



+ **YOU**

Sermon Series: Irrefutable: Prophecies that Point Us to Jesus

To be used with: Session 5: The Light and Glory of God

Sermon Title Possibilities: A Special Report from God

Scripture: Isaiah 40:1-8

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the small group study *Irrefutable: Prophecies that Point Us to Jesus*, these sermon outlines will follow the same theme as the small group study, so the pastor can reinforce the study from the pulpit.

The Point: Jesus reveals God's glory and love.

Introduction: If you're my age or older, you probably recall hearing these words at some time or another: "We interrupt this program for a special report." Back in those days, we didn't have twenty-four-hour news networks like we have now, so the news only came on a few times a day. If something really important was happening, the networks would cut in on one of their regularly scheduled programs to tell what was happening. Sometimes the news was bad. When I was in the seventh grade, I was sick one Sunday evening, so I stayed home from church. That night, the news interrupted the program I was watching, and they said Iranian students had just taken over the U.S Embassy in Tehran. That was the beginning of the Iranian Hostage Crisis. Sometimes, though, the news was good. I remember seeing another special report more than a year later, and it announced the end of the Hostage Crisis.

In this section of Isaiah's prophecy, God was giving a special report. Up to this point, His message to Israel had largely been bad news. He warned the people to repent of their sins and turn back to Him, or He would send judgment on them. Judgment came on the Northern Kingdom in Isaiah's own lifetime, and God warned the Southern Kingdom they would face the same fate if they did not repent. In chapter 40, however, God told Isaiah to bring words of comfort to the people of Judah. One day He would reveal His glory in a way He never had before, and the whole world would see it. This prophecy was fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ, and it's still good news!

I. A powerful promise.

- A. The word "comfort" carries the idea of consolation and hope.
 - 1. Up to this point, God did not have much comfort to give.
 - a. Though He had made a few references to the Messiah, His message had largely been one of judgment.
 - b. In the preceding chapter, he had warned King Hezekiah that his kingdom would someday be overthrown by the Babylonians.
 - 2. Nevertheless, God had some good news.
 - a. "Her warfare is accomplished" – Though it was still in the future, God could talk about it as though it had already happened.
 - b. More importantly, God would forgive Israel's sins.

- B. Our world's only hope for the future is still the mercy of God.
1. The world is currently under His wrath.
 - a. The rampant evil in our world, including our own nation, is evidence of God's judgment (Romans 1:21-32).
 - b. Our only hope is in God's mercy.
 2. "Double for all her sins" – That is, God's mercy would be more than sufficient to cover the sins of Israel.
 - a. He wasn't just going to forgive them of all their idolatry and other sins he had mentioned, but *all* of their sins.
 - b. Animal sacrifices would be rendered obsolete, and so would the Day of Atonement.

II. A powerful prediction.

- A. "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness" – The New Testament affirms that this was referring to John the Baptist.
1. "Prepare ye the way of the Lord" – God Himself was going to make a personal visit to Israel.
 - a. John emphasized that he was not the Messiah. He was merely sent to prepare the way for the Messiah.
 - b. John was a great prophet, but Jesus was none other than Almighty God incarnate.
 2. "Every valley shall be exalted...." – In other words, the people needed to make ready for the Messiah's arrival.
 - a. Mountains, hills, and curves are obstacles that slow down travel.
 - I used to live in southeast Missouri, which is flat, open country. Now I live in central Virginia, where the roads are hilly and curvy, so I have to drive much more carefully!
 - b. In biblical times, when people were expecting an important visitor, they would smooth out the road leading into their village. The people of Israel were going to receive the most important Visitor in history!
- B. The "glory of the Lord" would be revealed.
1. God had revealed His glory a few times in the past.
 - a. Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:18).
 - b. To Moses (Exodus 33:18-23).
 - c. The temple (1 Kings 8:10-11).
 2. When the Messiah came, God would reveal His glory in a way that no one had ever seen before.

III. A powerful proclamation.

- A. How could the people be sure this was really going to happen?
1. Isaiah cited the reason at the end of verse five: "For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it".
 - a. "What shall I cry?" – This was Isaiah's way of saying, "What more can I say?"
 - b. If God said it was going to happen, then that was enough.

2. Nothing in this world lasts forever, but the Word of God does.
 - a. Flowers and grass are pretty to behold, but they soon wither.
 - b. Human life can fade as quickly as flowers and grass (none of us know when our time will come).
- B. God's Word is still absolutely reliable.
 1. It has stood the test of time.
 - a. Archaeology has verified its truth many times.
 - b. People have tried to destroy it and discredit, but it still stands.
 2. We can still trust His promises.
 - a. Political leaders don't always keep their promises, but God does.
 - b. We can believe Him when He speaks of the return of Christ, future judgment, and our eternal home in heaven.

Conclusion: As I write this, I've been reading a lot of depressing news. Many people are worried about the economy, the instability abroad, national security, corruption in our political system, and a whole host of other things. I understand people's concerns, and I share many of them. I've gotten where I don't read much secular news anymore because it is too depressing. Yet if I may interrupt for a special report: our God still reigns! We don't know what the future holds, but we do know He will prevail in the end. When I was growing up, this song by Bill Gaither was very popular, and I think it sums up the issues quite nicely:

You talk about people, you talk about things that really aren't important at all;
You talk about weather, you talk about problem we have here at home and abroad.
But friend, I'm excited about a solution for the world: I'm gonna shout and sing:
It's Jesus Christ is still the King of Kings!

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