

“Hope Again”

October 3, 2021

A Word of Hope to the Hopeless (Isaiah 40:1-31)

40 *Comfort, comfort my people,
says your God.
2* *Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and proclaim to her
that her hard service has been completed,
that her sin has been paid for,
that she has received from the LORD's hand
double for all her sins.*

Church, if the message of the Gospel is anything it is a message of comfort.

But in **verse 3** and following the prophet still calls the people to holiness. To repentance. As the Spirit of God still calls to us today. To repent. His grace has never been a license for sin.

And in **verse 6** and following, the prophet reminds that that even though we have been faithless, He will remain faithful.

And that there's good news to be told (**vs 9**). And that good news is that He's coming! That there is a day in which the Sovereign LORD will come to us in power and His reward is with Him. He will gather His people like a shepherd gathers his lambs in his arms (**vs 11**).

But to the people of Israel, sitting there in Babylon, this seems impossible. And so the prophet then reminds them, how great is their God in **verse 12** and following. He says things like, “Who has measured the waters of the oceans in the hollow of His hands? Who can measure the heavens with the breadth of His hand? Who has measured the dust of the earth as in a basket, or weighed the mountains as if on a scale? No one can fathom His wisdom (**vs 13-14**). The nations are like a drop in the bucket (**vs 15**). All of their kings and armies and economies and empty threats and the rattling of their sabers. They seem so in control. But before Him all the nations are nothing, they are regarded as less than nothing in fact (**vs 17**).

So how can you even compare Him to anything or anyone, the prophet says? Think of it he says, people bow down to a block of wood and call it their god (**vs 18ff**). *What?!?*

Do you not know? Have you not heard? (**vs 21**). The LORD sits enthroned above the earth. The people of the earth are like grasshoppers. The princes of the earth are reduced to nothing in the sight of this God. They're like chaff blown away by the wind.

To whom will you compare Me, says the LORD? (**vs 25**). I call out the starry host by name. Because of my great power and mighty strength.

In more or less words, the prophet is saying, “People of God I see you are angry, discouraged, scared and tired, but people of God, look up! Look up! And behold your GOD!

Isaiah concludes with this exhortation and promise:

*²⁷ Why do you complain, Jacob?
Why do you say, Israel,
“My way is hidden from the LORD;
my cause is disregarded by my God”?*

*²⁸ 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.
²⁹ He gives strength to the weary
and increases the power of the weak.*

*³⁰ Even youths grow tired and weary,
and young men stumble and fall;
³¹ but those who HOPE in the LORD
will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.*

What is a Biblical Definition of Hope?

Hope is the faith-filled assurance that God is who He says He is and will do what He says He will do.

Some of us need to choose to HOPE AGAIN.

- I “know” so vs. I “hope” so (Hebrews 11:1)
- Living hope vs. Dead hope (1 Peter 1:3)
- Presence vs. Circumstances (John 16:33; Hebrews 13:5)
- Future Hope vs. Right Now Hope (John 16:33)

Questions for Personal Reflection and Discussion

1. In what ways are you angry, discouraged, scared, and/or tired right now?
2. How might getting a right view of God alter these emotions?
3. Review the suggested definition for “hope”. What attributes and promises of God are most meaningful to you? How might you choose today to “hope again” in these?
4. Review the additional descriptions of a biblical hope. Which of these is hardest for you to grasp or hang onto?