

Isaiah

Part Seven

The God Who Comforts and Chooses (chapters 40-48)

Chapter 40 – a Dramatic Change

- For several hundred years Assyria has been the dominant world power
 - During Hezekiah's lifetime
 - The decisions of Ahaz and Hezekiah

Chapter 40 – a Dramatic Change

- **For several hundred years Assyria has been the dominant world power**
 - **During Hezekiah's lifetime**
 - **The decisions of Ahaz and Hezekiah**
- **Beginning in Chapter 40**
 - **Isaiah speaks of events he won't live to see**
 - **Babylon destroys Assyria and becomes dominant**

Babylonian Captivity

- Israel's problem was not Assyria; it was failure to trust God
- Israel continued to
 - Practice injustice
 - Worship idols

Israel's Place in History

- **Through Abraham's seed all nations to be blessed**

The Line of History

As God intended it –
Israel to show the
nations the way to God

Nations

Israel



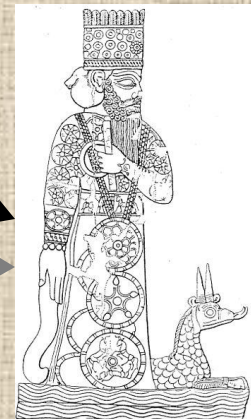
The Line of History

As it actually happened –
Israel followed the
nations away from God

God

Nations

Israel



The Problems

- **God's people did not change merely because Assyria was destroyed**
- **Hezekiah was not the king Israel ultimately needed – chapters 38-39**
- **Assyria's purpose was to destroy – 10:7**
- **Babylon deported the leaders and craftsmen and allowed them to settle together**
- **Babylon defeated Nineveh -- 612**

Babylon and Israel

- **605 BC First Deportation**
 - Captives included Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah – 2 Kg 24:1

Babylon and Israel

- **605 BC First Deportation**
 - Captives included Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah – 2 Kg 24:1
- **597 BC Second Deportation**
 - Captives included Ezekiel – 2 Kg 24:12

Babylon and Israel

- **605 BC First Deportation**
 - Captives included Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah – 2 Kg 24:1
- **597 BC Second Deportation**
 - Captives included Ezekiel – 2 Kg 24:12
- **586 BC Jerusalem Destroyed**
 - Zedekiah was the last king – 2 Kg 24:18-25:22
 - Lamentations 2:4; 4:4f, 8f

Israel in Babylon

- **Prophets addressing the Babylonian Crisis**
 - Isaiah 40 – 66, looking ahead beyond his lifetime
 - Jeremiah, prophesying to those left in Jerusalem
 - Ezekiel, prophesying to those in Babylon

The Jews in Babylon

- **Initially blind optimism for quick return**
- **Deep pessimism after Jerusalem destroyed**
 - **Has God forgotten us? Where is He?**
 - **Isa 40:27**
 - **By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept – Psa 137:1-4**

The Jews in Babylon

- **To the hopeless, Isaiah prophesies God's deliverance, and names Cyrus – Isa 44:28**
- **Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled – Ezra 1:1-2**
- **The remaining need**
 - **Even the best kings weren't what Israel really needed**
 - **Judah never lived up to what the servant should be**
 - **We'll finally see one king who does**

Four Points in 40 -- 48

- God wants to deliver them
- God can deliver them
- Idols cannot deliver them
- Israel is God's chosen servant and His delight despite all that's happened

Question 1

Does God want to deliver us?

40:1-11

How does the second half of Isaiah begin?

40:1-2 God comforts and forgives

**Comfort, comfort my people,
says your God. Speak
tenderly to Jerusalem...**

Does God want to Deliver us?

- 40:1-2 God comforts and forgives
- 40:3-5 You will see the glory of God
 - God is coming! The king will show himself!
 - A voice crying in the wilderness was good news for them!
 - So the voice of one crying in the wilderness – John the Baptizer – was good news!
 - In both cases – prepare for God!

Does God want to Deliver us?

- **40:6-8 All men are like withering grass**
 - Babylon says you'll stay captive here
 - Men are like withering grass and fading flowers
 - God says you'll go home to Jerusalem
 - God's word stands forever
 - Whose word can you trust?

Does God want to Deliver us?

- **40:9-11 Yahweh, the Shepherd King**
 - **Shout the good news from a tall mountain!**
 - **What is the good news?**
 - **Here is God! He's coming! He hasn't turned His back on you.**
 - **He tends His flock like a shepherd**
 - **He gathers his lambs close to his heart**

Question 2

Can God deliver us?

40:12-26

Can God Deliver us? – 40:12-26

- 40:12-26 Yahweh – the All-powerful Lord

- 40:12 Power

- Babylon may seem all powerful
- Did they mark off the heavens with their hands?

- 40:13-14 Wisdom

- The king of Babylon needs counselors
- Who is God's counselor?

Can God Deliver us? – 40:12-26

- **40:12-26** **Yahweh – the All-powerful Lord**
 - **40:15-17** **Significance**
 - The nations are a drop in the bucket
 - The nations are like a speck of dust on the scales
 - **40:18-20** **Incomparable**
 - Men have to build idols
 - If they're not careful, the idols topple over
 - You can't compare God to something like this

Can God Deliver us? – 40:12-26

- **40:12-26** **Yahweh – the All-powerful Lord**
 - **40:21-26** **Haven't you heard? Don't you know?**
 - **God sits enthroned above the earth**
 - **People (even Babylonians) are like grasshoppers to Him**
 - **He brings princes and rulers to nothing (Even Babylonian kings)**
 - **To whom will you compare God? Surely not to Nebuchadnezzar?**
 - **God brings out the stars and calls them by name**

God vs. the Idols

God vs. the Idols

IDOLS

40:18-20

- Idols (40:18-20)
- A craftsman creates it
- A poor man will use wood
- Be careful the wood doesn't rot
- Be careful the idol doesn't topple

God vs. the Idols

IDOLS

40:18-20

- Idols (40:18-20)
- A craftsman creates it
- A poor man will use wood
- Be careful the wood doesn't rot
- Be careful the idol doesn't topple

GOD

40:22-26

- Sits enthroned above the earth
- People are like grasshoppers
- Stretches out the heavens like a tent
- Reduces rulers of the earth to nothing
- Created the heavens
- Calls each star by name
- Makes sure no star is missing

Question 3

Can we be delivered?

40:27-31

God Strengthens the Weary – 40:27-31

- **Fatigue**
 - Yes, but we don't have the strength to go
 - We're tired and discouraged
 - God must be tired of us as well
- **God**
 - He is the everlasting God
 - He doesn't get weary – He strengthens the weary!
- **People**
 - Even youths grow tired and weary – but...
 - Those who wait on the Lord will renew their strength!

Where We Are

- **Chapter 40**
 - Does God want to deliver His people? YES!
 - Can God deliver His people? YES!
 - Can we be delivered? YES!
- **Chapters 41-48**
 - God has chosen Israel
 - Cyrus will destroy Babylon which will prove that!

Assignment

Read Isaiah 42-45

CREDITS

Marduk photo from Wikipedia Commons.