

Title: **THE THREEFOLD**
MESSAGE OF EVANGELISM

Text: Isaiah 40:1-31

Subject: *The Message God's Servants Preach*

Date: Sunday Afternoon — February 9, 2020

Reading: *Psalms 121:1-8*

Introduction:

Let's open our Bibles to the 40th chapter of the Gospel of Isaiah. The title of my message is **THE THREEFOLD MESSAGE OF EVANGELISM**. Our text will be Isaiah 40:1-31. — **THE THREEFOLD MESSAGE OF EVANGELISM**. (Isaiah 40:1-31).

Historically, Isaiah 40 is God's promise of grace and restoration to Judah. In Chapter 39:5-7 Isaiah told Hezekiah and Judah that the nation would be carried away into Babylon as captives. This was God's punishment for the sins of the nation. Yet, there was an elect remnant in Judah. Lest their hearts be overcome with grief and despair, Isaiah was instructed by God to assure his people of the nation's restoration and of the certainty of God's promise. In

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this 40th chapter we have a record of what God told Isaiah to say to his people.

Yet, in its scope this passage reaches far beyond Judah's restoration from Babylon. It speaks of the salvation of God's elect in, by, and with the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Proposition: In these 31 verses the Spirit of God tells us what every man sent of God to preach the Gospel is required of God to preach.

God sends his prophets to minister to different people in different ages and circumstances. These men who are sent of God to preach the Gospel vary from one another in many things. Some are educated and refined. Some are uneducated and rough. Some are scholars. Some are fishermen. Sometimes God's messenger is a Moses, an Elijah, or a John the Baptist. Sometimes he is an Isaiah, a John, or a Paul. But **God's messenger is always:**

- A Man among Men.

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- God's Man among Men.
- God's Man with God's Message to Men.

And **God's message to men never changes!** Every man who claims to be a prophet, or a preacher, sent from God must be examined, not by his personality, persuasiveness, or success, but by his message. — I want to show you from this chapter what that message is that God sends his servants to proclaim.

Divisions:

1. The Work of the Gospel Preacher (vv. 1-5).
2. The Word of Grace we are Sent to Preach (vv. 6-31).

THE PREACHER'S WORK

1st In verses 1-5 Isaiah shows us **the work of the Gospel preacher.** What are preachers supposed to do? What is involved in the work of the ministry? Most people think preachers are supposed to build up the church membership, visit the sick, marry the

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young, bury the dead, attend to civic affairs, and serve the whims of people. By modern standards any good social worker, any good coach, any good businessman, any good band leader, any good motivator would make a good preacher. But, as with all other spiritual matters, the opinions of men are diametrically opposed to the Word of God. **Here is what God says his servants are to do.**

COMFORT MY PEOPLE

The preacher's job is to comfort God's elect (vv. 1-2).

(Isaiah 40:1-2) “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. (2) Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD’S hand double for all her sins.”

“*My people*” are those sinners the Lord God has chosen in electing love, redeemed by the blood of his

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Son, and called from death to life in Christ by the power of his Spirit. “*My people*” are those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, those who are saved by God’s almighty grace.

In order to comfort God’s people we must speak to their hearts. The words “*speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem*” might be better translated, “speak ye to the heart of Jerusalem.” True preaching is delivering a message from the heart of God to my heart, and from my heart to your heart.

The basis of comfort is redemption accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ. — “*Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD’S hand double for all her sins*” (v. 2).

Nothing comforts the hearts of needy sinners like the good news of salvation accomplished. — False prophets talk about “salvation made possible,” “salvation offered,” and “salvation if...” **God’s**

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servants preach salvation accomplished (Isaiah 52:7).

(Isaiah 52:7) “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!”

We declare to every sinner who trusts the Lord Jesus Christ that...

- His warfare is over. — The Daysman has won the day!
- His iniquity is pardoned. — The debt is fully paid!
- He has received, from the hand of God, the Triune Jehovah, double for all his sins. — God has not only put away your sins, he has also made you perfectly righteous in Christ.

PREPARE

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It is the work of the Gospel preacher to prepare the way of the Lord (vv. 3-4).

(Isaiah 40:3-4) “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye 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 shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:”

These two verses were given as a direct prophecy of John the Baptist who was sent of God to prepare the way for the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4-6; John 1:23).

As John the Baptist came to lay a highway right across the desert of apostate Judaism, so God’s servants today, by preaching the Gospel of Christ, lay a highway across the desert of apostate religion, a highway upon which the Son of God comes to men and women in saving grace. The preaching of the Gospel of God’s free, sovereign, saving grace in

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Christ is like building an interstate highway. — Some excavation must be done.

- Every valley of hopeless despair must be filled.
- Every mountain and hill of self-righteousness must be pushed down.
- Every crooked bend of works religion must be made straight.
- Every rough place of legality must be made plain.

OUR ASSURANCE

As we faithfully perform our work, we have this word of assurance from our God. — “*The glory of the LORD shall be revealed*” (v. 5).

(Isaiah 40:5) “And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see *it* together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken *it*.”

- At the Cross (John 2; 2 Corinthians 5)
- In the New Birth

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- At Judgment (Revelation 1:7)
- In the Gospel.

That is to say, Christ will come to his people all over the world by the preaching of the Gospel, revealing the glory of God in redemption and grace. God's elect shall be saved! — *“The mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.”*

That is the work of the Gospel preacher. It is my responsibility to...

- Comfort God's elect by proclaiming redemption accomplished.
- Prepare the way of the Lord.
- Confidently wait for God to save his people.

THE PREACHER'S MESSAGE

2nd Now, in verses 6-31, **Isaiah shows us the word of grace we are sent to proclaim. Our object in preaching the Gospel is twofold.**

- The Glory of God.

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- The Salvation of God's Elect.

How shall we accomplish this twofold object? By what means can we both glorify the Lord our God and persuade lost, ruined sinners to come to Christ?

What message shall we preach?

- The world tells us to appeal to man's dignity. God tells us to declare man's depravity!
- The world tells us to preach the power of positive thinking. God tells us to proclaim the immutability of his everlasting purpose!
- The world tells us to talk about the love of God. God tells us to proclaim his greatness!

THREEFOLD MESSAGE

In verses 6-31 Isaiah shows us the threefold message of evangelism. This is the word of grace God has sent us to preach. In the fifty-two years I have been trying to preach the Gospel of God to eternity bound sinners, I have never deviated from it, not even a hair's breadth; and, God helping me, I never shall.

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FLESH

This is the first message of all true evangelical preaching. — “**All flesh is grass!**” (vv. 6-8).

(Isaiah 40:6-8) “The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh *is* grass, and all the goodness thereof *is* as the flower of the field: (7) The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people *is* grass. (8) The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever.”

It is the business of the Gospel preacher to destroy all hopes of self-righteousness by showing the utter inability and total depravity of man.

All flesh is worthless grass! Not hay for feed! — Grass! — Just weeds, nothing more! — Just worthless weeds!

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- All of man's goodness is like the pretty bloom on worthless weeds!
- Soon God will destroy the grass and its flower!

THE WORD OF GOD

Here is the second message of the Gospel. — “**The Word of our God shall stand forever**” (v. 8).

- The Scriptures — The written Word of God!
- The Decrees, Purposes, and Promises of God can never be thwarted, altered, or even hindered!
- The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Living Word of God shall stand forever!

“BEHOLD YOUR GOD”

Here is the third thing we are sent of God to declare to men. — “**Behold your God**” (vv. 9-31).

The preacher who brings good tidings to Zion is told to proclaim from the high mountain, lifting up his voice with boldness, saying to all the cities of Judah,

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all the cities of God's domain. — "*Behold your God!*"

(Isaiah 40:9) "O Zion, that bringest good tidings (or, *O thou that tellest good things to Zion*), get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift *it* up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!"

NOTE: The Lord God we tell men to behold, to look to with the eye of faith, is the God-man, our Savior, the embodiment of the only true and living God, Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ. — "*Behold your God!*"

He is the mighty Savior (v. 10).

(Isaiah 40:10) "Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong *hand*, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward *is* with him, and his work before him."

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The work before him is the salvation of his people; and that is the reward he brings with him.

He is the good Shepherd (v. 11).

(Isaiah 40:11) “He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry *them* in his bosom, *and* shall gently lead those that are with young.”

He is the omnipotent, omniscient Creator (vv. 12-14; Romans 11:33-36).

(Isaiah 40:12-14) “Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? (13) Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or *being* his counsellor hath taught him? (14) With whom took he counsel, and *who* instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the

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way of understanding?”

(Romans 11:33-36) “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out! (34) For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counsellor? (35) Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? (36) For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen.”

Compared to him all the nations and peoples of the earth are nothing, less than nothing, and vanity (vv. 15-17).

(Isaiah 40:15-17) “Behold, the nations *are* as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. (16) And Lebanon *is* not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. (17) All nations before him *are* as nothing; and they are counted

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to him less than nothing, and vanity.”

- They cause him no concern. — Dust!
- He rules them with ease.
- The whole world has nothing to offer him. (v. 16).
- All creation, before the great Lord God is vanity.

So great is our God that nothing can be compared to him. — Idolatry is foolish nonsense (vv. 18-20).

(Isaiah 40:18-20) “To whom then will ye liken God? Or what likeness will ye compare unto him? (19) The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains. (20) He that *is* so impoverished that he hath no oblation chooseth a tree *that* will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, *that* shall not be moved.”

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He who is God is the absolute, sovereign Monarch of the universe (vv. 21-26).

(Isaiah 40:21-26) “Have ye not known? Have ye not heard? Hath it not been told you from the beginning? Have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? (22) *It is* he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof *are* as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in: (23) That bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. (24) Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble. (25) To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. (26) Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these *things*, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that *he is* strong in power; not one

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faileth.”

“Behold your God!” — **He is able to save them that wait upon him, them who trust in him** (vv. 27-31).
God is greater than your need (vv. 27-28).

(Isaiah 40:27-28) “Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God? (28) Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, *that* the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? *there is* no searching of his understanding.”

He gives power to the faint and strength to the weak (v. 29). — “*When I am weak, then am I strong.*”

(Isaiah 40:29) “He giveth power to the faint; and to *them that have* no might he increaseth strength.”

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He preserves and keeps his own when others, who appear stronger and greater, faint, grow weary, and fall (vv. 30-31).

(Isaiah 40:30-31) “Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: (31) But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew *their* strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; *and* they shall walk, and not faint.”

“They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles.”
— *“As thy days, so shall thy strength be.”*
(Deuteronomy 33:25). — In the beginning of their pilgrimage, God’s saints soar and fly like the eagle.
— As they continue and grow in grace, God’s pilgrims run their race and never grow weary of it, though many do. — In their mature years, they walk, making steady, but tranquil and almost unconscious, advancement and faint not, though many fall.

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Application: “Behold your God!” To behold him is to...

- Know your need of him.
- Realize what he has done (v. 2).
- Trust him alone as your Savior.
- Be saved by him.

(Isaiah 45:20-25) “Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye *that are* escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god *that* cannot save. (21) Tell ye, and bring *them* near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? *who* hath told it from that time? *Have* not I the LORD? And *there is* no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; *there is* none beside me. (22) Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else. (23) I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth *in* righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. (24) Surely, shall *one* say, in

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the LORD have I righteousness and strength: *even* to him shall *men* come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. (25) In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.”

Amen.