

A BETTER KING, SERVANT, CONQUEROR

The Book of Isaiah

Isaiah 40:1—41:20

Verse to Remember

Do you not know?

Have you not heard?

*The LORD is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He will not grow tired or weary,
and his understanding no one can
fathom. Isaiah 40:28*

Context

We have seen the LORD “put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the Assyrian camp” and eliminate Judah’s enemy Sennacherib, the King of Assyria (Is. 37:36–38). There was to be “peace and security” in Hezekiah’s lifetime, but Isaiah forewarned him that a time would come when Hezekiah’s descendants and wealth would be carried away into exile in Babylon (Is. 39:5–8). Jerusalem finally fell to Babylon in 586 B.C., a hundred years after Hezekiah’s death (2 Kgs. 24:10–25:12). In today’s passage, Isaiah prophetically sees God’s people in exile and addresses their need for comfort.¹ Isaiah does not live to physically see his people go into captivity, so his prophetic words are even more profound, in that they reveal the everlasting character of God who knows “from ancient times, what is still to come” (Is. 46:10).

This week we begin a new section of Isaiah called **“The Book of the Servant” (chapters 40–55).**

As you read, be on the lookout for Isaiah’s many references to a servant.

Read Daniel 1:1–7


to get an idea of what it would have been like to go into exile. Imagine the people’s need for comfort. Then think of your own need for comfort.

Day 1 — “Sovereign LORD”

(Is. 40:10a)

Read Isaiah 40:1–11.

God pronounces that Jerusalem’s sin “has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD’s hand double for all her sins” (Is. 40:2). This means that God’s people have “suffered sufficiently”² for their sins—and now their time of punishment is past. As sinners, however, the people of Israel could never ultimately atone for their sin. True and complete atonement can come only through the sacrifice of Christ, the sinless Suffering Servant we will read about in chapter 53.

1. Why at this point is God calling for comfort for his people? (Is. 40:2; Jer. 29:10;  * 2 Chr. 36:15–21; Ps. 137)

2. God’s revelation of himself brings comfort to his people. Fill in the chart below.

Verses	What does God reveal about himself?	How does this bring comfort?
Is. 40:4–5		
Is. 40:7–8		
Is. 40:9–11	(Look for two contrasting images.)	

Which one of these is especially comforting to you? Why?

Isaiah 40:3 is a call for God's people to prepare the way for the arrival of a great King. God wants his people to be ready for the glory of God to be revealed through this coming great King. Read John 1:6–7, 19–36 to see how John the Baptist fulfills this prophecy as the voice in the desert.³

Day 2 — “The Holy One”

(Is. 40:25b)

Read Isaiah 40:12–26.

1. What does God continue to reveal about himself through the questions in 40:12–14?

2. To what does God compare the nations in 40:15–17, 22–24? (Compare Is. 40:6–8.)

What do these comparisons say about the nations?

3. Why do you think it is important to remember who the nations are in comparison to God?

4. What is the point of 40:18–20 and 25–26? (📖 Hab. 2:18–20)

Day 3 — “The Everlasting God”

(Is. 40:28b)

Read Isaiah 40:27–31.

Previously “Israel” referred to the northern kingdom and “Judah” referred to the southern kingdom. From here on out, Isaiah will primarily use the names “Jacob” and “Israel” when speaking about the remnant of God’s people.

1. What are God’s people in exile complaining about? (Is. 40:27)



2. What does Isaiah want us and his people to know, hear, and understand about God? (Is. 40:28–31)


Why are these truths so comforting to a weary soul?

Day 4 — “I, the Lord – with the first...with the last – I am he.”

(Is. 41:4b)

Read Isaiah 41:1–10.

Isaiah 41:2–3 describes the “one from the east” whom God will use to bring his people home. At this time, Isaiah does not name him, but as Isaiah unfolds the future to his people, he will be identified as Cyrus (Is. 45:1), the ruler of the Persian Empire.⁴

1. In Isaiah 41:1, God summons the Gentile islands and nations surrounding Israel to his court to put them on trial before he executes judgment through Cyrus. This dialogue he holds with them will be picked up again in Isaiah 41:21.⁵
 - a. What does God want the nations to know about him? (Is. 41:4;  Is. 44:6; Rev. 22:13)
 - b. How will the nations respond to Cyrus (“one from the east”), the one whom God will use to judge them (Is. 41:2a)? (Is. 41:5–7)
2. How does God comfort Israel even though another Gentile king is coming who will rule over them? (Is. 41:8–10)

Day 5 — “Your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel”

(Is. 41:14b)

Read Isaiah 41:11–20

1. What promise does God give his weary people in verses 11–14?
2. Why do you think God calls his people “worm” and “little” while he is trying to comfort them?

How will the “worm” be transformed in God’s hands? (Is. 41:15–16a)

How will the people respond to this transformation? (Is. 41:16b)

3. What will God create in the desert for his “poor and needy” people (v. 17)? (Is. 41:17b–19)

What will these miraculous works bring about in his people? (Is. 41:20)

Review the lesson.

My take-away from this lesson is:

*The 📖 symbol indicates verses for further study.

¹ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Comforted: Feeling Secure in the Arms of God* (Colorado Springs, CO.: David C. Cook, 1992), 125-126.

² Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, Volume 3 Chapters 40-66 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2001), 23.

³ Ibid., 28-29.

⁴ Ibid., 75.

⁵ J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 308-309.