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LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH, MESSAGE FORTY-FOUR, JEHOVAH THE SAVIOR

In this message we want to see the revelation of the all-inclusive Christ in Isaiah 40, where Christ is revealed as Jehovah the Savior, as the glad tidings.

The New Testament shows that God came to man as Jesus, the incarnated One. God Himself was incarnated (John 1:1, 14). That was His coming to man. Genesis 18 records how God came to Abraham. He came with two angels to visit Abraham. He and these angels all were in the form of men when they came to Abraham, but Jesus came in a different way. He came in the way of incarnation, the way of entering into man and becoming a man to directly participate in man's humanity, partaking of man's blood and flesh.

For His coming there was the need of a forerunner to usher in the incarnated God to His people. This forerunner was John the Baptist. The New Testament opens with John's ushering, recommendation, and introduction of the incarnated God.

John's introduction was prophesied by Isaiah in 40:3-4. Jehovah the Savior, Jesus, was ushered in by the voice of John the Baptist crying in the wilderness. In verse 3, the voice cries, "Make clear / The way of Jehovah; / Make straight in the desert / A highway for our God." To make clear the way of Jehovah is to make clear the way of Jesus. Jesus is the New Testament Jehovah. Jehovah and Jesus are one person. In the Old Testament, the name of Jesus is Jehovah, and in the New Testament the name of Jehovah is Jesus. To make clear the way of Jehovah is to make straight in the desert a highway for our God. The way of Jehovah, Jesus, is a highway for our God. This means that Jesus is our God.

Verse 4 says, "Every valley will be lifted up, / And every mountain and hill will be made low, / And the crooked places will become straight, / And the rough places a broad valley." When I first came to the United States, I traveled frequently, and the highways were a marvel to me. If there was a valley, a bridge was over it. The terrain was leveled and adjusted so that the highways could be constructed.

We need to consider what Isaiah means by making a highway for our God. To prepare the way of Jehovah is to prepare our heart. Jesus comes with the intention of getting into our spirit, but to enter into our spirit, He must pass through our heart. Our heart is composed of four parts—the mind, the emotion, the will, and the conscience. The human heart is full of valleys, mountains, hills, crooked places, and rough places.

Before we were saved was our heart straight or crooked? Was it fine or rough? In our heart there were valleys, mountains, crooked places, and rough places. Even now we have to confess that our heart is not that straight, not that level. Our heart is still crooked and rough. The highway is a paved heart. Every part and avenue of our heart need to be straightened by the Lord through repentance that the Lord may enter into us to be our life and take possession of us (Luke 1:17).

Our mind may be full of crooked places, and our emotion may be very rough. We may be cold toward the Lord. This is why John was crying in the wilderness to make straight in the desert a highway for our God. The human heart is like a desert full of crooked and rough places. What is our heart like? Is it straight and paved, without valleys, mountains, crooked places, or rough places? This is John the Baptist's crying word to usher in the Savior, who is Jesus as the revealing of Jehovah God.

The revealing of Jehovah is the appearing of Jesus. John told people that he was not the Christ but the one coming before Christ to prepare

His way (Mark 1:1-8). Jesus, the One coming after John, would be the appearing of Jehovah. Jesus, who is Jehovah, is our God. He is the revealing of Jehovah. Isaiah 40:5 says that all flesh will see Him. This is the glad tidings, the good news.

Verse 5 also indicates that Jehovah is revealed through His speaking (John 3:34a; 7:17). In the Gospel of John, the Lord Jesus told us that He was sent by the Father (5:36b-37a) and that He did not speak from Himself (14:10). He was speaking from His Father, His teaching was altogether of His Father, and His speaking was the expression of the Father. The more you listen to His speaking, the more you see Jehovah. John 3:34a says, "For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God." He was sent by God for the purpose of speaking the word of God for God's expression. In other words, His speaking was the revealing of God. When you listen to Him, you see God. In His word, His speaking, God is unveiled and presented to you.

Isaiah goes on to say in 40:6-8a that all flesh withers like the grass and fades like the flower. All flesh, all of mankind, will not last. First John 2:17 says that the world is passing away. The world here, according to its usage in John 3:16, refers to mankind, to human beings. Human beings will pass away, but the word of Jesus will stand forever. There have been many famous people throughout history who spoke, but their words do not abide forever. When they died, their words died with them, but the speaking of Jesus remains forever. Jesus is still speaking, and His words remain forever.

When we hear His word, we see him. We were saved by hearing His word. Some may say that at a certain time they saw Jesus and were saved. Actually, they did not see Him physically, but they heard His word. His word is just Himself, and He is Jehovah, and Jehovah is God. Thus, we may say that the word is God. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God (John 1:1). When I speak, I always exercise not to speak from myself. I exercise to speak the word of the Lord. When we speak in this way, the Lord is present in our speaking, and others are able to see Jesus. When we are under the ministry of the Lord's word, we see Jesus, Jehovah, the Savior, God, the glad tidings. All of these are one. This is why we, the saved ones, like to come to the meetings. In the meetings there is the speaking of the Lord, the word of God. When we hear His word, we see Him.

His word will stand forever to enliven men that they may partake of His eternal life for their enjoyment (Isa. 40:8b; 1 Pet. 1:23-25). When people listen to His word, they are enlivened. When we heard the gospel, we saw Jesus, we were made alive, and we partook of His eternal life for our enjoyment. Peter told us in his first Epistle that we have been regenerated through the living and abiding word of God. As fallen men, we were like withering grass and fading flowers, yet we heard the living word, which is abiding forever. This living word brought the eternal life into us to regenerate us, and we received the eternal life for our daily enjoyment. This is the first aspect of the glad tidings.

Isaiah 40:9 declares the glad tidings—"Here is your God!" This is Jehovah's appearing. Jehovah is here, and He is your God. This is the glad tidings. If you have God, you have everything. If you have God, every problem will be solved, every lack will be supplied, and every shortage will be filled. This short word—"Here is your God!"—is the glad tidings. We should pray adequately to be filled with God, to receive the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

Then when we come to the meeting, in a sense, we may not need to speak that much. Instead we can all declare, "Here is our God!" This is the second aspect of the glad tidings.

The third aspect of the glad tidings is the Lord Jehovah coming. He comes as a mighty One to rule and to recompense (Isa. 40:10). He is the Ruler who

comes as a mighty One to rule over us. He is also the Judge. He will either reward us or punish us. This is His recompense, which is His judgment. Jesus came as the Savior, but in the four Gospels we also see Him as the Judge. In Matthew 5 the Lord spoke nine blessings for the kingdom people, but in Matthew 23 He spoke an eightfold woe to the scribes and Pharisees. He declared again and again, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites." This is His judging. With Him is a reward on the positive side and a punishment, which is a recompense on the negative side. He will judge us.

As the mighty One, the ruling and judging One, He comes to be a Shepherd (Isa. 40:11; Matt. 9:36; John 10:2-4, 11, 14). In a shepherd's care for his flock, he rules over the sheep to correct them. His ruling and correcting is his shepherding. In the past, we may have been wild persons who would not listen to the gospel or to the word of God. But in His ruling, Jesus did something to regulate us. His regulating is His shepherding. Many of us were saved because of Jesus' regulating. His regulating shepherds us to bring us into the flock, to get us on the right way, and to adjust us to the proper pace. He is adjusting us not to go too fast or too slow, but to take the pace of the flock. Today He is still shepherding us by adjusting us. He directs us, stops us, and urges us on.

As the Shepherd, He also feeds His flock, gathers the lambs in His arm, carries them in His bosom, and leads those who are nursing the young. Among us some are lambs and some are those who are nursing the young. Jesus, our Shepherd, takes care of His entire flock. This is surely a part of the glad tidings.

After this kind of shepherding, the flock, the sheep, will know Jesus as the Holy One, the eternal God, Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth, sitting above the circle of the earth (Isa. 40:22, 25-26, 28a). As we feed a new believer whom we have brought to the Lord, he will be helped by us to know Jesus more. He will be helped to know Jesus as the eternal God, Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth.

Actually, Isaiah 40 reveals the steps of the God-ordained way. We have to get people saved and feed them. Then they will begin to know that their Savior, Jesus, is the Holy One, the eternal God, Jehovah, and the Creator of the heavens and the earth. When we go to visit the new believers, we should speak to them about Jesus in these aspects. Then they will be fed. They will realize that Jesus is wonderful. Can Socrates, Confucius, or Buddha be compared with Him? There is no comparison between Him and anyone or anything else. As the Holy One, Jesus is unlimited, unsearchable, incomparable, and high (Isa. 40:12-14, 17-18, 28b, 22a).

Isaiah 40:15 and 17 say that all peoples are like a drop of water from a bucket, like specks of dust on the scales, and are nothing, even less than nothing, just vanity—emptiness. Perhaps you will bring a college professor to the Lord and then begin to feed him. A college professor may consider that he is a very important person with much prestige. As you feed him, however, he will come to know that he is like a drop of water from a bucket or a speck of dust on the heavenly scale. Eventually, he will realize that he is nothing and that Christ is everything. He will realize that apart from Christ, he is even less than nothing, vanity, emptiness. This will be the result of your visiting him to feed him again and again.

We have to preach Christ to such an extent, causing people to know that they are just vanity, emptiness. The more they realize that they are nothing, empty, and vanity, the more they will appreciate Christ and be filled up with Christ. They will treasure Christ. Saul of Tarsus was like this. Eventually, he realized that all things were dung and that only Christ is the excellent One. He even considered the knowledge of Christ to be excellent (Phil. 3:8). If a brother with a high position treasures this position, he will not be able to enjoy Christ that much. We have to count all things dung that we may gain Christ and enjoy Christ. This is the fourth aspect of the glad tidings.

The fifth aspect of the glad tidings in Isaiah 40 is that Jehovah the Savior empowers and strengthens those who wait on Him (vv. 29-31). We

experience this when we prophesy, when we speak for the Lord. When we prophesy, we are empowered and strengthened.

The Lord gives power to the faint, and to those who have no vigor He multiplies strength (v. 29). In Ephesians 6:10 Paul said, "Be empowered in the Lord and in the might of His strength." He also declared, "I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me" (Phil. 4:13). Christ is the empowering One, so we who wait on Him will not faint or become weary. In Christ as the empowering One, we will mount up with wings like eagles. Isaiah 40:30 and 31 say, "Although youths will faint and become weary, / And young men shall collapse exhausted; / Yet those who wait on Jehovah will renew their strength; / They will mount up with wings like eagles; / They will run and will not faint; / They will walk and will not become weary." This is the Old Testament way of describing those who trust in Jesus. The New Testament expresses this in Ephesians 6:10 and Philippians 4:13. Paul also says in Philippians 4:12, "I have learned the secret." He learned the secret of sufficiency in Christ, so he did not faint or become weary. At the end of his life, in 2 Timothy 4:7, he declared, "I have finished the course."

Isaiah 40 presents a marvelous picture of the all-inclusive Christ as Jehovah the Savior. Through His living and abiding word, we have been regenerated. We have been fed by Him to know Him as the Holy One, the eternal God, Jehovah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth. He is unlimited, unsearchable, incomparable, and high. We human beings are as a drop of water and specks of dust. We are nothing and even less than nothing, vanity, emptiness. When we know Christ in this way, we are qualified to wait on Him. We are nothing, and He is everything. Therefore, we do not have any trust in ourselves. We put our trust in Him and wait on Him. He then gives us the eagles' wings to mount up, so that we can run the course of the Christian life without fainting or becoming weary. This is the very Christ presented to us in Isaiah 40.

Burdens for Church Prayers

- For GTCA burden, especially for saints' participation in the move in Stockton and San Luis Obispo.
- For daily exercises in God's ordained way training: Personal contact with the Lord, Pursuing the truth, Participating in the study group, Praying with companions and in the church prayer meeting, Prophesying on the Lord's day and Going to the meetings on time.
- For gospel preaching on West Valley College campus, as well as for English-speaking testimony in Campbell.
- For young people that they would have morning revival, pursue the truth and become gospel seeds on campus.
- Pray for 8 points for GTCA, <http://beseeching.org/8-points-of-prayer-from-special-prayer-time-jan-17-18/>

Announcement

- Morning Revival: the Crystallization-Study of Isaiah (2), Message One.
- Prayer meeting on Tuesday (2/15) at Campbell meeting hall starting at 7:30 pm.
- 2011 International Chinese Speaking Conference will be held on 2/18-20 in Anaheim, CA. SC has bus each person \$50 round trip with 2 meals.
- GOW training, extra material purchase, please register with brother Mark, \$12.5 per copy.
- Spring Young People Conference (3/18-20) Please register via brother Ezra Tai.