

Isaiah 40

Isaiah 40:1-5 reads:

(1) Comfort my people, comfort my people, says your God. (2) Speak to the heart of Jerusalem, and proclaim to her, that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. (3) A voice of one calling in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." (4) Every valley shall be lifted up and every mountain and hill be made low; the rough ground shall become a plain, and the rugged terrain a broad valley. (5) And the glory of the LORD will be revealed and all flesh will see it together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

The first word of this passage points to an important feature of the entire section - the fundamental note of bringing comfort to people suffering misery as a result of their sins.

In the Hebrew, the words "my people" occur only once, but a proper representation in modern English requires that they be repeated, since the word "comfort" is in a form that indicates a transitive verb, ^{^3} and therefore requires an object.

Verse 2 gives the command, "Speak to the heart of Jerusalem." The message is intended to reach the heart as well as the mind.

In this verse it becomes evident that the victory over sin is already in view. The proclamation clearly goes far beyond anything that could be said to have been fulfilled by the return from the Babylonian Exile. Its first phrase, "that her warfare is ended [or, accomplished]," looks far beyond anything that could be said to have happened when a comparatively small