

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

Isaiah 40:1–43:13

Comfort Ye My People

40:1 "Comfort; comfort my people," says your God.

2 "Speak to the heart of Jerusalem, and call to her,
that her compulsory labor is fulfilled, that her sin is paid for,
that she has received from the hand of Yahweh double for all her sins."

3 A voice *is* calling in the wilderness, "Clear the way of Yahweh!
Make a highway smooth in the desert for our God! [[Matt 3:3](#); [Mark 1:3](#); [John 1:23](#)]

4 Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill shall become low,
And the rough ground shall be like a plain,
and the rugged ground like a valley-plain.

5 And the glory of Yahweh shall be revealed,
and all humankind together shall see *it*,

for the mouth of Yahweh has spoken." [[Luke 3:4–6](#)]

6 A voice *is* saying, "Call!"
And he said, "What shall I call?"
All humankind *are* grass,
and all his loyalty *is* like the flowers of the field.

7 Grass withers; *the* flower withers
when the breath of Yahweh blows on it.
Surely the people *are* grass.

8 Grass withers; *the* flower withers,
but the word of our God will stand forever. [[1 Pet 1:24–25](#)]

9 Get yourself up to a high mountain, Zion, bringer of good news!
Lift up your voice with strength, Jerusalem, bringer of good news!
Lift *it* up; you must not fear!
Say to the cities of Judah, "Here *is* your God!"

10 Look! The Lord Yahweh comes with strength,
and his arm rules for him.
Look! His reward *is* with him,
and his recompense in his presence.

11 He will feed his flock like a shepherd;
he will gather *the* lambs in his arm,
and he will carry *them* in his bosom;
he will lead those who nurse.

There Is No God Like Yahweh

12 Who has measured *the* waters in the hollow of his hand
and marked off *the* heavens with *a* span,
comprehended the dust of the earth in *a* third of a measure
and weighed out *the* mountains in the scales, and *the* hills in a balance?

13 Who has measured up the spirit of Yahweh
or informed him *as* his counselor? [[Rom 11:33–34](#); [1 Cor 2:15–16](#)]

14 With whom has he consulted, that he enlightened him
and taught him *the* path of justice,
and taught him knowledge,
and made *the* way of understanding known to him?

15 Look! *The* nations *are* like a drop from a bucket,
and they are counted like dust of *the* balances!
Look! He weighs *the* islands like a thin covering.

16 And Lebanon *is* not enough to light a fire,
and its animals not enough for a burnt offering.

17 All the nations *are* like nothing before him;
they are counted by him as nothing and emptiness.

- 18 And to whom will you liken God?
And to what likeness will you compare him?
- 19 A craftsman pours out the idol,
and a goldsmith overlays it with gold,
and *he* smelts chains of silver.
- 20 The one who is *too* impoverished *for* a gift chooses wood *that* will not rot;
he seeks a skillful artisan for himself to set up an image *that* will not be knocked over.

God is in Control of the Heavens and the Earth

- 21 Have you not known?
Have you not heard?
Has it not been told to you from *the* beginning?
Have you not understood *from* the foundation of the earth?
- 22 *He is* the one who sits above the circle of the earth,
and its inhabitants *are* like grasshoppers;
the one who stretches out *the* heavens like a veil
and spreads them out like *a* tent to live *in*,
- 23 the one who brings princes to nothing;
he makes rulers of *the* earth like nothing.
- 24 Indeed, hardly are they planted; indeed, hardly *are they* sown;
indeed, hardly has their shoot taken root in the earth
when he blows on them and they wither,
and *the* tempest carries them like stubble.
- 25 “And to whom you will compare me, and am I equal?” says *the* holy one.
- 26 Lift your eyes up *on* high, and see! Who created these?
The one who brings out their host by number.
He calls all them by name.
Because *he is* great of power
and mighty of power, no man is missing.

God Will Strengthen His People

- 27 Why do you say, Jacob,
and you speak, Israel,
“My way is hidden from Yahweh,
and my judgment is passed over by my God?”
- 28 Have you not known,
or have you not heard?
Yahweh *is* the God of eternity,
the creator *of* the ends of the earth!
He is not faint, and he does not grow weary!
There is no searching his understanding.
- 29 *He* gives power to the weary,
and he increases power for the powerless.
- 30 Even young people will be faint and grow weary,
and *the* young will stumble, exhausted.
- 31 But those who wait for Yahweh shall renew *their* strength.
They shall go up *with* wings like eagles;
they shall run and not grow weary;
they shall walk and not be faint.

God’s Work Terrifies Idolaters

- 41:1 Listen to me in silence, coastlands,
and let nations renew *their* strength.
Let them approach, then let them speak;
let us draw near together for judgment.
- 2 Who has roused salvation from the east,

summoned him to his foot,
gives nations in his presence,
and subjugates kings?
He makes *them* like the dust *with* his sword,
like scattered stubble *with* his bow.

- 3 He pursues them *and* passes on *in* peace;
he does not enter *the* path with his feet.
- 4 Who has accomplished and done *this*,
calling the generations from *the* beginning?
I, Yahweh, *am* first;
and I *am* the one with *the* last.
- 5 *The* coastlands have seen and are afraid;
the ends of the earth tremble.
They have drawn near,
and they have come.
- 6 Each one helps his neighbor;
he says to his brother, "Take courage!"
- 7 And *the* artisan encourages *the* goldsmith,
the one who makes smooth with *the* hammer *encourages the* one who strikes *the* anvil,
saying of the soldering, "It is good!"
And they strengthen it with nails so it cannot be knocked over.

Israel Need Not Fear—Yahweh is Their God!

- 8 But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen,
you, the offspring of Abraham my friend,
- 9 you whom I grasped from the ends of the earth
and called from its remotest parts
and told, "You *are* my servant;
I have chosen you and I have not rejected you."
- 10 You must not fear, for I *am* with you;
you must not be afraid, for I *am* your God.
I will strengthen you, indeed I will help you
indeed I will take hold of you with the right hand of my salvation.
- 11 Look! All those who are angry with you shall be ashamed and humiliated;
your opponents shall be like nothing and shall become lost.
- 12 You shall seek them,
but you shall not find them;
your opponents shall be like nothing,
and the men of your war like nothing.
- 13 For I, Yahweh your God, *am* grasping your right hand;
it is I who say to you,
"You must not fear;
I myself, I will help you.
- 14 You must not fear, O worm of Jacob;
people of Israel,
I myself, I will help you," declares Yahweh,
"and your redeemer *is* the holy one of Israel.
- 15 Look! I will make you into a new sharp threshing sledge,
with sharp edges.
You shall thresh and crush *the* mountains,
and you shall make *the* hills like chaff.
- 16 You shall winnow them and *the* wind shall carry them,
and *the* tempest shall scatter them.
And you yourself shall rejoice in Yahweh;
you shall boast in the holy one of Israel.

God Will Meet Every Need

- 17 The poor and the needy *are* seeking water and *there is* none;
their tongue is dried up with thirst.
I, Yahweh, will answer them;
I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them.
- 18 I will open rivers on *the* barren heights
and fountains in *the* midst of *the* valleys.
I will make *the* wilderness like a pool of water
and *the* land of dryness like springs of water.
- 19 I will put *the* cedar, acacia, myrtle, and olive oil tree in the wilderness;
I will set *the* cypress, elm, and box tree together in the desert
- 20 so that they may see and know,
and take to heart and understand together
that the hand of Yahweh has done this,
and the holy one of Israel has created it.”

God Challenges the Idols to Predict the Future

- 21 “Present your legal case,” says Yahweh.
“Bring your evidence,” says the king of Jacob.
- 22 Let them bring *them*,
and let them tell us what will happen.
Tell us what the former things *are*
so that we may take *them* to our heart
and know their outcome.
Declare to us the things to come;
- 23 tell *us* the things coming hereafter,
that we may know that you *are* gods.
Indeed, do good or do evil,
that we may be afraid and see together.
- 24 Look! you *are* nothing,
and your work *is* something worthless;
whoever chooses you *is* an abomination.
- 25 I stirred up *one* from *the* north,
and he has come from *the* rising of the sun.

He shall call on my name,

and he shall come *on* officials as *on* mortar,
and as *the* potter treads clay.

- 26 Who declared *it* from *the* beginning so that we might know,
and beforehand so that we might say, “*He is* right!”
Indeed, there was no one who declared *it*;
Indeed, there was no one who proclaimed *it*.
Indeed there was no one who heard your words.

27 First to Zion, look! Look at them!

And I give a herald of good tidings to Jerusalem.

- 28 But I look and there is no man,
and *I* look among these and there is no counselor,
that I might ask them and they might answer a word.
- 29 Look! All of them *are* deception;
their works *are* nothing;
their images *are* wind and emptiness.

The Ministry of the Messiah

- 42:1 Look! *here is* my servant; I hold him,
my chosen one, *in whom* my soul delights.
I have put my spirit on him;
he will bring justice forth to the nations.
- 2 He will not cry out and lift up
and make his voice heard in the street.
- 3 He will not break a broken reed,
and he not will extinguish a dim wick.
He will bring justice forth in faithfulness.
- 4 He will not grow faint,
and he will not be broken
until he has established justice in the earth.
And *the* coastlands wait for his teaching. [[Matt 12:15–21](#)]
- 5 Thus says the God, Yahweh,
who created the heavens
and stretched them out,
who spread out the earth and its offspring,
who gives breath to the people upon it
and spirit to those who walk in it.
- 6 “*I am* Yahweh; I have called you in righteousness,
and I have grasped your hand and watched over you;
and I have given you as a covenant of *the* people,
as a light of *the* nations,
- 7 to open *the* blind eyes,
to bring *the* prisoner out from *the* dungeon,
those who sit *in* darkness from *the* house of imprisonment.
- 8 *I am* Yahweh; that *is* my name,

and I do not give my glory to another,
nor my praise to the idols.
- 9 Look! the former things have come,
and I declare new things.
I announce *them* to you before they sprout up.”

A Hymn of Praise

- 10 Sing a new song to Yahweh;
praise him from the end of the earth,
you who go down *to* the sea and that which fills it,
the coastlands and their inhabitants.
- 11 Let *the* desert and its towns lift up their voice,
the villages *that* Kedar inhabits.
Let the inhabitants of Sela sing for joy;
let them shout loudly from *the* top of *the* mountains.
- 12 Let them give glory to Yahweh
and declare his praise in the coastlands.

God, the Mighty Warrior

- 13 Yahweh goes forth like a mighty warrior;
he stirs up zeal like a man of war.
He raises the war cry, indeed he raises the battle shout;
he prevails against his foes.
- 14 I have been silent for a long time;
I have kept silent;
I have restrained myself like one giving birth;
I will moan, pant, and gasp together.
- 15 I will cause mountains and hills to dry up,

and I will cause all their herbage to wither;
and I will make rivers like islands,
and I will cause pools to dry up.

- 16 And I will lead the blind by a road they do not know;
I will cause *them* to tread on paths they have not known.
I will make darkness in their presence into light
and rough places into level ground.
These *are* the things I will do,
and I will not forsake them.
- 17 They shall turn back;
they shall be greatly ashamed,
those who trust in an image,
who say to a cast image, “You *are* our gods.”

Israel’s Failure to See and Hear

- 18 Deaf people, listen!
And blind people, look to see!
- 19 Who *is* blind but my servant
or deaf like my messenger *whom* I sent?
Who *is* blind like the one who is repaid
or blind like the servant of Yahweh?
- 20 You see many *things*, but you do not observe.
His ears are open, but he does not hear.
- 21 Yahweh was willing for the sake of his righteousness;
he showed *his* teaching to be great and proved *it* to be glorious.
- 22 But this *is* a people plundered and looted; all of them are trapped in holes,
and they are kept hidden in houses of imprisonment.
They have become like plunder, and there is no one who saves;
like booty, and there is no one who says, “Restore!”
- 23 Who among you will heed this,
will listen attentively and listen, for the time to come?
- 24 Who gave Jacob to a plunderer
and Israel to those who plunder?

Was it not Yahweh, against whom we have sinned?

And they were not willing to walk in his ways,
and they would not obey his law.

- 25 So he poured *the* wrath of his anger upon him
and *the* strength of war.
And it set him afire all around, but he did not understand;
and it burned him, but he did not take *it* to heart.

God’s Love for Israel—He Will Save Them

43:1 But now thus says Yahweh,

he who created you, Jacob,
and he who formed you, Israel:
“You must not fear, for I have redeemed you.
I have called *you* by your name; you are mine.

- 2 When you pass through the waters, I *will be* with you,
and through the rivers, they shall not flow over you.
When you walk through fire, you shall not be burned,
and *the* flame shall not scorch you.
- 3 For I *am* Yahweh, your God,
the holy one of Israel, your savior.
I give you Egypt *as* ransom,
Cush and Seba in place of you.

- 4 Because you are precious in my eyes,
you are honored, and I myself love you,
and I give people in place of you,
and nations in place of your life.
- 5 You must not fear,
for I *am* with you.
I will bring your offspring from *the* east,
and I will gather you from *the* west.
- 6 I will say to the north, 'Give!'
and to *the* south, 'You must not withhold!'
Bring my sons from far away,
and my daughters from the end of the earth—
- 7 everyone who is called by my name,
and whom I created for my glory,
whom I formed,
indeed whom I made."

The Courtroom—You Are My Witnesses

- 8 Bring out *the* people blind yet with eyes,
and deaf, though they have ears.
- 9 Let all the nations gather together,
and let *the* peoples assemble.
Who among them has declared this,
and declared *the* former things to us?
Let them bring their witnesses, that they may be in the right,
and let them hear and say, "*It is true!*"
- 10 "You *are* my witnesses," declares Yahweh,
"and my servant whom I have chosen
so that you may know and believe in me
and understand that I *am* he.
No god was formed before me,
and none shall be after me.
- 11 I myself *am* Yahweh,
and there is no savior besides me!
- 12 I myself declared and saved,
and I proclaimed. And there was no strange god among you.
And you *are* my witnesses," declares Yahweh,
"and I *am* God.
- 13 Indeed, from *this* day I *am* the one,
and no one can deliver from my hand.
I perform, and who can cancel it?"

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