

LESSON 6

TEXT • ISAIAH 40:1–31

INTRODUCTION

The Bible has 66 books. The first 39 books we typically call “The Old Testament”—Genesis through Malachi. They were written from about 1500 years to about 400 years before Jesus. The second part is the “New Testament”—27 books that reveal God’s plan of salvation: Matthew through Revelation.

The Old Testament is often called “The Law and the Prophets.” The basic purpose of this part of the Bible is to introduce us God, to show His righteous standards and holiness, and to teach that there is only *one way* to achieve righteousness and salvation—by faith in God. The Law and Prophets were so perfect and exacting that the one reading these scriptures *should* realize that there is no human way to reach God apart from calling on Him for rescue. The Old Testament ultimately reveals that the human condition is completely broken and the only hope is a *brand-new heart*.

Which brings us to the 27 books of “New Testament.” In these scriptures we discover how we are ultimately saved by Jesus’ sacrifice to pay for our sins and how God gives us a *new heart* when we surrender to Him. Jesus brings comfort, new life, true living water, and freely-given bread of life. This message is salvation by grace through faith, because of God’s fierce love for us.

Did you know that the book of Isaiah resembles the Bible as a whole? I don’t know whether God planned it this way or if it just a happy coincidence, but think about it...

- The first 39 chapters of Isaiah echo the 39 books of the Old Testament, which are a message of God’s holiness, man’s sin, and judgement.
- The next 27 chapters of Isaiah, though, remind us of the 27 New Testament books in their message of salvation through the Messiah.

Chapter 40, our focus in this lesson, starts it off with the amazing message: *“Comfort! O comfort my people... Her iniquity has been removed... Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness... The glory of the Lord will be revealed.”* This sure sounds like the words of

the Gospel message proclaimed by the angels to the shepherds in Bethlehem when Jesus was born, and as John the Baptist comes preaching this message in the desert, to prepare the way for Jesus.

And in Isaiah 40:10–11 we find these amazing words, showing how God Himself will come and care for His people personally, as a gentle shepherd...!

Behold, the Lord GOD will come with might, With His arm ruling for Him. Behold, His reward is with Him And His recompense before Him. Like a shepherd He will tend His flock, In His arm He will gather the lambs And carry them in His bosom; He will gently lead the nursing ewes.

The rest of Isaiah chapters 40—66 continue in the same themes: God’s grace; Jesus revealed; His sacrifice for our sin; salvation for the meek and lowly who seek Him in faith—just like the New Testament!

QUESTIONS

Let’s now dig deep into Isaiah 40. Compare the following sets of verses: What key word or idea is common to both?

Isaiah 40:1 / Luke 2:10 •

Isaiah 40:2 / Colossians 1:19–22 •

Isaiah 40:3–4 / Matthew 3:1–3 •

Isaiah 40:5 / Hebrews 1:3 •

Isaiah 40:6–8 / 1 Peter 1:23–25 •

Isaiah 40:9 / 2 Peter 1:16 •

Isaiah 40:10–11 / Matthew 9:35–36 •

Isaiah 40:12 / Colossians 1:16–17 •

Isaiah 40:13–14 / John 1:47–49 •

Isaiah 40:15–17 / Ephesians 1:22–23 •

Isaiah 40:18–20 / Philippians 3:7–8 •

Isaiah 40:21–24 / Hebrews 13:8 •

Isaiah 40:25 / Luke 3:16 •

Isaiah 40:26–27 / Hebrews 1:8–10 •

Isaiah 40:28 / John 5:17–18 •

Isaiah 40:29–31 / Colossians 1:9–12 •

What is the big takeaway from this study? What key thing you learned in these passages?
