and tells us that we can be more than conquerors through Him who loved us (Romans 8:32).

10 **The Believer's Warfare is Ended**

- 1 Jn. 4:4: *"You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."*

11 **"That her iniquity is pardoned"**

- When Isaiah spoke these words, Jerusalem was well aware of their sins because of the preaching of Isaiah. But here the prophet speaks of a day when they will know comfort because her iniquity is pardoned. This is looking prophetically into the future when their Messiah will come and pay for their sins on the cross and their sins will be forgiven, pardoned. This is real reason for comfort.

12 **"For she has received from the Lord's hand Double for all her sins."**

- This declares the basis for the pardon – the sin has been completely paid for. Whether under the Old Covenant or under the New Covenant, our sin and iniquity is pardoned because our sin has been paid for.
- When he says *double payment for all her sins* it simply means that Jesus more than paid for the sins of Jerusalem, but also for the sins of every person born in this world through the death of Jesus on the cross

13 **Colossians 2:13-14**

- 13 *And you, being dead in your trespasses . . . He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, 14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.*

14 **MAKE IT CLEAR:**

- Our iniquity is never pardoned because God is love and therefore decided to "let us off the hook." That would be impossible because God is a righteous Judge and therefore justice must always be served.
- But under the New Covenant, it is not we who have received from the LORD's hand double for all our sins; it is our sin-bearing Savior Jesus Christ, who received the cup of wrath from the LORD's hand double for all our sins.

15 **2. THE WORD OF THE LORD PREPARES THE WAY OF THE LORD – vv. 3-5**

- ³ *The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God. ⁴ Every valley shall be exalted And every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough places smooth; ⁵ The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, And all flesh shall see it together; For the mouth of the Lord has spoken."*

16 **THE VOICE**

- ³ *The voice of one crying in the wilderness* – Here Isaiah speaks for the LORD's messenger, who

cries out in the barren wilderness.

- *"Prepare the way of the LORD* – The meaning is that the LORD is coming to His people as a triumphant King, who has the road prepared before Him so He can travel in glory and ease. Every obstacle in the way must be removed; ⁴ *Every valley shall be exalted And every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough places smooth;*

17 **A Word Picture**

- The real preparation must take place in our hearts. "Building a road is very much like the preparation God must do in our hearts. They are both expensive, they both must deal with many different problems and environments, and they both take an expert engineer."

18 **"The glory of the LORD shall be revealed"**

- It is revealed no matter our nationality; *"all flesh shall see it together."*
- The glory of the LORD is not revealed only to Jerusalem or Judah, but to every prepared heart.
- The certainty of this word is guaranteed *For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.*
- This passage of Isaiah 40:3-5 has a direct fulfillment in the New Testament, in the person and ministry of John the Baptist.

19 **Jesus was the coming Messiah and King**

- John the Baptist's ministry was to be one *crying in the wilderness*, and through his message of repentance, to *prepare the way of the LORD*. We often overlook how important the *preparing* work of the LORD IS. Any great work of God begins with great *preparation*. John wonderfully fulfilled this important ministry.

20 **THE MESSAGE OF THE VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS**

- Isaiah 40:6-8: ⁶ *The voice said, "Cry out!" And he said, "What shall I cry?" "All flesh is grass, And all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. ⁷ The grass withers, the flower fades, Because the breath of the Lord blows upon it; Surely the people are grass. ⁸ The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever."*

21 **What shall I cry?**

- An important work
- Wanted to know more
- The message is the frailty of man: *All flesh is grass*. Isaiah thinks of the beautiful green grass covering the hills of Judea after the winter rains, and how quickly the grass dies and the hills are left brown and barren. This is how frail and weak man is. Even the beauty of man is fleeting, and passes as quickly as spring wildflowers (*"all its loveliness is like the flower of the field"*).

22 **Because the breath of the Lord blows upon it**

- Man is in this fragile state at the pleasure of God. It is to God's glory and according to His plan that man is this frail, and the glory of man is so fleeting.
- *Because the breath of the Lord blows upon it*. The word of our God stands forever: The message is the permanence of God and His word. In contrast to the frailty and fleeting glory of man (*The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.*)

23 **The Word of our God stands forever**

- The word of our God certainly has endured. It has survived centuries of manual transcription, of persecution, of ever changing philosophies, of all kinds of critics, of neglect both in the pulpit and in the pew, of doubt and disbelief – and still, the word of our God stands forever!

24 **The Word of our God stands forever**

- "Written on material that perishes, having to be copied and recopied for hundreds of years before the invention of the printing press, did not diminish its style, correctness, nor existence. The Bible, compared with other ancient writings, has more manuscript evidence than any ten pieces of classical literature combined." (Josh McDowell, Evidence that Demands a Verdict)

25 **The Word of our God stands forever**

- In A.D. 303, the Roman Emperor Diocletian demanded that every copy of the Scriptures in the Roman Empire be burned. He failed, and 25 years later, the Roman Emperor Constantine commissioned a scholar named Eusebius to prepare 50 copies of the Bible at government expense.

26 **The Word of our God stands forever**

- Voltaire, the French skeptic and infidel who died in 1778, said that 100 years from his time, Christianity would be swept from existence and passed into history, and that the Bible would be a forgotten book. Many years after Voltaire's death, the Geneva Bible Society used his press and his house to produce stacks of Bibles.

27 **Hastings, cited in McDowell**

- "Infidels for eighteen hundred years have been refuting and overthrowing this book, and yet it stands today solid as a rock. Its circulation increases, and it is more loved and cherished and read today than ever before. Infidels, with all their assaults, make about as much impression on this book as a man with a tack hammer would on the Pyramids of Egypt. When the French monarch proposed a persecution of the Christians in his dominion, an old statesman and warrior said to him,

28 **Hastings (2)**

- 'Sire, the Church of God is an anvil that has worn out many hammers.' So the hammers of the infidels have been pecking away at this book for ages, but the hammers are worn out, and the anvil still endures. If this book had not been the book of God, men would have destroyed it long ago. Emperors and popes, kings and priests, princes and rulers have all tried their hand at it; they die and the book still lives."

29 **Bernard Ramm, Protestant Christian Evidences**

- "A thousand times over, the death knell of the Bible has been sounded, the funeral procession formed, the inscription cut on the tombstone, and committal read. But somehow the corpse never stays put."

30 **The word of our God:**

- This message, cried out by the voice in the wilderness, was meant to prepare hearts for the coming of the LORD by leading them into repentance. The understanding of our frailty and fleeting glory, contrasted with the eternal enduring of God and His word, should humble us in repentance before the LORD. It certainly worked in the ministry of John the Baptist (Luke 3:7-18).

31 **"The word of our God stands forever"**

- Peter in 1 Peter 1:22-23 said an "amen" to that wonderful truth: "*Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.*" He then went on to quote Isaiah 40:6-8. He went on to say, "*Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.*"
- Peter makes a beautiful connection, showing that the word of God that stands forever that Isaiah spoke of is the same word of the gospel that is preached and believed, bringing salvation to lost souls.

