

Isaiah 35 to an Introduction to Isaiah 40

In Isaiah 35 we saw the signs of the Messiah and the church and the in the last days with the church triumphant returning as a remnant returning along the King's Highway ... a most exquisite representation of the redeemed traveling home to God.

Isaiah 35:3-7 Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. 4 Say to them [that are] of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come [with] vengeance, [even] God [with] a recompence; he will come and save you. (WHEN the People would want to Know?)

Isaiah 35:5-8 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. 6 Then shall the lame [man] leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. 7 And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, [shall be] grass with reeds and rushes.

8 And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it [shall be] for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err [therein].

V:8 "And an highway shall be there" which is the way we are directed to walk and live our lives by Divine authority for it is Christ the King's highway.

V:8 "The way of holiness" which is the good old way of the fathers cf:

Jeremiah 6:16 Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.

V:8 “It shall be called The way of holiness” which is the way of faithfulness and obedience to God.

V:8 “The unclean shall not pass over it”, you must have your sins washed away to get on the King’s highway. Cf: Acts 2:37-38 & 47.

V:8 “It shall be for those: the wayfaring (Hebrew haw’-lak) men”, who choose to walk and live their lives traveling on it.

V:8 “though fools, shall not err therein,” this gospel will be so simple a fool can’t fail to understand it ... it is like 2 & 2 = 4. You have to go to college to be taught wrong to mess this gospel up it is so simple. But He Himself shall Be with them, Walking in the way. That is God cf: V:4 who shall dwell among them and set them an example that they should follow in His steps.

Isaiah 35:9 No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up there on, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there:

V:9 “No lion shall be there” This King’s highway is in the Peaceful Kingdom of God, it will be the safe way. Perfect salvation and safety is promised for those who stay on the king’s highway for they are out of the reach of Satan the roaring lion.

I Peter 5:8-9 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: 5:9 Whom resist stedfast in the faith ...

V:9 “but the redeemed shall walk there:” Hebrew *geu-lim* those who forfeited their inheritances are bought back by the near kinsman in Hebrew: *go-el* the nearest kin of the family. This is according to the ancient law of kinship, to buy back the relatives property, marry his widow, to take revenge in behalf of the family (eye for eye & tooth for tooth), to purchase, to ransom, to redeem. This is foreshadowing the

Lord and His sacrificial offering. Many Ancient manuscripts add the Hebrew words *ad olam*, forever: “the redeemed shall walk there forever”.

What exactly are we redeemed with?

I Peter 1:18-19 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

Isaiah 35:10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

V:10 “And the ransomed of the LORD shall return”: Ransomed Hebrew *padah* (paw-DAW’) to redeemed by the Redeemer paying the price.

V:10 “and come to Zion” what is Zion prophetically? cf:

Hebrews 12:22-24 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, 23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

V: 10 “and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads”: When we enter into the joy of the Lord it shall not only fill our hearts but it shall be upon our heads as an ornament of grace and a crown of glory, as a garland worn in token of victory.

V: 10 “sorrow and sighing shall flee away”.

Revelation 21:4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

In Isaiah chapters 36 & 37 the Assyrian army is destroyed. This is recorded 3 times in Biblical history. Here in Isaiah 36-37, 2 Kings 18-19 & II Chronicles 32. This is an astounding miracle in which the Assyrian army is destroyed by a direct stroke from heaven.

Isaiah 37:36 Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand (185,000): and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they [were] all dead corpses.

This is the grand climax of the Near Term promise of Salvation which God had given repeated assurances by Isaiah to Hezekiah ... no less than 9 times in the preceding chapters God had promised to deliver Jerusalem from Assyria.

This is a blended account of the two invasions by Sennacherib. In 713BC Hezekiah lost the war that was forced on him by the deep state within his own government ... who made "a covenant with hell and death" cf Isaiah 28. After that military disaster that Isaiah had warned him about. Hezekiah bribed and bought off the King of Assyria to save his own life and the lives of the faithful remnant who had fled to Jerusalem after the collapse of the N. Kingdom of Israel and it's capital of Samaria.

II King 18:14-16 And Hez-e-ki'-ah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyri'-i-a to La'-chish, saying, I have offended; return from me: that which thou putttest on me will I bear. And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold.¹⁵ And Hezekiah gave [him] all the silver that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the

king's house.16 At that time did Hezekiah cut off [the gold from] the doors of the temple of the LORD, and [from] the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria.

Senackerib accepts the bribe and then welches on the deal probably making the 2nd Invasion in 701BC sending on his army and generals to mock the LORD publically before Hezekiah and all the people.

II King 18:17 And the king of As-syr'-i-a sent Tar'-tan and Rab'-sa-ris and Rab'-sha-keh from La'-chish to king Hez-e-ki'-ah with a great host against Jerusalem. And they went up and came to Jerusalem. And when they were come up, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which [is] in the highway of the fuller's field.

Isaiah then delivers the great prophecy of salvation ... the people want to know WHEN?

In the short term that night an angel of the Lord saved their lives and killed 185,000 of the Assyrian Army.

Isaiah 35:3-4 Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. 4 Say to them [that are] of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come [with] vengeance, [even] God [with] a recompence; he will come and save you.

Isaiah 33:11-12 Ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble: your breath, [as] fire, shall devour you. 12 And the people shall be [as] the burnings of lime: [as] thorns cut up shall they be burned in the fire.

The Prophet contrasts the physically rotting, stinking Assyrian Army that the corpses were burned with fire. The Spiritual Kingdom will become like Spiritual flowers when the Messiah comes.

The glory of this passage is enhanced, if that is possible, by its setting as an oasis between the visionary waste of Isaiah 34 and the history of war and folly

Prologue Or Introduction To Isaiah 40

Those professors who consider themselves too enlightened to believe in God, have chosen Biblical criticism to make their living. They have been quite successful in engorging their bank accounts with much filthy lucre writing books on there was not just one Isaiah. They have created a flood of critical unbelieving comments that this section of Isaiah chapter 40 through 66 is utterly unlike the first 39 chapters of the book. They conceive, hypothesize, theorize and pontificate that it comes from one or two different Isaiah's, who lived a century or more after the first Isaiah's time because of the naming of Cyrus the Great (c. 576 – 530 BC). Cyrus figures in the Hebrew Bible as the patron and deliverer of the Jews. He is mentioned 23 times by name and eluded to several times more. According to the Bible, Cyrus the Great, king of Persia, was the monarch under whom the Babylonian captivity ended. In the first year of his reign he was prompted by God to decree that the Temple in Jerusalem should be rebuilt and that such Jews as cared to might return to their land for this purpose. Moreover, he showed his interest in the project by sending back with them the sacred vessels which had been taken from the First Temple and a considerable sum of money with which to buy building materials.

Some even fanaticize Isaiah 60-66 is written by a “third Isaiah.”

It is our unwavering conviction that all of the prophecy in Isaiah was indeed written by him and that no one except Isaiah could possibly have written a line of it. His special pet name for God used only by him in the whole Hebrew Bible “The Holy One of Israel” is interwoven throughout the book giving internal evidence of one author.

The inspired writers of the New Testament quoted from this last section of Isaiah no less than thirty-seven times, almost always making specific mention of the prophet “Isaiah” as the author of the passage they quoted. Here is the real evidence on the authorship of this prophecy, as contrasted with the “hog wash” advocated by the critics. Who were these New Testament writers only Jesus, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter and Paul.

It would also make sense that the royal archive, in First Temple Jerusalem, would have contained records of Isaiah’s prophecies. We have seen that Isaiah’s seal & Hezekiah’s seal were both found within feet of each other in the ruins of the royal library. The royal archives of the Semitic city-state of Mari held records of prophecies 1000 years before Hezekiah. The royal archives of the Neo-Assyrian capital Nineveh held records of prophecies too, some written during, and just a few decades after, Isaiah's time. Keeping records of prophecies in royal archives seems have been the normal.

Unbelievers in higher education do not believe there is any such thing as predictive prophecy that foretells the future. The problem is, God in this second half of Isaiah basically says, I’m going to prove to you that I am the only God by telling you the future ... the most outlandish example is Isaiah 45, where God names the coming king, Cyrus the Great, 150 years before he was born!

Isaiah 45:1-3 Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; 2 I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: 3 And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call [thee] by thy name, [am] the God of Israel.

"To his anointed ..." (Isaiah 45:1). The ceremony of anointing was used in the elevation of Jewish kings; but no similar ceremony was known among the pagans; and some have wondered what is meant here. It means that Cyrus was consecrated to carry out the purpose of God in the release of the Jews and termination of their captivity. We agree with Dummelow that the "surname" God gave Cyrus refers probably to "Anointed (Isaiah 45:1) or to Shepherd (Isaiah 44:28)."

"Subdue nations ..." (Isaiah 45:1). "Xenophon gave the following list of nations conquered by Cyrus: The Syr'-i-ans, As'-syr-i-ans, A-ra'-bi-ans, Cap-pa-do-ci'-ans, Phry-gi'-ans, Ly'-di-ans, Ca'-ri-ans, Phoe-ni'-cians, and the Ba-by-lo'-ni-ans." The significant thing about this list of nations is that Cyrus himself acknowledged in his decree that Jehovah had indeed given him all of those nations (Ezra 1:2).

Another important implication of this first verse is inherent in the name of Cyrus as God's anointed. Archer pointed out that, "Cyrus stands as a type of Jesus Christ; and many of the promises to Cyrus have their spiritual fulfillment in the life and ministry of Our Redeemer.

"No one but an omniscient Being could have predicted 150 years before they occurred, that such events would take place; and these verses are one of the many prophecies which demonstrate in the most particular manner that Isaiah was inspired of God.

"I will break in pieces the gates of brass ..." (Isaiah 45:2). Some of the most inconsequential, nit-picking, picayune objections to this prophecy are registered in the writings of Chey'-ne. He made light of the prophecy of Cyrus as follows:

"The prophet does not say 'a child shall be born, Cyrus by name,' but assumes his existence, and predicts that he, rather than some scion of the house of David would be the instrument of the Jews'

deliverance ... He assumes rather than predicts the existence of Cyrus; and he omits to mention by how many years, if any, his announcement preceded the birth of the Deliverer!"

The reason God's prophecy omitted the prophecy of the birth of Cyrus was that his ancestry was not important,

Isaiah 40:1 Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

Yes, God still has a people, despite the sins and rebellions of Israel. Although the sinful kingdom is to undergo well-deserved punishment, there remains nevertheless a "righteous remnant," that being, the "people" whom God will comfort. Note that this chapter has no reference whatever to Babylon, or to anything that is supposed to have happened to Israel between Isaiah 40 and Isaiah 39. One may find all of that in the speculations It is implied, however, in Isaiah 40:2, that Judah will endure hard military service (warfare) and receive "double" penalty from God for her sins. "The double punishment refers, perhaps, to (a) the seventy years of captivity, and (b) the eternal punishment visited upon the person of Christ the sin-bearer on Calvary.

Isaiah 40:2 Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins.

"Her iniquity pardoned, her warfare accomplished ..." (Isaiah 40:2). "These are perfects of prophetic certainty," a fact proved by the truth that Jerusalem in the days of Isaiah had not actually received the forgiveness of her sins, nor had her warfare then been accomplished. As a matter of fact, it lay more than a century in the future. Isaiah, however, sees all as already accomplished in the Divine counsels, and so announces it to the people.

These two verses serve ample notice upon us that the theme of prophecy here encompasses the far distant future, and that the ultimate comfort of God's "righteous remnant" will not be their return from physical captivity, though that will be included, but will principally consist of the forgiveness of their sins, a benefit which will depend upon and derive absolutely from the achievement of Messiah and the establishment of his kingdom.

Isaiah 40:3-4 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. 4 Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:

Every Gospel writer Jesus, Peter and Paul, all say that this verse is talking about John the Baptist.

The first impression here may be that God will precede the captives on the way back home from Babylon, and that these words are a call to prepare the Lord's way through the desert. However, as Archer noted:

"From Matthew's application of this verse to the ministry of John the Baptist (Matthew 3:3) it is apparent that these geographical features symbolize the arid lifelessness of the unconverted soul. The hills represent the carnal pride of the sinner, the valleys his moods of carnal hopelessness and self-pity.

In short, the meaning is that Judah should prepare their hearts for the coming manifestation of God in their deliverance.

The figure of leveling and preparing literal roads is taken from the practice of some ancient rulers who actually required such preparation when they traveled to distant places.

Despite the obvious primary application of this passage to the return of Israel from the Babylonian captivity, "At the same time it is clear that the prophet was inspired to use language of a special design that should also appropriately express an even more important event, the coming of John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Messiah, and the work that he would perform as preparatory to the first advent of Messiah."

We have the irrefragable authority of John the Baptist and of our blessed Saviour himself, as reported by the gospels, that these verses apply to the introduction of the Gospel and the kingdom of Christ, who was to effect a much greater deliverance of God's people, Jews and Gentiles alike, from the captivity of sin and the dominion of death

Matthew 3:3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

Mark 1:3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

Luke 3:4-6 As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. 5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways [*shall be*] made smooth; 6 And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

John 1:23 He said, I [*am*] the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

Isaiah 40:5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see [*it*] together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken [*it*].

In short, the meaning is that Judah should prepare their hearts for the coming manifestation of God in their deliverance.

Isaiah 40:6-8 The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh [*is*] grass, and all the goodliness thereof [*is*] as the flower of the field: 7 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people [*is*] grass. 8 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

The big point in this paragraph is the last clause. It points to the only dependable and certain anchor that men have, namely, the word of the Lord.

Both Peter and James quoted from this passage (1 Peter 1:24,25; James 1:10,11), bringing to six the New Testament authors who quoted from this chapter, four of them ascribing the passage to Isaiah. No Christian should dare to ascribe it to anyone else!

Isaiah 40:11 O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift [*it*] up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! 10 Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong [*hand*], and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward [*is*] with him, and his work before him. 11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry [*them*] in his bosom, [*and*] shall gently lead those that are with young.

The significance of this, along with other things cited here, is that it earmarks this chapter as having been written by Isaiah just as clearly as if he had signed it a half dozen times.

Isaiah 40:11 is an expression of the tenderness of God toward his people under the metaphor of a loving shepherd; and Jesus Christ our

Lord called attention to the application of this metaphor to Himself when he declared that, "I am the Good Shepherd" John 10:14ff.

Isaiah 40:12-17 Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? 13 Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or [*being*] his counsellor hath taught him? 14 With whom took he counsel, and [*who*] instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding? 15 Behold, the nations [*are*] as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. 16 And Lebanon [*is*] not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. 17 All nations before him [*are*] as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.

Isaiah here offered no argument for the existence of God, because he was addressing a people who had long been accustomed to the acceptance of such a fact. Here, Isaiah was commenting upon the greatness of God. As Hailey noted, "No more appropriate title for these verses could be imagined than the one found in the ASV, as follows: `The Incomparable Greatness of God.'"

There is a series of rhetorical questions here, every one of which requires the answer: "No one." Kelley commented that the use of such questions, "was a favorite literary device of this prophet."

The apostle Paul quoted from Isaiah 40:13 in Romans 11:34. One of the unusual metaphors here is in Isaiah 40:16 where it is declared that the whole forest of Lebanon for the fire and all of the beasts

thereof for the burnt-offering would not be sufficient to provide a single sacrifice for such a great God as Jehovah!

"The nations ..." vs 17. This means all of the nations on earth taken together.

Isaiah 40:18-26 To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him? 19 The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains. 20 He that [is] so impoverished that he hath no oblation chooseth a tree [that] will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, [that] shall not be moved. 21 Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? 22 [It is] he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof [are] as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in: 23 That bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. 24 Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble. 25 To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. 26 Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these [things], that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that [he is] strong in power; not one faileth.

The first few verses here speak of the utter foolishness of idolatry. Idols simply cannot be compared to God. An idol is not a person, it cannot see, it cannot think, it cannot hear, it cannot move, it cannot feel, it cannot "know" anything, it cannot move, it cannot "do" anything! How, then could it even remind anyone of God? Isaiah here emphasizes all of this by speaking of the manner in which idols are

manufactured. As objects of worship, idols are "nothing," indeed "less than nothing." This writer once visited a pagan temple in Japan. It was the great temple of the Diabutso; and there were dozens of niches around the outer part of the great enclosure where many lesser gods were honored with statues; but on the day when this writer visited, there were large signs in black and red letters declaring that, "These gods are out for repair"!

"Have ye not known, have ye not heard, hath it not been told you, etc ..." (Isaiah 40:21). This refers to the basic knowledge that has been handed down to successive generations of the human race concerning God's creation of the world and related truth.

Isaiah 40:22-23 speak of God in terms stressing his incomparable greatness and power.

"Be sitteth above the circle of the earth ..." (Isaiah 40:22). We are somewhat annoyed by some writers who hasten to explain to us that this has no reference to the earth's being a sphere, because Isaiah, of course, could not have known that. Do such writers not know that it was not Isaiah who declared this, but God gave the words through Isaiah? Certainly the passage is compatible with the fact of the earth's being round.

"That stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in ..." (Isaiah 40:22). Here is another scientific fact, utterly unknown to Isaiah, but apparent nevertheless in the words which God delivered through Isaiah to mankind. Are the atmospheric heavens indeed a curtain and a tent? Assuredly! Take a look at detailed photographs of the moon, where there is no atmosphere (heavens) like that which protects the earth, and it will be at once apparent what God's "curtain, or tent" has done for our earth. That curtain, composed of earth's atmosphere, traps and destroys millions of meteorites which otherwise would long ago have

destroyed our world without God's "heavens" spread out like a curtain or a tent to dwell in!

Such an omnipotent, ubiquitous, omniscient God could indeed behold the inhabitants of the earth as "grasshoppers." The mention here of princes that "have not been planted" suggests that great men do not even have the stability and permanence of a tree. All men, even the great ones, are "here today and gone tomorrow"!

How can such a great God be compared, or "likened" to anything on earth? Even the starry hosts of heaven are deployed and commanded by God's authority. He made them; and he has a definite plan for every single one of them; and he even calls every one of the billions of trillions of stars by their names! Feeble, mortal, men do not have the slightest idea of how many stars there actually may be.

Isaiah 40:27-31 Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God? 28 Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, [*that*] the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? [*there is*] no searching of his understanding. 29 He giveth power to the faint; and to [*them that have*] no might he increaseth strength. 30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall. 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.

Kelley and others suppose that these words of reproach coming here in Isaiah 40:27 from the Jews and directed against Jehovah were due to the terrible anguish the people were suffering in their captivity. However, there is not even a hint of such things in the text. This attitude on the part of the chosen people was characteristic of nearly any period in their long history of distrust and rebellion against God

and by no means was confined to the captivity. As a matter of truth, the Jews fared very well in Babylon; and the vast majority of them found it so good there that they even refused to go back to Jerusalem when the opportunity finally came. Remember, it was only a "remnant," and a very pitifully small one, that returned.

Of course, Isaiah designed these words to be of special comfort to Israel during the captivity who had prophesied in the preceding chapter; and the big admonition here is that Israel should stabilize and comfort herself by leaning "Upon God, (1) the everlasting; (2) the Creator; (3) the unwearied; and (4) the unsearchable."

The word "wait" (Isaiah 40:31) is of unusual interest. Kelley informs us that:

"The basic word from which 'wait' is derived means 'to wind' or 'to twist,' the word 'rope' being a noun that comes from this term. The meaning here is that the believer should let the Lord be his lifeline, his cord of escape."

Some are tempted to view the last clauses of Isaiah 40:31 as an anticlimax, that is, in the words flying, running, and walking; but as Kelley noted:

"The man of faith may sometimes soar on eagles' wings, or run without wearing; but most of the time he will merely walk. And the real test of his faith comes, not when he flies or runs, but when he must plod along. It is in the monotony of everyday life that the man of faith reveals his true character."

As Hailey noted, "'They that wait for Jehovah' is another favorite expression of Isaiah." As we have already observed, the vocabulary, style, and favorite expressions of this great prophet are so abundantly used in this chapter that they are as valuable in the identification of Isaiah as the author of it, as would be a half dozen signatures!

It is curious that Lowth rendered a portion of Isaiah 40:31 thus, "They shall put forth fresh feathers." His comment on this tells of a common and popular opinion, "that the eagle lives and retains his vigor to a great age; and that beyond the common lot of other birds, he moults in his old age, and renews his feathers, and with them his youth. Psalms 103:5 has this: `Thou shalt renew thy youth like the eagle."