

**CALVARY PANDAN
BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

DHW BIBLE CLASS

LESSON 40

ISAIAH

CHAPTER 40

Theme: "The Incomparable Comfort of God!"

THEME VERSE

Isaiah 40:18 (KJV) "To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him? . . . 22 It 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: 23 That bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. "

INTRODUCTION

The focus in this chapter of Isaiah is none other than the LORD God. His attributes were highlighted for Israel's encouragement.

Israel had just experienced God's greatness in dealing with the Assyrian superpower. Many more superpowers would arise to conquer the Promised Land. Israel would lose her sovereignty for a few hundred years until 1948 AD when she would return to her own land and be an

independent nation again! Until that day, Israel would need all the encouragement that she could get from the LORD.

What is the best way to get out of the doldrums when one is feeling downcast and dejected? Some go to parties to be cheered by friends and merry making. Some eat to forget their sorrows. Others hide in a corner to lick their wounds. These methods may work for a moment but they do not provide lasting comfort to the soul. Once these externals "factors" are removed, the pain and sorrow will return and sometimes they return with a vengeance. The LORD does not want His people to be fooled by these temporal and futile ways. The solution is to go to God's Word. But which aspect of God's Word provides the best comfort to the heart and soul of God's people?

For a believer, there is no better encouragement than the attributes of the LORD. The more one knows God, the stronger will be one's faith. It is easier to trust someone that one knows well.

This chapter reveals the power and greatness of God at a time when Israel was under tremendous strain. Israel had already been destroyed by the Assyrians. The spiritual and emotional condition of the people, who remained in the land of Israel, was at an all time low. Judah, the southern kingdom, had by the grace and mercy of God narrowly escaped the wrath of the Assyrians.

The primary purpose of this chapter is described in the words of

the LORD for His people "Comfort ye, comfort ye!"

OUTLINE

1. Comforting His People (v.1-2);
2. Crying for Comfort (vv. 3-8);
3. Crying to God (vv. 9-11);
4. The Omniscient and Omnipotent God (vv. 12-17).
5. The Sovereignty of God (vv. 18-26)
6. The Omnipresent God – 40:27-31

COMMENTARY

Comforting His People – 40:1-2

The LORD sought to comfort His people. The double usage of the same verbal imperative "comfort" emphasized the urgency of the time. It served as a reminder that the LORD was aware and He cared. It was not the end of the world even though Israel had ceased to exist as a nation for the first time in her history after the conquest of the Promised Land. What a difficult and painful time for God's people, regardless of whether they were from the north or the south (Judah) of the Promised Land. They were so badly demoralized by what had happened that they needed urgent encouragement from the LORD. The use of the first personal pronoun "my people" reminded Israel that even though they had been destroyed as a nation, they were still God's people.

This encouragement was not for the dispersed and devastated northern Israelites alone but all Israelites in the

northern and southern kingdoms. This was what God said. The use of "Elohim" in verse 1 points to the power of God rather than the covenantal relationship. The power of God had not diminished and the LORD God remained in control. How could the people of God fail so miserably and be so easily defeated by a Gentile foe? Would this reflect on the LORD's ability to protect His own? Did the defeated Israelites, including the Jews, entertain such thoughts?

The only capital city that remained that represented God's people was Jerusalem. To tell the capital city was as good as telling the whole nation for the capital city represented the whole nation when used in this manner. Speak (imperative) to Jerusalem comfortably i.e. use words to comfort Jerusalem. The people were hurting. Cry (imperative) to her and let her know that her warfare was accomplished. The time for battle was accomplished i.e. full and ended. There would be no more war upon His people. The destruction of Israel for her many sins was done and completed.

Tell Jerusalem that her iniquity i.e. the iniquity of her northern neighbour had been pardoned for she had received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins. Israel had paid fully for her many sins. The punishment was a double dosage that fitted the manifold sins that had been committed by Israel for the past 200 years since the time of the divided kingdom. The period of the single kingdom had arrived. The name LORD

was used to remind Judah that the covenant still stood with her.

Crying for Comfort – 40:3-8

Without any transition, the Word of God ushered in a phrase that was used in the New Testament to describe the ministry of John the Baptist (cf. Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 1:76; John 1:23). Without a doubt, this verse was a prophecy of the ministry of John the Baptist. Of course, the Jews at that time did not know what we know in terms of the specificity of the prophecy such as his name was John. But this prophecy was a tremendous encouragement to the people of God in that it revealed a future coming of Christ which meant that Israel would continue to exist, at least up to the coming of the Messiah. Not only that the Messiah would come from Israel but that He would be the future hope of the people of God!

The meaning of verse 3 to the people of God was that there would be someone from Israel who would cry in the wilderness "Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." A voice from the wilderness is understood as one who goes ahead of the king. He is the forerunner of the king. His duty is to prepare the way before the king arrives. Make straight the path in the desert means that it is unchartered territory. The voice in the wilderness will sound out something that his King will do that has not been seen before. A highway" is a broad thoroughfare that many can tread on. The King will bring a huge entourage with Him when He comes!

Verse 4 -- When the King comes, every valley shall be exalted i.e. elevated high. Every mountain and hill shall be made low. The crooked i.e. twisted shall be straightened for easy travel. The rough places will be made plain i.e. level for smooth travelling. If understood literally, it means that no obstacle will prevent the King from coming and accomplishing His work and rule. If understood figuratively, it means that the poor and downcast will be promoted i.e. become believers of the Messiah, while the proud and arrogant will be humbled. The crooked refers to the polluted and deceitful. They will be made righteous by the Messiah. The rough places refer to their behaviour, life and conduct which will be transformed to righteous living.

Verse 5 – The glory of the LORD shall be revealed when the Messiah comes for He is the Emmanuel i.e. God incarnate walking in the midst of man. All flesh shall see it together i.e. when Christ walks on the earth in the future, all Gentiles and Jews will see Him. He will perform miracles. His perfect life and teaching will be seen by all who meet Him. The mouth of the LORD hath spoken it. This means that it will certainly come to pass. The people of God should not doubt this wonderful and comforting prophecy regarding the future of Israel.

Verse 6 – A switch is made here. The voice said "Cry". Whose voice is this? It has to be the voice of God to His people. Immediately we are brought back to the present and the frailty of man is emphasized by the LORD.

This is followed by the response, "What shall I cry?" What is it that man has to cry about? This seems a legitimate question for God's people to ask! It is true that Israel has been destroyed but there is not much that can be done now. Furthermore, Judah seemed to be in good condition under the reign of king Hezekiah, or at least for the time being while he was still in office. What was there for God's people or even Isaiah to cry about?

The answer was man's frailty: "All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field." This was a very sobering reminder from the LORD to a people who seemed to think that life on earth was all about merry making, gathering in the harvest, looking forward to a luxurious life every moment of every day!

Far from it, said the LORD! Take a long hard look within man's soul. How much time does man really have on this earth? What is the most important thing in his life that he ought to deal with immediately before he dies! His life is brief, in fact, very, very brief. It can be compared to the grass which looks green today but very soon it will turn brown and die! Its beauty is also compared to the flower of the field that appears in the morning but by evening is dried up and gone.

The fleeting nature of man's life is what man has to cry about! Man is wasting his life on things temporal. He does not realize how brief his life on earth really is! If he knows then he will probably sin less, be more serious in his outlook and search diligently for the

answer to life after death. Where will he be if he were to die in his sin? These are critical questions that man must find an answer to.

Man is busy making money and supposedly living the "good" life. In reality, however, he is living the life of a condemned man. The big difference is that the condemned man in prison knows that he is condemned and he wants to make peace with his Creator, whereas man today lives in ignorance indulging in a drunken stupor pursuing thrash (which they call wealth) that will soon be destroyed by fire.

Verse 7 – Does man not know that the grass withereth and the flower fadeth? As he grows older, the aches and pains in his body will remind him of this truth! Yet he stubbornly ignores it to his own peril and refuses to find an answer to the problem of sin, death and hell. Why do the grass wither and the flower fade? It is because the Spirit of the LORD blows upon them. Man's time on this earth is not in his hands but in the LORD's. Israel should know better. She had the Word of God, the Temple and the entire priesthood to instruct and educate her. Yet the people of God were just as complacent as their Gentile neighbours! Instead of influencing the world to Christ, Israel had been influenced by the world to her shame!

Would Israel cry in repentance and return to the LORD? For the sake of Christ and His testimony, Israel must! So God said, surely the people is grass! This metaphor is vivid and clear. Man is very frail. He must take stock of his being right now and ask

himself if he knows Jesus Christ as his Saviour and Lord. Only Christ alone is able to deliver him out of the bondage of sin, death and hell.

Verse 8 – Repeating what was mentioned in verse 7 for emphasis, the Bible contrasts the eternal Word of God with the very brief life of man! Without a doubt, man who is like the grass and the flower of the field will wither and fade but the Word of God is eternal! What is the significance of this contrast? The best and most healthy young man will grow old and die. Man should come to his senses, take stock of his brief life and take the necessary steps to change. He should be prepared because, in no time, he will meet his Creator.

The Word of God has warned man of the brevity of life but this truth continues to be challenged and attacked. Will man not listen, repent and turn from his sins? Of wretched sinful man, there is much to cry before God. There is no merry making when sin is our master and death is the wages of this evil master.

Crying to God – 40:9-11

Isaiah called to the people of God to bring good tidings to God. He addressed them using the name of the capital "Zion" – this means that he was addressing the entire nation. The people were commanded to bring good tidings to the high mountain i.e. bring good news to the Mountain of God (Jerusalem).

In the next phrase, the word Jerusalem is used instead of Zion. Zion means "a sign" while Jerusalem

means "founded peaceful". The two names were used to describe the same city.

The first name Zion is a sign to the people of God that Israel was under God's protection and would remain a people of God till the first coming of Christ. The second name Jerusalem refers to the peace that would surely come to and through Israel. Peace would be what the LORD would bring as the Prince of peace.

The people of Judah had good reasons to come before God with good tidings of praise and thanksgiving. The LORD had been good to them all their days. They were challenged by the LORD not to be weary but to lift up their voices with strength. Do not be cast down by what had happened to Israel but be encouraged. Do not be afraid of the enemies. They would not prevail as long as the LORD was on Israel's side. The LORD would remain on the side of Judah as long they remained faithful and true to Him. Isaiah was told by God to tell the cities of Judah to behold their God. They should not look to man or they would be discouraged by the carnal philosophies of the world.

Verse 10 – Behold the LORD God will come with a strong hand and His arm shall rule for Him. This is the best reason for bringing good tidings before the LORD. The people of God will always have this blessed hope of the LORD being with His people. The question is whether this refers to His first or second coming or neither! If it refers to the first or second coming, then the phrase LORD God means

Christ. Some commentators argue that it refers to the second coming because Christ comes to rule with a strong hand. Others say that it refers to the first coming because the strong hand refers to the strength of Christ to break the bondage of sin.

However, my opinion is that it does not refer to either as the context is one of impending exile based upon the judgment of God against king Hezekiah. Israel would have reason to bring before the LORD good tidings despite the news of their impending exile because the LORD would come with a strong hand to deliver Judah. The arm of the LORD God would rule for Him. He knows what He is doing and at the right time, Israel/Judah would return to the Promised Land. Do not be disheartened by the prophecy of exile. The reward and work of the LORD was to restore the Promised Land back to Israel. This included the rebuilding of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem in the times of Ezra and Nehemiah. Based on this opinion, the LORD God refers to the Heavenly Father who had been dealing with Israel all along up to this point of time.

Verse 11 – The LORD God shall feed His people like a shepherd. The illustration of a shepherd feeding his sheep exemplifies protection and great personal care. The tender care of the shepherd for his sheep is described in Psalm 23. He shall gather his lambs with his arm. He does so because the lambs are too young to walk or catch up with the rest of the flock. This is what a good shepherd will do for his flock. The weakest will

be well taken care of. None will be left behind or ignored. He carries them in his bosom. The sure protective arm of the shepherd will calm the lambs. They will feel safe and secure in his bosom. No harm will come to them for the shepherd protects them with his life.

He gently leads those that are with young. They are too heavy for him to carry but these ewe lambs will be led safely for he accompanies them to ensure that no wolf or lion attacks them as they follow slowly behind the flock. They are most vulnerable but not when the shepherd walks beside them.

The Omniscient and Omnipotent God – 40:12-17

From here to the end of the chapter, the attributes of the LORD God are highlighted to assure Judah that the LORD is capable of doing what He promised. The present generation would probably die before the exile. Some would see the exile but would not live to see the end of the exile. But they must believe by faith that what the LORD had said would surely take place in the future. Their present life must not be one of hopelessness but one of trust and even victory in the face of the greatest defeat in Judah's history, to go into exile!

The LORD God has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand! Two thirds of our planet is covered by water. It is impossible for us to measure its volume, to contain it or collect it. The water around us is indeed frightful. We cannot do without it but too much of it can kill us. We swim in it but fear it at the same time

because it has claimed countless lives throughout the ages. But to the LORD God, it is like a tiny little cup of water! He can easily measure it in the hollow of His hand! He knows how much water there is on earth at all times regardless of how it changes with the tide and thunderstorms.

He metes out heaven with the span. The span is the measurement of a person's outstretched hand from the tip of his thumb to the tip of his last finger. Heaven is beyond man's ability to penetrate, impossible even with today's best telescopes. The latest technology is not able to fathom the vast "infinite" expanse of heaven. Man has always been stumped by what is in outer space. Yet the LORD God measures it by simply stretching out His hands.

The LORD God also comprehends the dust of the earth in a measure. The amount of dust is innumerable. No man can figure out the amount of dust there is on earth! Yet the LORD God measures it like grains on a weighing scale.

Mountains and hills all over the earth are like eternal monuments bigger than anything that man can ever build. In comparison the tallest and largest building on earth throughout the ages cannot even come close to the size of one of God's mountains. Yet the LORD God weighs all the mountains and hills in the world together by putting them on a scale that He holds in His hand.

These mind boggling thoughts are far from the hearts and minds of mortal men but to the LORD they are

like the knowledge of young children. Not even the best computers today can compute these numbers but to the LORD God of Israel, this earth is like a little pebble in His all knowing hand.

Verse 13 – Is there anyone that the LORD God needs to consult before he does anything? Has there been anyone who can teach the Spirit of the LORD? He knows all things all at the same time. He does not gain knowledge or lose knowledge. He is not only omniscient but also immutable in His omniscience.

Verse 14 – Does the LORD God seek anyone's counsel? Has anyone instructed Him even in the slightest way or taught Him in the path of judgment? When the LORD God makes His judgments, does He not make them all alone? He does not seek help from anyone when he makes His judgments on what is right and what is wrong.

Who can teach the LORD God knowledge that He does not already have from the beginning of time? Who can show Him the way of understanding? All before Him are creatures created by Him. Can the creatures ever teach the Creator?

Verse 15 – The nations of the earth are to the LORD God like a drop in a bucket and the small dust on the balance. The LORD did not say that the nations are like many drops or many grains of dust. All the nations of the world combined together from the time of Adam to the end of time at Christ's second coming are likened to one single drop in a bucket or a grain of dust on a balance! What a

tremendous illustration of His power and might!

The LORD God takes up all the islands on the earth like a man picking up a tiny object. The thousands of islands strewn all over the earth when combined together is like a little thing that He carries in His hand.

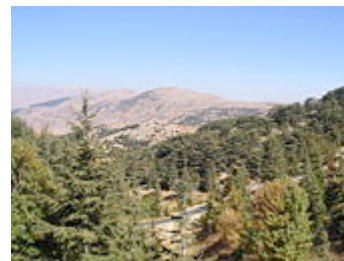
We feel so easily threatened by men with power. But what have we to fear seeing that we have such an awesome God as our Heavenly Father? How foolish is man to worry about inflation, the cost of houses and how our children are going to survive in the expensive future! What a tragedy when man puts God into a tiny little bottle and shortens His arm as if He cannot help. Christians today have made God into their own image, although many will not admit it. What a shame! We need to have this glorious picture of God in these last days more than the people of God in Isaiah's time. Yet we tragically ignore these wonderful truths to our own detriment by living a defeated life void of the abundant life that Christ has promised every believer! Will we ever awaken to the glorious and wonderful life that we already have in Christ Jesus now and not just only after glorification?

Verse 16 – Lebanon is not sufficient to burn or the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering unto the LORD God. Lebanon is well known for its innumerable huge cedar trees found in its forests. Because of the fertility of the land in Lebanon, the beasts especially the bulls are well fed and therefore very huge compared to the bulls that lived in the plains. All of

these are not enough to be burned as burnt offerings before the LORD! Those who have seen the enormous forests of Lebanon will understand this picture much better.

Below is a brief description of present day Lebanon downloaded from the internet.
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lebanon>

"The country's surface area is 10,452 square kilometres (4,036 sq mi) of which 10,230 square kilometres (3,950 sq mi) is land. Lebanon has a coastline and border of 225 kilometres (140 mi) on the Mediterranean sea to the west, a 375 kilometres (233 mi) border shared with Syria to the north and east and a 79 kilometres (49 mi) long border with Israel to the south.^[64] The border with the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights is disputed by Lebanon in a small area called Shebaa Farms. Lebanon is divided into four distinct physiographic regions: the coastal plain, the Lebanon mountain range, the Beqaa valley and the Anti-Lebanon mountains.



Mountain scenery in Barouk

The narrow and discontinuous coastal plain stretches from the Syrian border in the north where it widens to form the Akkar plain to Ras al-Naqoura at the border with Israel in the south. The

fertile coastal plain is formed of marine sediments and river deposited alluvium alternating with sandy bays and rocky beaches. The Lebanon mountains rise steeply parallel to the Mediterranean coast and form a ridge of limestone and sandstone that runs for most of the country's length. The mountain range varies in width between 10 km and 56 km; it is carved by narrow and deep gorges. The Lebanon mountains peak at 3,088 metres (10,131 ft) above sea level in Qurnat as Sawda' in North Lebanon and gradually slope to the south before rising again to a height of 2,695 metres (8,842 ft) in Mount Sannine. The Beqaa valley sits between the Lebanon mountains in the west and the Anti-Lebanon range in the east; it is a part of the Great Rift Valley system. The valley is 180 km long and 10 to 26 km wide, its fertile soil is formed by alluvial deposits. The Anti-Lebanon range runs parallel to the Lebanon mountains, its highest peak is in Mount Hermon at 2,814 metres (9,232 ft). The mountains of Lebanon are drained by seasonal torrents and rivers foremost of which is the 145 kilometres (90 mi) long Leontes that rises in the Beqaa Valley to the west of Baalbek and empties into the Mediterranean Sea north of Tyre."

Verse 17 – All the nations of man are nothing before the LORD God. The LORD has evaluated them and found them to be less than nothing and to be vanity i.e. emptiness (same word that is used to describe the earth in Genesis 1:2 –"without form"). The LORD sees them all and weighed them all accordingly and considered them as total emptiness! To man these

are so-called superpowers and great dynasties. They left behind great monuments and architectural buildings to depict their greatness and power in times of great strength. But as far as the LORD God is concerned, all these superpowers are regarded as emptiness. They are not even seen as minor power but as zero power before God! This includes the so-called mighty United States of America supposedly the greatest superpower of all time because of its nuclear capabilities. However, in the eyes of the LORD, it is emptiness, zero power. There is absolutely nothing that man has on this earth that is real power. Man has no power outside of what other men gives him. How can puny men give power to man? He himself has no power at all. He is grass and wild flower that come and go and soon fade into nothingness! Such frail creatures possess no power and can give no power to any man. God alone has true powers. His power is inherent in Him who is God Almighty. He needs no man to give Him power. Man can reject and deny Him but He will still be God untouched by Man's futile rejection.

The Sovereignty of God – 40:18-26

Can anyone or anything be compared to God? There is only one living and true God and beside Him there is none other. Our LORD is God Almighty. Since no one can be compared to Him in all His immutable attributes, God's people have nothing to be afraid of. Yes the exile of Judah is coming. But God's people need not fear. There is none like our Heavenly

Father who sits on the throne. Everything in heaven and on earth is under His sovereign will and control.

Verse 19 –The workman melts a graven image and then the goldsmith spreads it over with gold and casts upon it silver chains. These may look glorious and beautiful in the eyes of man but how can anything so lifeless be a true representation of the living and true God! The works of man's hands are just idols.

Verse 20 – It is an irony that a person who is so impoverished i.e. poor that he cannot afford to bring an oblation i.e. offering to the LORD will take the time to choose a tree that will not rot and seek out a skillful workman to prepare a graven image out of this tree and call it god! Such foolish sincerity is an abomination to the LORD. How could Israel commit such a heinous sin against the LORD? They had everything before them to see the light and the truth and yet they made God into an image with their own hands.

Verse 21-22 – Using a series of four rhetorical questions the LORD rebuked those who were blind and had turned to idols calling these idols Jehovah God! These questions included "have ye not known?" which pointed to old knowledge and not new knowledge to Israel. What the LORD was teaching Judah was old theology! The second question was, "Have ye not heard?" which implied that these teachings of the LORD through Isaiah had sounded out before through the corridors of Israel's history! The Old Testament was replete with the power

and deeds of the LORD God! The third question was, "Hath it not been told Israel from the beginning?" which implied that from the very beginning of her existence, the doctrines about God had already been given to Israel. Israel made her covenant with the LORD with her eyes open. The fourth and final question was, "Have Israel not understood from the foundation of the earth?" which meant that Israel could not be this blind to have never understood at all! Israel had proper understanding of the nature and attribute of God in the past but that seemed to have changed!

It is the LORD that sits upon the circle of the earth -- this means that the LORD rules over it and the earth is subjected to His will. Since the LORD sits on the earth, how can something made by the hands of man using materials of the earth ever truly represent the LORD? It is utterly impossible.

Furthermore the inhabitants of the earth are like grasshoppers to the LORD. They hop along on the earth as if they are really moving but in reality they are hopping to nowhere! Man is locked onto the earth and he is like the grasshopper hopping here and there thinking that he has moved! But he is still on the earth and has not moved at all. The man and the grasshopper are small and contemptible before the LORD God.

The LORD on the other hand is great and transcendent. He stretches out the heavens as a curtain. He is like a man who draws the curtains in his house. Whenever He feels like it, He

draws it open and He closes it at will. This is what the LORD does to the heavens! He spreads them out like a tent to dwell in. How can finite man comprehend such a great imagery as this? The heaven is a vast expanse that is beyond man's comprehension and yet the LORD spreads it like a curtain and He dwells in the great expanse of the heaven. This is anthropocentric language to give man a glimpse of God's greatness. Man can never represent Him in any form, shape or size no matter how beautiful, glorious or expensive the graven image may be! The idolatrous representation is sin and a great insult to the LORD God!

Verse 23 – The power of the LORD God over the princes of the world is the next focus. The LORD reduces them to nothing! When does He do that? When they die! All their power and princely glory are reduced to nothingness when they die! They end up in the grave like everyone else. The pauper lies underneath the earth when they die just like the prince! All earthly status and distinction, including the princes of the world, are reduced to naught when they die.

The LORD makes the judges of the earth as vanity (same word as in Genesis 1:2). Judges condemn men who stand before them. They have power to acquit some who stand before them. They may judge man and have power over all men but before the LORD God they are nothing! They are judged by the LORD. They are condemned by the LORD. None will escape Him.

These are the two most visible offices on earth (princes and judges) and yet before the LORD, they are emptiness.

Verse 24 – When it comes to the food chain that man enjoys on earth, it is definitely not mother earth that they should thank or cry to for help, but the LORD God. What man plants and sows are according to the sovereign will of God. The LORD determines what kind of earth is good for what kind of seeds. He alone decides whether that seed will germinate and become a full grown plant to supply food to man. This entire system of planting, growing and sowing is the act of the LORD.

If the LORD wants them to die, He can easily blow upon them and they will die. Man's efforts in planting and growing are futile before the LORD for the increase of the land is in the LORD's hand. When He blows upon them, they wither and die. He sends the whirlwind and they are blown away like stubbles in the wind. The climate that sustains life is in the control of the LORD. He turns it off and man dies! The wind blows where He wills.

Verse 25 – In conclusion, the LORD repeats the rhetorical question, "To whom then will Israel liken the LORD or shall He be equal to?" The resounding answer is absolutely no one! He is all powerful and absolutely no one is His equal. No one even comes close!

Verse 26 – To encourage Judah and the remaining Israelites, they were told to lift up their eyes on

high, i.e. do not look down. If Judah looked at one another, they would not see the LORD. God's people must look up and not allow man or circumstances to dictate their life of faith.

See the power of the LORD God over His creation. He created them all. The hosts are brought out by the LORD every day according to their number. These hosts include the sun, the moon and the millions of stars in the heaven. The sun rises and sets. The moon appears and disappears. The stars come and go. All of them are in the control of the LORD. He even calls them all by their names according to the greatness of His might (see Genesis 1:14-19). All of them function according to the power and sovereign will of the Almighty God. Not one of them shall fail unless God wants them to fail. There are no accidents on this earth and in the heavens.

The Omnipresent God – 40:27-31

When the people of God sin and try to hide from the LORD, they are being foolish. The LORD deliberately called Israel "O Jacob," here. This was the old name of Israel before his conversion. His name means "usurper."

Why does Israel say that her way can be hidden from the LORD, and that the LORD does not know the judgments made by her? How foolish is Israel! This is an apt description of many professing believers today. They want to bear the name of Christ but not the attributes of Christ. They sin and hide their sins from man and pretend to be what they are not. But the LORD

knows all their sins and their judgments are before Him always.

Verse 28 – Using rhetorical questions again, the LORD wanted foolish Israel to know that she cannot hide from Him. The LORD said, "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?"

Israel should know from her history, as recorded in Holy Scriptures, that the LORD fainteth (i.e. grows tired) not and is never weary i.e. exhausted. There is no way anyone can search out His understanding if He chooses not to reveal it! God's ways are always higher than man's. Israel will go into captivity for her own good. This is His way. It is not because He has lost his power or that He cannot control the enemies of Israel. This is His way to save Israel and restores her back to her spiritual responsibilities.

Verse 29 – The LORD gives power to those who faint and strength to those who have no might. Israel in captivity received help from the LORD. Daniel and his three friends definitely received help from the LORD.

Israel in exile is not to be understood as the breaking of the covenant the LORD made with Israel but rather the fulfilling of it (see Deu. 28). It is precisely because of the covenant that the LORD put Israel into exile and He will do likewise to Judah 140 years later (Judah was destroyed in 586 BC).

To be strong in the LORD is to be weak in self. To be strong in self is

to be weak in the LORD. This is also true during the Apostle Paul's time. Paul wrote in **2 Corinthians 12:10** "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."

Verse 30-31 – Even the youth at the prime of their lives will feel faint and weary. Man in his youthful vigour and strength will also tire. There is a time in every man's life when he seems to be brimming with energy in everything that he does. But to no avail, he will run and also grow faint. And he will walk and also grow weary.

But this is not so with the LORD and for those who trust and lean upon Him. The LORD said that those who wait upon Him i.e. bind themselves with Him shall definitely renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles. When the eagles fly, they fly high and strong, soaring higher and higher into the heavens. This is how eagles get away from their predators. Safety is the emphasis here for believers who are tied to the LORD.

They shall run and not be weary i.e. exhausted. They run on and on and never give up till they reach their destination. They shall walk and not faint i.e. feel tired. This is applied in the spiritual sense and at times physical sense too. The LORD kept Moses both spiritually and physically strong when he communed with the LORD for 40 days and 40 nights up on Mount Sinai. He walked down from the mountain which probably took him 4 hours to climb up.

The LORD God is not only all powerful, all knowing and all present but absolutely sovereign. Those who trust in Him will be empowered by Him to be strong and not faint in their service for Him. This is His promise to Israel and to us today. Amen.

DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Daily Readings

MONDAY: Isaiah 40:1-8

TUESDAY: Isaiah 40:1-17

WEDNESDAY: Isaiah 40:1-31

THURSDAY: Isaiah 40:1-31

FRIDAY: Isaiah 40:1-31.

Discussion Questions

- 1. Do you look at your life as grass and your goodness as the flowers of the field? Why or why not? If you do, what would change in your life? Please elaborate.

- 2. How do you feel about the prophecies in the Bible? Do the prophecies of God impact your life? Please elaborate.

3. How do you feel about the omniscience of the LORD? Does this attribute of God impact your life? Please cite an example from your own experience as an illustration.

4. How do you feel about the omnipresence of the LORD? Does this attribute of God impact your life? Please cite an example from your own experience as an illustration.

5. How do you feel about the omnipotence of the LORD? Does this attribute of God impact your life? Please cite an example from your own experience as an illustration.

6. How do you feel about the absolute sovereignty of God in your life and in this world? Does this knowledge impact your present life in any way? Please explain.

7. Do you think you have made God into your own image or perhaps into another image? Do you have any evidence to show that the LORD God is the one living and true God that is at work in your life? Please elaborate.

8. What lessons have you learnt from this chapter about God's Word and about yourself?
