

Isaiah Series Part 17

“Comfort for God’s
Weary People”

Isaiah Chapter 40



Introduction

There are moments in life when God's people feel forgotten. Seasons when troubles persist, prayers seem unanswered, and the future appears uncertain. Israel knew such a season well. Isaiah 40 opens on the edge of exile—after years of judgment, tears, and hopelessness.

Yet into this darkness, God speaks the first words of the chapter:

“Comfort, comfort My people, says your God.”

The shift is dramatic. Oswalt says that Isaiah 40 begins “a new book within the book,” a movement from judgment to salvation, from despair to hope, from human failure to divine intervention. Motyer calls Isaiah 40 the “gospel before the Gospel,” for here God reveals the nature of His salvation long before Bethlehem's manger and Calvary's cross.

How does the living God comfort His weary people?

We will look at three great movements:

1. God's Word of Comfort
2. God's Incomparable Greatness
3. God's Strength for the Weary

I. God's Word of Comfort (40:1-11)

A. The Divine Imperative: “Comfort, comfort My people” (vv. 1–2) “Comfort” in the imperative plural

Oswalt: God speaks to the prophetic council; comfort comes from **God's initiative**, not human change.

Threefold declaration to Jerusalem (v. 2)

“Her warfare is ended” — God ends the exile.

“Her iniquity is pardoned” — The deepest problem is dealt with.

“She has received double...” — Motyer: not punishment doubled, but **fully sufficient payment** and complete satisfaction.

First Comfort Promised:

Genesis 3:15

I will put enmity
between you and the
woman,
and between your offspring
and her offspring; he shall
bruise your head, and you
shall bruise his heel.”



I. God's Word of Comfort (40:1-11)

B. Preparing the Way of the Lord (vv. 3–5)

The wilderness voice

Applied in the NT to John the Baptist (Matt 3:3).

Motyer: God Himself is coming; the Exodus imagery is renewed.

Leveling the terrain

Symbolic of removing spiritual obstacles.

Oswalt: God's coming transforms a moral wasteland.

Universal revelation of God's glory

The good news is expansive—"all flesh shall see it together."

The Work:

Matthew 3:3

For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said,

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.’ ”



The Work:

Matthew 21:13

He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you make it a den of robbers."



I. God's Word of Comfort (40:1-11)

C. The Eternal Word That Stands Forever (vv. 6–8)

The frailty of humanity (v. 6–7)

Motyer: Human life is fragile and transient as grass.

The unshakeable Word of God (v. 8)

Oswalt: Comfort rests not in human strength but in God's enduring promise.

The Visitation:

John 1:14

And the Word became
flesh and dwelt among us,
and we have seen his glory,
glory as of the only Son from
the Father, full of grace and
truth.



I. God's Word of Comfort (40:1-11)

D. The Shepherd-King Comes to Save (vv. 9–11)

A message from the mountaintop (v. 9)

Zion becomes the herald of good news.

God's mighty coming (v. 10)

He comes with “arm” of power—victorious.

God's tender shepherding (v. 11)

Motyer: The chapter's theme—the **God who is infinitely powerful and intimately gentle.**

The Visitation:

Luke 2:14

Fear not, for behold,
I bring you good news of
great joy that will be for all
the people. For unto you
is born in the city of David
a Savior, who is Christ the
Lord.



The Lion and Lamb:

Revelation 5:5

Weep no more;
behold, the Lion of the tribe
of Judah, the Root of David,
has conquered, so that he
can open the scroll and its
seven seals.



The Lion and Lamb:

John 1:29

“Behold, the **Lamb of God**, who takes away the sin of the world!”



II. God's Incomparable Greatness (40:12-26)

A. God Is Greater Than All Creation (vv. 12–14)

The measuring God (v. 12)

Hyperbolic language highlighting His absolute sovereignty.

God's unteachable wisdom (vv. 13–14)

Oswalt: Against the Babylonian mythologies, God alone has wisdom.

Almighty God:

Hebrews 1:3

He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.



II. God's Incomparable Greatness (40:12-26)

B. God Is Greater Than the Nations (vv. 15–17)

Nations as “a drop from a bucket”

Motyer: Nations appear powerful, but from God's perspective, they are “dust.”

Lebanon insufficient for sacrifice

God's worth exceeds the world's resources.

II. God's Incomparable Greatness (40:12-26)

C. God Is Greater Than All Idols (vv. 18–20)

The folly of idolatry

Oswalt: The idol-maker creates a god who must be nailed down so it doesn't fall.

Contrast: The living God vs. the crafted image

Idols cannot help, hear, or save.

II. God's Incomparable Greatness (40:12-26)

D. God Is the Sovereign Creator and Sustainer (vv. 21–26)

He sits enthroned above the earth (v. 22)

He reduces princes to nothing (v. 23)

He calls the stars by name (v. 26)

Motyer: God's power is covenantal—He sustains what He names.

III. God's Strength for the Weary (40:27-31)

A. Israel's Complaint and God's Response (v. 27)

1. "My way is hidden...my right is disregarded."

Oswalt: The exiles accuse God of neglect.

2. God does not forget His covenant people.

III. God's Strength for the Weary (40:27-31)

B. The Character of God Reaffirmed (vv. 28–29)

1. The everlasting God

Creator of the ends of the earth.

2. He does not faint or grow weary

Motyer: Human exhaustion is the backdrop for divine strength.

3. He gives power to the faint

Comfort is not theoretical—it is experiential.

Rest for the weary:

Matthew 11:29-30

Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”



III. God's Strength for the Weary (40:27-31)

C. The Promise of Renewed Strength (vv. 30–31)

1. Human strength fails (v. 30)

2. Waiting on the Lord renews strength (v. 31)

“Wait” = active trust, hopeful expectation.

3. Threefold renewal

- *Mount up with wings like eagles* — spiritual vitality.
- *Run and not grow weary* — endurance for life's demands.
- *Walk and not faint* — faithfulness in the ordinary routines.

Conclusion

Isaiah 40 answers the question: *How does God comfort His weary people?*

He comforts by revealing:

- His Word of comfort—He pardons and draws near.
- His incomparable greatness—He alone is God.
- His inexhaustible strength—He sustains the weak.

The message of Isaiah 40 is this:

The God who comes in power also holds you in His arms.

So wait on Him. Trust Him. Lean into Him.

And you will find strength—soaring, running, walking—strength enough for every season.