

Behold your God!

Isaiah 40

Behold your God! Introduction

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- We've said that prophecy can seem complicated.
- There are three main topics:
  1. Rebellion
  2. Results of rebellion
  3. Restoration – accomplished through the faithful remnant.

# Behold your God! Introduction

- The passage before us focuses on :
  - ~~1. Rebellion~~
  - ~~2. Results of rebellion~~
  - 3. Restoration** – accomplished through the faithful remnant.

# Behold your God! Introduction

- The people Israel **rebelled** in the days of Isaiah.
- The **results** were that they went into exile.
- Isaiah is now speaking to them about their **restoration**.

# Behold your God! Introduction

- **Restoration** gives us insight into what God is truly like.
- When we are in rebellion, or in the midst of reaping its consequences, we can lose sight of that.
- Our picture of God is distorted.

# Behold your God! Introduction

- **Isaiah 40** will describe God's vision of a restored relationship with his people.
- It also shows us at least **nine things** the Lord wants in a restored relationship with you.

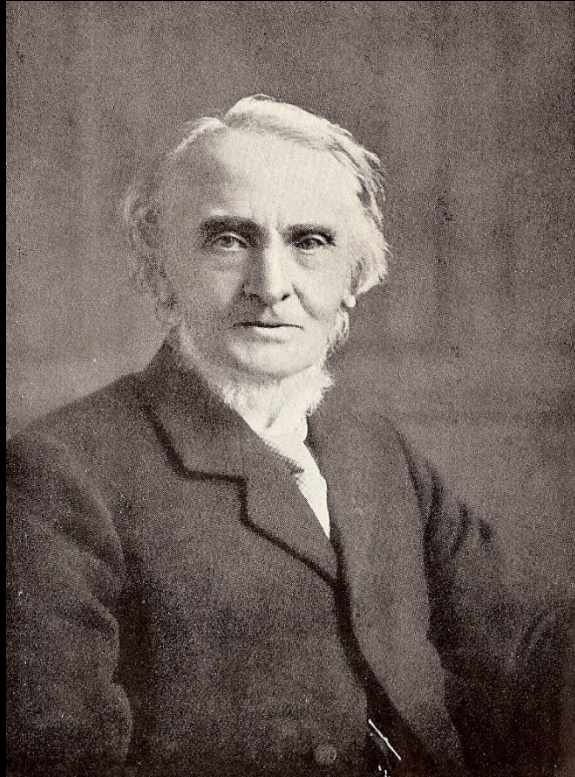
Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:1-2



# Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:1-2

- Three reasons to comfort Jerusalem:
  1. Her warfare (hardship, term of service) is ended.
  2. Her iniquity is pardoned.
  3. She has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins – as in the Law, **Exodus 22:3-4**, when the thief had to pay back double.

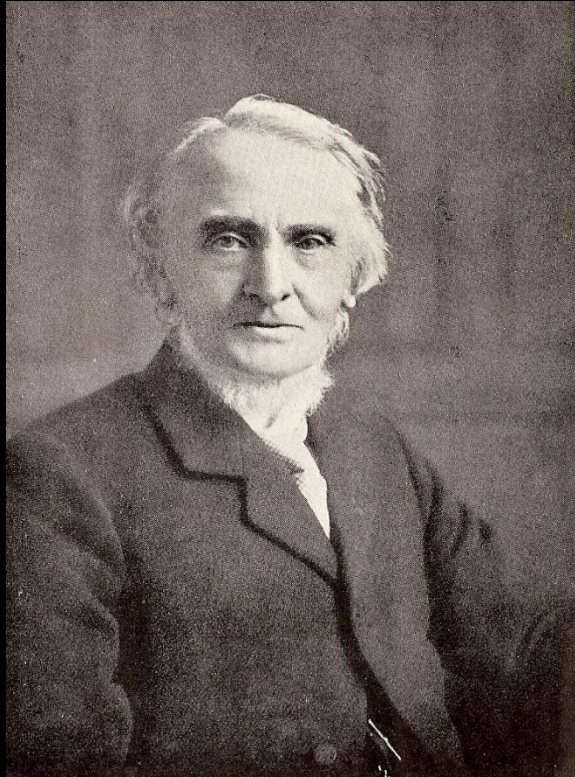
# Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:1-2



*That is a wonderfully tender word with which the silence and sadness of exile are broken. The inmost meaning of God's voice is ever comfort ... The exiles are still His; He who has hidden His face from them so long is still theirs.*

*– Alexander Maclaren (1826 – 1910)*

# Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:1-2



*And what was true of them is true of us; for sin may separate us from God, but it does not separate Him from us, and He still seeks to make us recognise the imperishable bond, which itself is the ground of both our comfort and of His will that we should be comforted.*

*– Alexander Maclaren (1826 – 1910)*

# Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:1-2

- Nine things the Lord wants:
  1. He wants to comfort you.

Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:3-5

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- In the Gospel of Matthew, we are told that this text pertains to John the Baptist.
- He would prepare the way for Jesus Christ – “the LORD” and “our God” – speaking of the deity of Christ.

Behold your God!     **Isaiah 40:3-5**

**Matthew 3:1-3** (ESV)

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, <sup>2</sup> “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” <sup>3</sup> For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said,

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:  
‘Prepare the way of the Lord;  
make his paths straight.’”

# Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:3-5

- Jesus is the basis of the restored relationship that we can all now have with God.



# Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:3-5

- Nine things the Lord wants:

2. He wants to forgive you since Jesus has paid for your sin.

Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:6-8

# Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:6-8

- God's word is stable, unchanging and enduring.
- When we receive his word and accept it by faith, it forms the basis of our eternal life.
- Listen to the Apostle Peter.

# Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:6-8

## 1 Peter 1:23-25 (ESV)

<sup>23</sup> ... [Y]ou have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God;

<sup>24</sup> for “All flesh is like grass

and all its glory like the flower of grass.

The grass withers, and the flower falls,

<sup>25</sup> but the word of the Lord remains forever.”

And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

# Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:6-8

- Nine things the Lord wants (Review):
  1. He wants to comfort you.
  2. He wants to forgive you since Jesus has taken care of your sin.

# Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:6-8

- Nine things the Lord wants (Review):
  1. He wants to comfort you.
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  3. He wants you to trust in his word.

Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:9-11

# Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:9-11

- God is speaking through Isaiah to returning exiles.
- He wants them to take notice.
- This is what God is like.
- He is powerful but will deal with them gently.



# Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:9-11

*All this power is employed with great tenderness on behalf of his people, leading them back from Babylon to the fold in Jerusalem.*

*– Geoffrey Grogan (1925 – 2011),  
Glasgow Bible College*



Behold your God!     **Isaiah 40:9-11**

**John 10:14-15** (ESV)

<sup>14</sup> I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, <sup>15</sup> just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.

# Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:9-11

- Nine things the Lord wants:

4. He wants to care for you and lead you like a shepherd.

Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:12-17

# Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:12-17

- We can't teach God anything.
- We can only learn from him.
- He knows everything there is to know.
- His knowledge, wisdom and understanding are all completely without limits.

# Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:12-17



Speaking of God's infallible foreknowledge, Tertullian said,

*... it was by this very attribute that He foreknew all things when He appointed them their places, and appointed them their places when He foreknew them.*

– *Tertullian (ca.155 – 240 A.D.),  
North African Church Father*

# Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:12-17



*His vision is utterly unchangeable. Thus, he comprehends all that takes place in time – the not-yet existing future, the existing present, and the no-longer existing past – in an immutable and eternal present.*

*– Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430 A.D.),  
North African Church Father*

# Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:12-17

- Nine things the Lord wants:

5. He wants you to appreciate his wisdom.



Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:18-20

# Behold your God!     Isaiah 40:18-20

- Prior to their exile the Israelites were preoccupied with the idols of other nations.
- In Babylon they were surrounded with some of the most intense idolatry of all.

# Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:18-20

- Perhaps the best comparison in our day is the worship of all the many Hindu gods and goddesses.



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# Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:18-20

- Now they were going to return from exile.
- The idolatry they observed on such a massive scale in Babylon might give them something to think about.

# Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:18-20



*The one who makes the idol has to take care that it will not topple, but [God] is the one who can balance the heavens like a canopy (40:21-22). Rather than building foolish idols or trusting in princes, we should contemplate and meditate on God's handiwork in creation (40:26).*

*– Edouard Kitoko Nsiku,  
South African Theological Seminary*

# Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:18-20

- Nine things the Lord wants (Review):
  1. He wants to comfort you.
  2. He wants to forgive you since Jesus has paid for your sin.
  3. He wants you to trust in his word.
  4. He wants to care for you and lead you like a shepherd.
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  6. He wants you to know that he is completely unlike all idols.

Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:21-23



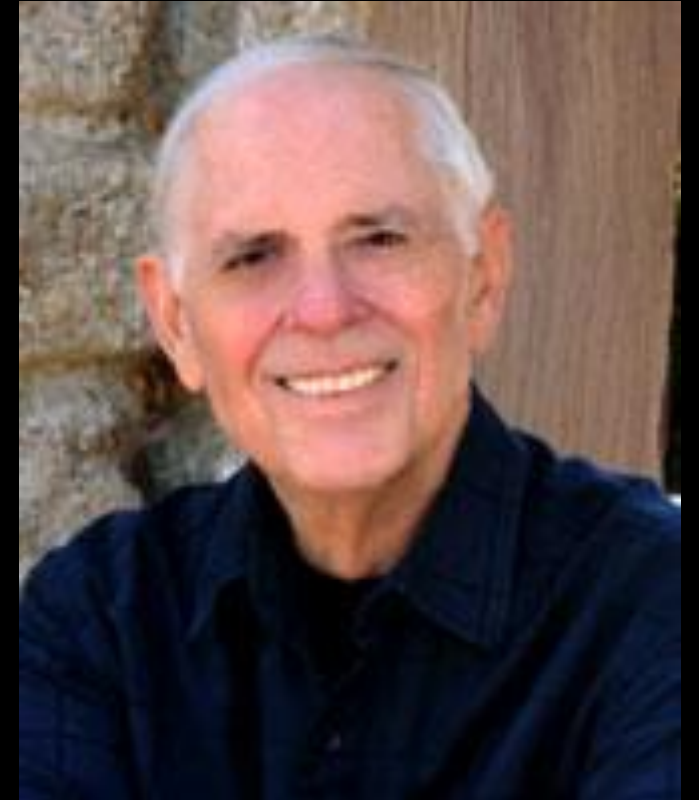
# Behold your God!     Isaiah 40:21-23

- You may have noticed that we simply cannot control everything.
- Our inability to keep things under control can be a powerful motivation to trust in the Lord.

# Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:21-23

*Humans may fail to accomplish an act of willing by either failing to know what is to be done; or knowing what should be done but not willing it; or lacking the power to do what is willed ...*

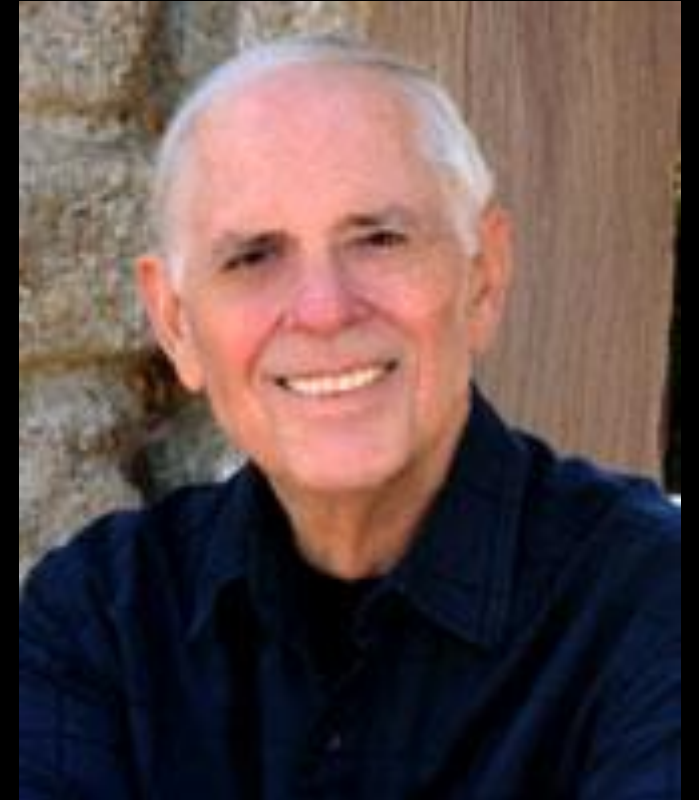
*– Thomas Oden, Classic Christianity*



# Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:21-23

*God's power lacks none of these deficiencies of will since God enjoys untrammelled awareness of what can be done. God wills that the good be done, even if beyond the range of our finite perceptions. God has the power to accomplish what God wills.*

*– Thomas Oden, Classic Christianity*



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- Nine things the Lord wants:

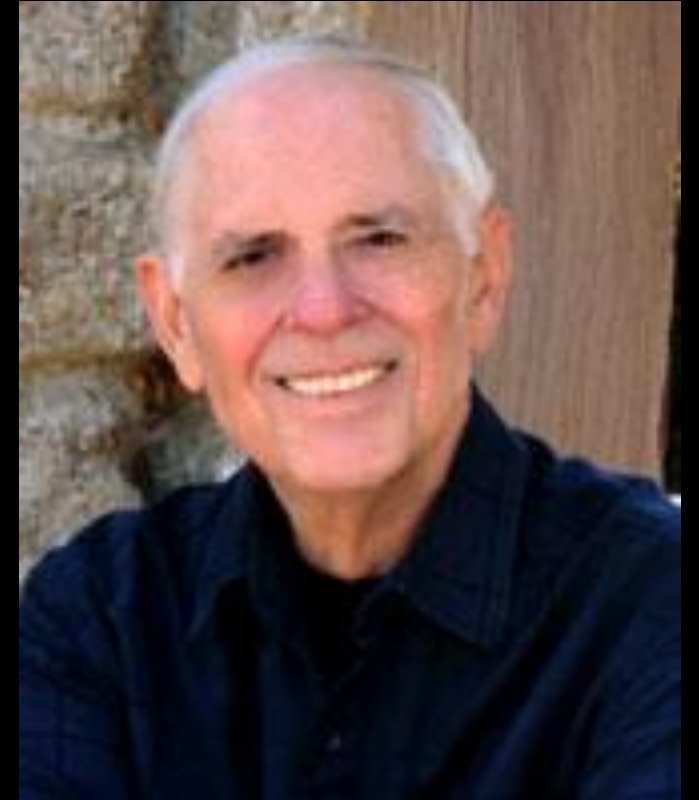
7. He wants you to know that he has everything under control.

Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:24-26

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*God's influence upon the world is unlike any other mode of influence— unlimited in capacity ... Omnipotence may be defined as the perfect ability of God to do all things that are consistent with the divine character. God can do all that God wills to do.*

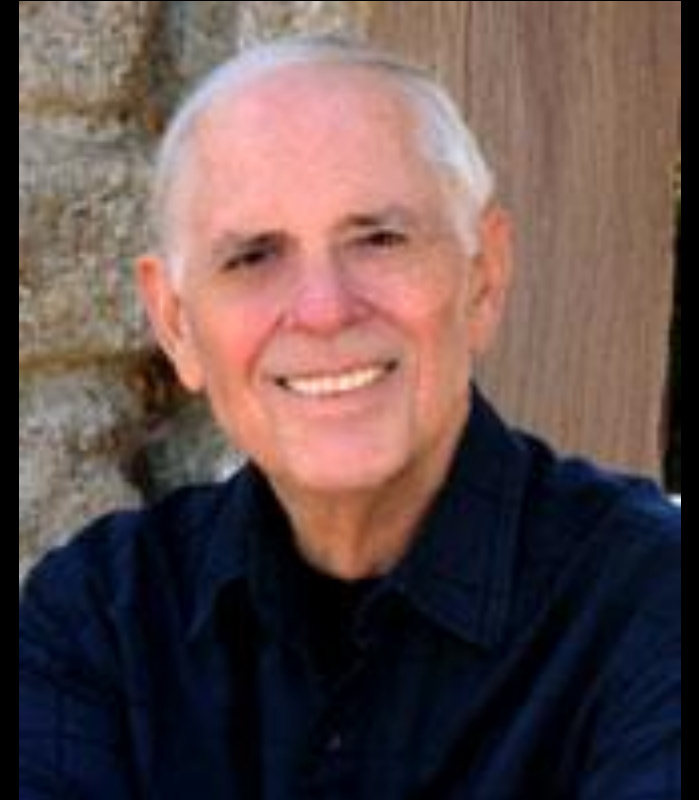
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# Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:24-26

*Omnipotence points to the necessary form of power pertinent to the One worthy to be worshipped. God is not limited in any of the divine attributes by anything external to himself. No power in history has any other empowering source ultimately than God.*

*– Thomas Oden, Classic Christianity*



Behold your God!     Isaiah 40:24-26

**Ephesians 3:20-21 (ESV)**

<sup>20</sup> Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, <sup>21</sup> to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.



# Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:24-26

- Nine things the Lord wants:

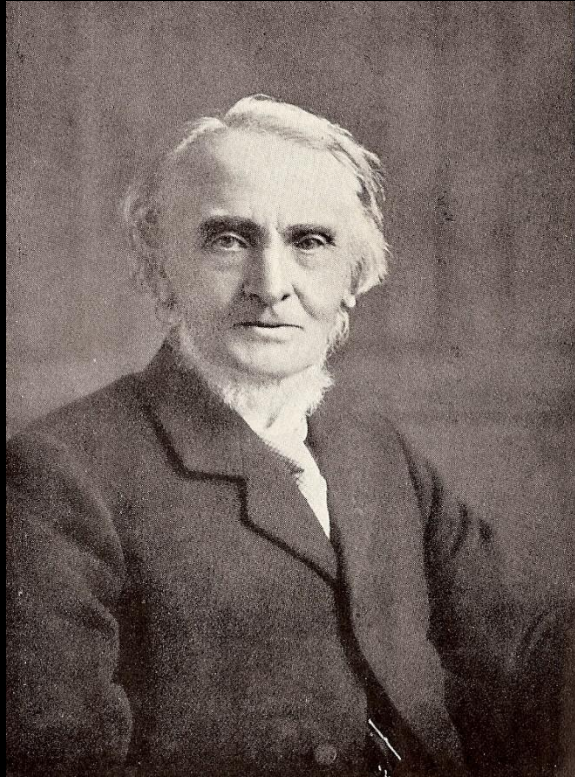
8. He wants you to know that he is all-powerful.

Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:27-31

# Behold your God!     **Isaiah 40:27-31**

- This is a beautiful passage to turn to when you think you have had enough.
- When you simply cannot go on, God wants you to know that you can – not in your own strength, but in his.

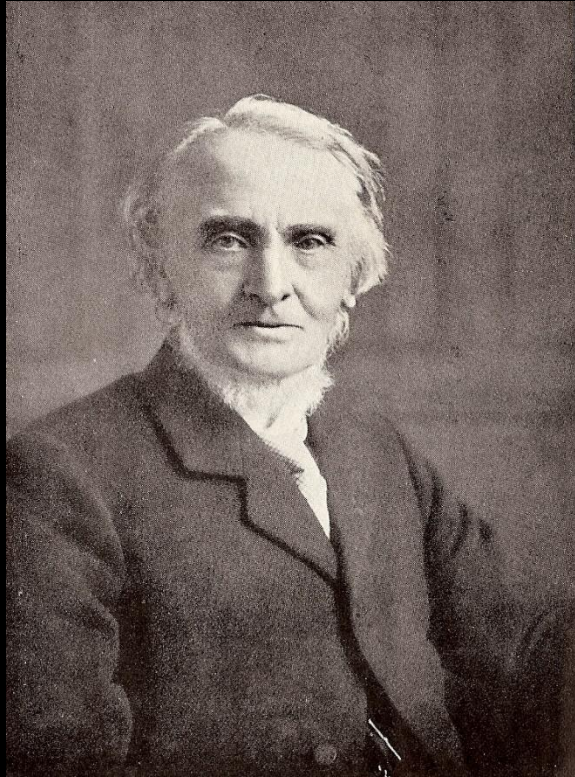
# Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:27-31



*So brethren, here is the promise. God will give Himself to you, and in the very heart of your decaying nature will plant the seed of an immortal being which shall, like His own, shake off fatigue from the limbs and never tend toward dissolution or an end.*

*– Alexander Maclaren (1826 – 1910)*

# Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:27-31



*The life of nature dies by living; the life of grace, which may belong to us all, lives by living, and lives evermore thereby. And so that life is continuous and progressive, with no tendency to decay, nor term to its being.*

*– Alexander Maclaren (1826 – 1910)*

# Behold your God!    Isaiah 40:27-31

- Nine things the Lord wants:

9. He wants to give you strength and help you to endure.

Behold your God!

Conclusions

# Behold your God!      Conclusions

- When Isaiah first spoke, the Israelites were in the midst of rebellion.
- Eventually they would reap the results of their persistent sin – captivity and exile.



# Behold your God!      Conclusions

- Still, God promises that they will be restored.
- Before ever allowing them to experience the full consequences of rebellion, God promises restoration.
- This is what God is like.

# Behold your God!      Conclusions

- We've seen at least nine things that God wanted in a restored relationship with his people.
- He wants these same things in his relationship with us.

# Behold your God!      Conclusions

- We've seen at least nine things that God wanted in a restored relationship with his people.
- He wants these same things in his relationship with us.
- Here they are once again. Behold your God!

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