

The Isaiah 40 Message

Isaiah 40

A. Introduction

1. Isaiah 40 is God's prophetic message of comfort to Israel.
2. In the midst of her greatest tribulation at the End of the Age, the Lord will speak this message to Israel through His voices.
3. This message will turn Israel back to her God, that she may find strength in His sovereignty and might, and find hope in the promised deliverance of their Messiah, Jesus.

B. Context of Isaiah 40

1. The prophecy of Isaiah 40 has both a near fulfilment and a far fulfilment.
2. The near fulfilment points to the historical context of the Babylonian invasion and exile of the southern kingdom of Judah (Isa 39:6–8, 47:5–7).
 - a. In His righteousness and according to His word, God sent judgement to Judah through the wars and invasion of the Chaldean army. This was the result of their sin and iniquity (Isa 40:2; Hab 1:5–11).
 - b. This invasion foreshadows the coming invasion of Israel by the Antichrist army at the End of the Age.
3. The far fulfilment points to the End of the Age, describing what will happen to Israel right before Jesus returns.
 - a. Israel will experience a time of warfare during the final 3.5 years of human history (Isa 40:2)
 - i. She will go through the greatest trouble she will ever face as a nation and as a people (Dan 12:1; Jer 31:7). She will experience intense persecution as the Antichrist, his army, and all nations come against her (Zech 12 – 14; Rev 12:13–17).
 - ii. The trouble Israel will face is foremost God's judgement against her sin (Zech 12:1–3; Joel 2:11). He will judge her through her enemies because of her sin, wickedness and rebellion toward Him (Isa 28 – 29, 42:23–25; Zech 13:8–9).
 - Israel will place their confidence and contentment in the counterfeit comfort of the Antichrist and his peace treaty. The Lord will come against her idolatry, that she may see that her true comfort can only be found in the Lord.

- Satan and the powers of darkness will also rage against Israel, seeking to destroy her in order to hinder God's plans (Rev 12:13–14).
- b. God promises that Israel's judgement, suffering and discipline will come to an end (Isa 40:2). He promises that He will completely deliver her from her enemies (Zech 2:6–9, 14:3–5; Joel 3).

"I will also gather all nations, and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; and I will enter into judgement with them there on account of My people, My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations..." (Joel 3:2)
- c. Jesus, Israel's Messiah, will return, and the *"glory of Yehovah shall be revealed"* when He comes on the clouds (Isa 40:3–5; Dan 7:13–14; Matt 24:30).
 - i. *"All flesh"* (v5) will see the return of Jesus (Matt 24:30; Rev 1:7).
 - ii. He will defeat all of Israel's enemies (Rev 19:17–21), save His people, march into the land, and establish His rule and reign over nations from Jerusalem as Israel acknowledges her King and Messiah (Ps 118:26; Matt 23:39).
- d. Jesus will rule over Israel as the King (Isa 40:10–11). He will rule in strength (Ps 2:9; Rev 19:15–16) as the Shepherd who will feed Israel His people (Ezek 34:11–16; Matt 23:37).

C. Importance of the Message of Isaiah 40 to the Jewish People

1. The message of Isaiah 40 is a 2-fold exhortation to Israel. It is:
 - a. A message of hope in Jesus' return;
 - b. A message calling her to repentance back to God.
2. In their desolation, hardship and anguish, she will wonder if her God is absent or if she has been forsaken by Him (Isa 40:27, 62:4). They will be in desperate need of comfort and hope.
 - a. The message of Isaiah 40 will direct her to see His sovereignty over the earth and His omnipotence over nations. This will bring comfort to her and make her confident in Him.
 - b. It will also assure her that He has seen her plight, and will give strength and hope to those who continually put their trust in Him.
3. The message for Israel to find hope and comfort in God is a consistent theme throughout Scripture because He desires His people to look to Him as their source and foundation.
 - a. The Lord assured Joshua and Israel that He is the One who led them into the promised land (Deut 31:6,8; Josh 1:9).
 - b. King David found comfort, hope and confidence in God even as he was fleeing from his enemies (Ps 23:4, 27:1,13).
 - c. The Lord promises Israel true comfort and rest if she would turn away from her false comforts unto Him (Isa 30:15, 61:2–3; Zech 10:2).

4. Hearing this message, the Jewish people will recognise her sin and her need for spiritual salvation. Thereafter, they will repent and respond in alignment with their God, that the way of Jesus to return may be prepared (Isa 40:3–4).
 - a. The message of Isaiah 40 includes the call to humility, righteousness and holiness (Isa 40:3–4) — key attributes required for Israel to emerge as the Holy Seed (Isa 6:13).
 - b. Amid God's judgements, the message will go forth, causing many in Israel to be convicted of the weight of their sin and iniquity before God (Judg 10:10; Isa 59:1–14; Mk 1:4–5). Many will be directed to the place of repentance.
 - c. It is God's desire for the Jewish people to turn from every idol and to put their complete confidence in Him. This message will cause them to see the necessity of turning their trust away from worldly systems and leaders, and back to their God.
 - d. In addition, the call to humility and righteousness is aligned with God's preparation and refining of Israel to become the Holy Seed, that she may be a worthy vessel, partnering with Jesus to rule and reign in the Millennial Kingdom (Isa 6:11–13; Zech 13:9).

D. The Message in Isaiah 40

- a. Isaiah 40 is a message of assurance and comfort, with promises of God's deliverance, blessings, and restoration of His people and the land. The message is also a call for the Jewish people to repent and return to their God, in preparation of the coming Messiah.
- b. Isaiah 40:1–2 speaks of the call to comfort Jerusalem.
 - i. This message of comfort is a message of God's coming salvation upon the Jewish people. This involves both the physical and spiritual salvation of Israel.
 - ii. Physical salvation: He will deliver her from the hand of all her enemies (the Antichrist army, the nations which come against her, etc.).
 - Every conflict Israel is in will be resolved when Jesus returns to fight against her enemies, ending her warfare for all of eternity.
 - This message of comfort will cause the Jewish people to eagerly wait for Jesus' return and deliverance (Rom 8:25).
 - iii. Spiritual salvation: Through this message, the Jewish people will also recognise their sin and their need for a Saviour. This message will point them to Jesus as One who has made a way for spiritual reconciliation back to their God.
 - When they are convicted of their sin, the Isaiah 40 message also provides the answer by pointing them to Jesus, giving them comfort (Isa 40:1–2; Rom 7:21–25).
 - They will only be saved when they call upon the name of Jesus (Rom 11:26–27; Isa 66:8). It is only after they repent and call upon His name that their iniquity is pardoned (Isa 40:2).

- c. As Israel repents and returns to their God in Jesus, she will receive double honour and possessions as God restores His kingdom and rulership in Jerusalem.

“Instead of your shame you shall have double honor, and instead of confusion they shall rejoice in their portion. Therefore in their land they shall possess double; everlasting joy shall be theirs.” (Isaiah 61:7)

2. Isaiah 40:3–4 lays out a 5-fold message that God’s voices will speak.

- a. *“Make straight in the desert a highway for our God”*
Every resistance and mixture will be removed in the hearts of the Jewish people. This includes every resistance toward Jesus their Messiah.
- b. *“Every valley shall be exalted”*
Every emotional brokenness (i.e. fear, intimidation, inferiority) will be removed, and confidence in their King will be restored. As they encounter the Shepherd King and His leadership, it will give rise to confidence, trust and hope.
- c. *“Every mountain and hill shall be brought low”*
Every pride and haughty heart will be removed as Israel turns to humility, meekness and dependence on their God.
- d. *“The crooked places shall be made straight”*
Every wickedness will be removed, and truth will be restored. Israel will return to the ways and statutes of God (i.e. godly values, character, righteousness, justice).
- e. *“The rough places are made smooth”*
Every offence will be removed and hearts will be tenderised (Ezek 36:26).

3. Isaiah 40:10–11 lays out 7 expressions of who Jesus is and what He will do when He returns.

- a. *“His arm shall rule”*
He will rule over the entire earth and all kingdoms will be subject to Him (Rev 11:15).
- b. *“His reward”*
He will reward and vindicate the Jewish people (Ps 135:14).
- c. *“His work before Him”*
He will fully unveil and execute His glorious End-Time plan, bringing forth justice upon the innocent and the wicked alike (Ps 91:8; Jer 31:16)
- d. *“He will feed His flock”*
He will refresh and satisfy the Jewish people (Ps 23:1; Rev 7:17).
- e. *“He will gather the lambs”*
He will gather the remnant of Israel (Zech 14:2b; 1 Cor 15:51–53; 1 Thess 4:16–18).
- f. *“He will carry them in His bosom”*

He will cherish the Jewish people and treat them with great affection and tenderness.

- g. *“He will gently lead”*
He will bring the Jewish people back to the land of Jerusalem (Jer 30:3, 33:7, Joel 3:1).
- 4. Isaiah 40:6–8, 12–26 speaks of the call for Israel to remember His covenant and promises with them, and to behold the sovereignty of the Lord.
 - a. The Lord is calling them not to focus on the hardships that they are facing, but to see His promise that *“the word of our God stands forever”* (v8).
 - i. This word speaks of the certainty of victory, the coming deliverance, and the promises that He has given to His people that will surely come to pass at the End of the Age.
 - ii. Israel will emerge as the Holy Seed (Isa 6:13), a *“kingdom of priests and a holy nation”* (Ex 19:6), a menorah (light to the nations) (Isa 42:6), and a blessing to the nations (Gen 12:3).
 - iii. She will partner with Jesus to rule and reign over nations as the inaugural government during the 1,000-year Millennial Kingdom (Ex 19:5–6; Deut 7:6–7; 26:18–19).
 - iv. She will possess and inherit the fullness of the promised land when Jesus returns (Ezek 20:33–37, 40–42; Rev 21).
 - b. The prophet Isaiah also speaks of the greatness of God’s wisdom and sovereignty over the heavens and the earth, and His power that far surpasses nations and kingdoms (v12–26).
 - i. In essence, no one can compare to or prevail against the King of Israel; He is all-loving, all-powerful, and all-wise.
 - ii. He desires His people to lift up their eyes to see this King who is returning, that they may put their confidence in His unshakeable nature and plans, and find true comfort in Him (v26).
- 5. Isaiah 40:27–31 gives the ultimate key for God’s people to grow strength.
 - a. Israel will complain and cry out because they believe that their way is hidden from the Lord due to the injustice and hardships that they will face (v28). Israel will feel overlooked due to the pressures and crises that she will face as a nation.
 - b. The prophet Isaiah calls them to *“wait on Yehovah”* (v31). Those who wait on Him *“shall renew their strength... not be weary... and not faint.”* (v31).
 - c. The Lord is calling Israel to wait on Him, that they may find strength in Him amidst increasing darkness and seeming uncertainty. It is only when they wait on the Lord, take courage and put their hope in Him, that the Lord promises to grant them His supernatural strength within their hearts (Ps 27:13).

E. The Isaiah 40 Voices

1. A voice is a forerunner, running ahead of God's people to prepare the way for the coming of Christ (Isa 40:3; Matt 3:1–12).
 - a. God's pattern throughout Scripture is to use faithful vessels to speak forth His message to Israel.
 - b. Once again, He will raise up Isaiah 40 voices to speak to Israel before Jesus returns.
2. Voices proclaim God's word for the season, make sense of what is happening around the world by sharing God's perspective, and bring forth new understanding. Through these voices, God's heart is revealed to His people.
3. The Isaiah 40 voices will speak forth the message of comfort and hope in Isaiah 40 to Israel, pointing her to Jesus and calling her back to repentance.
4. John the Baptist was the voice who prepared the way for Jesus's first coming, and was a picture that foreshadows what the End-Time Isaiah 40 voices will look like.
5. John the Baptist is described as the "*voice of one crying in the wilderness*" (Matt 3:3; Mk 1:3; Isa 40:3), and as God's "*messenger... [who] will prepare the way before [Jesus]*." (Mal 3:1; Matt 11:10; Mk 1:2)
 - a. His call was to make the Jewish people ready for Jesus' First Coming (Lk 1:16–17; Matt 3:1–12). Similarly, the Isaiah 40 voices will make the Jewish people ready for Jesus' Second Coming.
 - b. John the Baptist was strong in the spirit and consumed with the kingdom of God (Lk 1:80; Matt 3:2, 11:12). He moved in the spirit and power of Elijah, which the Isaiah 40 voices will move in (Lk 1:17; Mal 4:5–6). His message was 2-fold (Matt 3:2):
 - i. "*Repent*" — He called the people of Israel to return to God in wholeheartedness (Lk 1:16). The Isaiah 40 voices will also call Israel to repentance in Jesus before He returns.
 - ii. "*For the kingdom is at hand*" — He also preached that the kingdom would come through Jesus. The Isaiah 40 voices will point Israel to King Jesus who will return to rule and shepherd the Jewish people, and restore the kingdom to Israel (Isa 40:10–11; Acts 1:6).
 - c. Just as John the Baptist went into the deserts until his manifestation to Israel (Lk 1:80; Matt 3:3–4), so will the Isaiah 40 voices be prepared in the wilderness.
 - i. The wilderness represents a season of hiddenness and isolation, when these voices will be transformed to become holy and mature by the work of the Spirit.
 - ii. It is in the wilderness that these voices know the heart of God, and grow to become authentic voices who speak with boldness and conviction. They will do so in the face of the same resistance which came against John the Baptist.

F. Conclusion

1. Isaiah 40 is a message of comfort to the Jewish people, describing the return, deliverance by and rule of their Messiah Jesus, whom they can put their hope in amid great turmoil.
2. It is a call to repent and return to their God through Jesus , and to put their complete confidence in Him, as He is sovereign and faithful to Israel.
3. The End-Time Isaiah 40 voices will arise to speak forth this message and call the Jewish people back to their God, that they may receive true comfort of the Lord.

G. Prayer Themes

1. In a time of increasing antisemitism and the coming reality of “*Jacob’s trouble*” (Jer 30:7), pray for the message of comfort in Isaiah 40 to run swiftly, directing the Jewish people to find their hope and comfort in their God (2 Thess 3:1,3,5).
 - a. Pray for the message of comfort to go forth like fire and like a hammer, marking the hearts of the Jewish people (Jer 23:29).
 - b. Pray for the promises of deliverance, of recompense and of receiving double honour and possessions to go forth swiftly to the Jewish people, that they may have hope.
 - c. Pray for them to be established in confidence and trust in the Lord, in His perfect leadership. Pray that they will look forward to the eventual deliverance through Jesus
 - d. Pray for the Lord to guard them from the work of the evil one, that every plan to direct them away from the comfort of God will be thwarted.
 - e. Pray for the God of patience and comfort to establish them and direct them into God’s comfort and longsuffering amid their desolation.
 - f. Pray for the God of hope to direct them to hope in Jesus and in His return, that this hope will sustain and strengthen them, especially through the Great Tribulation.
2. Pray for the opening of the eyes of the Jewish people to see that true comfort is only found in the God of Israel (Eph 1:17–18).
 - a. Pray for revelation that every other alternative comfort of the world, especially that of the Antichrist, is counterfeit and will not last.
 - b. Pray for revelation that true comfort can only be found in knowing the nature, plans, promises and acts of their God.
 - c. Pray for revelation and understanding of God’s End-Time redemptive plan, and that they will be reminded of every promise God has for Israel in the Millennial Kingdom, that will grant them hope, peace and joy amid their suffering (Eph 1:18).

- d. Pray for the call to repentance in Isaiah 40 to run swiftly, directing the Jewish people unto true repentance and returning to their God in Jesus (2 Thess 3:1,5).
- 3. Pray for the call to repentance to go forth with conviction, cutting the hearts of the Jewish people unto seeing the need for repentance (Acts 2:37).
 - a. Pray that as they hear the call to repent, for an opening of eyes to see their own sin and iniquity, and their need of a Saviour to bring spiritual salvation (Eph 1:18).
 - b. Pray for them to be directed into the hope they can have in Jesus, the Lamb that takes away their sins, by whom their iniquities are pardoned.
 - c. Pray for those in worldly sorrow to be directed to godly sorrow, that will produce repentance unto salvation and desire for their God (2 Cor 7:10–11).
 - d. Pray that the repentance of the Jewish people that will lead to a wholehearted returning to the Lord their God (Joel 2:12).
- 4. Pray for the Jewish people to see God's heart behind His judgements and discipline through nations that will give rise to humility and repentance.
 - a. Pray for them to see that His judgements are out of His heart of love for them and zeal for their fullness.
 - b. Pray for this realisation to bring them to a place of humility before their God.
- 5. Pray for God's work of restoration and dealing with the hearts of the Jewish people (Isa 40:3–4), that the way of Jesus may be prepared.
 - a. Pray for the removal of every resistance and mixture in the hearts of the people, and for Israel to fully understand and agree with God's perfect will and plan for them.
 - b. Pray for the restoration of emotional strength, especially among the broken-hearted and weak, through confidence in their coming Shepherd King.
 - c. Pray for the removal of every pride and haughtiness in the hearts of the Jewish people, and for the forming and forging of humility, meekness and dependence on their God.
 - d. Pray for God to deal with the pride of the governmental and spiritual leaders of Israel, that they may be directed to humility.
 - e. Pray for the purging of wickedness and perversion of truth, and for God to re-establish His truth, righteousness, and justice back in the laws of the land and in the hearts of people.
 - f. Pray for God to deal with every injustice among the governmental and spiritual leaders of Israel, and for the restoration of compassion and lifting up of the weak and broken under them (Ezek 34).

- g. Pray for the removal of every offence before their God, and for God to turn hearts of stone into hearts of flesh for those who repent (Ezek 36:26).
- 6. Pray for the Jewish people to receive revelation of Jesus as Yeshua Hamashiach, their King, Shepherd and Messiah (Eph 1:17; Isa 40:10–11).
 - a. Pray for them to realise that it is Jesus who is their Messiah and King who will deliver them and bring an end to their warfare and tribulation.
 - b. Pray for eyes to see the coming Judge who will reward and vindicate His people, and come against all nations who come against her.
 - c. Pray for eyes to see that Jesus is the returning King who will rule the entire earth, release His glory, restore the promised land, and establish His throne forever in Jerusalem.
 - d. Pray for eyes to see that Jesus is the tender Shepherd who will gather the remnant of Israel back to Jerusalem, care for them with great affection and kindness, and lead them into their fullness.
- 7. Pray for revelation of God's faithfulness, wisdom and sovereignty, that Israel may find stability and strength in the knowledge of who He is (Isa 33:6).
 - a. Pray for the turning of many eyes unto beholding their God (Isa 40:9).
 - b. In their hopelessness and despair, pray for the Jewish people to be reminded of God's faithfulness, and to see that His promises of deliverance and destiny endure, that they may have hope (Isa 40:8).
 - c. Pray for revelation of the wisdom, counsel and understanding of their God and Creator, that they may put their complete trust in Him and His plan to bring forth justice (Isa 40:12–14).
 - d. Pray for revelation that the sovereign God of Israel is mightier than the nations of the earth that come against Israel, that she may be assured and confident in His mighty hand and outstretched arm to deliver her (Isa 40:15–17).
 - e. Pray for the Jewish people to see the temporality of evil leaders and the eternity of God who made the foundations of the earth (Isa 40:21–24).
 - f. Pray for revelation of the God who sees their plight and condition, and has not forsaken them, but will strengthen them in due time (Isa 40:27–29)
 - g. Pray for them to be directed to the posture of waiting and hoping in the Lord, by which their strength will be renewed (Isa 40:31).
 - h. Pray for God to give supernatural strength and stability — spiritual, physical and emotional strength — to those who put their trust in Him (Isa 40:31).
- 8. Pray for the raising up of Isaiah 40 voices amongst the Jewish people and the Gentile Church who will speak comfort to their brethren.

- a. Pray for the maturing of these Jewish voices, that will speak forth the Isaiah 40 message with authenticity, wisdom and authority.
- b. Pray for these voices to be prepared, strengthened and perfected in the wilderness, that they may arise walking worthy of God's call for them (Col 1:10; 1 Pet 5:10).
- c. Pray for the voices themselves to encounter God's heart from Isaiah 40, that they will be consumed with the message and strengthened at the place of waiting on the Lord.
- d. Pray for voices to arise in the pattern of John the Baptist, strong in the spirit and consumed with God's kingdom, who will live simply for themselves.
- e. Pray for these voices to be anointed with the spirit and power of Elijah, that they will call Israel back to her God with great power (Lk 1:80).
- f. Pray for these voices to be equipped with boldness and courage to speak forth the message, even amid resistance and persecution.
- g. Pray that through the speaking forth of these voices, many Jewish people will come to the place of repentance and hope in the coming of Jesus.