

Book of Isaiah



Chapter 40

Theme: Comfort, a message from God

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Chapter 40

Note style change: Concepts, vocabulary, perspective dramatically oriented in New Testament terms.

Chapters 1-35

Chapters 36-39 (historical interlude)

Chapters 40-end

See: Mt 8:17; Lk 4:17,18; Jn 12:38-40. All written by the prophet Isaiah.¹

Isa. 39, contain many predictions of the coming captivities to Babylon, but Isa. 40 -- 66 contain predictions which look beyond them. Many prophecies in Isa. 1 -- Isa. 39 also look beyond the captivities, but no prophecy in Isa. 40 -- Isa. 66 just looks forward to them. A few refer to deliverance from Babylon (Isa. 44:26 -- Isa. 45:4,13; 46:1-2; 48:14-15) and a few, now fulfilled, refer to the first advent (Isa. 40:3; 42:1-3,6-7; 49:1-5; 50:2-11; 52:14; 53:1-12; 61:1-2), but otherwise every prophecy in this section is unfulfilled and has to do with the regathering of Israel in the last days, the future tribulation, the second coming of Christ, the Millennium, and the New Earth.²

Chapter 40 brings us to the final major division of the Book of Isaiah. There is a sharp contrast between the first and last sections of this book. The first section was a revelation of the Sovereign upon the throne, while this final section is a revelation of the Savior in the place of suffering. In chapter 6 we saw the crown; in chapter 53 we shall see the cross. The theme in the first section was the government of God; in this section it is the grace of God.

The opening words, "Comfort ye," set the mood and tempo for this final section. The message from God is comfort rather than the judgment which we saw in the first section.

The change of subject matter has led the liberal critic to postulate the Deutero-Isaiah hypothesis. Because the subjects are entirely different, they suppose that they were written by different writers -- two Isaiahs. Well, a change of message certainly does not necessitate a change of authorship. The message has changed but not the messenger. Many authors write on subjects that are entirely different. For example, I have a booklet on Psalm 2, which is God's judgment, and one on Psalm 22, which is God's salvation -- two entirely different subjects, but written by the same individual.

In this section of Isaiah the thunder and lightning of Sinai are subdued, smothered by the wonderful message of grace which comes from God.³

¹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

² Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

³ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

The book of Isaiah makes a dramatic shift at this point. The following chapters discuss the majesty of God, who is coming to rule the earth and judge all people. God will reunite Israel and Judah and restore them to glory. Instead of warning the people of impending judgment, Isaiah here comforts them. Chapter 40 refers to the restoration after the Exile. Cyrus is the instrument of their deliverance from Babylon. Isaiah also foretells a time when "Babylon"—the future evil world system—will be destroyed and the persecution of God's people will end.⁴

Much of the second part of Isaiah is a message of comfort to the exiles concerning their return. These chapters were written by the prophet Isaiah, through prophetic revelation, for exiled Israel of the sixth century. In chs. 40-48 Isaiah warns them against adopting the beliefs and attitudes of the pagans among whom they would live.⁵

INTRODUCTION TO DIVISION VI (Isaiah 40-66)

Our introduction to the whole prophecy is also applicable here; but due to the flood of critical comments to the effect that this division is utterly unlike Isaiah and that it comes from a different author who lived a century or more after Isaiah's times, we shall address the question again, hopeful that new light can be shed upon the alleged problem.

It is our unwavering conviction that all of the prophecy in our version which is ascribed to Isaiah was indeed written by him, the fact being that no one except Isaiah could possibly have written a line of it. Why do we believe this?

I. The inspired writers of the New Testament quoted from this last section of Isaiah no less than thirty-seven times, almost always making specific mention of the prophet Isaiah as the author of the passage quoted. Here is the real evidence on the authorship of this prophecy, as contrasted with the fembu advocated by the critics. Who were those New Testament writers: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter and Paul? They were the Holy Apostles of the Son of God, to whom Jesus Christ promised that the Holy Spirit would guide them "into all truth." We believe this! Here is an analysis of their quotations from this last Division of Isaiah:

NEW TESTAMENT QUOTATIONS

BY THE APOSTLES FROM ISA. 40-66
Isaiah 40:3-5 Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4-6; John 1:23
Isaiah 40:6-8 1 Peter 1:24,25
Isaiah 40:13 Romans 11:34; 1 Corinthians 2:16
Isaiah 42:1-4 Matthew 12:18-21
Isaiah 42:7 Mark 4:15,16
Isaiah 45:23 Romans 14:11
Isaiah 49:6 Acts 13:47
Isaiah 49:8 2 Corinthians 6:2
Isaiah 52:5 Romans 2:24
Isaiah 52:7 Romans 10:15
Isaiah 52:11 2 Corinthians 6:17
Isaiah 52:15 Romans 15:21
Isaiah 53:1 John 12:28; Romans 10:16
Isaiah 53:4 Matthew 8:17; 1 Peter 2:24

⁴ Life Application Study Bible.

⁵ Believers Study Bible

Isaiah 53:7,8Acts 8:32,33
 Isaiah 53:91 Peter 2:22
 Isaiah 53:12 Mark 15:28; Luke 22:37
 Isaiah 54:1Galatians 4:27
 Isaiah 54:13 John 6:45
 Isaiah 55:3 Acts 13:34
 Isaiah 56:7Matthew 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46
 Isaiah 59:7,8Romans 3:15-17
 Isaiah 59:20,21Romans 11:26,27
 Isaiah 61:1,2 Luke 4:18,19
 Isaiah 62:11Matthew 21:5
 Isaiah 65:1,2Romans 10:20,21
 Isaiah 66:1,2 Acts 7:49,50
 Isaiah 66:24 Mark 9:44. SIZE>MONO>

The significant thing about these quotations is that the inspired holy writers took pains to tell us whom they were quoting. Did they know? Of course. Take just one out of many examples of this from the above list, the very first quotation, from Isaiah 40:3-5, quoted by all four of the gospel writers. They each identified the person whom they were quoting, as follows:

Matthew: "This is he that was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, etc." (Matthew 1:3).

Mark: "As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, etc." (Mark 1:2).

Luke: "As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, etc." (Luke 3:4).

John: "As said by the prophet Isaiah etc." (John 1:23).SIZE>

What do the critics do with such an argument as this? They ignore it, that being the only answer they have; and for one who believes the Lord and his holy promises to the apostles, that is no sufficient answer. These quotations are an all-sufficient reason for accepting every word of Isaiah as being One Book by One Author. Nevertheless, there are other reasons for doing so that are just as convincing.

II. God's "Modus Operandi". Yes, God has a modus operandi, that being the truth that he was never caught in an emergency. God anticipated every need of mankind in his plan of redemption, which was not formulated after men sinned, but "before the foundation of the world." When, in the wilderness of wanderings of Israel, God's people encountered the bitter waters of Marah, God did not instruct Moses to plant a certain tree and wait a generation or two till it matured and then cast it into the waters to sweeten them. Oh no! God had planted that tree perhaps a century before it was needed! Now, in the case of the comfort and encouragement that God's people were sure to require during their captivity, may we suppose that God waited till they were twenty years deep into that punishment and that God then raised up some Johnny-come-lately of a prophet to prophecy their return and the blessings of God that would follow? Ridiculous! If God had done a thing like that, nobody in Israel would have believed such a "prophet." As Hailey accurately judged:

"Jehovah knows what is in man; and anticipating our every need, He makes provision for us. Over a hundred years before Judah went into captivity, Jehovah made provision through Isaiah the prophet for their spiritual needs ... This is the theme of this section." (Homer Hailey, p. 336.) (See Isaiah 40:12-31).

The utmost precautions were taken in order to ensure that Judah would have every reason to believe what this great prophet declared. He was the one who prophesied the captivity; and from the very beginning he had repeatedly spoken of that "remnant" who would return. Furthermore,

the Jewish tradition that Manasseh murdered Isaiah, is probably true. Thus Isaiah sealed his prophecies with his own blood. Yet, even with all of that, it was only a pitiful little remnant who believed Isaiah and the other true prophets and returned to Jerusalem. This undeniable fact simply will not square with the critical dictum that the wonderful prophecies found in Isaiah were written by "Some Great Unknown." The Piltdown Man hoax was no greater deception than this allegation of Bible enemies.

III. The Jewish people were incapable of producing any prophet at all during their captivity. The priesthood itself fell to such a low condition during this period that God, through Malachi, uttered a curse against them, accused them of robbing God, and gave expression to the thought that God would be pleased if someone would close the temple itself. What a preposterous proposition it is that during that terribly low estate of Judah, there arose the greatest of the Old Testament prophets, whose writings would be recognized for all ages to come as the "heart of the Old Testament," who would be the most esteemed prophet ever to appear on earth, and whose writings are undoubtedly the most eloquent prophecies ever given concerning the coming of the Messiah into our poor world.

IV. There is no textual evidence of any change in the authorships as we proceed from Isaiah 39 to Isaiah 40. In fact, Isaiah 40 is as well authenticated as belonging to Isaiah as if he had signed it two or three times. Critics complain that he did not sign it anywhere in the last twenty-seven chapters; but the critics themselves never sign their letters but once. There is no historical evidence that any "great unknown prophet" ever lived during the captivity who had the capability of writing these magnificent chapters. Who has ever explained just how such a thing could have happened? If the author of a little book such as any one of half a dozen of the minor prophets would have been so honored and respected as they were, how can it be imagined that that "great unknown nobody" wrote the most magnificent prophecies of a Millennium without anyone's finding out who he was, where he lived, or anything else concerning him? And just how did he get his marvelous writings incorporated into the book of the writings of the most distinguished royal prophet, Isaiah? And just how did it happen that those writings were certified to all subsequent generations as a bona fide portion of Isaiah?

The preposterous allegations that underlie such a complicated and elaborate complex of deceptions deserve only one appellation. They bear all the earmarks of a gargantuan falsehood, a title which we do not hesitate to assign to this favorite allegation of Biblical enemies.⁶

This portion of Prophecy introduces Cyrus the Persian. He will be mentioned in every chapter up to chapter 49 beginning first obscurely but continuing to ever more clear statements even to naming him by name. The "contrast" between world events and the blessings to come when Zion appears is continued. This style of the book has continued from the very first chapters. Cyrus' conquest of Babylon, accomplished in about 539 BC, resulted in the 536 BC decree to free the captive nations and effectively end the Seventy Year captivity prophesied by Jeremiah in Jeremiah 25:11 and begun by Nebuchadnezzar in 606 BC. This policy of exporting nations to control the empire had been begun by the Assyrians and was continued by their successors, the Babylonian Empire. The decree to free the nations particularly included the Jews. It would seem certain that Daniel the prophet made Cyrus aware of the prophecies that preceded him by about 200 years. A thread of predictions concerning Cyrus begins here in chapter 40 which continues to chapter 49. There is yet a lot of living and suffering ahead for the nation to endure before the appearance of Zion. Thus the section opens with comforting words and the promise that the

⁶ <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bcc/isaiah-40.html>

divine purpose of the nation would be accomplished. It would appear that much of the comfort would be written for the sake of the captive nation in Babylon to assure them that God was not through with them yet. This is particularly seen in the promise of the restoration of the nation by Cyrus and his decree that the foundation of the second Temple would be laid.

Chapter 40 begins a new section separate from but not unrelated to what has gone on before. As in the first section where Tiglath Pileser, as a messenger of God, was contrasted with Messiah and the interaction of the Assyrian Empire with Israel and Judah occupied a large portion of the first section so in this section Isaiah foretells the interaction and the rise and fall of the Babylonian Empire with Israel and Judah and makes the contrast of two Messengers of God both of whom are Messiahs. Cyrus the Mead or Persian will be introduced and his activity, person and the details of his life will be offered up as proof that only the Almighty could write such details before they happen. Cyrus will be contrasted with the Exalted Messiah of Paradox who rises after the fall of Babylon and the return of Israel and Judah to the blessings promised to them. There is great comfort offered but only because there are centuries of agony for the nation to suffer before the promises of God will be realized. Much evidence is offered that God is revealing the future and they will know that the deferred promises are at the end of the trials because God predicts great historical events along the way so that the future will be reconfirmed to each generation. Most of these events which will convince the Jews that the messianic kingdom will ultimately come relate to Cyrus the Persian overthrowing the Babylonian Empire which will end their oppression of the Jews. It must be remembered that Babylon had not risen as a great power at the time that Isaiah wrote and the captivity that Judah was to be released from was yet in the future by over 100 years and the return to the land and rebuilding of the Temple (which had not yet been destroyed when he wrote this) was over 200 years further on and in that period of the return beginning with the down fall of Babylon begun by Cyrus the true Messiah would appear. It is this future restoration that is offered as the comfort to the nation. The comfort offered to the Remnant of Israel and the Jewish nation is much like the Christian receives in the New Covenant. For instance, the parable of the ten virgins has one major teaching among others of lesser importance and that is that the bridegroom's future appearance is assured but that he may delay his coming. You will need enough oil to hold out. Thus, in the same way comfort is offered of future blessings and God's continual watch care of the nation until the promises are realized. The prophecies to follow therefore are urgings to stay faithful in the only true God in spite of the many trials to be endured while the pictures of the beauties of the future age are intermingled with the trials and triumphs along the way. This intermingling creates similar difficulties as encountered in the first portion of the book where the cast of characters and the scenes change without notice making interpretation difficult. With some outstanding exceptions, the obscurity of change of scene will be a characteristic of the rest of the book but especially from chapter 40 through 52.⁷

⁷ <http://www.moellerhaus.com/40-45.htm>

¹Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

Comforter.

Father: 2 Cor 1:3.

Holy Spirit: Jn 14:16, 26; 15:26, 16:7 (4x called Comforter).

Son: Isa 61:2 ("advocate" with the Father - 1 Jn 2:1 = paraclite!).⁸

Comfort: Hebrew: nacham (HSN-<H5162>), to have pity or compassion; to be sorrowful in a good way; to console, avenge, or comfort. The general purpose of Isa. 40 -- Isa. 66 is to comfort Israel in view of eternal restoration under the Messiah. (Such comfort isn't predicted in Isa. 1 -- Isa. 39.) The prophecies speak as if Israel were already near the end of the Babylonian captivity (Isa. 41:1-3,25; Isa. 44:26 -- Isa. 45:4,13), Jerusalem already in ruins (Isa. 44:26-28), and the people about to be restored to their own land.

"Comfort" Used in Isaiah:

1. Comfort ye, comfort ye My people (Isa. 40:1).
2. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her (Isa. 40:2).
3. The Lord has comforted His people (Isa. 49:13; 52:9).
4. The Lord will comfort Zion (Isa. 51:3).
5. He will comfort her waste places.
6. I am He that comforteth you (Isa. 51:12).
7. By whom will I comfort you? (Isa. 51:12).
8. Restore comforts unto him (Isa. 57:18).
9. To comfort all that mourn (Isa. 61:2).
10. So will I comfort you (Isa. 66:13).
11. You will be comforted in Jerusalem (Isa. 66:13; cp. Isa. 12:1).⁹

All of the "woes" and the "burdens" of the first section have been lifted because there is now a burden-bearer, One who later on will fulfill everything that Isaiah said about Him. He will be the One to give the invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). The Lord Jesus Christ lifts burdens.

"Comfort ye, comfort ye" is a sign of yearning from the pulsating heart of God. Our God is the God of "all comfort." That is the way Paul speaks of Him in 2Corinthians 1:3-4: "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." The Holy Spirit is called "the Comforter." The Lord Jesus said, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever" (John 14:16). He is today our Comforter.¹⁰

1-2 Judah still had 100 years of trouble before Jerusalem would fall, then 70 years of exile. So God tells Isaiah to speak tenderly and to comfort Jerusalem.

The seeds of comfort may take root in the soil of adversity. When your life seems to be falling apart, ask God to comfort you. You may not escape adversity, but you may find God's comfort as you face it. Sometimes, however, the only comfort we have is in the knowledge that someday we

⁸ Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

⁹ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

¹⁰ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

will be with God. Appreciate the comfort and encouragement found in his Word, his presence, and his people.¹¹

1-8 This prophecy consists of addresses by three heavenly heralds. The first calls upon the others to comfort the exiles because their time of servitude has ended (vv. 1, 2). The second calls for building a highway so that all may see the coming of the Lord (vv. 3-5). The third guarantees the vision (vv. 6-8).¹²

²Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins.

Why double for all her sins? Seems unfair? (vs. Elihu in Job 34).

Two concepts:

- 1) Israel is spoken of as God's firstborn. Firstborn is entitled to a double portion, both of good and bad.
- 2) Another possibility it is that it is a commercial term for debts "paid in full."¹³

Three things to cry to Jerusalem:

1. Her warfare is accomplished.
2. Her iniquity is pardoned.
3. She has received of the Lord double for her sins.

These things are spoken of as already accomplished, but all are yet to be fulfilled at the Christ's second coming (Isa. 63:1-5; Zech. 12:10 -- Zech. 14:21; Mt. 23:37-39; Rom. 11:25-29).

Furthermore, these are national problems: the warfare, iniquity, and reaping for sins referred to concern Judah as well as Jerusalem. The city will be restored and all the people blessed and pardoned under the Messiah (Isa. 40:1-2).

[double] That is, in full (Isa. 61:7; Jer. 16:18).¹⁴

It has been suggested that when there was an indebtedness or mortgage on a house in Israel, the fact was written on a paper, a legal document, and put on the doorpost so that all their neighbors and friends would know that they had a mortgage on their place. Another copy was kept by the one who held the mortgage. When the debt was paid, the second copy, the carbon copy, was nailed over the other doorpost so that all might see that the debt was paid. This is the meaning of "she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." The sins of Jerusalem were paid for by the One who suffered outside her gates. This is the difference between the dealings of God with His people in the Old Testament and with us in our day. It actually separates Christianity from all pagan religions and from the Mosaic Law. The difference is all wrapped up in that little word propitiation. In the heathen religions the people bring an offering to their gods to appease them, and that is what propitiation means. Many people think that that is what it means in the

¹¹ Life Application Study Bible.

¹² The Nelson Study Bible

¹³ Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

¹⁴ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

Bible, that they have to "do" something -- because God is angry -- to win Him over. The people in heathen religions are always doing that because their gods are always angry and difficult to get along with. Their feelings are easily hurt, and they are not very friendly. The fact is that sin, man's sin, has alienated him from God, but it is God who did something. And today God is propitious. You don't have to do anything to win Him over. Propitiation is toward God, and reconciliation is toward us. God has done everything that needs to be done. Today we are asked to be reconciled to God, not to do something to win Him over. God is already won over; that is what Jesus Christ did for us on the cross. We need only accept what Christ has done. This is the word of comfort for a lost world today.¹⁵

Jerusalem was to be addressed tenderly (lit., "to the heart," i.e., in gentle, encouraging words; cf. Hosea 2:14) as a mother would speak to her child. The 70-year Captivity was seen as almost over. Hard service translates the Hebrew word for "warfare" and "time of enlistment in war." Judah's captivity was like the hardships of war. That time of trial had come because of her sin. But now her sin had been paid for so that God's blessings could begin. As stated in the Mosaic Covenant, God would bless His people if they lived according to His Word. However, if they disobeyed Him, He would curse them and eventually cast them out of the land of Israel (Deut. 28:15-68, esp. vv. 49-52, 64). Now that cursing was seen as almost accomplished, Israel could have a new start. To receive double for all her sins does not mean to be punished beyond what she deserves but in keeping with what she deserves. The point is that she has now received "full" or "sufficient" punishment for all her sins (cf. "double" in Isa. 51:19; 61:7).¹⁶

Her warfare is accomplished: The season of struggle against idolatry and punishment for the nation will be past. This indicates that punishment of the nation will be finally completed. As we shall see the punishment will include a Babylonian servitude from which God will restore the nation. At the consummation of the struggle against idolatry and after the return to the land to a rebuilt temple the messianic age will be introduced. The announcement is made beginning in the next verse.¹⁷

³The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Mt 3:3 (Matthew highlights Old Testament prophecies which are being fulfilled.)¹⁸

John the Baptist Predicted

Except for the last part of Isa. 40:5, all of Isa. 40:3-5 are quoted in Lk. 3:4-6 as being fulfilled with John the Baptist and the first coming of the Messiah (Isa. 40:3-5; Mt. 3:3; Mk. 1:3; Lk. 3:4-6; Jn. 1:23). They might also have a further and more complete fulfillment in the ministry of Enoch and Elijah to herald His second coming, or prepare the hearts of people to receive the Messiah (Mal. 4:5-6; Rev. 11:3-11; Ezek. 20:35-36). The statements about preparing the way of the Lord are used here figuratively, heralding the coming of the Messiah. It was the custom in

¹⁵ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

¹⁶ The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

¹⁷ <http://www.moellerhaus.com/40-45.htm>

¹⁸ Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

the East to send a party of men before a king or a prince to prepare the way before him. They cleared the way of thorns, brambles, and bushes; made bridges; found fording places in the streams; and levelled the ground wherever necessary to make it easier for travel. Isaiah alluded to this when he spoke of making a way for the Lord (Isa. 40:3-6). This was never done literally for Christ, but the custom could be applied figuratively of the preparation of the people to receive Him. If it is ever to be fulfilled literally this will be in the Millennium when a literal highway will be built from Egypt to Assyria, through Palestine, as predicted in Isa. 11:16; 19:23-25; 35:8-10.¹⁹

LORD: Jehovah

Hebrew: Yahweh (HSN-<H3068>), Jehovah. Who was this Jehovah whom John the Baptist was to prepare the way for? It was Jesus Christ, which proves again that He also is Jehovah, as are the Father and the Holy Spirit. See Gen. 19:24 which shows one Jehovah on earth raining fire upon Sodom and Gomorrah from another Jehovah in heaven. In Ps. 110:1,5 we find two Jehovah's or Self-existent Ones. The Holy Spirit is equally Self-existent or Eternal with the Father and the Son, so He could also be called Jehovah. We should not say that Jesus Christ of the N.T. is the only Jehovah of the O.T. simply because He is also Jehovah, any more than we should say that He is the only person called God simply because He is God. Christ is God and Jehovah, and so are the other members of the Trinity.²⁰

All four writers of the Gospel records -- Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John -- quote this verse as applying to John the Baptist. Since it appears four times in the New Testament, I'm not going to argue about it. I say that it refers to John the Baptist.²¹

3-5 Preparing a straight highway means removing obstacles and rolling out the red carpet for the coming of the Lord. The wasteland is a picture of life's trials and sufferings. We are not immune to these, but our faith need not be hindered by them. Isaiah told people to prepare to see God work. John the Baptist used these words as he challenged the people to prepare for the coming Messiah (Matthew 3:3).²²

3-5. A voice (probably Isaiah's, different from the voice in v. 6) called out to the people to prepare the way for the Lord (v. 3) and His glory (v. 5). True prophets were "voices," for their messages were from God. They were calling the nation to get back into a proper relationship with Him. Each Gospel writer applied Isaiah 40:3 to John the Baptist (Matt. 3:1-4; Mark 1:1-4; Luke 1:76-78; John 1:23). John was a desert prophet who prepared the way for Jesus Christ, and who in the wilderness made a highway for Him (cf. Matt. 3:3). However, here in Isaiah the entire nation was in a spiritual wilderness, and each Israelite needed to get ready spiritually for the appearing of the Lord.

Raising the valleys and lowering the mountains refer in hyperbole to workmen leveling or smoothing out the roads on which a dignitary would travel when he came to visit an area. Today an equivalent is, "roll out the red carpet." In Isaiah's day he was calling Israel to be "smoothed out" so that the Lord could come to the nation and rule. This was emphasized by all the

¹⁹ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

²⁰ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

²¹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

²² Life Application Study Bible.

prophets—ethically the nation must be righteous. Eventually the nation will be "smoothed out" spiritually when the glory of the Lord is revealed (Isa. 40:5). Isaiah was thinking of the millennial kingdom when the Lord will be revealed in His glory, that is, when His unique splendor will be evident everywhere. As Isaiah wrote elsewhere, the Messiah would suffer and would also appear in glory. However, apparently he was not aware of the time interval that would elapse between these two aspects. Though the disciples saw Jesus' glory (John 1:14), all mankind has not yet seen it, but they will see it in the Millennium. This coming glory is certain for the... Lord has spoken it (cf. Isa. 1:20; 58:14). The word of the Lord is sure and cannot be broken.²³

⁴Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:

⁵And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see *it* together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken *it*.

The glory of the Lord was revealed by Jesus Christ and all flesh did see His mighty power that glorified God (Lk. 2:9; Jn. 1:14; 2:11; 11:4,40; 12:41).²⁴

⁶The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh *is* grass, and all the goodliness thereof *is* as the flower of the field:

“All flesh is grass” (in sense that it is transitory, here today gone tomorrow. Also, introduces symbolism used in Revelation.)²⁵

[**voice said, Cry**] This voice was not the one of Isa. 40:3, but another which Isaiah heard in the vision -- evidently the voice of God (Isa. 6:8-9).

[**What shall I cry?**] Question 81. Next, Isa. 40:12. This was Isaiah's response to the voice.

[**All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field**] Quoted in 1Pet. 1:24-25. This was the message the voice of the vision told him to cry: People are like grass which withers soon and is gone, but the Word of the Lord shall stand forever (Isa. 40:6-8; Ps. 119:89-91; Mt. 5:18; 24:35; Mk. 13:31; Jn. 10:35; 12:34; 1Pet. 1:25).²⁶

6-8 People are compared here to grass and flowers that wither away. We are mortal, but God's Word is eternal and unfailing. Public opinion changes and is unreliable, but God's Word is constant. Only in God's eternal Word will we find lasting solutions to our problems and needs.²⁷

²³ The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

²⁴ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

²⁵ Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

²⁶ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

²⁷ Life Application Study Bible.

6-8. A second voice (cf. v. 3) spoke. This voice, probably God's, gave the command, probably to Isaiah, to cry out. The voice told him to contrast the difference between people and God. People are temporary and they change. They are like wild grass and flowers that come up in the springtime only to fade and fail when the weather gets hot (cf. Pss. 37:2; 102:11; 103:15-16). By contrast, God never fails for His Word endures forever. This fact would greatly comfort and encourage the people in exile who read these words. Because God's Word stands, His prophecy that the people would be restored to their land was sure to be fulfilled.²⁸

⁷The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people *is* grass.

7-8 Man is compared to the grass of the field. The question is, How can there be comfort in being reminded that we are like grass? Hence in California grass is beautiful after the spring rain; but not many weeks later, after the sun has beat upon it for awhile, it begins to wither and die. Man is just like that.

You say, "Well there is no comfort in that!" Yes, there is. Man is faint, frail, and feeble, but the Word of God is strong, sure, and secure. God's Word is our hiding place, a foundation upon which we can rest; it is our sword and buckler, high tower, protection, security, and salvation. In 1 Peter 1:23-25 we read, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." It is only the gospel that gives eternal life to man who naturally is just a transitory creature on this earth.²⁹

⁸The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

This is a glorious affirmation of the total sufficiency and eternal existence of God's word. Regardless of the decay of nature, human frailty, and changing circumstances, God's word is sure. He gives absolute promises which certainly will be accomplished. His word lives and breathes in the hearts of those who, through the ages, have been regenerated.³⁰

⁹O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift *it* up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

"Good tidings" = gospel (2 Cor 15:1-4; 1 Pet 1:21-25) Not appreciated unless one realizes what we are saved from.³¹

²⁸ The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

²⁹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

³⁰ Believers Study Bible

³¹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

[bringest good tidings] All world-wide missionary activity will proceed from Zion and Jerusalem when Christ comes (Isa. 2:2-4; 52:7; Zech. 8:23). The knowledge of the Lord will then cover the earth as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11:9).

[good tidings] The good tidings will be the good news to Judah that their God is reigning visibly in their midst through the Second Person of the Trinity (Isa. 9:6-7; 52:7; 63:1-5; Zech. 14; Lk. 1:32-33; Jude 1:14-15; Rev. 1:7; 11:15; 20:1-10).

[be not afraid] Four commands to Zion and Jerusalem:

1. Get up into the high mountain.
2. Lift up your voice with strength.
3. Be not afraid.
4. Say to the cities of Judah: Behold your God (cp. Isa. 52:7).

[Judah] Judah was the ruling tribe of Israel and it always will be, for the Messiah came through Judah and He will be the King of all Israel in Palestine (Isa. 9:6-7; 52:7; Gen. 49:10; Lk. 1:32-33; Rev. 11:15). Judah will be one of the names of the kingdom of Israel when they are regathered in the promised land (Isa. 11:10-12; Jer. 30-31; Ezek. 36-37).

[Behold your God] How could missionaries say this to the cities of Judah unless God was there visibly? See Isa. 9:6-7; 52:7; Zech. 14:9; Lk. 1:32-33; Rev. 11:15; 20:1-10.³²

"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!³³

9-11. Perhaps the one who was to take good tidings to Jerusalem was someone who was passing on Isaiah's message. The messenger was to tell loudly to the towns of Judah that God was coming (v. 9) to Jerusalem, restoring His people from exile. Presumably Isaiah envisioned the return from exile as leading immediately into the Millennium, though of course Bible passages written later indicate an extensive time gap between the two events. God was described first as the Sovereign Lord who is a powerful, conquering King (v. 10). He not only rules in power, but He also brings booty (His reward, i.e., blessings) with Him. Arm suggests strength, a concept Isaiah frequently mentioned (40:10; 51:5 [twice], 9; 52:10; 53:1; 59:1, 16; 60:4; 62:8; 63:5, 12). God was also pictured as a tender Shepherd (cf. Pss. 23:1; 80:1; John 10:11, 14; Heb. 13:20; 1 Peter 2:25; 5:4), who carefully carries and leads the weak and helpless members of His flock (cf. Jer. 13:17, 20; Micah 4:8; 5:4; 7:14; Zech. 10:3). These two aspects of the Lord's character are emphasized throughout this second portion of Isaiah's book.³⁴

Cities of Judah: Jesus is a Nazarene from Galilee. It may be argued, to fulfill this passage, that he was first introduced as the Messiah to those in Judea at his baptism by John the Baptist not far from Jerico on the banks of the Jordan River. However most of his teaching ministry took place in Galilee. Peter's confession of his Godhood, which this verse makes the center of the announcement, was in Galilee and his most important miracles (excluding the resurrection) were performed in Galilee. However what is specifically pointed out here is that the cities of Judah are

³² Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

³³ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

³⁴ The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

to receive him. Historically, in the return from Babylon, the second commonwealth of all twelve tribes was known as the Kingdom of Judah. The state of Israel was not reconstituted. Israel was contained in the nation of Judah. In that sense all the cities of the nation to which Jesus the Nazarene ministered and was announced as Messiah were, whether in Judea or Galilee, in Judah. Thus even Nazareth, Cana of Galilee and Capernaum were in Judah.³⁵

¹⁰Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong *hand*, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward *is* with him, and his work before him.

“Strange work” - Work is the Day of the Lord (or Time of Jacob’s Trouble, or the Great Tribulation) and his reward is with him.³⁶

Eight things God will do:

1. Come with power.
2. Rule with a strong arm.
3. Reward men when He comes.
4. Do a great work, changing the earth and all things therein.
5. Feed His flock like a shepherd (Isa. 40:11).
6. Gather the lambs with His arm.
7. Carry them in His bosom.
8. Gently lead those with young.

[his work before him] See Isa. 11:4-12; 35:1-10; 65:17-25; Zech. 14.³⁷

¹¹He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry *them* in his bosom, *and* shall gently lead those that are with young.

“Shepherd”: Cf. Jn 10:11, 14-16; Heb 13:20; 1 Pet 2:25; 5:4.

Now Isaiah, as he generally does, draws together the first and second comings of Christ. This verse looks forward to His second coming. Actually, the gospel includes both the first and second comings of Christ. We are apt to get sidetracked and put all the emphasis on Jesus' first coming or on His second coming. Well, let's put our emphasis on both comings, which is the totality of the gospel.³⁸

The Lord Jesus took the title of Shepherd when He came the first time. "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (John 10:11). He also said, "...I lay down my life for the sheep" (John 10:15).³⁹

³⁵ <http://www.moellerhaus.com/40-45.htm>

³⁶ Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

³⁷ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

³⁸ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

³⁹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

God is often pictured as a shepherd, gently caring for and guiding his flock. He is powerful (40:10), yet careful and gentle. He is called a shepherd (Psalm 23); the good shepherd (John 10:11, 14); the great Shepherd (Hebrews 13:20); and the Great Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4). Note that the shepherd is caring for the most defenseless members of his society: children and those caring for them. This reinforces the prophetic theme that the truly powerful nation is not the one with a strong military, but rather the one that relies on God's caring strength.⁴⁰

12Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?

Emphasis on quantitative design (not qualitative), calling our attention to God's precision.⁴¹

[measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span ...] This may be hyperbole -- a figure of speech wherein more is said than is literally meant. It could however, be literal in the sense of God measuring these things when He originally brought them into existence. Whether literal or figurative, this expresses God's greatness in contrast with the idols which Israel served at various times (Isa. 40:12-19; Job 28:25; 30:4).⁴²

Who has done that? To begin with, when you get out into space, you don't weigh anything; so who is doing the weighing today, and where is it going to be weighed? This verse makes me feel like singing "How Great Thou Art!"⁴³

12-31 Isaiah describes God's power to create, his provision to sustain, and his presence to help. God is almighty and all-powerful; but even so, he cares for each of us personally. No person or thing can be compared to God (40:25). We describe God as best we can with our limited knowledge and language, but we only limit our understanding of him and his power when we compare him to what we experience on earth. What is your concept of God, especially as revealed in his Son, Jesus Christ? Don't limit his work in your life by underestimating him.⁴⁴

12-14. By five rhetorical questions Isaiah emphasized that God, in creating the universe (v. 12), did not need anyone to assist Him (vv. 13-14). He is such a great Creator that all the waters of the globe were held, as it were, in His hand. Figuratively, He can measure the vast starry universe with the breadth of His hand. Also all the earth's dust could be put in a basket of His; and the mountains and hills, though vast, are so small compared with Him that He, figuratively speaking, could weigh them all on small scales. Though the immensity of Creation is awe-inspiring, no one on earth is God's equal.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Life Application Study Bible.

⁴¹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

⁴² Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

⁴³ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁴⁴ Life Application Study Bible.

⁴⁵ The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

¹³Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or *being* his counsellor hath taught him?

Holy Spirit: Gen 1:2 (order - negative entropy - out of chaos! Prov 3:19.)⁴⁶

Quoted by Paul in Rom. 11:34 and referred to in 1Cor. 2:16.

13-14 God knows no equal nor is there anyone to whom He can go for advice. Someone has asked the rather facetious question, "What is it that you have seen that God has never seen?" The answer is very simple. God has never seen His equal. I see mine every day.⁴⁷

13-14 Isaiah spoke of the infinite knowledge and skill the Lord possesses. No one on earth can claim to have taught the Lord anything. He did not need to consult anyone. Isaiah was probably thinking of the Creation account (Gen. 1) in which God spoke and Creation came into being. In irony God had also pointed out to Job by numerous questions that his knowledge was nothing compared with God's (Job 38:2-39:30).⁴⁸

¹⁴With whom took he counsel, and *who* instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?

¹⁵Behold, the nations *are* as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.

Verses 15-17 magnify the greatness of God, as Isa. 40:12 does.

15-17. Since God's Creation is so grandiose, the people of the nations are as nothing before Him (like a mere drop of water or dust particles on scales). All the wood and the animals in fertile, wooded Lebanon, north of Israel, would be inadequate for sacrifices that would be significant before the great God. The nations who do not know the Lord are worthless and less than nothing before Him.⁴⁹

¹⁶And Lebanon *is* not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering.

⁴⁶ Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

⁴⁷ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁴⁸ The Bible Knowledge Commentary

⁴⁹ The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

17All nations before him *are* as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.

[vanity] Hebrew: *tohuw* (HSN-<H8414>), emptiness. Translated "without form" in Gen. 1:2; Jer. 4:23.⁵⁰

18To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?

[then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him] Since God is so great and powerful, what can He be likened to? Certainly not to a lifeless image made by man (Isa. 40:19-20). Since He is such a Being as pictured in Isa. 40:12-17, what kind of image could one make of Him that would reveal the truth?⁵¹

You and I know very little. All we know is what He has revealed in the Word of God, and I don't think He has told us everything. To begin with, we can't even comprehend what He has told us. Isaiah is contrasting God to idols. "To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?" Look around you at the pictures of Him. Personally, I don't care for any pictures of Jesus because they are not pictures of Jesus. I don't become very popular when I say this. Stores that sell such pictures and people who are rather sentimental think I am terrible. But, my friend, we don't need pictures of Him. I agree with the old Scottish philosopher who said years ago, "Men never thought of painting a picture of Jesus until they had lost His presence in their hearts."⁵²

18-20. With irony Isaiah wrote about two idols—one made of metal by a craftsman and then overlaid with gold and decorated with silver ornaments, and another selected by a poor man from wood and fashioned so that it will not fall over. (Other passages denouncing idols are 41:7; 44:9-20; 45:16, 20; 46:1-2, 6-7; Pss. 115:4-7; 135:15-18; Jer. 10:8-16; Hab. 2:19.) Both of these idol-makers used materials God created, and skills that God gave them! God, however, is unlike any idol. He is the Creator of all things including people. God is unique.⁵³

19The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains.

Two kinds of images here:

1. Graven or molten images
2. Carved or wooden images, covered with metal (Isa. 40:20)⁵⁴

The rich make a very ornate idol. They have a rich god.

⁵⁰ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

⁵¹ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

⁵² Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁵³ The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

⁵⁴ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

²⁰He that *is* so impoverished that he hath no oblation chooseth a tree *that* will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, *that* shall not be moved.

The poor can have only a crude idol; he whittles out a god from a piece of wood. How preposterous idolatry is!⁵⁵

²¹Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth?

[from the foundations of the earth] Men have been told of God from the very beginning of the earth's creation. This is further proof that men and nations lived on earth under Lucifer and before the days of Adam.⁵⁶

It is utterly ridiculous to compare God to some dumb idol.

21-22. From His sovereign position in heaven God watches over His created universe. You (used four times in v. 21) refers to people in general. The force of the first question, for example, is "Doesn't everyone know this?" (cf. v. 28) The Lord is like a king sitting enthroned above the circle (hûg, "horizon," which is circular; cf. Job 26:10; Prov. 8:27) of the earth and over His people who by comparison seem like mere grasshoppers. The heavens (the sky) are pictured as spread out like a tent for Him to live in (cf. Ps. 104:2). Isaiah was not presenting a detailed idea of God's abode. He was merely using imagery that his readers would easily understand.⁵⁷

²²It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof *are* as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in:

Circle or sphere of the earth (declared two centuries before Christ!).

"Stretches out the heavens as a curtain"—modern scientists now describe the universe as being uncurled (black hole, ultimate of the uncurl; Gen 1:4; Cf. Isa 34:4).⁵⁸

[he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers] The idea is that God sits so far above the round earth that men look like mere grasshoppers or locusts. This is a striking illustration of man's insignificance as God sees him from the heavens. Man appears as a busy, agitated, raging multitude spread over the earth like bands of locusts over the plains of the East.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁵⁶ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

⁵⁷ The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

⁵⁸ Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

⁵⁹ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

[circle] Hebrew: chuwg (HSN-<H2329>). Translated "circle" (Isa. 40:22); "circuit" (Job 22:14); and "compass" (Pr. 8:27). This word revealed that the earth was round, long before men generally accepted it.⁶⁰

The Old Testament does not teach that the earth is flat; but scientists in the days of Columbus taught this theory. Those so-called scientists did not pay attention to the Word of God in that day, and they missed something. And I think scientists are missing something today. It is clearly stated in this verse that the earth is a sphere, a circle positioned in an even greater universe, and that God's throne is far beyond the penetration of the most powerful telescopes as they search out the limitless vault of space.⁶¹

Thin Curtain

Hebrew: doq (HSN-<H1852>), something crumbling; fine, as a thin cloth; curtain (Isa. 40:22). This may refer to the ozone layer. The sun gives off various kinds of violet rays -- some deadly, some beneficial. We are shielded from at least 8 harmful rays by a layer of ozone about 1/8 in. thick. This seems to be the proper thickness to allow beneficial rays to come through while protecting us from destructive ones. If this curtain were removed, life on earth would come to an end, for the harmful rays would blind, blister, and kill. If it were thicker it would prevent the needful rays from coming through, and life would perish. At an altitude of 8 miles the atmosphere is -67 degrees F, but at 30 miles it is +170 degrees F. We are shielded from a constant barrage of meteors from space, the majority of which burn up before reaching earth. Billions of meteoric bodies are said to invade the atmosphere each day to be destroyed by friction; and about 100,000 tons of star dust falls to the earth each year. Dust in the atmosphere, along with reflection from the sun, contributes to the makeup of light, rain, and snow. Otherwise the heavens would be black; even now they are black 17 miles up, with a luminous glow below. The protective covering of ozone is about 40 miles up. We live at the very bottom of an ocean of air which provides us with life-giving oxygen; and the atmosphere is a perfect blanket or curtain of insulation against both heat and cold. It prevents the rapid escape of heat and keeps us from freezing; and it also acts as a great reservoir and distributor of heat and light from the sun. Thus, God has adjusted earth, atmosphere and the heavens to sustain life.⁶²

23^{That bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity.}

None who oppose God's plan, regardless of their wealth and power, are a real hindrance to God. He can and does remove them, making them as nothing whenever they get in His way (Job 12:21; Ps. 2:10; 107:40).⁶³

23-24. In controlling history God establishes rulers and removes them (cf. Dan. 2:21). This truth would have been comforting to Isaiah's original readers who were living under the threat of the

⁶⁰ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

⁶¹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁶² Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

⁶³ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

Assyrian Empire and who heard his prophecy that the Babylonian Empire would take them into captivity.⁶⁴

²⁴Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble.

Those who oppose God will be cut off; even their posterity will not continue on earth. Their names and families will become extinct and grow no more than a stump left in the earth (Nahum 1:14).⁶⁵

²⁵To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One.

God does not argue for Himself in Genesis. Bible opens on the presumption of the existence of God. Isa 2, God articulates His Own Case.⁶⁶

25-26. God, who cannot be compared to anyone or anything (cf. v. 18; 46:5) knows everything about His Creation and sustains it. In His strength He created and also controls and sustains millions upon millions of stars, each one of which He, amazingly, has named (cf. Ps. 147:4). In Isaiah 40-66, God is frequently referred to as Creator and Maker, probably as a polemic against the lifeless idols of Babylon. He created the heavens, the earth, people, Israel, and darkness, and will create the new heavens and new earth.⁶⁷

²⁶Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these *things*, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that *he is* strong in power; not one faileth.

“Calleth them all by name”; Cf. Ps 147:4,5.

Here (and in several other places) God appealed to the heavens as proof of His existence and perfection, and as a demonstration of His greatness and power (Isa. 42:5; 44:24; 45:18; 48:13; 51:6-16; Ps. 19:1-6; 97:6; 104:2; Zech. 12:1). This argument is becoming more impressive as men learn more about the heavens.

[names by the greatness of his might] Besides stars, God knows the name and number of billions of other things in creation (Isa. 45:18).

[not one faileth] Nothing in creation, that is run by natural laws, ever fails regarding its creative purpose.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

⁶⁵ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

⁶⁶ Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

⁶⁷ The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

⁶⁸ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

27 Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God?

(Isa. 40:9,27; 1:2; 2:1).

Jacob's name was changed to Israel. Generally, once changed it stays changed (ex. Abram to Abraham, Sarai to Sarah). However, Jacob is an exception, the name "Jacob" is used when he is being carnal, and "Israel" when he is being spiritual. The same with the nation Israel. Here Isaiah uses both terms. ("God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" - should give us comfort!)⁶⁹

God knows about the difficulties and problems of His people. If you belong to Him, He is able to quiet the storms of life, but sometimes there are lessons for His own to learn in the storm. When you find yourself in the midst of a storm, instead of sitting and weeping and criticizing God, why don't you look around and find out what lesson He wants you to learn? God will not let you go through trials unless He has something for you to learn.⁷⁰

God's people should never think He has forgotten them. Jacob and Israel are synonyms for all 12 tribes. In chapters 40-49, Isaiah used these two words together 16 times (40:27; 41:8, 14; 42:24; 43:1, 22, 28; 44:1, 5, 21, 23; 45:4; 46:3; 48:1; 49:5-6). Though the people of the Northern Kingdom were already exiled to Assyria, God was still watching over the few believers who remained true to Him. His covenant people should never think God did not see or remember them.⁷¹

28 Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, *that* the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? *there is* no searching of his understanding.

Ps 121: 4 ("He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.")

Three names and titles of God:

1. The everlasting God ('Elohiym (HSN-<H430>), Triune God)
2. The Lord (Jehovah (Yahweh (HSN-<H3068>), the Eternal)
3. The Creator (Isa. 43:15; Eccl. 12:1; Rom. 1:25; 1Pet. 4:19)

[not, neither is weary] Three things man cannot do:

1. Exhaust God's power and cause Him to faint
2. Make Him weary of doing things for His own people who love and submit to Him; He can only be wearied by sin and rebellion (Isa. 43:23-24; Mal. 2:17)
3. Search out God's understanding (Job 11:7-9)⁷²

We have a great God. He never gets tired. He is not like man.

⁶⁹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

⁷⁰ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁷¹ The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

⁷² Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

28-31. On the question Do you not know? see comments on verse 21. Since God, who unlike pagan idols is eternal and the Creator, never grows weary (v. 28) He can give strength to those who are weary or weak (vv. 29-31). Among Isaiah's original readers those who hope in the Lord were believers who remained faithful to God. They were the ones who would be restored. For his readers in captivity Isaiah was probably speaking of a national refreshing when the captives would be released and would return to their land. Even though in captivity they were weary the Lord would help them endure and soar... like eagles, to be uplifted emotionally and spiritually.⁷³

28-31 The questions of v. 28 are designed to call Israel's attention to the folly of her attitude. God is entirely free from all that is defective and imperfect in man. If He were to grow weary, all nature and every man would fail and drop into nothingness. There is no denial that God can be known. The entire context strongly argues that He can be known. However, man must trust God for deliverance because His ways are incomprehensible and beyond the understanding of man. God is also able to supply man with strength and energy, even man's very existence, because out of His divine abundance He can supply strength to even the most weary of men. The "young men" were those in prime physical condition and most fit for athletic contest; yet even these tire and become weary. The "eagle" is a common metaphor for strength (cf. Ex 19:4; Deut 32:11). God's strength is available for all who wait in patience for God's purposes to be carried out.⁷⁴

²⁹He giveth power to the faint; and to *them that have* no might he increaseth strength.

This is one of God's attributes that is exercised constantly toward those who are in need (Jas. 1:17).⁷⁵

29-31 Even the strongest people get tired at times, but God's power and strength never diminish. He is never too tired or too busy to help and listen. His strength is our source of strength. When you feel all of life crushing you and you cannot go another step, remember that you can call upon God to renew your strength.⁷⁶

³⁰Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:

30-31 There are three degrees of power here, and several expositors have likened them to the three stages of Christian growth that you have in 1John 2:12-14. These three stages of growth are: (1) the young Christian shall mount up as an eagle; (2) the adult Christian shall run; and (3) the mature Christian shall walk.

This reminds me of the black preacher down in my southland who preached a very wonderful sermon, in which he said, "Brethren, this church, it needs to walk." And one of the deacons said, "Amen." He continued, "Brethren, this church needs to run." And the deacon said, "Hallelujah." Then he said, "Brethren, this church needs to fly." And this deacon said, "Amen and hallelujah."

⁷³ The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

⁷⁴ Believers Study Bible

⁷⁵ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

⁷⁶ Life Application Study Bible.

Then the minister said, "Well, it's going to cost money to make this church fly." To this the deacon replied, "Let her walk, brother, let her walk."

My friend, regardless of who you are, if you are going to move with God through this earth, it will cost you something. But God will furnish you strength whatever your condition. If you need strength to walk, He will give it to you. If you need strength to fly, He has that for you also. This is a wonderful chapter revealing the comfort of God as our Creator, as our Savior, and as our Sustainer.⁷⁷

³¹But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew *their* strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; *and* they shall walk, and not faint.

Not in climatic order. (Real test, endurance, the walk.)⁷⁸

The most vigorous and powerful men may faint under strain and utterly fall, but those who wait on the Lord shall:

1. Renew their strength (Isa. 40:31).
2. Mount up with wings as eagles.
3. Run and not be weary.
4. Walk and not faint.⁷⁹

[wait upon] Hebrew: qavah (HSN-<H6960>), to bind together by twisting; to expect; gather together; look patiently for; wait for or upon (Isa. 40:31; 49:23; 51:5; 59:9; 60:9; Ps. 25:3,5,21; 27:14; 37:9,34; 40:1; 52:9; 69:6; 130:5; Prov. 20:22; Jer. 14:22; Lam. 3:25; Hos. 12:6).

[renew] Hebrew: chalaph (HSN-<H2498>), to slide by or hasten away; pass on; spring up; change; alter; go forward; grow up; renew; sprout; strike through (Isa. 40:31; 41:1).

[as eagles] They mount up like eagles, not that they become young again. Eagles can mount up without becoming young again and this is all that is stated here.⁸⁰

Trusting in the Lord is the patient expectation that God will fulfill his promises in his Word and strengthen us to rise above life's difficulties. Do you believe God loves you and wants the best for you? Can you relax, confident that his purposes are right? Are you convinced that he has the power to control all of life—and your life as well? Though your faith may be struggling or weak, accept his provisions and care for you.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁷⁸ Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

⁷⁹ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

⁸⁰ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

⁸¹ Life Application Study Bible.