

Isaiah's Prophecy to Judah—Book of Comfort, Part 1 (c. 689 BC)

Isaiah 40:1–42:17

Comfort Ye My People

40:1 “Comfort, O comfort My people,” says your God.

2 “Speak kindly to Jerusalem;

And call out to her, that her warfare has ended,
That her iniquity has been removed,
That she has received of the LORD's hand
Double for all her sins.”

3 A voice is calling,

“Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness;

Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God. [[Matt 3:3; Mark 1:3; John 1:23](#)]

4 “Let every valley be lifted up,

And every mountain and hill be made low;
And let the rough ground become a plain,
And the rugged terrain a broad valley;

5 Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed,

And all flesh will see *it* together;

For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.” [[Luke 3:4–6](#)]

6 A voice says, “Call out.”

Then he answered, “What shall I call out?”

All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field.

7 The grass withers, the flower fades,

When the breath of the LORD blows upon it;

Surely the people are grass.

8 The grass withers, the flower fades,

But the word of our God stands forever. [[1 Pet 1:24–25](#)]

9 Get yourself up on a high mountain,

O Zion, bearer of good news,

Lift up your voice mightily,

O Jerusalem, bearer of good news;

Lift *it* up, do not fear.

Say to the cities of Judah,

“Here is your God!”

10 Behold, the Lord GOD will come with might,

With His arm ruling for Him.

Behold, His reward is with Him

And His recompense before Him.

11 Like a shepherd He will tend His flock,

In His arm He will gather the lambs

And carry *them* in His bosom;

He will gently lead the nursing *ewes*.

There Is No God Like Yahweh

12 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand,

And marked off the heavens by the span,

And calculated the dust of the earth by the measure,

And weighed the mountains in a balance

And the hills in a pair of scales?

- 13 Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD,
Or as His counselor has informed Him? [[Rom 11:33–34](#); [1 Cor 2:15–16](#)]
- 14 With whom did He consult and *who* gave Him understanding?
And *who* taught Him in the path of justice and taught Him knowledge
And informed Him of the way of understanding?
- 15 Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket,
And are regarded as a speck of dust on the scales;
Behold, He lifts up the islands like fine dust.
- 16 Even Lebanon is not enough to burn,
Nor its beasts enough for a burnt offering.
- 17 All the nations are as nothing before Him,
They are regarded by Him as less than nothing and meaningless.
- 18 To whom then will you liken God?
Or what likeness will you compare with Him?
- 19 *As for* the idol, a craftsman casts it,
A goldsmith plates it with gold,
And a silversmith *fashions* chains of silver.
- 20 He who is too impoverished for *such* an offering
Selects a tree that does not rot;
He seeks out for himself a skillful craftsman
To prepare an idol that will not totter.

God Is in Control of the Heavens and the Earth

- 21 Do you not know? Have you not heard?
Has it not been declared to you from the beginning?
Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?
- 22 It is He who sits above the circle of the earth,
And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers,
Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain
And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.
- 23 He *it is* who reduces rulers to nothing,
Who makes the judges of the earth meaningless.
- 24 Scarcely have they been planted,
Scarcely have they been sown,
Scarcely has their stock taken root in the earth,
But He merely blows on them, and they wither,
And the storm carries them away like stubble.
- 25 “To whom then will you liken Me
That I would be *his* equal?” says the Holy One.
- 26 Lift up your eyes on high
And see who has created these *stars*,
The One who leads forth their host by number,
He calls them all by name;
Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of *His* power,
Not one *of them* is missing.

God Will Strengthen His People

- 27 Why do you say, O Jacob, and assert, O Israel,

“My way is hidden from the LORD,
And the justice due me escapes the notice of my God”?

- 28 Do you not know? Have you not heard?
The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth
Does not become weary or tired.
His understanding is inscrutable.
- 29 He gives strength to the weary,
And to *him who* lacks might He increases power.
- 30 Though youths grow weary and tired,
And vigorous young men stumble badly,
- 31 Yet those who wait for the LORD
Will gain new strength;
They will mount up *with* wings like eagles,
They will run and not get tired,
They will walk and not become weary.

God’s Work Terrifies Idolaters

- 41:1 “Coastlands, listen to Me in silence,
And let the peoples gain new strength;
Let them come forward, then let them speak;
Let us come together for judgment.
- 2 “Who has aroused one from the east
Whom He calls in righteousness to His feet?
He delivers up nations before him
And subdues kings.
He makes them like dust with his sword,
As the wind-driven chaff with his bow.
- 3 “He pursues them, passing on in safety,
By a way he had not been traversing with his feet.
- 4 “Who has performed and accomplished *it*,
Calling forth the generations from the beginning?
‘I, the LORD, am the first, and with the last. I am He.’”
- 5 The coastlands have seen and are afraid;
The ends of the earth tremble;
They have drawn near and have come.
- 6 Each one helps his neighbor
And says to his brother, “Be strong!”
- 7 So the craftsman encourages the smelter,
And he who smooths *metal* with the hammer *encourages* him who beats the anvil,
Saying of the soldering, “It is good”;
And he fastens it with nails,
So that it will not totter.

Israel Need Not Fear—Yahweh is Their God!

- 8 “But you, Israel, My servant,
Jacob whom I have chosen,
Descendant of Abraham My friend,
- 9 You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth,
And called from its remotest parts

- And said to you, 'You are My servant,
I have chosen you and not rejected you.
- 10 'Do not fear, for I am with you;
Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you, surely I will help you,
Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'
- 11 "Behold, all those who are angered at you will be shamed and dishonored;
Those who contend with you will be as nothing and will perish.
- 12 "You will seek those who quarrel with you, but will not find them,
Those who war with you will be as nothing and non-existent.
- 13 "For I am the LORD your God, who upholds your right hand,
Who says to you, 'Do not fear, I will help you.'
- 14 "Do not fear, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel;
I will help you," declares the LORD, "and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel.
- 15 "Behold, I have made you a new, sharp threshing sledge with double edges;
You will thresh the mountains and pulverize *them*,
And will make the hills like chaff.
- 16 "You will winnow them, and the wind will carry them away,
And the storm will scatter them;
But you will rejoice in the LORD,
You will glory in the Holy One of Israel.

God Will Meet Every Need

- 17 "The afflicted and needy are seeking water, but there is none,
And their tongue is parched with thirst;
I, the LORD, will answer them Myself,
As the God of Israel I will not forsake them.
- 18 "I will open rivers on the bare heights
And springs in the midst of the valleys;
I will make the wilderness a pool of water
And the dry land fountains of water.
- 19 "I will put the cedar in the wilderness,
The acacia and the myrtle and the olive tree;
I will place the juniper in the desert
Together with the box tree and the cypress,
- 20 That they may see and recognize,
And consider and gain insight as well,
That the hand of the LORD has done this,
And the Holy One of Israel has created it.

God Challenges the Idols to Predict the Future

- 21 "Present your case," the LORD says.
"Bring forward your strong *arguments*,"
The King of Jacob says.
- 22 Let them bring forth and declare to us what is going to take place;
As for the former *events*, declare what they *were*,
That we may consider them and know their outcome.
Or announce to us what is coming;
- 23 Declare the things that are going to come afterward,

- That we may know that you are gods;
Indeed, do good or evil, that we may anxiously look about us and fear together.
- 24 Behold, you are of no account,
And your work amounts to nothing;
He who chooses you is an abomination.
- 25 “I have aroused one from the north, and he has come;
From the rising of the sun he will call on My name;
And he will come upon rulers as *upon* mortar,
Even as the potter treads clay.”
- 26 Who has declared *this* from the beginning, that we might know?
Or from former times, that we may say, “*He is right!*”?
Surely there was no one who declared,
Surely there was no one who proclaimed,
Surely there was no one who heard your words.
- 27 “Formerly *I said* to Zion, ‘Behold, here they are.’
And to Jerusalem, ‘I will give a messenger of good news.’
- 28 “But when I look, there is no one,
And there is no counselor among them
Who, if I ask, can give an answer.
- 29 “Behold, all of them are false;
Their works are worthless,
Their molten images are wind and emptiness.

The Ministry of the Messiah

- 42:1 “Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold;
My chosen one *in whom* My soul delights.
I have put My Spirit upon Him;
He will bring forth justice to the nations.
- 2 “He will not cry out or raise *His voice*,
Nor make His voice heard in the street.
- 3 “A bruised reed He will not break
And a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish;
He will faithfully bring forth justice.
- 4 “He will not be disheartened or crushed
Until He has established justice in the earth;
And the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law.” [\[Matt 12:15–21\]](#)
- 5 Thus says God the LORD,

Who created the heavens and stretched them out,
Who spread out the earth and its offspring,
Who gives breath to the people on it
And spirit to those who walk in it,
- 6 “I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness,
I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you,
And I will appoint you as a covenant to the people,
As a light to the nations,
- 7 To open blind eyes,
To bring out prisoners from the dungeon

And those who dwell in darkness from the prison.

- 8 “I am the LORD, that is My name;
I will not give My glory to another,
Nor My praise to graven images.
- 9 “Behold, the former things have come to pass,
Now I declare new things;
Before they spring forth I proclaim *them* to you.”

A Hymn of Praise

- 10 Sing to the LORD a new song,
Sing His praise from the end of the earth!
You who go down to the sea, and all that is in it.
You islands, and those who dwell on them.
- 11 Let the wilderness and its cities lift up *their voices*,
The settlements where Kedar inhabits.
Let the inhabitants of Sela sing aloud,
Let them shout for joy from the tops of the mountains.
- 12 Let them give glory to the LORD
And declare His praise in the coastlands.

God the Mighty Warrior

- 13 The LORD will go forth like a warrior,
He will arouse *His* zeal like a man of war.
He will utter a shout, yes, He will raise a war cry.
He will prevail against His enemies.
- 14 “I have kept silent for a long time,
I have kept still and restrained Myself.
Now like a woman in labor I will groan,
I will both gasp and pant.
- 15 “I will lay waste the mountains and hills
And wither all their vegetation;
I will make the rivers into coastlands
And dry up the ponds.
- 16 “I will lead the blind by a way they do not know,
In paths they do not know I will guide them.
I will make darkness into light before them
And rugged places into plains.
These are the things I will do,
And I will not leave them undone.”
- 17 They will be turned back *and* be utterly put to shame,
Who trust in idols,
Who say to molten images,
“You are our gods.”