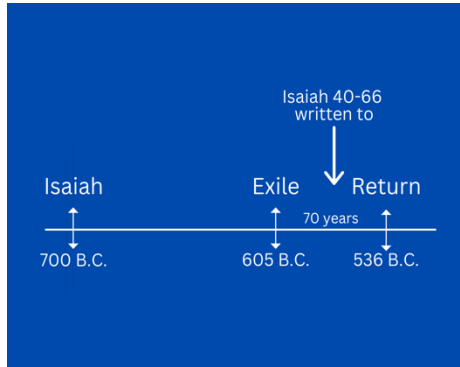


COMFORT MY PEOPLE

Isaiah 40

The Book of Comfort (Isaiah 40-66) was written to Jews living near the end of the Exile, 150 years in the future from Isaiah.



The Jews of Judah were conquered and deported by the Babylonians in three waves in 605 B.C., 597 B.C. and 586 B.C. The Prophet Jeremiah revealed the Exile would last 70 years (Jeremiah 29:10). In 536 B.C. the Persians repatriated foreigners and the Jews were free to return to Israel. A remnant of Jews returned, most stayed in the east.

The Book of Comfort contains prophecies of comfort to the returning Jews. The Book of Comfort also challenged Isaiah's generation to repent, live by the covenant and trust God.

In verses 1-5, God comforts His people that a day is coming when the glory of the Lord will be revealed to all mankind.

THE _____ OF THE LORD WILL BE REVEALED (40:1-5)

In verses 1-2, God comforts the Jewish exiles that their punishment has come to an end. Despite many warnings from Isaiah and other prophets, the Jews of Judah continued in idolatry and rebellion. God used the Babylonians to chastise Judah. By 586 B.C. Jerusalem and Solomon's Temple were destroyed. Thousands of Jews died. Tens of thousands were deported.

Isaiah wrote to the exiles towards the end of the 70 years. Their punishment was complete. Soon they would be able to return home. In verses 3-5, a messenger cries out the good news that when the Jews spiritually dedicate themselves to God, the glory of the Lord will be revealed.

When a dignitary would visit an area, workmen would level and smooth out the roads; they would "roll out the red carpet". Isaiah used this as a figure for spiritual revival. If the Jewish exiles will "smooth themselves out" spiritually, casting away their idols and dedicating themselves to Yahweh, then God's glory will come and be revealed to all the world. Isaiah was calling for spiritual revival so that the Lord would come in His glory.

That was the same message John the Baptist came preaching to the generation of our Lord Jesus (Matthew 3:1-6).

John the Baptist was the fulfillment of the messenger in Isaiah 40:3-4. He called the nation of Israel to spiritual revival so that the glory of the Lord, that is, the glory of Jesus, might be revealed in the coming of the Messianic Kingdom *at that time*. Isaiah 40:5 would have been fulfilled in that generation if the spiritual leaders of the Jews had lead the nation in spiritual revival and in accepting Jesus as the promised Messiah. The full glory of Jesus would have been revealed to all mankind in the establishment of His Kingdom at that time. But the spiritual leaders lead the nation to reject Jesus (Matthew 12). The offer of the Kingdom was withdrawn from that generation.

The Kingdom will again be offered to the Tribulation generation of the Jews. The leadership of that generation will lead the Jews in spiritual revival and they will accept Jesus as their Messiah. In response, Jesus will come again and establish His kingdom on earth. He will reveal His glory to all mankind when He sits on His throne of glory (Matthew 25:31) In that day, Isaiah 40:3-5 will be completely fulfilled.

It's been 2700 years since this prophecy was spoken. The Jews have yet to "smooth themselves out" spiritually. Many believe we are foolish to hold to this belief and they insist we are misinterpreting the Scriptures. Why do we continue to believe? Because no matter how long it takes, if God promised it, He will do it. That is the message of verses 6-26.

GOD'S WORD _____ FOREVER BECAUSE OF WHO HE IS (40:6-26)

We can be confident the glory of the Lord Jesus will be revealed to all the world because God has declared it. God's Word stands forever because of Who He is.

No matter how long it takes to fulfill His promises, do not doubt God! The glory of the Lord Jesus will be revealed to all flesh when He comes again and reigns on His throne.

70 years was a long time to live in exile. Many doubted God. Many felt like God had forgotten them. Many doubted they would ever be able to return to Israel. In verses 27-31, Isaiah admonished the exiles to trust God and His promises.

God will not forget the exiles. They must continue to wait upon the Lord to bring their exile to an end. When He does, God will strengthen them for the journey home.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Spiritual Purity is the only way to fully experience God's kingdom now and in the life to come (Galatians 5:16-24)

Be Confident Jesus is Coming Again with Power and Great Glory (Matthew 24:29-31, 44-51).

Be Amazed, Be Humbled By the Greatness of Our God Who Always Fulfills His Word

Grace News and Needs

Women's Soup Social: Sunday, October 29th, 3-5PM.

Women's VOM Stream: Friday, November 3rd, 6:00-8:00PM, Modular.

VOM Needs for October: Foam Nerf Balls, Chapstick

Operation Christmas Child: November 5-19. Let's pack a boatload of shoeboxes!

Church Business Meeting: Sunday, November 5th, 4:00PM, childcare provided.

Blood Drive: November 10th, 2:00-6:00PM, Modular.

For more information on our events and ministries, visit www.gccramona.com