

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 24 (June 10-16, 2018)

For the next several weeks, I want you to ask yourself two questions: 1) How big is my God? 2) How much do I trust the Word of God? These two questions will come together in selected passages from Isaiah.

Sunday, June 10 (read Isaiah 40:1-8)

The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever. (Isaiah 40:8)

To prepare the Jewish people for their captivity in Babylon that was to come about a century later, God uses the pen of Isaiah to prophesy **encouraging** words. The Lord tells His prophets to **comfort** those who will read these words in Babylon with the knowledge that the consequences for their sins will have reached completion during their captivity (v. 1-2). Someone will soon come who will prepare the way for the arrival of the long-awaited Messiah (v. 3-5). From our previous studies, you know that John the Baptist fulfilled this prophecy. I have the privilege, along with many others, to prepare the way for the **second coming** of Jesus Christ when **all of prophecy** will be fulfilled. Our message is the same as John's: Do not put your trust in men or the beauty of earthly things. Instead, fully trust God's Word because it, alone, stands forever (v. 6-8)!

Monday, June 11 (read Isaiah 40:9-11)

He tends His flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in His arms and carries them close to His heart; He gently leads those that have young. (Isaiah 40:11)

Today's entire text pictures the kingdom of Jesus Christ on earth, lasting 1000 glorious years. The Lord will rule from His throne in the current city of Jerusalem (v. 9). Best of all, we will come back with Him at the end of the tribulation and reign with Him (v. 10; see also Revelation 19:11-16). Isaiah's earlier prophecy in 9:6-7a will be fulfilled: "For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever." The beautiful picture of His leadership is in today's printed verse above. This is such a powerful, tender image that I have placed a picture of Jesus holding a little lamb on His shoulder next to the large cross at New Hope Christian Church.

Tuesday, June 12 (read Isaiah 40:12-17)

Whom did the Lord consult to enlighten Him, and who taught Him the right way? Who was it that taught Him knowledge or showed Him the path of understanding? (Isaiah 40:14)

How large is your God? Does He have to answer all of your questions on demand? Can you trust Him even when His ways do not make sense to you? A god small enough for you to understand would never be big enough for you to worship! The obvious answer to all the questions in v. 14-16 is "no one!" God is in management; we are only in sales! As I am writing this devotion, all the nations in the Mid-east are plotting against Israel. If I did not know the Word of God, I would be in a panic. Do not fear. The Lord is in charge of all the nations (v. 15-17). Israel will never be destroyed because He has promised to protect this nation (see Jeremiah 31:35-37). Praise His holy Name!

Wednesday, June 13 (read Isaiah 40:18-24)

He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. (Isaiah 40:22a)

Do you have anything or anybody that rivals God for your affections? If so, you have just identified your idol. The people of Isaiah's day were making idols from wood that was overlaid with gold (v. 18-20). Can you name some of the idols that people still bow down to? The list should include things like houses, cars, land, possessions, children, grandchildren, memories, churches, and the list goes on and on. How big is your God? Do you see Him high and lifted up on His throne in Heaven or have you reduced Him to a Santa Claus role of giving you everything you want? Don't miss the amazing passage printed above in which God tells us the earth is round almost 2000 years before Columbus proved it. God determines who the rulers of each nation will be. He places them on the throne for His purpose and then removes them (v. 23-24). Relax! The Master is in charge (see also Proverbs 21:1)!

Thursday, June 14 (read Isaiah 40:25-27)

"To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?" says the Holy One. (Isaiah 40:25)

Are you still having difficulty understanding the magnitude of God? He challenges you to go outside on a clear night and gaze at the stars. "Who created all these?" He asks (v. 26a). Then He answers His own question, "He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name" (v. 26b). How big is your God now? Think about the billions of stars we can now see through our telescopes. He calls each of them by name! "Because of His great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing" (v. 26c). Do you think a God this omnipotent has any trouble knowing what you are doing and saying and thinking (v. 27)? I want you to experience real worship. This will happen when you realize how big God is and how small and unimportant you are. In spite of our insignificance compared to His greatness, He loves us and has adopted us into His family. Glory to His Name!

Friday, June 15 (read Isaiah 40:28-31)

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. (Isaiah 40:31 KJV)

Some verses are just too beautiful in the King James to use any of the modern versions. The one printed above is one of those! God wants you to know that He will never leave you or forsake you (see Hebrews 13:5). He who created the entire universe in six literal days is everlasting. He will not grow tired or weary (v. 28). As the son of Mary, Jesus experienced tiredness (see John 4:6), but as the Son of God He invites us to "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). Are you enjoying the rest He promised to you? Can you trust the creator of the universe to supply all your needs (see Philippians 4:19)? If so, you will find renewed strength for your journey ahead.

Saturday, June 16 (reread Isaiah 40:28-31)

He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. (Isaiah 40:29)

My wife and I were at a conference featuring Colonel Oliver North shortly after the Iran-Contra hearings in which he was accused of wrongdoings. Someone asked how he could remain so calm during the intense questioning from his political enemies. He said that, as he was being led into the courtroom under tight security, somehow an elderly lady broke through the guards and placed a note in his hand. Upon arriving at his seat, Colonel North looked to see what she had given him. Written in her handwriting were the words, "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" (v. 31). This verse motivated Colonel North to stand tall and brave before his accusers and the Lord has used him in a mighty way since this trial. Could this woman have been a messenger from God? Can you see how powerful the Word of God can be for you?