

Series: Messiah; Sermon: **Comfort, Comfort My People**

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Bible text explored: Isaiah 40:1–5

¹Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

²Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that her warfare is ended,
that her iniquity is pardoned,
that she has received from the Lord's hand
double for all her sins.

³A voice cries:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord;
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

⁴Every 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.

⁵And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.” [ESV]

Review and application:

Divinely inspired to predict events after his own earthly lifetime, Isaiah warned of God's judgment on his sinful people through exile. But today's passage launches a section of his prophecy announcing coming salvation. It will be led by God's righteous servant, the Messiah, and a restored remnant will glorify him among the nations.

1. What (vv. 1-2) comforting news does God want the exiles in Babylon to hear about the punishment he has imposed on them? (Note: “Her warfare is ended” could be understood as “She has now served her sentence.”)
Do you have the assurance of knowing that God has pardoned your sins?
2. Several aspects of God's *comfort* are expanded on in this chapter. How should God's merciful way of dealing with his people encourage us? (See *Isa. 40:11.*)
How should grasping God's power bolster our confidence? (See *Isa. 40:25-26.*)
How should restored hope enable us to persevere? (See *Isa. 40:31.*)
3. What does the fact that this passage (vv. 3-5) is quoted in all four Gospel narratives (fully in *Luke 3:4-6*; partially in *Matt. 3:3*, *Mark 1:3*, and *John 1:23*) tell us about its applicability to more than the exiles?
4. For what glory did John the Baptist's “voicing” create a highway? (See *John 1:14* and *Heb. 1:3.*)
5. How can you picture yourself helping to clear the way for all people to see the glory of God?