



PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

ISAIAH 40:1-5, 25-26, 29-31 LESSON: COMFORT FOR GOD'S PEOPLE—

December 1, 2024

INTRODUCTION:

This message begins three studies in the 40th chapter of Isaiah about how God Takes Care of Us. The first study is from verses 1-11 — God Is Our Comfort. The next study is from verses 12-22 — God Reaches Down to Us in Power, and the final study is from verses 25-31 — God Gives Us Strength. As we look at these passages from Isaiah, I believe our faith will be strengthened as we see how God truly does Take Care of Us.

LESSON: I. GOD, OUR COMFORTER ISAIAH 40:1-5

GOD IS OUR COMFORT WHEN WE'RE WORRIED

40:1 Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. ¹The nation of Israel had been in exile. They were unsure of what the future would bring. But God sent this message from His Prophet Isaiah to comfort the people. When we are worried or in despair God sends His comfort. He wants to help His people. As Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*" "*Comfort*" (nachamū, meaning repent or freedom from pain). And comfort only follows after true repentance. The Prophet has received into the depths of his spirit God's announcement and the true spoiler — "*the rod of His anger and the staff of His Indignation*", is no more Assyria, but rather Babylon. He has accepted the sentence that the people because of their sin, (in fact continued sin) and refusal to repent, are to go into captivity. God's people surely need comfort when worried about dislocation and everything taken from them.

²This prophecy reaches to and includes the whole Gospel dispensation, from the coming of John the Baptist to the second coming of Christ. The word "*comfort*" is repeated twice. He says this to confirm the thing. It is God who is the God of all comfort that speaks through Isaiah. And to His "*people*", whom He has chosen, with whom He has made a covenant in Christ, and given to Him, and Christ redeemed by His blood, and whom He effectually calls by His grace. "*Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.*"

God is our comfort when we're afraid

40:2 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. God is commanding Isaiah "*to speak comfortably to Jerusalem and out loud*" — "*Comfortably*" — "*leb*" — (actually a completely different word than the "*comfort*" in the first verse). This is speaking to the inner man, the mind, will, heart, and understanding; speak kindly (NAS), tenderly (NLT). We could translate

¹ <http://www.hurtingchristian.org/PastorsSite/otherscripture/isaiahstudies/isaiah40-1-11.htm>

² <http://www.searchgodsword.org/com/geb/view.cgi?book=isa&chapter=040&verse=001>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>





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this as, "**Speak to the heart**". Thus, God's message of comfort in this passage is **not a mere strengthening of the people of Israel in an outward deliverance only; it is a deep and inner work of God in the hearts of His people as well.**

1. **That her warfare is accomplished.** The battle may have still loomed (appearance of something large), even though there was still an army against them, but as far as God was concerned, "***her warfare is ended.***" The word "**Is**" is a right now thing. It's not going to be, but it is a done deal as spoken by Isaiah! This was the reason for comfort. It is in this same sense that God speaks to us and tells us we **are more than conquerors through Him who loved us (Romans 8:37).** The battle still looms, but as far as it concerns the believer **in Jesus Christ,** our warfare is ended, because "***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***" (1 John 4:4).
2. **That her iniquity is pardoned.** At the moment Isaiah spoke this, Jerusalem was well aware of her sin because Isaiah had made them aware of it! Yet, **the prophet speaks of the day when comfort is offered because her iniquity is pardoned. This is real comfort; to be recognized as a sinner - as one having iniquity - yet knowing just as much that our iniquity is pardoned. We are saved by Grace!**
3. **"For she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins"** – still talking about Israel.

³The Old Testament law required that the sinner pay back more than what they took. Most of the time, they were to pay back double what they stole (Ex. 22:9). The idea here isn't that they had received more for their sins than they deserved, but that they had received the full punishment that their sins deserved.

⁴The word '**double**' has two meanings (in the original language, as well as in English). '**Double**' can mean 'twice as much', as in 'double punishment'. But 'double' can also mean to 'fold in two' (see Exodus 26:9). For example, if I fold a piece of paper in two, I double it. Isaiah is using this second meaning here.

The verse refers to an ancient custom. If poor people were quite unable to pay a debt, they could become slaves (see 2 Kings 4:1). There were no national funds to help them. But there was one thing that a poor person could do. He could fix the final demand (bill) for the money in a public place. He hoped that some generous rich person would fold the demand in two. That is, that he would double it. Then he signed his name on the back of the demand (like a modern cheque). That meant that he would kindly pay the poor man's debt. And everybody knew it.

So God forgives His people because of His great kindness. They could not earn their freedom by their hard labour. But God Himself acts to rescue them. The punishment of their sins was paid in full as far as God was concerned.

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. You can't add to what Jesus has done for you.

God is our comfort when we're overwhelmed

40:3 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. Doesn't that sound familiar? This would be fulfilled by the ministry of John the Baptist who said in John 1:23 "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Make straight the way of the Lord." He literally lived in the "***wilderness***", the desert of Judea. **His purpose in life was to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah.** His voice cried night and day. The

³ <http://www.calvaryfullerton.org/Bstudy/index.htm>

⁴ easyenglish.bible/bible-commentary/isaiah40-48-lbw-nh.htm

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>





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"wilderness" and **"desert"** represent the world. It represented Israel that had lost her way, therefore the promise is for the restoration of that nation, which will yet take place.

1. **"Prepare the way of the Lord"** – When eastern princes marched through desert countries, ways were prepared for them, and hindrances removed. The idea of preparing the way of the Lord is a word picture, because the real preparation must take place in our hearts. Building a road is very much like the preparation God must do in our hearts. Make room for Jesus!
2. **"Make straight in the desert a highway for our God"** – The Lord is coming to His people as a triumphant King whom they didn't know nor were prepared to receive. Whatever was wrong in the road must be corrected for God to have clear passage. Preparing a straight road means removing obstacles or rolling out the red carpet for the coming of the Lord. The desert is a picture of life's trials and sufferings. We are not immune to these, but you can't allow things to overwhelm you. Jesus had to go through the wilderness and the desert. Isaiah told the people to prepare to see God work. And the better we prepare our hearts, the clearer answer He can provide. The making of that highway for the Lord is our job; our duty. It is the way we ready ourselves for our communion with God. It is part of how we repent, we make our way straight by submitting to Him without any closed doors unfit for the King of kings to enter; making it easy for Jesus to come in.

God is our comfort when things appear bleak

40:4 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. The psalmist is looking ahead and what does he see? He sees deep un-crossable valleys and steep mountains and hills which are depressing and bleak. The terrain is uneven and rough before him. Things look very bad.

1. But this verse tells us **"every valley shall be lifted up"** – every low point in our life will be raised. These are sins of deficiencies stemming from doubt in God and His good purposes for our lives. Some of these are: worry, stress, fears, indecision, self-hatred, depression, and suicide. The Lord heals our wounds.
2. **Every mountain and hill shall be made low** – The "mountain" and "hill" represent the oppressors of the world. They will be brought down from their exalted position and shall be made low. Every obstacle in our way will come down. Self-confidence is the belief that one can manipulate circumstances to gain what we want. Some of the sins of self-confidence are: pride, anger, bitterness, looking down upon, immorality, stealing and lying. But, all of these obstacles must come down.
3. **The uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain** —the rollercoaster of our life will be calmed, and God will smooth out the rough places. Only Christ can make the crooked straight and the rough places plain in our lives.

As the Lord prepare our hearts by the teaching of His Word and the convictions of His Spirit, may high and proud thoughts be brought down, good desires planted, crooked and rugged tempers made straight and softened, and every hindrance removed, that we may be ready for His Will on earth, and be prepared for His heavenly kingdom.

40:5 And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken. When the way is prepared, then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed. All obstacles out of the way; every mountain and hill is made low; the uneven ground becomes



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level, and the rough places a plain, then the Lord is able to reveal Himself to you. "***The glory of the Lord***" is the visible manifestation of the Lord's attributes and His character. The glory of the Lord is seen all through the Bible. The ultimate fulfillment will be seen at Jesus' Second Coming (Rev. 21:23). In this text God would display His power, and show Himself to be a Covenant-keeping God, by delivering His people from their bondage, and bringing them back to their own land. This glory and faithfulness would be shown in His delivering them from their captivity in Babylon; and it would be still more illustriously shown in His sending the Messiah to accomplish the deliverance of His people in later days.

⁵The sense of this verse is: Get things straightened out for the King, and you'll catch a glimpse of His glory. For those that are so depressed that they can't look up at the Lord – then when they realize that God loves them, they will catch a glimpse of the glory. For those who are puffed up and become humbled, they too will get closer to the Lord.

He's saying, this will come to pass because all flesh will witness this. The word "***flesh***" is often used to denote human nature, or mankind. And the strongest possible confirmation that it would be fulfilled is out of the mouth of the Lord. This should be a comfort to all of us, God's spoken Word of Promise!

II. GOD, OUR CREATOR ISAIAH 40:25-26

40:25 Our lesson skips to verse 25: "To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One." We have been looking at how God takes care of us by comforting us in a time we will need Him the most. Now we will see how God takes care of us by His greatness as He reaches down to us in Power. This is a summary to conclude from verse 18 "*To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto Him?*" If God is paramount over idols, over nature, and over humanity, to whom can He be likened? Is He not altogether unique and incomparable? The Prophet having thus set forth the majesty and glory of God asks now with great emphasis, what could be an adequate and proper representation of such a God. There is nothing whatsoever that is a fit likeness and similitude, by which to represent the Lord, the Holy One! He is the "***Holy One***" and is pictured as controlling the heavens on high, even as He providentially controls the events on earth. No one or thing can be compared to God and He has proven Himself time and time again.

40:26 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 falleth.

Some 50 years ago, it was claimed by Astronomers that there were over 40 sextillion stars in the Universe. If every one of these stars were named, there would be enough names to fill approximately 80 quadrillion books of this size.

Not one fails to fulfill its will; not one has failed to fulfill its purpose from when it was first spoken into existence. To understand that the Supreme Being has created all of these stars, and calls them each by name, is beyond our comprehension! He is still taking care of His Covenant people by His awesome Power.

III. GOD, OUR CONFIDENCE ISAIAH 40:29-31

God gives us strength when we are weak

40:29 Our lesson now skips to verse 29: He giveth power to the faint; and to [them that have] no might he increaseth strength. After explaining all the greatness and glory of God, now Isaiah explains another benefit we can receive from God. God takes care of us by renewing our strength.

⁵ <http://www.calvaryfullerton.org/Bstudy/index.htm>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>





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Notice who God gives power to:

1. the faint; 2. those who have no might

Even the strongest people get tired at times, but God's power and strength never diminish. He is never too tired or too busy to help and listen. He increases our strength; "...when I am weak, then am I strong" **2Corth.12:10c.** Those who are proud and confident in their own wisdom and strength will receive no strength from God. They're on their own.

Wiersbe tells us, "We can never obey God in our own strength, but we can always trust Him to provide the strength we need. If we trust ourselves, we will faint and fall; but if we wait on the Lord by faith, we will receive strength for the journey."

God's strength is reserved for those who know they are weak, and know they have no might.

God gives us strength when we are weak

God gives us strength when we are exhausted

40:30 Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall utterly fall. Two categories used here: youth and young men. They "*shall faint and be weary*" and they "*shall utterly fall.*" "*Weak*" means "*fallure through loss of inherent strength.*" Youth have so much energy that we wished we had a tenth of it. Yet even the little ones get tired and crash. The most vigorous young men whom we expect manly strength, also, become weary by labor. There may be a time when you are weakened by disease and sink under with discouragement – exhausted. God is able to give strength when you thought you couldn't go on any further. The Israelites needed to know that God would be with them in captivity, be with them when they get faint or become exhausted. And the next verse helps us to understand.

God gives us strength when we are exhausted.

God gives us strength when we can't go on.

God gives us strength when we can't go on.

40:31 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. Five things stand out here.

1. wait 2. renew their strength 3. mount up as eagles 4. run and not be weary 5. walk and not faint.

1. They that wait upon the Lord – When we are powerless to continue, then the Lord says to wait. I think this is the one thing we hate more than anything else – to wait on God. We don't like waiting. We are an impatient people. But God says we must learn to wait. It is only in that place of waiting we find the promises of God:

- "Wait" – "*qavah*" – wait, hope, expect; to look eagerly for; to lie in wait for; linger for. The idea behind wait on the Lord is not a passive sitting around until the Lord does something. It is a feeling that is as consistent with the most strenuous endeavors to secure the object; it is a seeking with a clinging expectant trust and hope in Him.

Here it properly refers to those who were suffering a long and grievous captivity in Babylon, and who had no prospect of deliverance but in Him. The phrase is applicable also to all who feel that they are weak, feeble, guilty, and helpless, and who in view of this, put their confident trust in "Yahweh."

2. "Shall renew their strength" – That trust in "Yahweh" brings about a change; it will cause a change in your life. The Hebrew word:

- "Renew" – "*chalaph*" – means to pass on or away; to change, substitute, to alter, change for better; and then to revive, to renew, to cause to flourish again. It's the idea of



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changing clothes, taking off the old stuff and putting on new ones. It's taking our weakness and exchanging it for God's strength.

The people of God who trust in Him shall become strong in faith; able to contend with their spiritual foes, to gain the victory over their sins. They shall lay aside their strength and put on, as a garment, strength from God.

- 3. "They shall mount up with wings as eagles" – It has been a common and popular opinion that the eagle lives and retains his vigor to a great age. The eagle lives to a very advanced age; and in shedding his feathers, his youth is renewed with his new feathers.**
 - **"Mount up" – "*alah*" – to go up, ascend, climb. Their climb is swift and strongly.**

What does that mean? Why as eagles? Why not with wings as doves? The eagle is the king of birds. It soars the highest into the Heavens. Believers are to live a heavenly life, in the very presence and love and joy of God. They are to live where God lives; they need God's strength to rise there. We see a metaphor of an eagle used to describe how with God we can soar through and above difficulty.

Eagles are able to cover incredible distances, rising thousands of feet into the sky, reaching speeds of 60 miles per hour. But these beautiful birds may flap their wings only once or twice over the course of hours, and in doing so they let the thermal updrafts carry them along.

It's hard to mount up, climb, or go up higher if you try to go before your time of renewal. That period of waiting on God is a must. It's always best to soar under the shadow of the Almighty as He covers you with His feathers under His wings while you trust in Him.

⁶Eagles and other raptors generally do not pluck their feathers. All birds, including raptors (bird of prey), do go through a process of losing feathers and this is called a molt. A bird's feathers do suffer regular wear and tear so, ultimately, the quality of the feathers will decrease and they will need to be replaced. The feathers are not lost all at the same time. If this were true, the bird would be unprotected from natural elements, and more importantly it would not be able to fly. Raptors and all other birds molt in a symmetrical pattern. If a primary feather is molted, simultaneously it is also on the right wing. This can ensure balance in flight for the bird while it hunts during this molting period.

(The Speculation): It is said that the eagle sheds his feathers in the beginning of spring, and with fresh plumage assumes the appearance of youth. The belief that an eagle renews its strength and youthful appearance after shedding its feathers gave rise to Psalm 103:5 and Isaiah 40:31. Eagles do have a long lifespan, living 20 to 30 years in the wild, and longer in captivity [Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary].

4. They shall run and not be weary.

- **"Running" is a continual going, a continual execution in spite of. Yes, you sometimes get weary when you run. "Weary" means exhaustion because of the hardness of life (Motyer). However, this passage is expressing the idea that they who trust in God would be vigorous, elevated, and unwearied; that God would sustain and uphold them.**

5. And they shall walk and not faint. This was at first designed to be applied to the Jews in captivity in Babylon to induce them to put their trust in God. But it is as true now as it was at that time. This is the purpose of the strength the Lord gives us - strength to move forward and progress in Him. It isn't strength to show off, but strength to go

⁶ <http://www.snopes.com/critters/wild/eaglerebirth.asp>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>





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forward in Him;

- **Walk** in Him; take one step at a time in Him; allow your actions to be controlled by Him so you won't become weak along the way and give-up.

Notice what happens when we wait on the Lord. God says He will renew our strength. We will begin to take flight like the eagle. We will run and not be weary. We will walk and not faint. Notice the order, because it seems strange. But remember how it was when you first came to Christ. You were "*gong-hoe*" and ready to do it all. There was such a change in your life; you were soaring to new heights. First we mount up with wings like eagles. Then we run. Finally we walk. Does it seem out of order? - Not at all. As things go up, they come down. God wants the landing to be smooth. First, we recognize that we soar up into heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:6). Then we set ourselves on the course to run the race (Hebrews 12:1). Then we are in the good place to walk the walk (Colossians 2:6).

SUMMARY:

The great power of God brings comfort to His people (40:1). He renews our strength. He takes the weak and the lowly and lifts them up by His power. This is the consistent theme of the book of Isaiah. He will comfort His people (40:1), forgiving them of their sins (40:2). A voice is crying in the wilderness shouting make room in your hearts for Jesus. It is the way we ready ourselves for our communion with God (40:3). Every low point in our life will be raised. Every "*mountain and hill*" will be brought down from their exalted position. Only Christ can make the crooked straight and the rough places plain in our lives (40:4). When the way is prepared, then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together. And the strongest possible confirmation that it would be fulfilled is out of the mouth of the Lord. This should be a comfort to all of us, God's spoken Word of Promise! (40:5).

The Prophet having thus set forth the majesty and glory of God asks now with great emphasis, what could be an adequate and proper representation of such a God? There is nothing whatsoever that is a fit likeness and similitude, by which to represent the Lord, the Holy One! (40:25). God appeals us to direct our eyes toward the starry heavens as proof of His existence and perfections, and as the most awe-inspiring exhibition of His greatness and power (40:26).

Even the strongest people get tired at times, but God's power and strength never diminish. He is never too tired or too busy to help and listen. God gives power to the faint; and to [them that have] no might he increases strength (40:29). Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall utterly fall. God is able to give strength when you thought you couldn't go on any further (40:30). For those who patiently wait on the Lord through pain and hardship, God will give strength to endure. They who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint (Isaiah 40:31).

APPLICATION:

Many people have not at all thought about the purpose God has in mind for their lives. They are constantly thinking what they want of their lives. What a shame they miss out on the true fulfillment of their lives! Let's try to better understand this concept of God's glory in our lives. As it is in heaven, let it be done on earth!

