

Week Three: Promise Expected

God first promised to bring salvation to His people 6000 years ago in the Garden. That salvation came in the person of Jesus around 2000 years ago. That means that for 4000 years, the people of God were looking and waiting for the day when God would do what He had promised to do.

Many of the passages in the prophetic books of the Old Testament are records of this longing. The prophets looked at the world around them and saw the sins of Israel. They saw God's judgment being poured out in response to this sin. Yet, they still believed what God had said to their fathers. They knew that he would do what he had promised to do. They looked ahead to the day when God would keep his promises and save his people.

Their preaching and writings bear this out. They were constantly calling for the people of Israel to repent of sin and warning them that God would not tolerate it forever. God is slow to anger and full of mercy, but in His timing He will judge sin. In the same breath, they were urging their hearers to trust in the Lord and not lose hope. They wanted the nation of Israel to turn back to their faithful God who would keep His promises.

This week we will look at several of these passages. Pray that we will feel the excitement and anticipation that the prophets felt—the feeling of waiting and looking frantically for the only one that has any hope of helping you. Pray also that this would excite us and make us long for the day when our Savior will come back to gather his people to himself. Let us say with the prophets, “Come Jesus, our long-expected, long-wanted, long-awaited savior!”

“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
from our sins and fears release us; let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
dear Desire of every nation, Joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a king,
born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all sufficient merit raise us to thy glorious throne.

Isaiah 40:9-11, 27-31

Tyson Lott

As you are reading through the Bible, coming up to Isaiah 40 is like walking up the base of an immense mountain. Once you've read through the chapter you might imagine yourself having reached the summit. And just like reaching the summit of a mountain, by the time you get to the end of the chapter – you are filled with awe as you realize just how small you are in comparison to the greatness and glory of God. You don't feel great or powerful, instead you feel small, humble, and lowly in the presence of our God who is incomparably powerful and majestic. Verse 9 ends by saying "Behold your God!" and then from the rest of the chapter flows evidence of his greatness (just read verses 12 – 26 to see this).

But despite being infinitely wonderful, powerful, glorious, and beyond our comprehension, our God approaches His people as a loving Shepherd to "tend his flock." Verse 11 says that He will "gather the lambs in his arms; He will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young." What an amazing thing, that the almighty God in all His glory and might would treat such small people so wonderfully. What an incredible joy we can have knowing that despite our own lowly status the eternal and infinitely powerful God offers hope and salvation to us?

Allow me to ask a question – Are you weary? Do you look out in these cold months and struggle to see the light? Do you feel that you've been working as hard as you ever have, just to stay in the same place? Or maybe you feel the other way. Do you feel that you cannot take another step. Whatever life has placed in front of you, it feels unbearable. If this is you, then take hope. Read the final verses of this chapter (28-31).

Have you not heard of the greatness of our God? Have you not beheld his might and power? Don't you know that he never grows tired, and he is wiser than anyone can comprehend? Know this – He sees everything. He knows the injustices you have endured. He knows the trial you are facing. He knows your situation and He cares so much about you that He promises to redeem it all! He gives power to those who are weary. If you cannot walk anymore, like a shepherd He gathers you into His arms and will carry you through the field. Verse 29 says "He gives power to the faint, and to him who has not might He increases strength."

If you are weary today remember this: the infinitely powerful God who can do anything He pleases has chosen to lift you up and give you strength. God's speaking is God's doing. He will not let you down for all "who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength." If you are weary, trust in the Lord. Turn to him. He will not let you down.