

# INITIATION INTO ISAIAH

by

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## THIRD DIVISION

### SALVATION (Poetry) Chapters 40-66

This is the third and last major division of the prophecy of Isaiah. It is in contrast to the first major section. There we had judgment and the righteous government of God. In this section we have the grace of God, the suffering and glory to follow, here all is grace and glory. The opening statement “**comfort ye**” sets the mood and tempo for this section.

It is this section that has caused the liberal critics to postulate the Deutero-Isaiah hypothesis. A change of subject matter does not necessitate a change of authorship. It is interesting that for 1900 years there was not a word about a second Isaiah. John refers to this section as authored by Isaiah.

**He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias** (John 1:23).

Our Lord likewise referred to this section as written by Isaiah (Luke 4:7-21).

There are numerous other references which confirm the authorship of Isaiah.

Philip used it to win an Ethiopian to Christ.

The beauty and wonder of this section will come before us as we proceed in a detailed chapter discussion.

### OUTLINE:

(A threefold division marked by the concluding thought in each division that there is “no peace to the wicked”).

1. **The COMFORT of the Lord Which Comes Through the Servant.** Chapters 40-48  
(A Polemic against Idolatry—Help and Hope Come Only Through the Servant)

2. **The SALVATION of the Lord Which Comes Through the Suffering Servant.** Chapters 49-57

- (1) *The Redeemer of the Whole World, Who is God's Servant.* Chapters 49-52:12  
(2) *The Redemption Wrought by the Suffering Servant, who is God's Sheep (Lamb).* Chapters 52:13-53  
(3) *The Results of the Redemption Wrought by the Redeemer, Who is God's Only Saviour.* Chapters 54-57

**3. The GLORY of the Lord Which Comes Through the Suffering Servant.** Chapters 58-66

- (1) *Sin Hinders the Manifestation of the Glory of God.* Chapters 58-59  
(2) *The Redeemer is Coming to Zion.* Chapters 60-66 (Nothing Can Hinder God's Progress—He Will Judge Sin)

## CHAPTER FORTY

### THEME:

A message of comfort from God, the Creator, the Saviour and Sustainer.

### REMARKS:

The change of subject from judgment to salvation as we enter this section is quite noticeable. It is not necessary to postulate a second Isaiah whom the critics have labeled "the great unknown" in order to explain this section. The message now is comfort and not judgment. God reveals Himself as Creator, Saviour and Sustainer so that He will not be "the great unknown" to His people.

A polemic against idolatry begins in this chapter and continues through chapter 48. It runs through this section as both undertone and overtone. A correct knowledge of God as Creator, Comforter and Deliverer is the answer to idolatry of the past and the cults of the present. God called Abraham from idolatry.

**And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods (Joshua 24:2).**

Abraham and the nation Israel were to bear witness to the unity of the Godhead in the ancient world of idolatry and polytheism.

**Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord (Deuteronomy 6:4).**

The Church today is to bear witness to the Trinity in this modern world of atheism. The constant danger to Israel was that of lapsing into idolatry. The constant danger of the Church is of apostatizing unto Unitarianism. In both cases a knowledge of God is the answer.

**And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent (John 17:3).**

## OUTLINE:

1. **COMFORT**—a message from God. Verses 1-11
2. **CREATION**—a Revelation of God. Verses 12-26
3. **CONSIDERATION**—a call from God. Verses 27-31

## COMMENT:

Verse 1—**Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.**

“**Comfort ye, comfort ye.**” The opening statement and its repetition is a sigh of yearning from the pulsating heart of God. Our God is the God of “**all comfort.**”

**Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God** (II Corinthians 1:3-4).

The Holy Spirit is called “**the comforter.**”

**And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever** (John 14:16).

The Lord Jesus Christ is likewise called “**the comforter.**”

**My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous** (I John 2:1).

The word for “**advocate**” is the same as the one for “**comforter.**” God’s people in all ages need His comfort as they face the problems and perplexities of life.

Verse 2—**Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord’s hand double for all her sins.**

It has been suggested that when there was an indebtedness or mortgage on a house in Israel, the fact was written on a paper and put on the door posts that all could read. Another copy was kept by the one who held the mortgage. When the debt was paid the second copy was nailed over the other door post that all might see the debt was paid. This was to receive double. The sins of Jerusalem had been paid for by the One who suffered outside her gates and wall. Before there can be any comfort and peace, there must be the knowledge of sins pardoned and put away. This is the first step to peace of mind and heart.

Verse 3—**The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.**

All four evangelists quote this verse as applying to John the Baptist.

**For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness. Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight (Matthew 3:3).**

**The voice of one crying in the wilderness. Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight (Mark 1:3).**

**As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God (Luke 3:4-6).**

**He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord as said the prophet Esaias (John 1:23).**

**Verse 4—Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:**

**Verse 5—And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.**

**Verse 6—The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field:**

Luke quotes this as applying to John the Baptist.

**Verse 7—The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass.**

**Verse 8—The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.**

Then, where is comfort in these words? The first thing man must learn, if he is to receive the comfort and salvation of God, is that he is utterly helpless and there is no ability in him. Man is faint, frail and feeble, but the Word of God is strong, sure and secure. This word is the Gospel as quoted by Peter.

**Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you (I Peter 1:23-25).**

This gospel gives eternal life to man who naturally is as transitory as the grass.

Verse 9—**O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!**

“**Good tidings**” is the gospel. “**Behold your God**”—Jesus Immanuel— “**God with us.**”

Verse 10—**Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.**

This looks forward to His second advent. The Gospel compasses both the 1st and 2nd comings of Christ.

Verse 11—**He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.**

He took the title of Shepherd when He came the first time.

**I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep** (John 10:11).

He also said, “**I lay down my life for the sheep.**”

Verse 12—**Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?**

This verse introduces the section that speaks of the greatness of God as Creator. The theme song in this section could be, “*How Great Thou Art.*” The vast oceans are like a drop of water in His hand; not enough to wet His hand. The earth is like a fleck of dust that cannot be seen by the naked eye.

Verse 13—**Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him?**

Verse 14—**With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?**

God knows no equal nor is there anyone to whom He can go for advice.

Verse 15—**Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.**

Verse 16—**And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering.**

**Verse 17—All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.**

The nations of the earth may think they have insurmountable problems but they present no problem to God, note that the entire forest of Lebanon would not make a fire for a burnt offering even if all the animals of the world were offered to God. Only in Jesus' sacrifice can God find satisfaction.

**Verse 18—To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?**

Here the prophet contrasts God to idols, no image of God was permissible in the second commandment.

**Verse 19—The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains.**

The rich make a very ornate idol.

**Verse 20—He that is so impoverished that he hath no oblation chooseth a tree that will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, that shall not be moved.**

The poor can have only a crude idol.

**Verse 21—Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth?**

It is utterly preposterous to compare God to some dumb idol.

**Verse 22—It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in:**

**Verse 23—That bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity.**

The Old Testament did not teach the earth was flat: science first taught this theory. It is clearly stated here that the earth is a sphere positioned in an even greater universe, and that God's Throne is far beyond the penetration of the most powerful telescopes, as they search out the limitless vault of space.

**Verse 24—Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble.**

Verse 25—**To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One.**

Verse 26—**Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he called them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in Power; not one faileth.**

The reason God does not deliver His own in every emergency is not because He is limited in power, his wisdom directs Him to do otherwise for the good of His creatures.

Verse 27—**Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God?**

God knows about the difficulties of His own, he is able to quiet the storms of life, but sometimes there are lessons for His own to learn in the storm. God knows, and sees, and cares, he does care that His own shall not perish.

Verse 28—**Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.**

We have a great God, he is able to help the helpless and strengthen the weak.

Verse 30—**Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:**

Verse 31—**But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.**

There are three degrees of power here. Some have likened it to the three stages of Christian growth. See I John 2:12-14.

(1) *The young Christian shall mount up as an eagle.*

(2) *The adult Christian shall run.*

(3) *The mature Christian shall walk.*

See the author's book *On Eagles' Wings* (See Exodus 19:4 and Deuteronomy 32:11).

~ end of chapter 40 ~

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