



Prepare and Anticipate (His Comfort is Coming)

Isaiah 40:1-12

We are living in an age when people are disillusioned, defeated, and discouraged. We need to be refreshed by God Almighty! Perhaps God is calling us to reset our lives to get back to what is most important?

Setting the Scene: 2021 Theme: Refresh

- In the first half of Isaiah, the question readers ponder, “Would you trust in God under the brutal Assyrians or trust in yourself?” The Israelites choose the latter, and their hearts were hard.

⁵Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Listen to this message from the LORD of Heaven’s Armies: ⁶**‘The time is coming** when everything in your palace—all the treasures stored up by your ancestors until now—will be carried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left,’ says the LORD. ⁷‘Some of your very own sons will be taken away into exile. They will become eunuchs who will serve in the palace of Babylon’s King.’” ⁸Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “This message you have given me from the LORD is good.” For the King was thinking, “At least there will be peace and security during my lifetime.” Isaiah 39:5-8

- Isaiah is prophesying a time of suffering that will happen 100 years later. It is as if he is putting a message in a time capsule. Israelites will be held in captivity in Babylon. However, a time of restoration will come. King Cyrus is the instrument God uses for their release. (Deliverance from Babylon, thru the Medes and Persians)
- This passage reminds us that all is not lost; God is on the throne when everything looks terrible around you.

Verses 1 and 2 provide an introduction and set the tone for the following three three-verse stanzas. The idea of the word translated “comfort” (v. 1) is to “encourage,” as is “speak tenderly” (v. 2). Isaiah sees a day when God’s servants will be crushed to the ground under the burden of their sins. They will feel sure that all is lost and that all the promises have been nullified by their rebellion. But the message to be proclaimed to them is that this is not so.¹

- Comfort, comfort – stated twice for emphasis. God’s comfort encourages, gives strength, and full of grace.
- To Receive a refreshing from the Lord, We will need to listen to the right voice.

Voice #1 Anticipate and Prepare (vs. 3-5)

- Something New will happen in 2021
 - Valleys – Unexpected Loss
 - Mountains – Unexpected pressure
 - Curves/Edges –Unexpected emotion
 - Glory (Hebrew “covode” meaning weight)
- Every time the glory of God is revealed, it is a foretaste, a preview of what it will be like when Christ comes again.

John replied in the words of the prophet Isaiah: ‘I am a voice shouting in the wilderness, **‘clear the way** for the Lord’s coming!’ John 1:23,

“Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.” (John the Baptist) Matthew 3:2

- Repent is a beautiful word. It is not what some pictures, as bullhorn man. It means to return to who God intended you to be.

¹⁹Now repent of your sins and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped away. ²⁰Then **‘times of refreshment** will come **‘from the presence of the Lord**, and he will again send you Jesus, your appointed Messiah. Acts 3:19-20

¹ Oswalt, J. N. (2003). *Isaiah* (pp. 444–445). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

- The wilderness reminded Israel of her past, their wilderness wanderings, because of her sinful disobedience and rebellion against God. For some, you might feel like you are in a wilderness (God might see Inattentive, uncooperative, or late.)
- New People will be raised up in Babylon. They needed to "hit reset" in the relationship with God Almighty. A new generation had to rise up. "I am God, and I will be your God" Notice God took his people back to where Abraham started (The Land of Babylon) – Genesis 12
- Gospel's share this passage, of John the Baptist, calls to clear the road, the King, the savior is coming., ; John the Baptist was a man coming out of the wilderness, so we would not have to wonder.
- He was calling people out to prepare their hearts and minds to encounter God Almighty.
- Confession- (Baptism of Repentance) We are not ready for the King. Repentance reminds us we have missed the point.

Voice #2: Seize the day; life is precious. (vs. 6-8)

- Grass in the Old Testament is the most fragile life; when the rain stops, grass withers. People are grass. However, the Word of God stands forever. Life is not about my momentary happiness.

²⁴As the Scriptures say, "People are like grass; their beauty is like a flower in the field. The grass withers, and the flower fades.²⁵ But the word of the Lord remains forever." And that word is the Good News that was preached to you. 1 Peter 1:24-25

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. ²We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith.³ Because of the joy⁴ awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne. Hebrews 12:1-2

³⁰Even youths will become weak and tired, and young men will fall in exhaustion. ³¹But those who trust in the LORD will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint. Isaiah 40:30-31

- Let us fix our eyes on His unfolding plan.

Voice #3 God is powerful and gentle. (vs. 9-12)

- He tends his flock with power but gentle like a shepherd.
- And He will return in power, and He will sustain you.

⁷And God will provide rest for you who are being persecuted and also for us when the Lord Jesus appears from heaven. He will come with his mighty angels, ⁸in flaming fire, bringing judgment on those who don't know God and on those who refuse to obey the Good News of our Lord Jesus. ⁹They will be punished with eternal destruction, forever separated from the Lord and from his glorious power. ¹⁰When he comes on that day, he will receive glory from his holy people—praise from all who believe. And this includes you, for you believed what we told you about him. 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10

⁷Look! He comes with the clouds of heaven. And everyone will see him—even those who pierced him. And all the nations of the world will mourn for him. Yes! Amen! ⁸"I am the Alpha and the Omega—the beginning and the end," says the Lord God. "I am the one who is, who always was, and who is still to come—the Almighty One." Revelation 1:7-8

One Last Thought: Your circumstances do not necessarily coincide with how God feels about you. The proof is in how God feels about you is found in the cross.