

## GOD IS: TRUSTING GOD IN TURBULENT TIMES (STUDY GUIDE)

# LESSON #1: BEHOLD YOUR GOD! (ISAIAH 40:1-31)

These materials have been prepared in order to guide you through the Scripture texts that we will be studying on Sunday mornings during our Fall sermon series on Isaiah 40-55. Each lesson includes an introduction, questions, a text for memorization, and a prayer of response. Consider using this Study Guide during your morning quiet time with the Lord. You can write your responses and your prayers in a journal. Regardless of how you use this guide, may God bless you as you dig deep into this fabulous book of Isaiah!

### STEP 1: CONSIDER

Chapter 40 opens like a garden in full bloom.

Isaiah writes, “Make straight in the desert a highway for our God” (v.3). He wants his glory to be openly visible to all. He himself intends to come. Isaiah prophesies, “Behold your God!” (v.9) – he will come as victorious king returning with the spoils of war (v.10); he will come as tender shepherd carrying his people in his arms (v.11). What comfort for God’s people (40:1)!

This fixed purpose of God’s is as certain as is his authority. He is beyond both our understanding and our making (40:12-20); like a military officer commanding soldiers to attention, all of creation responds unflinchingly to his power (40:21-26).

Therefore, Judah can take heart. God has not disregarded their case; he will not fail to fulfill his promise. He will come; he can be trusted. Thus, strength in the midst of crisis is found by learning to wait on him.

### STEP 2: READ

Read Isaiah 40:1-31.

### STEP 3: REFLECT

To answer the following questions, read and reread the text. Note verse references in parentheses.

1. What problems does God’s promise of “comfort” address (40:2)?

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2. How do you think God’s comfort (40:1-2) is connected to his coming (40:3-11)?

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3. Read Luke 2:25. Simeon had been “waiting for the consolation of Israel.” The word used for *consolation* in Luke is the same word used for *comfort* in Isaiah 40:1. How does Luke understand the fulfillment of the “comfort” prophesied by Isaiah?

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4. List the things that are emphasized about God's power and authority from 40:12-26.

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5. How should these truths about God affect how you see your particular circumstances (40:27)?

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6. Israel would be tempted to think that their crisis was hidden from God. In what area of your life do you need to be reminded that God sees your situation?

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7. What does it look like to "wait" for the Lord in that situation? (Look at 25:9, 26:8, 33:2, 49:23)

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#### STEP 4: MEMORIZE

Isaiah 40:28-31

#### STEP 5: PRAY

*Almighty God, we praise you because you are our God who comes. We see this most definitively in the coming of our Lord Jesus – the consolation of Israel and of all the world. And, I know that it is within your nature to be a God who comes. Not just once, but every day. You deal intimately, compassionately, justly, and authoritatively with me, and my case is not hidden from you. Teach me how to wait upon you. Amen.*