

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH: Old Familiar Challenges, New Hopes and Dreams

N.T. Wright on Isaiah 40: *“The prophet envisages a voice calling out a message of comfort to Zion: it’s over! Your punishment is finished! So flatten the hills and fill in the valleys and roll out the red carpet, because he’s coming back at last!”*

OVERVIEW of ISAIAH STUDY:

Jan 18: “Second” & “Third” *Isaiah*

Jan 25: Messianic Themes in *Isaiah*

Feb 1: *Isaiah* in the New Testament

ISAIAH 40 Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.

² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her
that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid,
that she has received from the Lord’s hand double for all her sins.

³ A voice cries out:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord;

make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

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

⁵ Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall 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 flesh is grass; their constancy is like the flower of the field.

⁷ The grass withers; the flower fades,
[[when the breath of the Lord blows upon it); surely the people are grass.

⁸ The grass withers; the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

⁹ Get you up to a high mountain; O Zion, herald of good news;^l
lift up your voice with strength O Jerusalem, herald of good news;^l
lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah “Here is your God!”

¹⁰ See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him;
his reward is with him and his recompense before him.

¹¹ He will feed his flock like a shepherd;
he will gather the lambs in his arms
and carry them in his bosom
and gently lead the mother sheep.

¹² Who has measured the waters of the sea in the hollow of his hand
and marked off the heavens with a span...

and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance?

¹³ Who has directed the spirit of the Lord or as his counselor has instructed him?

¹⁴ Whom did he consult for his enlightenment,
and who taught him the path of justice?

Who taught him knowledge and showed him the way of understanding?

¹⁸ **To whom, then, will you liken God,
or what likeness compare with him?**

¹⁹ An idol?

²¹ **Have you not known? Have you not heard?**

Has it not been told you from the beginning?

Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?

²⁵ **To whom, then, will you compare me,
or who is my equal? says the Holy One.**

²⁶ Lift up your eyes on high and see:

Who created these?

He who brings out their host and numbers them,
calling them all by name;

because he is great in strength, mighty in power,
not one is missing.

Why do you say, O Jacob, and assert, O Israel,

“My way is hidden from the Lord,
and my right is disregarded by my God”?

²⁸ **Have you not known? Have you not heard?**

**The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.**

He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.

²⁹ He gives power to the faint and strengthens the powerless.

³⁰ Even youths will faint and be weary,

and the young will fall exhausted,

³¹ but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength;

they shall mount up with wings like eagles;

they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

ISAIAH 55:

Hear, everyone who thirsts;

come to the waters;

and you who have no money,

come, buy and eat!

Come, buy wine and milk

without money and without price.

² Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread
and your earnings for that which does not satisfy?

ISAIAH 60

**Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.**

**² For darkness shall cover the earth
and thick darkness the peoples,
but the Lord will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.**

³ Nations shall come to your light and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

⁴ Lift up your eyes and look around;
they all gather together; they come to you;
your sons shall come from far away,
and your daughters shall be carried in their nurses' arms.

⁵ Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice,
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you;
the wealth of the nations shall come to you. ...

¹⁰ Foreigners shall build up your walls, and their kings shall minister to you,
for in my wrath I struck you down, but in my favor I have had mercy on you.

**¹¹ Your gates shall always be open;
day and night they shall not be shut,**
so that nations shall bring you their wealth, with their kings led in procession. ...

**¹⁴ The descendants of those who oppressed you shall come bending low to
you, and all who despised you shall bow down at your feet;**
they shall call you the City of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

¹⁵ Whereas you have been forsaken and hated, with no one passing through,
I will make you majestic forever, a joy from age to age.

¹⁶ You shall suck the milk of nations; you shall suck the breasts of kings,
and you shall know that I, the Lord, am your Savior
and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.

¹⁷ Instead of bronze I will bring gold; instead of iron I will bring silver;
instead of wood, bronze; instead of stones, iron.
I will appoint Peace as your overseer and Righteousness as your taskmaster.

¹⁸ Violence shall no more be heard in your land,
devastation or destruction within your borders;
you shall call your walls Salvation and your gates Praise.

**¹⁹ The sun shall no longer be your light by day,
nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you by night,
but the Lord will be your everlasting light,
and your God will be your glory. ...**

²¹ Your people shall all be righteous; they shall possess the land forever.
They are the shoot that I planted, the work of my hands,
so that I might be glorified. ...

²² I am the Lord; in its time I will accomplish it quickly.

ISAIAH 61

**The spirit of the Lord God is upon me
 because the Lord has anointed me;
 he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
 to bind up the brokenhearted,
 to proclaim liberty to the captives
 and release to the prisoners,
² to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor
 and the day of vengeance of our God,
 to comfort all who mourn,
³ to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
 to give them a garland instead of ashes,
 the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
 the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. ...**

**⁴ They shall build up the ancient ruins;
 they shall raise up the former devastations;
 they shall repair the ruined cities,
 the devastations of many generations.
⁵ Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks;
 foreigners shall till your land and dress your vines,
⁶ but you shall be called priests of the Lord;
 you shall be named ministers of our God;
 you shall enjoy the wealth of the nations,
 and in their riches you shall glory.
⁷ Because their shame was double
 and dishonor was proclaimed as their lot,
 therefore in their land they shall possess a double portion;
 everlasting joy shall be theirs.
⁸ For I, the Lord, love justice,
 I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
 I will faithfully give them their recompense,
 and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
⁹ Their descendants shall be known among the nations
 and their offspring among the peoples;
 all who see them shall acknowledge
 that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed. ...**

¹¹ For as the earth brings forth its shoots
 and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
 so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise
 to spring up before all the nations.