

“Behold Your God!”

Isaiah 40:1-11

Introduction:

- In **Isaiah 40**, we enter into the second section of Isaiah (**chapters 40-66**). The tone of the second section of **Isaiah** is so different from the tone of **chapters 1-39**, that one cannot help but sense that the second half of **Isaiah** is almost a new book, with a new theme.
- In **chapters 1-39**, the main theme was the coming judgment upon Israel, and upon surrounding enemy nations (such as Tyre and Babylon). **Chapter 39** ends with a solemn warning from the prophet Isaiah to King Hezekiah of Judah. Isaiah warned Hezekiah that although there would be “peace and truth” in his day (around 700 B.C.), Hezekiah’s descendants would, in the not-so-distant future, be taken as captives to Babylon, along with the entire nation of Judah.

Isaiah 39:1-8

- In **chapter 40**, however, the theme shifts suddenly from the darkness of Israel’s sin and captivity to the light of Israel’s (and the world’s) redemption through the coming Messiah. A large part of this second section of Isaiah (**Chapters 41-53**, particularly) speaks of the “Servant of Jehovah.” (As we will see when we get there, this “Servant of Jehovah” sometimes refers to the nation of Israel, but mostly refers to one particular man from the nation of Israel, Jesus Christ.) **Chapters 40-66** look beyond the coming captivities, and stress *how* the Messiah would bring redemption (i.e., by becoming a sacrifice for us), and what Israel’s future will be during the 1,000-year Kingdom of Jesus Christ.
- The first eleven verses of **Isaiah 40** present Israel with words of “comfort.” This comfort is based on the fact that the Messiah would come to pardon their sin. Israel is also put on notice to look for a “voice in the wilderness” who would announce the arrival of the Messiah.

Isaiah 40:1-11

I. The announcement of Israel’s comfort and pardon (vv. 1-2)

- God’s command to Isaiah to “comfort” His people sets the stage for the entire second part of Isaiah. Henceforth, the theme will be the sufferings of the Messiah for our sins (culminating in **Isaiah 53**), and the glory that will follow for the nation of Israel.
- In **verse 2**, the LORD is speaking to the inhabitants of Jerusalem in Isaiah’s own day: yet, He is comforting them with the promise of *future* events, and it using the past tense to express it. (In other words, He is speaking of future events as though they had already happened.) It is not unusual for God, in prophetic passages, to speak of future events as though they had already happened. As the eternal, omniscient God, He sees the past, present, and future all at the same time; and anything that He, as the omnipotent, sovereign God, has declared that He will do, is as good as done already!

Romans 4:16-17

Romans 8:30 (The word “glorified” refers to the future bodily resurrection of believers; yet, is in the *aorist* past tense—which means that the action has been completed at a definite point in the past. Though our resurrection hasn’t happened yet, God sees us as though we *were* already resurrected.)

Ephesians 2:4-7 (Christians on earth are not yet seated in “heavenly places”; yet, God sees them as though they *were* already seated there!)

- With this in mind, please note the three aspects of this message of “comfort”:

A. Jerusalem’s “*warfare is accomplished*” (v. 2).

The word “warfare” refers not merely to a time of military battles against enemies, but to an extended time of misery and hardship. Obviously, this is a prophecy that has not yet been fulfilled, because Jerusalem has been plagued with warfare, distress, and oppression, from the time of Isaiah until the present hour.

From other Scriptures, we know that this time of “warfare” for Jerusalem will continue until the end of the Tribulation, when Christ returns to earth.

Daniel 9:26-27 [A time of great “desolations” began after the destruction of the “city and the sanctuary” (Jerusalem and the Temple) in A.D. 70. These desolations will continue until the end of the “seventieth week” (the seven-year Tribulation).]

Matthew 24:1-22

Luke 21:20-24

The “times of the Gentiles” refers to the entire period of history from the loss of Judah’s national sovereignty in 605 B.C., until the return of Christ to earth. (In 605-586 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar took the Jews away in three “waves” of captivity; dictated which Jewish kings could sit on the throne; and finally destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple.) During this long period of time, Israel has experienced constant oppression from Gentile nations, which have had constant control of Jerusalem. At this present hour, Jerusalem is partly under control of the Muslims; and the U.N. and Western powers wield great political pressure upon the state of Israel. Even during the time of false “peace” in the first half of the Tribulation, when the Antichrist will allow the Jews to have their Temple, Jerusalem will still be partly under the control of Gentiles.

Revelation 11:1-2

Side note: The “times of the Gentiles” is not the same as the “fullness of the Gentiles” (**Romans 11:25-27**). The “fullness of the Gentiles” refers to the New Testament age, right up until the Rapture. During the New Testament age, God is

calling multitudes of Gentiles to Himself for salvation; and the Jews, for the most part, remain in spiritual blindness. However, after the Rapture, multitudes of Jews will have their spiritual eyes opened to Jesus as their Messiah, and Israel will be used of God to evangelise the world.)

B. Israel's "*iniquity is pardoned*" (v. 2)

The word "pardoned" comes from the verb *nir'tsah*, which means "accepted, received favourably"; or, "accepted because a debt has been paid, or satisfied." The idea is not that God would "accept" Israel's *sin*, but rather that God would accept a payment that would be made for Israel's sin debt. (God does not forgive sins simply because He feels like being merciful; He forgives sin because an acceptable *payment* was made for sinners' sin. God, in His mercy, provided that payment Himself.)

Interestingly, the word "iniquity" in this verse comes from the word *avown*, which can mean either "iniquity," or "the punishment for iniquity." The following verse is an example of where *avown* means "the *punishment* for iniquity."

Leviticus 26:40-42

In the above verse, the word "accept" is the same Hebrew verb that is translated as "pardon" in **Isaiah 40:2**. In this case, the party that is "accepting" something favourably is the nation of Israel. But *what* are they accepting? They are accepting the *avown*. The word *avown*, in this case, has the sense of "punishment for sin," instead of "sin." The teaching of **Leviticus 26:41** is that when Israel, in the future, "accepts favourably" the punishment for sin that has been provided for them, then their God will accept them.

The clear teaching of **Isaiah 40:2**, then, is that "the *debt* for Israel's iniquity is paid." But *how* and *by whom* was the debt paid? Could *Israel's* suffering (their chastisement under the hand of their enemies) satisfy their sin debt? Obviously not. The constant teaching of Scripture is that sinners cannot pay for their own sin debt. In **Isaiah 53**, the LORD makes it abundantly clear that *one innocent man* from the house of Israel who would pay the debt for Israel's sin.

Right at the beginning of the second half of **Isaiah**, then, we are told that a payment for sin would be made. We know that Jesus Christ is the one who would make the payment. But when will *Israel* accept the payment that Christ made for them? There have always been Jewish individuals who have believed on Jesus over the last 2,000 years; but Israel, as a complete nation, will not accept Christ's sacrifice for them until Christ returns to earth.

Zechariah 3:9

Romans 11:25-27

C. Israel has received "*double for all her sins*."

This last statement in **verse 2** raises an important question. Does the word “double” refer to a double portion of chastisement from God, or to a double portion of blessing from God?” To find the answer to this question, we must remember what the Scripture teaches us: that sinners cannot atone for their own sin (neither personally, or nationally). It wouldn’t matter whether Israel endured two thousand, three thousand, or ten thousand years of chastisement for her sins. She still wouldn’t be able to pay the debt!

Again, we are drawn back to that word “pardoned.” The word “pardoned” implies “acceptance because a debt has been paid.” The idea, then, is that because someone would pay Israel’s sin debt, God would be able to render double blessing to them in exchange for all their sin! The word “double” is often used in the Old Testament as an expression that means “abundance of blessing.”

Job 42:10-12 [Although Job did receive twice as many animals as he had possessed before his trials began (**Job 1:3**), he received the *same* number of children (**Job 1:2**). The idea is not that everything was exactly twice the number: the idea is that God blessed Job abundantly.]

Zechariah 9:11-12 [This prophetic passage speaks of the salvation that Christ would bring through the New Covenant. Once again, though, we see the word “double” referring to “abundance of blessing,” and not necessarily to “twice” the amount of something.]

In **verses 1 and 2**, we already see a strong promise of salvation and pardon: and the Saviour hasn’t even been mentioned yet! In **verses 3 and 4**, however, we are told about the man who *would* announce the arrival of Israel’s Saviour.

II. The prophecy regarding John the Baptist, and his mission (vv. 3-5)

- This prophecy found its fulfilment in John the Baptist. John dwelt in the wilderness of Judaea, and lived off the land. God chose him for the unique mission of announcing the arrival of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 3:1-6

Mark 1:1-6 [Note that the Gospel era began with John the Baptist’s preaching ministry, and not on the Day of Pentecost, as is popularly believed. Jesus affirmed that the “*law and the prophets*” (the Old Testament era) ended with John the Baptist (**Matthew 11:2-13**).]

Luke 1:13-17, 80

Luke 3:1-6

John 1:6-29

- John’s preaching was filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. John never performed even one miracle, as many of the most prominent prophets of the Old Testament did: yet, the people knew that John had authority from heaven (**Matthew 21:23-27**).

Side note: Other prophecies of John the Baptist (parts of which were quoted in the New Testament Scriptures above) are found in the book of Malachi. We will study these in detail when we reach the end of this *Messiah* series.

Malachi 3:1

Malachi 4:5-6

- **Verse 3** is an important verse, because it proves that Jesus is God! How so? Well, as John stated repeatedly, his mission was to prepare people to repent and believe on Jesus. Yet, here in **Isaiah 40:3**, we are told that John’s message would be, “Prepare ye the way of the LORD [Jehovah], make straight *in the desert* a highway for our *God*.” How could a “way” be made for the invisible, non-corporeal, omnipresent God in the earthly desert where John lived and ministered? This would be possible only if God wrapped Himself in human flesh and walked through the desert. Clearly, this verse teaches that Jesus is Jehovah. (Jehovah’ Witnesses, who deny that Jesus is God, can give no explanation for this verse!)

Verse 5 also proves Jesus’ deity, because it states that the One whose glory John was preparing the people to behold is none other than the LORD (Jehovah) Himself! Truly, those who have seen Jesus have seen the Father.

John 14:7-9

- Old Testament Scriptures often predict the first and the second coming of the Messiah in the same breath, without giving any indication that there would actually be two comings of the Messiah, with a big gap of time in between the two. It has often been compared to the way that a person can see what appears to be one mountain on the horizon, yet he doesn’t realise, until he gets there, that he was also seeing parts of a second mountain beyond the first one. The two mountains are blended together in view until the person comes close to the first mountain; and then he begins to see the second mountain.
- **Isaiah 40:3-5** is one of those passages where Christ’s two comings are blended together. John the Baptist quoted **Isaiah 40:3-5** in order to prove that the Messiah had finally come; that Jesus was that Messiah; and that he was Jesus’ forerunner. Yet, we, with perfect hindsight, are now able to look at **Isaiah 40:3-4** and see that this passage is predicting a first *and* second coming of Christ to earth. The second coming of Christ will be accompanied by a levelling of mountains and valleys—something that has not yet happened!
- While it is true, in one sense, that John figuratively “levelled the ground” (in other words, removed the obstacles of sin that prevented people from believing on Jesus, by preaching

that they needed to repent), this passage is clearly speaking of literal, cataclysmic events. Shortly before Christ's return to earth, every mountain and hill will *literally* be made low, and every valley will literally be lifted up! In other words, the world's surface will become smooth, without tall, rugged mountains or deep valleys. The entire topography of the world will be radically changed, so that there will be no obstacle to travel as people go to worship Christ in Jerusalem during the 1,000-year Kingdom of Christ! This radical change in topography will also enable Mount Zion to be lifted up as the highest mountain on earth.

Revelation 16:17-20

Micah 4:1-2

- In regard to the change in the earth's topography in preparation for Christ's second coming, it is interesting that the words *derek* ("way") and *m'sillah* ("highway") are used in **Isaiah 40:3**. These two words are used often in the book of Isaiah; and, as we have seen in past lessons, they refer to literal roads that will be built during the Kingdom.

Isaiah 11:16

Isaiah 35:8

- The word *m'sillah* refers not to a highway that is built by following the contour of the land, but rather to a main thoroughfare that is built by cutting into hills and filling in depressions with mounds of earth, so as to accommodate large amounts of traffic, or large armies. In light of the prophetic passages in Isaiah that speak of the "highway of holiness" that will be built for travellers to Jerusalem during the Kingdom age, it is safe to say that John is speaking of the highway of holiness, as well. John himself didn't realise that this highway would not be built until much later, after a second coming of Christ to earth; but he faithfully proclaimed the message nonetheless, as God instructed him.
- **Verse 5** is the basis for the famous chorus "And the Glory of the Lord," from Handel's *Messiah*. For this reason, many Christians who have listened to the *Messiah* assume that this Scripture refers to Christ's first coming to earth. (After all, the *Messiah* is sung at Christmas time, when we remember Christ's first coming.) However, **verse 5** has definitely not been yet fulfilled in any sense. The "glory of the LORD" has, up to this point, been seen by only a few. Peter, James, and John did get a glimpse of Christ in His millennial glory. Actually, what they were seeing was a *vision* of Jesus, Moses, and Elijah speaking together in the future 1,000-year Kingdom. John also saw the return of Christ in vision on the Isle of Patmos. However, other than these three men, and other prophets from the Old Testament who saw visions of Christ's return, no one has actually seen the glory of the Lord in His coming to earth.

John 1:14

Matthew 17:1-13

2 Peter 1:15-18

- The prophecy of **Isaiah 40:5** will be fulfilled when Christ returns to earth for the second time. God will see to it that every eye is able to behold His Son as He descends to earth at the Battle of Armageddon. All flesh will literally see Christ in His glory, no matter where they are in the world. Furthermore, all nations will be gathered together to be judged by Christ; and they will see His glory there, as well.

Zechariah 12:10

Revelation 1:4-7

Revelation 19:11-16

Matthew 25:31-32

III. The permanency of God's Word (vv. 6-8)

- In **verse 5**, the LORD was still speaking about His coming to earth at the end of the Tribulation. In **verse 9**, this theme is continued. In the interval, though, the LORD pauses to say something about mankind, and something about His Word. Particularly, he contrasts the two. He had just been speaking about how “all flesh” will see the glory of the LORD (Jesus the Messiah). Now he points out that “all flesh” is like grass. Grass withers almost as fast as it arises. So it is with man. Man is here today, and gone tomorrow. God's Word, on the other hand, stands forever.
- This passage of Scripture is quoted twice in the New Testament.

James 1:9-10

1 Peter 1:24-25

- In **verse 6**, Isaiah is let in on a conversation between two persons. The “voice” is, most likely, the LORD (although we are not told explicitly). The one who asks “*What shall I cry?*” is, evidently, not Isaiah, since the pronoun “he” is used. It would seem that the LORD is speaking to an angel. Whoever is being spoken to, however, the message is clear: Man is frail, and withers like grass that has been blasted with the “*spirit of the LORD.*” [The word for “spirit” (*ruach*) also means “breath,” or “wind.” This may be an illusion to the Hamsin, or Sirocco—a very hot, dry wind that blows into Israel from Arabia in May, for days on end without interruption.] In contrast to Man, however, God's Word is eternal and immutable (unchanging).
- As Bible believers, we believe that God's Word is given by verbal, plenary (complete, full) inspiration of God; that it is absolutely, completely authoritative; that it is pure and inerrant (containing no errors in any point whatsoever); that it is complete (nothing more is to be added); and that it has been perfectly preserved from corruption to all succeeding

generations. All these truths about God's Word are either stated or implied in the simple statement "*The word of our God shall stand forever.*"

A. The Bible is given by verbal, plenary (complete, full) inspiration of God.

"Verbal" means that God gave to human authors the very words to write (albeit in their own individual styles, with their full cognisance and cooperation). The Bible does not "contain" God's Word; it *is* God's Word in full, from beginning to end. (This is why we use the word "plenary," or complete.) The Bible is not, as liberal theologians say, "dynamic." In other words, it does not "become" God's Word to *you* whenever it happens to speak to you individually. It *is* God's Word in full, regardless of how man responds to it.

Jeremiah 36:1-4

2 Peter 1:19-21

2 Timothy 3:15-17 (The phrase "given by inspiration of God" comes from one Greek word, *theopneustos*. It simply means "God-breathed." The idea is that God breathed out the very words for the human authors to write down.)

All these truths are contained in the simple phrase "*the word of our God.*" If the Bible truly be "the word of God," and not man, then it must be immediately understood that it is given by verbal, plenary inspiration from God!

B. The Bible is absolutely, completely authoritative in every area of our lives.

2 Peter 1:3

John 12:48

2 Timothy 3:15-17

The very fact that the Bible is "*the word of our God*" (who happens to be the Judge of all the earth) immediately implies absolute authority! The fact that His Word "*shall stand forever*" also implies absolute authority. The ever-shifting opinions of man have no bearing on the authority of God's Word.

C. The Bible is pure and inerrant (containing no errors of any kind).

Psalms 12:6-7

Psalms 119:140

The fact that God is omniscient and that He "*cannot lie*" (**Titus 1:2**) immediately implies that His Word must be pure and inerrant. The fact that it "*shall stand*

forever” also implies its purity. No mistakes or errors will ever come to light, and need to be “_____.”

- D. The Bible is complete (nothing more is to be added).

Revelation 22:18-19

1 Corinthians 13:8-12 [Paul prophesied that there would be a definite closure to the canon of Scripture. “*That which is perfect* (complete)” is, clearly, the Word of God, since it is compared to a “glass”—an oft-used symbol for the Scripture itself (**2 Corinthians 3:14-18; James 1:22-25**).]

At the time when **Isaiah 40:6-8** was written, new revelation was still being given to men. The canon of Scripture was not closed yet. How, then, does this passage in Isaiah teach that the Bible is complete (nothing more to be added)? This truth is enshrined in the words “*shall stand forever*.” The implication is that God’s Word is eternal—which means that it has been written down, *en toto*, from eternity past, even before it was given to men!

Psalms 119:89

Amos 1:1 (Why are we told that Amos “saw” the word of the LORD, instead of “heard” it? Because He saw God’s Word written in heaven!)

- E. The Bible has been perfectly preserved from corruption to all succeeding generations.

Obviously, the fact that God’s Word “*shall stand forever*” implies that God will perfectly preserve His Word.

The amazing thing about God’s Word is not only that God used frail, weak men (whom He compares to “grass”) to *write down* His words, but that He continued to use weak, erring men to copy His words, from generation after generation, with perfect accuracy! God’s Word may be settled in heaven; but if His words were able to be lost and hopelessly corrupted on earth by erring or wicked men, then what good would His Word be to us? How would we know, with certainty, which is God’s Word and which isn’t? The corrupt Critical Text (which is the basis of almost all modern English versions of the Bible) omits or changes 7% of the New Testament. The *Received Text*, on the other hand (the basis of our KJV Bible), is backed up by more than 5,250 ancient manuscripts going back to the second century; and they are all in stunning agreement! God has preserved His Word, as He promised.

Psalms 12:6-7

Luke 16:17

Matthew 5:17-18

The word “jot” is the anglicised form of the Hebrew word “*yod*,” which is the name of the smallest consonant in the Hebrew language. *Yod* (י) corresponds to our letter “y.”)

“Tittle” means “a very small dot”; and it is translated from the Greek word *chiria*. *Chiria* is, itself, a transliteration of the Hebrew word “*chireq*”—which is the name of the smallest vowel in the Hebrew language. *Chireq* is a single, tiny dot, which is placed under consonants; and it stands for the short “i” sound.

Jesus, then, is teaching that not even the smallest consonant or vowel of God’s Word can be destroyed! How is this possible? God enables His people, in every generation, to guard His words from corruption.

Matthew 28:19-20 [The word *terein* (“observe”) literally means “to guard.” Christ’s churches are given the charge to guard His words from corruption!]

Side Note: As Bible believers, we certainly don’t need to see historical “proof” that Christ’s churches have actually guarded His words through the centuries. Nonetheless, there is plenty of historical evidence that Christ’s true churches *did*, in fact, make accurate copies of the Scriptures throughout the darkest days of history. In 1669, the French historian Jean Leger wrote that the ancient Waldenses (the Baptists of the Middle Ages) “always had the... celestial treasure of the true, preserved holy Scriptures.”¹ For centuries, the Waldenses used the Old Italic translation (an accurate Latin translation that was made in A.D. 157); but they also had the New Testament in the original Greek (the *Received Text*). They actually taught biblical Greek to their young men, and made many copies of it through the centuries. They also made translations from Greek into modern languages, and spread copies of it throughout Europe, through the bold but cautious efforts of their tradesmen and peddlers. “One old historian by the name of Edgar” recorded that Theodore Beza (a Greek scholar who worked with John Calvin in Geneva in the 1500’s) “used Waldensian Greek manuscripts in preparing his Greek New Testament.” These copies were given to him for safekeeping by the Waldenses, who fled to Geneva to escape the slaughter that was being carried out on them by the Roman Catholic Church.² Beza’s Greek text was later used by the translators of the KJV in 1611.

It certainly is true that the Greek *Received Text* was copied accurately by many *pseudo* “Christians” (such as the monks of the Greek Orthodox Church) for centuries. God can use even unbelievers to accomplish His will. However, it also is true that God used His true churches, such as the Waldensian churches, to make accurate copies of His Word (as well as accurate translations) through the centuries!

- Now, what is the connection between **verse 5** and **verse 9**? Why is this statement about the weakness and brevity of man *versus* the greatness and permanency of God’s Word placed right in the middle of this passage about Christ’s return? The truth that the LORD is conveying is that He is going to accomplish His plan for human history, in accordance with His eternal Word, regardless of what man says or does. Since God’s Word is

¹ David H. Sorenson, *Touch Not the Unclean Thing* (Duluth, MN: Northstar Baptist Ministries, 2001), p. 258.

² *Ibid*, p. 260.

eternal, and cannot pass away, how can frail men, who grow up like flowers today and are dust tomorrow, think that they can stop God from accomplishing His plan or returning to earth and setting up His Kingdom? They cannot! (Although they will try.)

Psalm 2:1-5

IV. The return of Jesus Christ to earth (vv. 9-11)

- In this passage, the theme of Christ's return to earth is resumed; and it is presented as "good tidings." Zion itself (the inhabitants of Jerusalem) are said to be the bearers of these good tidings. Christ will return and set up His Kingdom, and the word will go out from Jerusalem (**Isaiah 2:3**). Not coincidentally, the Gospel started out from Jerusalem 2,000 years ago, just after Christ's ascension (**Acts 1:8**). Like the heralds of Christ's return in the future Kingdom age, we should be bold, lift up our voices, and not be afraid.
- What, exactly, is the "good news," though? Well, we know that in our present age, the "good news" (the Gospel) is the message of salvation through the vicarious death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (**1 Corinthians 15:1-4**). Why, though, would the "good news" be any different during the Kingdom age? Certainly, the "good news" will be the news that Christ has returned to set up His Kingdom; but included in that good news of Christ's return will be the good news of His death, burial, and resurrection, which He accomplished in His *first* coming to earth. The news of Christ's return to earth would not be "good" news at all if He had not already provided salvation for us!
- A similar use of the word "good tidings" can be seen in **Nahum**.

Nahum 1:15

- The teaching of this Scripture is that Judah will be able to rejoice because her enemies will be cut off. The big enemy of Nahum's day, whose destruction is predicted in this book, was Nineveh, the capital of Assyria. However, Nineveh was not the last of "the wicked" (Judah's enemies) to pass through the land. Many more enemies have passed through the land since then. Yet, this Scripture says that the wicked shall "*no more*" pass through Judah. This implies that *all* enemies will be cut off. This prophecy cannot ultimately be fulfilled until Christ returns to set up the Kingdom. Like **Isaiah 40:9**, this verse teaches that heralds from Jerusalem will spread the good news that Israel's enemies have been finally and completely cut down, never to harass Israel again.
- The "good news," however, is not simply that Judah will one day be saved from all enemies. The true core of the "good news" is that Christ has provided salvation from sin for His people, Israel. Paul points this out in **Romans 10**, where he quotes from **Nahum**.

Romans 10:9-16

The LORD also states this more implicitly later in Isaiah.

Isaiah 62:10-12

- It should not be overlooked that once again, we are told that the Messiah is God. As the heralds go out from Jerusalem, they will say, “**Behold your God.**” Jesus’ deity is taught throughout the book of Isaiah.
- Lest there be any remaining doubt that this passage is still speaking of Christ’s second coming, **verse 10** clinches it. We are told that the Lord GOD (the Messiah, Jesus) will come, and that “**his reward is with him.**” Jesus Christ applied these words to Himself at the end of the book of Revelation, as He reminded Christians of His soon return to earth.

Revelation 22:12

- In **verse 10**, we are told that the Messiah’s “**arm shall rule for him.**” God’s “arm” is a symbol of His strength and power (**Deuteronomy 33:27**). Hence, “**his arm shall rule for him**” means that He will use His strength and power to rule for His benefit and profit.
- In **verse 11**, we see the Messiah in yet another role: we are told that “**he shall feed his flock like a shepherd.**” First and foremost, we need to remember the context: Namely, this Scripture is talking about Christ during the Millennial Kingdom. In the Kingdom age, Christ will be physically, visibly on earth to provide protection and guidance to His people, just as He was 2,000 years ago. However, this truth is just as applicable to us today as it was in Christ’s first coming to earth, and as it will be in His Second Coming. Though Christ is not with us in the flesh, He is still our Good Shepherd. He leads and guides us through His Spirit and His Word.

John 10:1-18

Hebrews 13:20-21

1 Peter 2:25 / 5:4

Conclusion: The first eleven verses of **Isaiah 40** present words of comfort to Israel. Despite their iniquity, Israel could be comforted in knowing that a Saviour was coming to pardon their sins. This pardon involved a payment—a satisfaction—for their sin debt. The forerunner of this Saviour would cry in the wilderness, “Prepare ye the way of the LORD.” This prophecy was fulfilled in John the Baptist, who heralded Christ’s first coming to earth. When the Saviour comes for the second time, however, all flesh will see His glory; and a literal highway will be built so that all the people of earth may go, without hindrance, to worship Him.

All these things are in accordance with the Word of God. God’s Word has declared these events from eternity past; and, unlike man, who fades as a flower, God’s Word stands forever.

When the Messiah returns, the inhabitants of Jerusalem will bear the glad tidings—not only of Israel’s salvation from her enemies, but also of Israel’s (and the world’s) salvation from sin through Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. Christ will come with “strong arm” to rule; yet, at the same time, He will lead His people with the gentleness that a shepherd shows to his sheep.

