

**And Now for Something Completely Different  
Isaiah Shifts the Message Per Instructions  
Isaiah 40:1 – 11**

**Scripture quotations are taken from the following translations:**

**ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.**

**Scripture quotations taken from the New American Standard Bible® (NASB),  
Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973,  
1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation  
Used by permission. [www.Lockman.org](http://www.Lockman.org)**

**Scripture quoted by permission. Quotations designated (NET) are from the NET Bible® copyright ©1996-2016 by Biblical Studies Press, L.L.C. <http://netbible.com> All rights reserved.**

**Scripture quotations marked (NLT) are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.**

**Scripture taken from the Holy Bible: International Standard Version® Release 2.0. (ISV) Copyright © 1996–2011 by the ISV Foundation. Used by permission of Davidson Press, LLC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED INTERNATIONALLY.**

We are done with the historical section of Isaiah and now move into the last section of the book. Let me deal with the elephant in the room, at least it is for some. Some scholars believe a different person wrote the last portion of the book. I do not. I believe Isaiah wrote the entire book.

Jesus confirmed for us in Matthew 13:14-15 that Isaiah is the author of the first half of Isaiah. He again attests to that in Mark 7:6 – 7. In Luke 4:17 – 21 Jesus quotes from Isaiah 61 and tells His listeners that the prophecy He has read was fulfilled that very day in their hearing. He touched both halves saying – Isaiah is the author.

In John 12, both sections of Isaiah are quoted, and both are attested to, by John under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to be authored by Isaiah.

Every prophetic book of the Old Testament bears the prophet's name as author in the introductory verse or verses. These are declared to be "his words." He is the man who "had the vision"—the man to whom "the word of the Lord came." This invariable fact is a point of supreme importance to our main question of the authorship of the latter portion of Isaiah. (Cowles 1873, 528)

So, for those who want to hear a more detailed discussion regarding the alleged issues with the authorship of the book of Isaiah I would refer you to the following statement. "In the New Testament Isaiah is quoted more than all the other prophets together, and this is done in such a way as to leave no room for doubt that, in the eyes of the New Testament, Isaiah was the author of the entire prophecy." (Young 1977, 205)

Isaiah wrote the entire book. There will be no further discussion, guessing, rewriting, or conjecture.

Starting with chapter 40 there is a shift. We move from the sovereign God on His throne to, our Lord hanging on the cross. Starting with chapter 40 we are moving to the blessings portion of the book of Isaiah. Isaiah 40 to 66 is about the grace of God.

We see that with the very first words of the chapter. The words that His people need to hear in this age is simple, we need to hear comfort, we need to hear encouragement, we need to know that He truly is in total control.

Isaiah 40:1–2

““Comfort, O comfort My people,” says your God. “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.”” (NASB95)

In the first 39 chapters, judgement, judgement, and more judgement.

The opening words, “Comfort ye,” set the mood and tempo for this final section. The message from God is comfort rather than judgment which we saw in the first section. (McGee 1997, 284)

2 Corinthians 1:3–4

“Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles so that we may be able to comfort those experiencing any trouble with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” (NET)

As we see from 2 Corinthians 1, our God is the “God of all comfort.” It makes complete sense for this aspect of His attributes to be reflected amid His righteousness being expressed in judgement. Sin must be dealt with, but for those who repent and rely on Him, there is comfort. Comfort so overwhelming that as NT believers overwhelmed with the Holy Spirit, we have an overabundance of comfort and can share His comfort with others even as we go through troubling times.

This is a series of speeches. YAHWEH and others are speaking.

The speeches are urgent calls for messengers to represent YHWH and the heavenly court in spreading the word of YHWH’s decisions and coming actions. Their work has the character of prophetic tasks. The first two speeches (vv 1–2, 3–5) urge that a mission go to Jerusalem to encourage her with the good news that YHWH will return to the city very shortly. The group is to prepare a way through the Arabah for his victorious return. (Watts 2005, 607)

We know for certain that Judah has been saved from Assyria by YAHWEH. We also know, just as certainly, that they are going to go to Babylon into captivity.

Before God sent his people into captivity he furnished them with precious promises for their support and comfort in their trouble; and we may well imagine of what great use to them the glorious, gracious, light of this prophecy was, in that cloudy and dark day, and how much it helped to dry up their tears by the rivers of Babylon. (Henry 1994, 1149)

The instructions of verse one are clear, it is God’s own people who need comfort declared to them. God is not done with His people and considering what is coming, He wants His people to be comforted and know that there is still a future for them. They may leave Him, but He will never leave them.

Remember Jerusalem? This is same city that will go into captivity and is the same city that Jesus lamented over in Matthew 23:37 – 39. It is important for the people of Jerusalem to know that God is not done with them yet.

Soon, Jerusalem was going to be destroyed and lay uninhabited for 70 years. Encouragement, considering that fact, is required.

What is being brought out here though is that the future of Jerusalem is one of peace with no warfare. This is not a future after Babylon or a future after the diaspora, but one after the final defeat of “the Beast”

at the hands of the Messiah. We know this because ...”her iniquity has been removed...”. This is yet to happen for the nation.

This is a calling out to a city in exile, not once but twice and the second time for a far longer period than the first. Here Isaiah says “...That she has received of the LORD’S hand Double for all her sins.” (Isaiah 40:2b, NASB95)

Judgement is indeed coming for the city. There is a remnant in Judah, but many of the people will become reprobate. As we saw in chapter 39, judgement is only delayed, it is certain to fall because of the sin of the people. The same as we see all around us today.

There are those who are faithful, those who have not turned away and will not turn away. They will take comfort in what it is YAHWEH is revealing to them through Isaiah.

Just as we can take comfort in the words of Jesus that He is preparing a place for us (John 14:3) and will come again to take us to be with Him forever(1 Thessalonians 4:13 – 18).

1 Thessalonians 4:13–18

“But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.” (NASB95)

Comfort here in Isaiah also carries the sense of encouragement. “To comfort — to alleviate sorrow or distress; give emotional strength to.” (Brannan 2020)

Just as we need to be comforted in these last days. with the things that Jesus said would happen happening, we need to be comforted that He is in control and will indeed do exactly as He said He would. The great evacuation is still on. Paul said to comfort one another as we consider that fact. Comfort means we encourage one another. We point to the reality of the promises He has made to us.

He has also made promises to His people, the Jews. These promises are different than the ones made to the church. Just as the promises to the church will take place, so will the promises He made to His people, the Jews. “Comfort, o comfort My people...”

The words in Hebrew are plural imperatives, so the command is for all the prophets, priests, and leaders to declare the message of comfort. (Horton 2000, 299)

For Jerusalem, the comforting words are pointing to that future day. Messiah has returned, and the promises seen earlier in Isaiah 9:6 & 7 have all been fulfilled. “Now in that day the remnant of Israel, and those of the house of Jacob who have escaped, will never again rely on the one who struck them, but will truly rely on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel.” (Isaiah 10:20, NASB95)

Speak ye comfortably”, literally, “speak to the heart of Jerusalem”: in agreement with which is the message—“and cry unto her that her warfare” (her “appointed time of hardship) is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned”—(the punishment of it is accepted as sufficient to answer the ends of justice): “for she hath received at the LORD’S hand double for all her sins”. Not double the punishment deserved, which were incompatible with the Divine Justice, and still more with the Love of God, who in judgment ever remembers mercy. Nor yet (as some understand it) ‘hyperbolic language designed to express the strongest consolation’, which is never to be supposed in inspired Scripture. But rather, with Bp. Lowth, “Blessings double to the punishment”, as in ch. 61:7—“For your shame ye shall have double, and for

confusion they shall rejoice in their portion” (compare Zech. 9:12, and e.g. Job 42:10). Or, preferable still, as more literal and agreeable to the context which speaks of punishment, “a double” or “twofold punishment,” in the sense, namely, suggested by the learned Houbigant whose comment here is particularly worthy of note:—‘The calamities incident to war (he says) are here primarily intended, in which the Jews suffered double punishment. Which two punishments are the two captivities, one under the Assyrians, the other under the Romans.’ (De Burgh 1863, 162-163)

As we look at the first two verses there is one other thing we need to take away, God Himself is the speaker and He issues four commands in the first two verses.

Isaiah 40:1–2 ““Comfort, O comfort My people,” says your God. “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.”” (NASB95)

Grammatically in the Hebrew, all four of those words are in the plural. This is a command to a group. The prophets? Yes. Israel? No as the command is to comfort Israel. Is it only the prophets? No.

Is this a recommissioning of Isaiah with a change in the overall scope and direction of the prophecies to come in the second half of the book? That is also a possibility. “Although Isaiah 40:1–8 is not a narrative like Isaiah 6, it is based upon the imagery of the commissioning of a prophet by means of a vision in the heavenly council.” (Seitz 1990, 238)

Plural commands, who this is directed to? Only Isaiah?

Plural imperatives (naḥmû; dabbērû; qir’û) and plural possessive suffix (’ēlōhêkem) beg the question: Who is being addressed here, by whose God? The targums offer “O ye prophets” (nebiyaya’) prefacing the verb (’itnabbi’u). Proving that translations can move freely into the realm of exegesis, the LXX supplies the vocative “O priests” (hieeis). (Seitz 1990, 230)

Isaiah 40:1–2

““Comfort, comfort my people,” says God. Priests, speak to the heart of Jerusalem; comfort her, because her lowliness has been satisfied; her sin has been forgiven, because she has received from the hand of the Lord double for her sins.” (Lexham Press 2020, Isa 40:1-2)

Comfort is to come from the prophets makes sense, I think it is a stretch for it to be the priests, but Ezra did this and those Priests who returned with him did indeed spend time comforting the people (Nehemiah 8:2 – 12).

Is there another explanation?

The plural imperatives are directed to a plural audience of divine attendants, called at other points in the OT “holy ones” (qēdōšîm), “seraphim,” angels/messengers (mal’ākîm), or divine beings (literally, “sons of the gods,” bēnê ’ēlîm). The voices in vv. 3 and 6 are voices of these same attendants, who respond to the command given by their God (so “your God” in v. 1) to speak comfort to Zion. (Seitz 1990, 231-232)

We’ve seen this before. In Isaiah 6.

Isaiah 6:8

“Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I. Send me!”” (NASB95)

Isaiah is commissioned in Isaiah 6 in the presence of the divine council, and He responds to YAHWEH when the question is asked as to who will go for us. Here, the command goes out from YAHWEH to His divine council to comfort, comfort, speak and call out to Jerusalem.

In verse 3, we see someone, unknown to us and to Isaiah, respond to this command. Who is this?

Isaiah 40:3–5

“A voice is calling, “Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God. 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; Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, And all flesh will see it together; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”” (NASB95)

Looking at this response, it is prophetic with several possible fulfillments.

Is this a picture of the nation returning from Babylon from exile?

Is this a picture of the one who will announce the coming King?

Is this a picture of the coming Kingdom?

But if we take this as a response to the command to the divine council to comfort His people, do these ideas make sense?

### **Return from Babylon**

Many commentators look at this section of scripture as the prophetic description of the remnant returning from Babylon. If that is the case, then the fulfillment took place under Cyrus in Ezra 1.

Ezra 1:1–5 “In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, the LORD fulfilled the prophecy he had given through Jeremiah. He stirred the heart of Cyrus to put this proclamation in writing and to send it throughout his kingdom: “This is what King Cyrus of Persia says: “The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth. He has appointed me to build him a Temple at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Any of you who are his people may go to Jerusalem in Judah to rebuild this Temple of the LORD, the God of Israel, who lives in Jerusalem. And may your God be with you! Wherever this Jewish remnant is found, let their neighbors contribute toward their expenses by giving them silver and gold, supplies for the journey, and livestock, as well as a voluntary offering for the Temple of God in Jerusalem.” Then God stirred the hearts of the priests and Levites and the leaders of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple of the LORD.” (NLT)

The figure is taken from the well-known Eastern practice of repairing the roads for a royal journey. It may be difficult to say how far the representation is ideal. Allusions to the march through the desert are too constant a feature of the prophecy (ch. 40:10 f., 41:18 f., 42:16, 43:19 f., 48:21, 49:9 ff., 55:12 f.) to be treated as merely figurative; the prophet seems to have expected the deliverance to issue in a triumphal progress of Jehovah with His people through the desert between Babylonia and Palestine, after the analogy of the exodus from Egypt. (Skinner 1898, 3)

At no point though does Ezra make the connection with the command to comfort. He does comfort those who return to Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile.

This is possible as a fulfillment, but not probable.

### **John the Baptist**

John the Baptist quoted this section of scripture when questioned about his ministry.

All four Gospels quoted this passage as applying to John the Baptist as the forerunner of Christ (Matt. 3:1–4; Mark 1:1–4; Luke 1:76–79; John 1:23). In this passage the entire nation Israel was pictured as in a desert place (Isa. 40:3), but anticipating the glorious deliverance of God. (Walvoord 1990, 109)

In ancient times a herald, or forerunner, would be sent out to clear the road of obstacles or repair any pot-holes in the road prior to a journey by the king. This passage states that a forerunner will precede the

arrival of the Messianic King, as with any other ancient king. In the New Testament these words are specifically applied to John the Baptist, whose words were quoted in the previous section. (Fruchtenbaum 1998, 44)

Let's look again at this as a conversation in the divine council.

God has made the command to comfort x2 His people, to speak kindly and to call out to them. In verse 3 there was an unknown voice responding to the command and we found ourselves wondering who that voice is?

When we studied the book of Daniel, we saw the divine council assembled in Daniel 7:9 – 14 to deal with the antichrist and we saw the presentation of Messiah. We further learned in our study of Revelation that the scene in Daniel 7 is the same scene as in Revelation 4 & 5. Daniel was given a vision of a future setting of the divine council. Isaiah has been provided the same.

John 1:19–23

“And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.” And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.” So they said to him, “Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” He said, “I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ as the prophet Isaiah said.”” (ESV)

John the Baptist is the unknown voice.

With the arrival of the messiah, the apostle John casts John the Baptist in Isaiah's role. Like the prophet of old, John the Baptist has “stood in the council” (Jer 23:16–22) and answered the call. To a Jew familiar with the Old Testament, the pattern would not be lost. As had been the case at the time of Isaiah, Yahweh's council had met in regard to the fate of an apostate Israel. Isaiah had been sent to a spiritually blind and deaf nation. The calling of John the Baptist tells the reader that Yahweh's divine council is in session again, only this time the aim is to launch the kingdom of God with the second Yahweh, now incarnate, as its point man. (Heiser 2015, 273)

The context makes no allusion to the desert between Babylon and Palestine. In 16:1, 8, the desert is the one south of Judah and east of Moab; but in ch. 27, 32, 35 the desolate places of Judea itself, the last passage including those of the heathen world. Hence the most natural reference here is to the desolations of the land of promise; and also, by analogy, to the moral state of a sinful people. (Birks 1878, 196)

Yes, this points also to the future completion of what was started when Jesus came the first time.

Jesus is indeed returning; the road must be prepared for Him just as it would be for any incoming King. “It was customary to construct processional avenues for approaching dignitaries and for idols carried in parade. The wilderness and desert represent the barren waste where God's people dwelt, complete with obstacles and impediments to overcome, and through which He would come to them with refreshment, as He did formerly at Mount Sinai. The idea is that He was certainly coming and His people should prepare for His appearing.” (Constable 2003, Is 40:3)

Isaiah 40:3

“A voice is calling, “Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.” (NASB95)

The call is to make a straight road for the Lord. The word for desert is the word arabah. This is why I think this being about returning from Babylon is not probable. “For some commentators it refers to the dry

valley south of the Dead Sea here (see the comments on 33:9), so it implies that Yahweh will come from the south to go to Jerusalem.” (Ogden and Sterk 2011, 1043)

As we have already learned in our study, when Jesus Christ returns at Armageddon, He indeed does return to Jerusalem from the south (Isaiah 34:6, 63:1) touching down at the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4).

But back to the connection in Isaiah with John the Baptist as the forerunner for Jesus Christ.

Mark 1:9–13

“In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him; and a voice came out of the heavens: “You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased.” Immediately the Spirit impelled Him to go out into the wilderness. And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him.” (NASB95)

We miss something in the English translation. “...the heavens opening...”.

In the Greek the word used is σχιζομένου (schizomenous) which comes from the word schizo. This word actually means to split apart or tear apart. It is used in the Septuagint version of Exodus 14:21, talking about the parting of the Red Sea.

In the events of the exodus, YAHWEH delivered His people from Egypt with victory over the enemy, the fallen former members of His divine council, the gods of Egypt. The nation then was in the wilderness for 40 years and they failed more than once. Jesus would be in the wilderness for 40 days and He would not fail.

As the nation approached the promised land, they did so from the wilderness to the south and east crossing the Jordan at Jericho. God Himself once again made the road for them stopping the water of the Jordan for them to cross over on dry land giving them access into the land (Joshua 3:9 – 4:14).

In the first exodus, the nation was to remove the trespassers from the land which had been given to them by YAHWEH. They failed. When Jesus returns, He will do the same. Trespassers will be removed from the planet which He purchased on the cross. Just as He did for Israel clearing a path for them, God will be the one who makes this road.

Isaiah 43:19

“Behold, I will do something new, Now it will spring forth; Will you not be aware of it? I will even make a roadway in the wilderness, Rivers in the desert.” (NASB95)

In order to make this road, there are some things that have to happen.

Isaiah 40:4

“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;” (NASB95)

Just as it says here Isaiah, every valley will indeed be lifted up and mountain and hills be made low.

Revelation 16:17–20

“Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air. And a mighty shout came from the throne in the Temple, saying, “It is finished!” Then the thunder crashed and rolled, and lightning flashed. And a great earthquake struck—the worst since people were placed on the earth. The great city of Babylon split into three sections, and the cities of many nations fell into heaps of rubble. So God remembered all of

Babylon's sins, and he made her drink the cup that was filled with the wine of his fierce wrath. And every island disappeared, and all the mountains were leveled." (NLT)

The kingdom of God is back, and this time it will not fail because it's being led by the visible Yahweh, now incarnate as Jesus of Nazareth. (Heiser 2015, 274)

With the terraforming that occurs as a result of the King arriving, comes the expectation of what we see in verse 5, the glory of the Lord being revealed.

Revelation 19:11–16

"Then I saw heaven opened, and a white horse was standing there. Its rider was named Faithful and True, for he judges fairly and wages a righteous war. His eyes were like flames of fire, and on his head were many crowns. A name was written on him that no one understood except himself. He wore a robe dipped in blood, and his title was the Word of God. The armies of heaven, dressed in the finest of pure white linen, followed him on white horses. From his mouth came a sharp sword to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron rod. He will release the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty, like juice flowing from a winepress. On his robe at his thigh was written this title: King of all kings and Lord of all lords." (NLT)

With the coming of Jesus the restoration of the kingdom is inaugurated. It was formalized at Jesus' baptism, the beginning of his public ministry, and made irreversible at the crucifixion and resurrection. The divine son and servant succeeded—and will succeed—where Israel, God's human and corporate son and servant, failed. (Heiser 2015, 353)

Isaiah 40:6–8

"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. The grass withers, the flower fades, When the breath of the LORD blows upon it; Surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever." (NASB95)

The discussion at the divine council continues with another imperative command. This time it is not plural but singular. God is telling the one who is speaking for Him to "call out." The natural question follows, "What shall I call out?" A willingness to communicate whatever message God has is there.

Isaiah then adds to what he believes that God would have him call out. "...All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, When the breath of the LORD blows upon it; Surely the people are grass." (Isaiah 40:6b–7, NASB95)

Based on what Isaiah has been asked to say to Judah in the last 39 chapters, the suggestion seems to be reasonable. But the Lord has a different message for Judah now.

The protest is common in the call narratives (cf. Exod 4 of Moses and Jer 1:6). However, here the protest not only complains of weakness; it is skeptical of the integrity of humankind. (Watts 2005, 608)

Isaiah 40:8

"The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever." (NASB95)

The response from YAHWEH is an affirmation that yes, grass withers and flowers fade but God's word is the stability that resolves the perceived weakness in man. He redirects what it is that was suggested as the message to Him.

This could be Isaiah who He is discussing this with, or it could be a continuing conversation with John the Baptist.



The prophet hears his own lament turned into a word of divine assurance in his colloquy with the heavenly being.” Yet it is the heavenly being who issues this statement of trust, not the prophet, and in that sense it is a rejoinder as well as an assurance, given the content of the prophet’s prior objection. (Seitz 1990, 236)

John the Baptist’s message reflects this change just as Isaiah’s message changes in the last half of the book.

Matthew 3:1–6

“In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.’ ” Now John wore a garment of camel’s hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.” (ESV)

John’s message was good news and fits with verse 8 and on.

Isaiah 40:9

“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!”” (NASB95)

“Good tidings” is the gospel, and the “good tidings” of John the Baptist was “Behold your God!” Until you have seen Jesus Christ as God manifest in the flesh, you haven’t really seen Him. You must come to Him as He is—not just as a Man, but as God, Immanuel, God with us. If He is just a human, He cannot be my Savior; but He is Immanuel, and He is my Savior. How wonderful this is! (McGee 1997, 285)

The picture here is one of good news being received by Jerusalem. The language “presents the picture of Zion receiving the news and running with it to the surrounding townships. On the other hand, however, the previous two voices were anonymous and there is no expectation that the third voice will be otherwise. More importantly, those commissioned in verses 1–2 were sent to Jerusalem, whereas now the message is going out from Jerusalem.” (Motyer 1996, 301)

Acts 1:7–8

“He answered them, “It is not for you to know what times or periods the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”” (ISV)

Jesus tells His disciples how the prophecy here in Isaiah 40:9 will be fulfilled. A high mountain is sued reflecting that all will hear. The word will go out from Jerusalem to the entire world, and it has. Jesus is returning and very soon. This is a driving purpose behind the message, and He is already in sight it is so close.

We see commands from the Lord.

- Get up
- Lift up
- Lift up
- Say to

It is all about getting out the message of good news. In the New Testament, we call that message the gospel.

#### 1 Corinthians 15:1–4

“Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,” (ESV)

*O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings; the church of God so called, to whom the faith of the Gospel is delivered, which is the pillar and ground of truth; which receives, retains, and maintains it, and sends forth ministers to proclaim it; particularly the first church at Jerusalem, where it was first preached, and from whence it went forth into other parts of Judea, and into all the world; here the apostles of Christ were, and from hence they set out, and published the Gospel all the world over, and who seem to be chiefly meant; for the words may be rendered, as the other clause, O thou that bringest good tidings to Jerusalem; so the Targum: lift up thy voice with strength; or preach the Gospel with a strong voice, speak it out; don't mutter it over, or whisper it in a corner; proclaim it on the house-tops, cry aloud that all may hear; lift up thy voice like a trumpet; blow the trumpet of the Gospel with all the strength thou hast; cause the joyful sound to be heard far and near: lift it up, and be not afraid; of the reproaches and revilings of men on account of it, or of their persecutions for it; or lest it should not be welcome, or be received as truth: say unto the cities of Judah; the inhabitants of them literally understood, and to the several churches and congregations of the saints everywhere; behold your God! that divine Person is come, that was promised, prophesied of, and expected; even Immanuel, God with us, God in our nature, God manifest in the flesh, God your Saviour, and who being God, truly God, is able to save to the uttermost; look to him with an eye of faith, and be saved; behold the Son of God, the Lamb of God, that has bore your sins, and took them away; behold him now, as your King and your God, on the throne, made and declared. Lord and Christ, crowned with glory and honour, on the same throne with his divine Father, having all power in heaven and earth; and let the echo of your faith be, my Lord and my God. (Gill 1810, 224)*

#### Isaiah 40:10–11

“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. 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.” (NASB95)

When Christ returns, it is to rescue His people and He will do so as the avenger of blood. He comes with might.

#### Isaiah 40:10–11

“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. 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.” (NET)

As the Lord returns to Jerusalem as a victorious warrior, he brings with him the spoils of victory, called here his “reward” and “prize.” These terms might also be translated “wages” and “recompense.” Verse 11 indicates that his rescued people, likened to a flock of sheep, are his reward. (Bible Studies Press 2005, Is 40:11)

#### Nahum 1:2–7

“The LORD is a zealous and avenging God; the LORD is avenging and very angry. The LORD takes vengeance against his foes; he sustains his rage against his enemies. The LORD is slow to anger but great in power; the LORD will certainly not allow the wicked to go unpunished. He marches out in the whirlwind and the raging storm; dark storm clouds billow like dust under his feet. He shouts a battle cry against the sea and makes it dry up; he makes all the rivers run dry. Bashan and Carmel wither; the blossom of Lebanon withers. The mountains tremble before him, the hills convulse; the earth is laid waste before him, the world and all its inhabitants are laid waste. No one can withstand his indignation! No one can resist his fierce anger! His wrath is poured out like volcanic fire, boulders are broken up as he

approaches. The LORD is good— indeed, he is a fortress in time of distress, and he protects those who seek refuge in him.” (NET)

Those who are His, He protects like a shepherd protects His flock. On the one hand we see the wrath of the avenger of blood, on the other, the love of our Savior.

John 10:7–15

“So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.” (ESV)

## Works Cited

- Bible Studies Press. 2005. *The NET Bible First Edition, Bible, English*. Biblical Studies Press.
- Birks, T. R. 1878. *Commentary on the Book of Isaiah: Critical, Historical, and Prophetical*. Second Edition, Revised. London: Macmillan & Co.
- Brannan, Rick, ed. 2020. *Lexham Research Lexicon of the Hebrew Bible, Lexham Research Lexicons*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.
- Constable, Tom. 2003. *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible*. Galaxie Software.
- Cowles, Henry. 1873. "On the Authorship of Isaiah 40-66." *Bibliotheca Sacra* (Galaxie Software) 30 (110): 521-533.
- De Burgh, William. 1863. *The Messianic Prophecies of Isaiah: The Donnellan Lecture for 1862*. Dublin: Hodges, Smith and Co. .
- Fruchtenbaum, Arnold G. 1998. *Messianic Christology: A Study of Old Testament Prophecy Concerning the First Coming of the Messiah*. Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries.
- Gill, John. 1810. *An Exposition of the Old Testament, The Baptist Commentary Series*. Vol. 5. London: Mathews and Leigh.
- Heiser, Michael S. 2015. *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible*. First Edition. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.
- Henry, Matthew. 1994. *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*. Peabody: Hendrickson.
- Horton, Stanley M. 2000. *Isaiah: A Logion Press Commentary, Logion Press Commentary Series*. Springfield, MO: Logion Press.
- Lexham Press. 2020. *The Lexham English Septuagint*. Second Edition. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.
- McGee, J. Vernon. 1997. *Thru the Bible Commentary*. Vol. 3. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.
- Motyer, J. A. 1996. *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

- Ogden, Graham S., and Jan Sterk. 2011. *A Handbook on Isaiah, United Bible Societies' Handbooks*. Edited by Paul Clarke, Schuyler Brown, Louis Dorn and Donald Slager. Vol. 1 & 2. Reading: United Bible Societies.
- Seitz, Christopher R. 1990. "The Divine Council: Temporal Transition and New Prophecy in the Book of Isaiah." *Journal of Biblical Literature* (Society of Biblical Literature) (109).
- Skinner, J. 1898. *The Book of the Prophecy Isaiah, Chapters XL-LXVI, With Introduction and Notes, The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Walvoord, John F. 1990. *The Prophecy Knowledge Handbook*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.
- Watts, John D. W. 2005. *Isaiah 34-66, Word Biblical Commentary*. Revised Edition. Vol. 25. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc.
- Young, Edward J. 1977. *An Introduction to the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.