

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 kindly to Jerusalem, and tell her
that her time of warfare is over,
that her punishment is completed.
For the LORD has made her pay double for all her sins."
- 3 A voice cries out,
"In the wilderness clear a way for the LORD;
construct in the desert a road for our God. [[Matt 3:3](#); [Mark 1:3](#); [John 1:23](#)]"
- 4 Every valley must be elevated,
and every mountain and hill leveled.
The rough terrain will become a level plain,
the rugged landscape a wide valley.
- 5 The splendor of the LORD will be revealed,
and all people will see it at the same time.
For the LORD has decreed it." [[Luke 3:4–6](#)]"
- 6 A voice says, "Cry out!"
Another asks, "What should I cry out?"
The first voice responds: "All people are like grass,
and all their promises are like the flowers in the field.
- 7 The grass dries up,
the flowers wither,
when the wind sent by the LORD blows on them.
Surely humanity is like grass.
- 8 The grass dries up,
the flowers wither,
but the decree of our God is forever reliable." [[1 Pet 1:24–25](#)]"
- 9 Go up on a high mountain, O herald Zion!
Shout out loudly, O herald Jerusalem!
Shout, don't be afraid!
Say to the towns of Judah,
"Here is your God!"
- 10 Look, the sovereign LORD comes as a victorious warrior;
his military power establishes his rule.
Look, his reward is with him;
his prize goes before him.
- 11 Like a shepherd he tends his flock;
he gathers up the lambs with his arm;
he carries them close to his heart;
he leads the ewes along.

There is No God Like Yahweh

- 12 Who has measured out the waters in the hollow of his hand,
or carefully measured the sky,
or carefully weighed the soil of the earth,
or weighed the mountains in a balance,
or the hills on scales?
- 13 Who comprehends the mind of the LORD,
or gives him instruction as his counselor? [[Rom 11:33–34](#); [1 Cor 2:15–16](#)]"
- 14 From whom does he receive directions?
Who teaches him the correct way to do things,
or imparts knowledge to him,
or instructs him in skillful design?
- 15 Look, the nations are like a drop in a bucket;
they are regarded as dust on the scales.

- He lifts the coastlands as if they were dust.
- 16 Not even Lebanon could supply enough firewood for a sacrifice;
its wild animals would not provide enough burnt offerings.
- 17 All the nations are insignificant before him;
they are regarded as absolutely nothing.
- 18 To whom can you compare God?
To what image can you liken him?
- 19 A craftsman casts an idol;
a metalsmith overlays it with gold
and forges silver chains for it.
- 20 To make a contribution one selects wood that will not rot;
he then seeks a skilled craftsman
to make an idol that will not fall over.

God is in Control of the Heavens and the Earth

- 21 Do you not know?
Do you not hear?
Has it not been told to you since the very beginning?
Have you not understood from the time the earth's foundations were made?
- 22 He is the one who sits on the earth's horizon;
its inhabitants are like grasshoppers before him.
He is the one who stretches out the sky like a thin curtain,
and spreads it out like a pitched tent.
- 23 He is the one who reduces rulers to nothing;
he makes the earth's leaders insignificant.
- 24 Indeed, they are barely planted;
yes, they are barely sown;
yes, they barely take root in the earth,
and then he blows on them, causing them to dry up,
and the wind carries them away like straw.
- 25 "To whom can you compare me?
Whom do I resemble?" says the Holy One.
- 26 Look up at the sky!
Who created all these heavenly lights?
He is the one who leads out their ranks;
he calls them all by name.
Because of his absolute power and awesome strength,
not one of them is missing.

God Will Strengthen His People

- 27 Why do you say, Jacob,
Why do you say, Israel,
"The LORD is not aware of what is happening to me,
My God is not concerned with my vindication"?
- 28 Do you not know?
Have you not heard?
The LORD is an eternal God, the creator of the whole earth.
He does not get tired or weary;
there is no limit to his wisdom.
- 29 He gives strength to those who are tired;
to the ones who lack power, he gives renewed energy.
- 30 Even youths get tired and weary;
even strong young men clumsily stumble.
- 31 But those who wait for the LORD's help find renewed strength;
they rise up as if they had eagles' wings,
they run without growing weary,
they walk without getting tired.

God's Work Terrifies Idolaters

- 41:1 "Listen to me in silence, you coastlands!
Let the nations find renewed strength!
Let them approach and then speak;
let us come together for debate!
- 2 Who stirs up this one from the east?
Who officially commissions him for service?
He hands nations over to him,
and enables him to subdue kings.
He makes them like dust with his sword,
like windblown straw with his bow.
- 3 He pursues them and passes by unharmed;
he advances with great speed.
- 4 Who acts and carries out decrees?
Who summons the successive generations from the beginning?
I, the LORD, am present at the very beginning,
and at the very end—I am the one.
- 5 The coastlands see and are afraid;
the whole earth trembles;
they approach and come.
- 6 They help one another;
one says to the other, 'Be strong!'
- 7 The craftsman encourages the metalsmith,
the one who wields the hammer encourages the one who pounds on the anvil.
He approves the quality of the welding,
and nails it down so it won't fall over."

Israel Need Not Fear—Yahweh is Their God!

- 8 "You, my servant Israel,
Jacob whom I have chosen,
offspring of Abraham my friend,
- 9 you whom I am bringing back from the earth's extremities,
and have summoned from the remote regions—
I told you, "You are my servant."
I have chosen you and not rejected you.
- 10 Don't be afraid, for I am with you!
Don't be frightened, for I am your God!
I strengthen you—
yes, I help you—
yes, I uphold you with my saving right hand!
- 11 Look, all who were angry at you will be ashamed and humiliated;
your adversaries will be reduced to nothing and perish.
- 12 When you will look for your opponents, you will not find them;
your enemies will be reduced to absolutely nothing.
- 13 For I am the LORD your God,
the one who takes hold of your right hand,
who says to you, 'Don't be afraid, I am helping you.'
- 14 Don't be afraid, despised insignificant Jacob, men of Israel.
I am helping you," says the LORD, your protector, the Holy One of Israel.
- 15 "Look, I am making you like a sharp threshing sledge,
new and double-edged.
You will thresh the mountains and crush them;
you will make the hills like straw.
- 16 You will winnow them and the wind will blow them away;
the wind will scatter them.
You will rejoice in the LORD;
you will boast in the Holy One of Israel.

God Will Meet Every Need

- 17 The oppressed and the poor look for water, but there is none;
their tongues are parched from thirst.
I, the LORD, will respond to their prayers;
I, the God of Israel, will not abandon them.
- 18 I will make streams flow down the slopes
and produce springs in the middle of the valleys.
I will turn the desert into a pool of water
and the arid land into springs.
- 19 I will make cedars, acacias, myrtles, and olive trees grow in the wilderness;
I will make evergreens, firs, and cypresses grow together in the desert.
- 20 I will do this so people will observe and recognize,
so they will pay attention and understand
that the LORD's power has accomplished this,
and that the Holy One of Israel has brought it into being."

God Challenges the Idols to Predict the Future

- 21 "Present your argument," says the LORD.
"Produce your evidence," says Jacob's king.
- 22 "Let them produce evidence!
Let them tell us what will happen!
Tell us about your earlier predictive oracles,
so we may examine them and see how they were fulfilled.
Or decree for us some future events!
- 23 Predict how future events will turn out,
so we might know you are gods.
Yes, do something good or bad,
so we might be frightened and in awe.
- 24 Look, you are nothing, and your accomplishments are nonexistent;
the one who chooses to worship you is disgusting.
- 25 I have stirred up one out of the north and he advances,
one from the eastern horizon who prays in my name.
He steps on rulers as if they were clay,
like a potter treading the clay.
- 26 Who decreed this from the beginning, so we could know?
Who announced it ahead of time, so we could say, 'He's correct'?
Indeed, none of them decreed it!
Indeed, none of them announced it!
Indeed, no one heard you say anything!
- 27 I first decreed to Zion, 'Look, here's what will happen!'
I sent a herald to Jerusalem.
- 28 I look, but there is no one,
among them there is no one who serves as an adviser,
that I might ask questions and receive answers.
- 29 Look, all of them are nothing,
their accomplishments are nonexistent;
their metal images lack any real substance.

The Ministry of the Messiah

- 42:1 "Here is my servant whom I support,
my chosen one in whom I take pleasure.
I have placed my spirit on him;
he will make just decrees for the nations.
- 2 He will not cry out or shout;
he will not publicize himself in the streets.
- 3 A crushed reed he will not break,
a dim wick he will not extinguish;
he will faithfully make just decrees.

- 4 He will not grow dim or be crushed
before establishing justice on the earth;
the coastlands will wait in anticipation for his decrees.” [\[Matt 12:15–21\]](#)
- 5 This is what the true God, the LORD, says—
the one who created the sky and stretched it out,
the one who fashioned the earth and everything that lives on it,
the one who gives breath to the people on it,
and life to those who live on it:
- 6 “I, the LORD, officially commission you;
I take hold of your hand.
I protect you and make you a covenant mediator for people,
and a light to the nations,
7 to open blind eyes,
to release prisoners from dungeons,
those who live in darkness from prisons.
- 8 I am the LORD! That is my name!
I will not share my glory with anyone else,
or the praise due me with idols.
- 9 Look, my earlier predictive oracles have come to pass;
now I announce new events.
Before they begin to occur,
I reveal them to you.”

A Hymn of Praise

- 10 Sing to the LORD a brand new song!
Praise him from the horizon of the earth,
you who go down to the sea, and everything that lives in it,
you coastlands and those who live there!
- 11 Let the desert and its cities shout out,
the towns where the nomads of Kedar live!
Let the residents of Sela shout joyfully;
let them shout loudly from the mountaintops.
- 12 Let them give the LORD the honor he deserves;
let them praise his deeds in the coastlands.

God, the Mighty Warrior

- 13 The LORD emerges like a hero,
like a warrior he inspires himself for battle;
he shouts, yes, he yells,
he shows his enemies his power.
- 14 “I have been inactive for a long time;
I kept quiet and held back.
Like a woman in labor I groan;
I pant and gasp.
- 15 I will make the trees on the mountains and hills wither up;
I will dry up all their vegetation.
I will turn streams into islands,
and dry up pools of water.
- 16 I will lead the blind along an unfamiliar way;
I will guide them down paths they have never traveled.
I will turn the darkness in front of them into light,
and level out the rough ground.
This is what I will do for them.
I will not abandon them.
- 17 Those who trust in idols
will turn back and be utterly humiliated,
those who say to metal images, “You are our gods.””

Israel's Failure to See and Hear

- 18 “Listen, you deaf ones!
Take notice, you blind ones!
- 19 My servant is truly blind,
my messenger is truly deaf.
My covenant partner, the servant of the LORD, is truly blind.
- 20 You see many things, but don't comprehend;
their ears are open, but do not hear.”
- 21 The LORD wanted to exhibit his justice
by magnifying his law and displaying it.
- 22 But these people are looted and plundered;
all of them are trapped in pits
and held captive in prisons.
They were carried away as loot with no one to rescue them;
they were carried away as plunder, and no one says, “Bring that back!”
- 23 Who among you will pay attention to this?
Who will listen attentively in the future?
- 24 Who handed Jacob over to the robber?
Who handed Israel over to the looters?
Was it not the LORD, against whom we sinned?
They refused to follow his commands;
they disobeyed his law.
- 25 So he poured out his fierce anger on them,
along with the devastation of war.
Its flames encircled them, but they did not realize it;
it burned against them, but they did notice.

God's Love for Israel—He Will Save Them

- 43:1 Now, this is what the LORD says,
the one who created you, O Jacob,
and formed you, O Israel:
“Don't be afraid, for I will protect you.
I call you by name, you are mine.
- 2 When you pass through the waters, I am with you;
when you pass through the streams, they will not overwhelm you.
When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned;
the flames will not harm you.
- 3 For I am the LORD your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your deliverer.
I have handed over Egypt as a ransom price,
Ethiopia and Seba in place of you.
- 4 Since you are precious and special in my sight,
and I love you,
I will hand over people in place of you,
nations in place of your life.
- 5 Don't be afraid, for I am with you.
From the east I will bring your descendants;
from the west I will gather you.
- 6 I will say to the north, ‘Hand them over!’
and to the south, ‘Don't hold any back!’
Bring my sons from distant lands,
and my daughters from the remote regions of the earth,
- 7 everyone who belongs to me,
whom I created for my glory,
whom I formed—yes, whom I made!

The Courtroom—You Are My Witnesses

- 8 Bring out the people who are blind, even though they have eyes,
those who are deaf, even though they have ears!
- 9 All nations gather together,
the peoples assemble.
Who among them announced this?
Who predicted earlier events for us?
Let them produce their witnesses to testify they were right;
let them listen and affirm, 'It is true.'
- 10 You are my witnesses," says the LORD,
"my servant whom I have chosen,
so that you may consider and believe in me,
and understand that I am he.
No god was formed before me,
and none will outlive me.
- 11 I, I am the LORD,
and there is no deliverer besides me.
- 12 I decreed and delivered and proclaimed,
and there was no other god among you.
you are my witnesses," says the LORD, "that I am God.
- 13 From this day forward I am he;
no one can deliver from my power;
I will act, and who can prevent it?"

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