

***THE GREAT OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGIAN;***  
**A SCRIPTURAL STUDY OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH**  
**(Chapters 40-66)**  
**“God’s Greatness, Comfort, and Encouragement”**

**Chapter 40**

**Compared to what has been emphasized earlier in chapters 1-39 about God’s coming judgment on the sin of the covenant people, with what tone at 40:1-2 does this section of Isaiah begin?**

**Try to summarize as best you can the following sections of chapter 40:**

**Verses 1-11;**

**Verses 12-26;**

**Verses 27-31;**

**What’s the purpose of the construction project described in verses 3 and 4?**

**Why do verses 3-5 of chapter 40 of Isaiah sound familiar to readers of the canonical gospels (see Mark 1:3)? For what are these words preparing or signaling?**

**What do verses 6-8 of chapter 40 teach about God's word or message? Why may hopeless people cling to God's word? Why might the people of Judah in exile in Babylon be skeptical of such promises?**

**While in the recent past the Hebrew people have seen the deaths of many of the people of Judah and the destruction of their capital in Jerusalem and the destruction of their sacred temple, what do these words (40:9-11) promise? To put it another way, to what does the phrase "good tidings" refer in v.9?**

**What scriptural references in Old and New Testaments pick up on the metaphor for God's love for His covenant people mentioned at Isaiah 40:11?**

**To what did the phrase "good news" come to refer in the New Testament writings? (see Luke 1:19; 2:10; 3:18; 4:18; 4:43; 7:22; 8:1; 16:16) From what sort of bondage or captivity does Jesus deliver those who trust in Him? (John 8:31-36; Romans 6:16-19; Gal. 1:4;)**

**Isaiah 40:12-26 focuses on the theme of the greatness of God. Scholar John Oswalt notes this section can be divided into two sections (v.12-20 and v.21-26) that parallel one another. Each of the two units begins with an assertion in the form of rhetorical questions, that Yahweh is the only Creator (40:12-14, 21). Next is an affirmation that Yahweh is the ruler of all nations (40:15-17, 22-24). Next comes a rhetorical invitation to try to compare God with anything else (40:18a, 25). Finally, there is the claim of Yahweh's absolute superiority over all gods and goddesses, whether idols (40:18b-20) or heavenly host (40:26).**

**What phrases does the prophet use to describe the one living and true God? And what does each phrase teach us about God's attributes?**

**What attributes of God are the focus of 40:12-17?**

**What are the implications of the statement at 40:17 that "the nations are as nothing before him; they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness?"**

**What does the prophet teach us about God at 40:18-24?  
\*For other material in Isaiah criticizing idols and those who worship them see 41:6-7; 42:17; 44:9-20; 46:5-7; 48:5.**

**What do we learn about God at 40:25-27?**

**How was the bitter and discouraging experience of the Jewish exiles in Babylon addressed at 40:28-31?**

**What do you think the writer means when he speaks of “waiting for the Lord?” What attitude does that sort of waiting involve? (see 8:17; 25:9; 33:2; 49:23; 63:4; see also Ps. 27:14; 31:24; 37, 62; 130:5-6)**

**\*How are you presently “waiting on God?”**

**\*Where do you need God’s encouragement in your life of faith at present?**

**\*In what ways if any does the experience of the Jewish exiles in Babylon resonate with your present life experience?**