

Gleanings of Grace

Isaiah 40

Lesson 29

God is always the God of hope. As much of the previous chapters of Isaiah were words of warning and judgment, God did not want His people to ever be a people without hope. Thus His desire, as expressed in Isaiah 40, was to give them hope and to remind them that their hope would be found as they obeyed His call to *lift up their eyes and see Him*. May you see Him as the God well worth *waiting on*, as you are reminded of His glory as you study.

OBSERVATION: Isaiah 40

1. Read Isaiah 40 using the Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework). After reading through the chapter, what would you say to someone if they asked you what it is about?
2. Key words help us to better understand the verses. We have listed below key words. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text. Remember to mark any personal pronouns/titles that refer to *God*.
Key Words: *God, Spirit, will/shall, and behold*
3. The contrasting word *but* is used two times in Isaiah 40. Mark the word. Choose one instance of its use and record what is being contrasted.
4. The words *will* or *shall*, when they refer to the Lord, can be viewed as sureties. Scan through the chapter and list five things that *will/shall* happen; what God *will/shall* do.

5. Mark each question mark (?). List five questions Isaiah asks about God.

Background:

1. Isaiah 40 begins to shift the focus in the book of Isaiah from warning to *comfort*. Bask in His *comfort* as you record phrases or words of *comfort* from the following verses:

Isaiah 43:1,2

Isaiah 43:18,19

Isaiah 49:15,16

Isaiah 53:6

Isaiah 55:1,2

Challenge: Share more verses of *comfort* that you found in Isaiah 40-66.

2. Amongst God's words of *comfort* to His people, are many proclamations reminding us that He alone is God. Write the words of three of those verses:

Isaiah 44:6

Isaiah 45:22,23

a. How does knowing that your God is the only God help you to trust in the *comfort* He proclaims for you?

Read Isaiah 40:1-8

1. In contrast to the previous announcements of God's judgments, the LORD instructed Isaiah to speak words of *comfort* to *His people*. According to verse 2, what was Isaiah to proclaim had *ended* and been *pardoned*?
 - a. As in our lives, the battle still existed for God's people. What *comfort* can we glean from Romans 8:37?
 - 1.) In what ways can you declare that the *warfare* has ended in your life?
 - b. What is the promise of Jeremiah 33:8?
 - c. The phrase, *double for all her sins* in Isaiah 40:2, can be compared to a mirror reflecting back an exact image or a paper folded in half equally. This idea is that all of their sins have been exactly met and paid for. Describe the *comfort* you have experienced knowing that your *iniquity is pardoned*.
2. *The voice of one crying in the wilderness* (verse 3) has been directly tied to John the Baptist in three of the gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke). Yet, this is also the cry to each heart to *prepare for the LORD*. How does understanding and living the truths of verses 4,5 help you to *prepare for God to work in your life*?
 - a. The *glory of the LORD* (verse 5) might be described as "the manifestation of God's greatness or attributes." In what ways do you *prepare your heart for the way of the LORD* so that the *glory of the LORD* can be *revealed*?
3. The *voice* was to pronounce the frailty of *flesh* and the endurance of *the word of God*. What was the *voice to cry out about all flesh*? verses 6,7
 - a. What was the *voice to cry out about the word of our God*? verse 8
 - 1.) In what ways should the realization of life's brevity and the longevity of God's word affect us?
 - b. Peter makes a wonderful application of this passage in 1 Peter 1:22-25. He linked the *gospel* to the *word of God*. According to these verses, what effect should the *word of the LORD* have on us?
 - 1.) In what ways have you expressed *love* since you have been *born again*?

Read Isaiah 40:9-17

1. In these verses, we have an invitation to *bring good tidings* to the people. Isaiah called to the people, *Behold your God!* In Isaiah 40:10-15, we see God revealed in four ways. *Behold* Him as you record a few statements about Him as:

the returning LORD (verse 10)

the loving Shepherd (verse 11)

the God over all creation (verse 12)

the God of all wisdom (verse 13,14)

2. Israel had experienced the power of other nations in war and in captivity. They had grown to not only respect the power of other nations, but to fear their power. Using verses 15-17, what does Isaiah say about the LORD to adjust their perspective?

- a. What does Jeremiah 10:10 declare?

- b. How does knowing God's power over opposing nations help you to understand that He has power over the enemies of your life?

Read Isaiah 40:18-24

1. God's greatness not only surpasses that of all nations, Isaiah now turns and challenges them regarding the worthlessness of idols. What two questions did he ask in Isaiah 40:18?

- a. How would you answer those questions?

2. *Images* were made of *gold, silver*, or for those who were *impoverished*, wood. Consider the foolishness of false idols as you fill in the blanks for verse 20. *Whoever is too impoverished for such a contribution chooses a tree that will not _____; he seeks for himself a skillful workman to prepare a carved image that will not _____.*

- a. What does that say to you about attempts to worship an *image*?

3. Isaiah 40:21 poses four questions that are meant to cause us to redirect our devotion and our thinking. Consider each of them. How might you use them to help you redirect your thinking when you begin to fear the power of something/someone or look to other sources to focus your attention?
4. Then there is our God. Using Isaiah 40:22-24, record a few phrases that describe Him.
5. Write a few of your thoughts as you compare *carved images* to the living God.

Read Isaiah 40:25-31

1. Isaiah 40:25 begins with the same question posed in Isaiah 40:18. Then in verse 26 God calls His people to *lift up your eyes on high*. What does He expect us to see?
 - a. Consider David's humility as he *considered the heavens* in Psalm 8:3,4. Why does considering the awesome creative powers of God cause us to have a better perspective of ourselves?
 - b. Rejoice in the promise of Isaiah 51:6.
2. The LORD challenges Israel in verse 27. What did He say?
 - a. How does knowing the character of God remind you that your ways are not *hidden* from Him?
 - 1.) What did David declare in Psalm 31:22?
 - a.) What have you learned about words you have said in *haste*?
3. We have soaked in the wonders of God's creative powers. God's counter to our *hasty* words and thinking are found in the crescendo of this chapter as the LORD takes us to the glorious words of His enabling power. Again, He has questions for us – challenges to return to what we have *known* and *heard*. Why is it important to remember those two things?

a. Using verses 28,29, declare the *glory of the LORD*.

4. Israel had looked to the power of nations. They had fallen to the worship of carved images. Isaiah 40:30 reminds us that even the strongest *shall faint and be weary and utterly fall*. According to verse 31, who are the *strong*?

a. Delight in the promises to those who *wait* on the LORD in the following verses:

Psalm 25:5

Psalm 27:14

Psalm 40:1

1.) What have you discovered to be the benefits of *waiting on the LORD*?

a.) Describe what it personally means to you to *wait on the LORD*.

b. According to Isaiah 40:31, what four things will those who *wait upon the LORD* be able to do?

REVIEW: Isaiah 40

1. How has the study of Isaiah 40 impacted you?

*Who satisfies your mouth with good things,
So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.*

- Psalm 103:5

Observation Worksheet

Isaiah 40

"Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" says your God. ² "Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she has received from the LORD'S hand double for all her sins." ³ The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴ Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill brought low; the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth; ⁵ the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." ⁶ The voice said, "Cry out!" And he said, "What shall I cry?" "All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. ⁷ The grass withers, the flower fades, because 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." ⁹ O Zion, you who bring good tidings, get up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, you who bring good tidings, lift up your voice with strength, lift it up, be not afraid; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" ¹⁰ Behold, the Lord GOD shall come with a strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him. ¹¹ He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those who are with young. ¹² Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, measured heaven with a span and calculated the dust of the earth in a measure? Weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? ¹³ Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, or as His counselor has taught Him? ¹⁴ With whom did He take counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him in the path of justice? Who taught Him knowledge, and showed Him the way of understanding? ¹⁵ Behold, the nations are as a drop in a bucket, and are counted as the small dust on the scales; look, He lifts up the isles as a very little thing. ¹⁶ And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor its beasts sufficient for a burnt offering. ¹⁷ All nations before Him are as nothing, and they are counted by Him less than nothing and worthless.

¹⁸ To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare to Him? ¹⁹ The workman molds an image, the goldsmith overspreads it with gold, and the silversmith casts silver chains. ²⁰ Whoever is too impoverished for such a contribution chooses a tree that will not rot; he seeks for himself a skillful workman to prepare a carved image that will not totter.

²¹ Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told 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 brings the princes to nothing; He makes the judges of the earth useless. ²⁴ Scarcely shall they be planted, scarcely shall they be sown, scarcely shall their stock take root in the earth, when He will also blow on them, and they will wither, and the whirlwind will take them away like stubble. ²⁵ "To whom then will you liken Me, or to whom shall I be equal?" says the Holy One. ²⁶ Lift up your eyes on high, and see who has created these things, who brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name, by the greatness of His might and the strength of His power; not one is missing. ²⁷ Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel: "My way is hidden from the LORD, and my just claim is passed over by my God"? ²⁸ Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. ²⁹ He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. ³⁰ Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, ³¹ but those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.