

Anticipated Present Realities of Jesus
November 18 – December 30 2012, Week Three of Seven
“Jesus, the Sovereign Shepherd-Lord”
Isaiah 40:1-11(40:9-11), Dec 2 2012

Focus for Week Three

In Isaiah 40, the prophet celebrates the present and future rule of God. His rule is that of “the sovereign Lord” (40:10); his rule is like a “shepherd that tends his flock” (40:11). No wonder that people are told to say, “Here is your God!” (40:9). What a contrast this God is to the gods the people followed and to the nations that God’s people feared more than they feared God. And then to think that Jesus perfectly displayed and NOW displays this “sovereign shepherd-rule” of God is absolutely wonderful. Truly, in Jesus, we see, “HERE IS OUR GOD!”

Summary of “Time of Reflection” and Message

1. Time of Reflection: **Here is Our God!!!**

- The “Spirit of Christ” in the prophets (see I Peter 1:11) spoke of anticipated realities of Christ that would be fulfilled in his first coming, his present rule, and fully in his second coming
- Some struggle with what God is like; many struggle to see how God is present. This was true in the setting where Isaiah speaks. With this in mind, what comfort Isaiah offers when he anticipates that Jesus is one about whom people can now say, “Here is your God.”
- Jesus himself said, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). Wow, what a present reality of Jesus we can experience now.

2. **Summary of Message**

- **Introduction:** Looking at the prophecies that anticipate present realities of Jesus is like looking at a clear night sky full of stars; ~~while we are~~ **have difficulty** trying to focus on one star in the messages, ~~this is difficult~~ because each star is surrounded by so many other prophecies that point to Jesus. It is hard to separate out one star from the rest; the stars together point to realities about Jesus that are truly holy and awesome and worthy of our praise.
- From Isaiah 40:9-11, **what do we see of Jesus then (i.e. first coming), now (i.e. present rule), and “even more then” (i.e. second coming)?**
 - a. Our God is here; we see his glory, not hidden, “all together” (see Isaiah 40:5, which describes his presence).
 - b. The Sovereign (i.e. absolute) Lord; all authority in heaven and on earth belongs to him such that NOTHING is beyond his rule.
 - c. He came, is present, and is coming again with power.
 - d. He rules with a mighty arm, which points to his authority over kings and nations.

- e. His just reward and recompense (i.e. payment) is with him; what greater reward is there that he who knows our sins completely values our life enough to die for our sins and bring us to welcome him as our Lord.
 - f. He treats us like a loving shepherd, tending his flock, gathering lambs in his arms, carrying those new to life in him close to his heart, leading gently.
- From Isaiah 40:9-11, **what does this all mean for us?**
 - a. We no longer have to be afraid; Jesus often said, “Fear not; I am with you.”
 - b. We have someone who hears our voice and desires that we lift our voice to him.
 - c. We have GOOD NEWS to share with ourselves, each other, and those to whom he sends us (see Isaiah 6:1-8).

For Further Study

1. Many biblical scholars have suggested that Isaiah 1-39 and Isaiah 40-66 were written by two different voices because Isaiah 40-66 deals with events much later than 1-39. Consider, however, seven reasons given in the *NIV 2011 Study Bible* why Isaiah likely wrote the entire book of *Isaiah*.¹ If Isaiah is the author the Holy Spirit guided and inspired, how does this make the description about prophets in I Peter 1:10-12 applied to Isaiah all the more amazing?
2. In Isaiah 40:1-11, the prophet announces words of comfort (40:1); he then points to three voices that give comfort (Voice One – 40:3-6; Voice Two – 40:7-8; Voice Three – 40:9-11). What words of comfort do you find in the first two voices that we did not consider in the message?
3. Read Isaiah 40:9-11 and the notes above. What are some ways you experience Jesus presence now, which Isaiah anticipates in these verses?
4. What “comfort” or “good news” do you find in this passage that might lead you to “lift your voice” to Jesus?

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¹ Seven reasons from *NIV 2011 Study Bible* why Isaiah may have written all of Isaiah 1-66. 1) “The Holy One of Israel” is used to speak of God 12x in 1-39 and 14x in 40-66; it is only used 6x in the rest of the Old Testament. 2) Striking verbal parallels between two halves (e.g. 1:2 & 66:24; 1:5-6 & 53:4-5; 5:27 & 40:30; 11:6-9 & 65:25). 3) At least 25 Hebrew words found in Isaiah that occur in no other prophetic writing. 4) Isaiah’s use of fire as a figure of punishment (e.g. 1:31, 10:17, 33:11-14, 66:24). 5) His references to the “holy mountain” of Jerusalem. 6) The structure that includes a historical interlude (i.e. Isaiah 36-40) that concludes 1-35 and introduces 40-66. 7) Several NT verses that refer to the prophet Isaiah in connection with all parts of the book.

Key Scriptures for Week Three

I Peter 1:10-12 (NIV 2011)

¹⁰ Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, ¹¹ trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

Isaiah 40:1-11 (40:9-11) (NIV 2011)

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins.

³ A voice of one calling:

“In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD;
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

⁴ Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain.

⁵ And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all people will see it together.
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

⁶ A voice says, “Cry out.”
And I said, “What shall I cry?”

“All people are like grass, and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field.

⁷ The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the LORD blows on them. Surely the people are grass.

⁸ The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.”

⁹ You who bring good news to Zion,
go up on a high mountain.
You who bring good news to Jerusalem,
lift up your voice with a shout,
lift it up, do not be afraid;
say to the towns of Judah,
“Here is your God!”

¹⁰ See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power,
and he rules with a mighty arm.

See, his reward is with him,
and his recompense accompanies him.

¹¹ He tends his flock like a shepherd:

He gathers the lambs in his arms
and carries them close to his heart;
he gently leads those that have young.