

PRECEPTS FOR LIFE
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Precept Ministries International
P.O. Box 182218, Chattanooga, TN 37422-7218
1-888-734-7707/ www.preceptsforlife.com

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SERIES: Isaiah, Part 2 (Comfort For His People)

TITLE: Program 1 – Hope and Redemption

MONDAY

OPEN

Are you hurting, My Friend? Are you in such pain that you don't know what to do? Do you feel, "If only someone could come and put their arms around me? If only they could hold me. If only I could look in their eyes and they could tell me and promise me that it would be all right, I know then I could make it. I know then that I wouldn't be alone." O Precious One, that's what's about to happen today as we look at God's precepts for life.

PART ONE

Welcome, Beloved. We are entering the second segment of the book of Isaiah. And I want you to know that this is the most incredible, incredible portion of Isaiah. Because what God does from the very beginning, from Isaiah 40 on is, He introduces a word. And that word is "comfort." Isaiah 40 opens up this way. Listen to it very carefully. **"Comfort, O comfort My people," says your God. 'Speak kindly to Jerusalem; and call out to her, that her warfare has ended, that her iniquity has been removed, that she**

has received [from] the LORD's hand double for all her sins.” (Isaiah 40:1-2) Do you feel like you have received double? Do you feel, Precious One, like what you're going through is more than you can handle? And I've got news for you: It is not more than you can handle. What God wants to do is, God wants to wrap His arms of truth around you. He wants to comfort you. He wants to speak to you from the Word of God and tell you that it is going to be all right. He wants you to take your eyes and stop looking at the circumstances, at the tragedy, at the trial, at this overwhelming pain that has overtaken you. This pain that is so bad that you're sitting there in absolute disbelief, He wants you to take your eyes off of that, and He wants you to put your eyes on Him. He wants you to look for Him in this situation. He wants you to wait for Him. He wants you to hope in Him. And so as you open up Isaiah 40, we're gonna look at the context in just a minute. But as you open up the second segment of Isaiah, it opens up with the word “comfort.” And then it repeats it, “**...O comfort My people....**,” comfort My people. (Isaiah 40:1) And then Isaiah chapter 40 ends with a passage that if you've been around Christianity or you've been in church, you probably have heard these verses. But maybe you don't understand them in their context. And they're gonna take on far new beauty as you dig into the Word of God with me, as we study Isaiah. But listen to what He says. He brings Isaiah 40 to a close. Now remember: Chapter divisions are made by man. So the message goes on. But look at verse 27 of Isaiah 40. “**Why do you say, O Jacob....**” (Isaiah 40:27) Another name for Jacob, remember was Israel, “**Why do you say, O Jacob, and assert, O Israel, ‘My way is hidden from the LORD, and the justice due me escapes the notice of my God’?**” (Isaiah 40:27) I shouldn't be going through this! This is not right. And he says, “**Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired....**” (Isaiah 40:28) You're weary. You're tired. You feel like you're about to faint, but God's there. He's there to comfort you. He

does not become weary. He does not become tired. **“...His understanding is inscrutable.” (Isaiah 40:28)** In other words, He has all the answers; you can’t plumb the depths of them. **“...His understanding is inscrutable. He gives strength to the weary....” (Isaiah 40:28-29)** Did you get that? He gives strength to the weary. You know, when we’re in a trial, when things are looming before us and they are scaring us to death, when that happens, God steps in, if you’ll let Him. And He’ll give strength. He’ll give you strength, **“...strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power. Though youths grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly,”** He says, “[Yet those...],” and this is the verse I’m talking about, **“Yet those who wait for the LORD will gain new strength....” (Isaiah 40:29-31)** If you will wait for God, now that word, wait in the Hebrew is “q-a-w-a” or “q-a-w-a-h.” And that word means, “to look, to look for” that word means, “to wait” that word means, “to hope.” It has the idea that, “your strength is not gonna come from inside. Your strength is going to come from the Lord.” So you’re looking for Him. You’re waiting for Him. You are hoping in Him. And what you’re going to learn, Precious One, in this week and in the weeks to come is, you are going to learn His precious precepts for life that will enable you to do what it says. Now watch what it says, **“Yet those who wait for the LORD will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like [an eagle]....”** It says, **“...they will run and not get tired, they will walk and [they won’t faint].” (Isaiah 40:31)** Now as I say all this, look, I stumbled. I stumbled badly. But I stumbled so badly that I asked the doctor when I was in the emergency room in Indiana, where I do not live. And I said to him, “Explain, what’s the seriousness of this break?” And he said, “Well, Kay,” he said, “The next thing would be to lose your foot.” So here I am. And what I want you to know is, that in all of this, and in everything that I’ve been going through—and honestly, there are things that I never dreamed I would go through. There are trials that I never dreamed that I would face. And, and I mean, one

of them is less than a month old. If I didn't know the Lord, if I didn't understand the Word of God, if I didn't understand Who God is and the principles and the precepts that we're going to teach you from Isaiah. I say "we" because it takes a whole crew of us to do this. But if I didn't understand them, I tell you, I would stumble. I would faint. I'm not a youth, but I would grow weary and tired. But I want to tell you something. Obviously, I'm not a youth. Obviously I am closer to the end of my life than I am even to the middle of my life. And yet, you know what? I have the strength of youth. I have the strength, and I can run and not be weary, and I can walk and not be tired, why? Because what I'm doing in a sense— and someone interpreted this verse this way; that those that wait upon the Lord, those that exchange their strength for His, now waiting doesn't mean to exchange a thing. But waiting means that you look for Him. Waiting means you hope for Him. Waiting means that you are counting on Him and not on yourself. So that's what we're going to look at. This week we're going to, by the grace of God, we're going to look at Isaiah 40 and Isaiah 41. Now if you are new to the program, if you've just been flipping the dial and you found us, I want you to know it's in the sovereignty of God. This program is all about helping you discover truth for yourself. Daniel 11:32b says this, [the people who know their God will be strong, they will be able to take action.] (PARAPHRASE, Daniel 11:32) Isaiah, earlier in the book, talks about truth stumbling in the streets. (See Isaiah 59:14) And what's happened is truth has stumbled in the streets. We don't want truth to stumble in the streets. We want you to know truth because truth sets you apart. Truth gives you a way to live that you know is absolutely certain. And so what we want you to do is, we want you to study with us. We want you to download and it's absolutely free, our study guide on Isaiah. And what we're going to do is, we're going to take you through Isaiah chapter 40 through 66. And we're going to teach you how to study Isaiah for yourself. So how do you connect with us? Well you go to preceptsforlife.com, preceptsforlife.com, so that you

can study along with us. Because the way that you're gonna be comforted, the way that you're going to find new strength is to look to God. But you can't look to somebody you do not know. Now as Isaiah opens up this 40th chapter, it is a real swing in the book. As he opens up this 40th chapter, what I want you to see is, I want you to see in Isaiah 39 he has just told them things aren't gonna be so good in the future. He has just told them that they're gonna be kicked out of their land, that they're going to go into captivity. Watch. Let's go back to Isaiah 39 so I can put you into context. Isaiah has been talking to Hezekiah. Hezekiah is the king. Now the book of Isaiah was written during the reign, and we're talking about the southern kingdom, was written to Judah and Jerusalem during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. So Isaiah's prophecy covers those four kings. He mentions Uzziah in chapter 6. He mentions Ahaz, and then talks to you about his death in chapter 14. And then he doesn't talk about Uzziah, Jotham. He leaves Jotham out. He comes to Ahaz. Then he comes to Hezekiah. And what does he say to him? Well we'll look at in just a minute.

PART TWO

Well I left you maybe in suspense. Maybe you wanted to know, "Hey what was Isaiah saying to Hezekiah?" Well, it wasn't good news. Remember Hezekiah has been sick. Hezekiah has recovered when he was sick. Babylon sent him gifts. Now Babylonians have shown up in Jerusalem. And Hezekiah has shown him everything that is in his house. I mean he has shown him all that they have because he's right proud of it. It's gonna get him in trouble. Listen to what it says in verse 5 of chapter 39. **"Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah..."** remember he's the king. **"...Hear the word of the LORD of hosts...."** (Isaiah 39:5) The word of the LORD of hosts, means hey God's in charge. He's Jehovah, Yehovah Sabboath. He is the One that is over all the armies; angelic, earthly, etc. **"Behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house and all that your fathers have laid up in**

store to this day [all your treasury] will be carried to Babylon; nothing will be left,' says the LORD. 'And some of your sons [will iss—] who...issue from you, whom you will beget, will be taken away, and they will become officials in the palace of the king of Babylon.'" Now that ought to really strike fear. Now, Hezekiah, it says, "Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, 'The word of the LORD which you have spoken is good.' For he thought, 'For there will be peace [in] and truth in my days.'" (Isaiah 39:6-8) Now you know what? This can be very typical of us. I know trials are coming. I know hard times are coming, but I've got myself covered. It's not going to affect me, or so we think. Or it's not gonna come in my time. I'm almost gone. I'm almost out of here. I'm not going to have to suffer. But that's not the right attitude. And what it does is, it strikes fear in the hearts of the people because what they have just been told is, "Everything in Jerusalem is going. All your treasures, all your people, all your sons; they're going to be led into captivity. They're going to be slaves." Now what do you do when you get news like that? Well the next thing, and you've got to remember, the next thing that happens is, Isaiah has a word. And that word is "...O comfort [comfort] My people,' says your God. Speak kindly to Jerusalem...." (Isaiah 40:1-2) You know, since studying Isaiah and having been in Isaiah 50, there's a verse and it talks about how "...He awakens [My ear] morning after morning, He awakens my ear to listen as a disciple." (Isaiah 50:4) And it says, [He has given me the tongue of a disciple that I might know how to speak a word to those that are weary.] (PARAPHRASE, Isaiah 50:4) A word to those that are weary. Well this is what God does is, He speaks a word to Israel. Now who is He speaking to? As He says, "Speak kindly to Jerusalem....," As He says, "...[say] to her, that her warfare has ended, [tell her] that her iniquity has been removed...." (Isaiah 40:2) The way you could translate it is this: Tell her that the penalty of iniquity has been accepted or paid off. In other words, your debt, your penalty, your punishment is all over. You have received

double for your sins, and it is over. And you're not gonna face it again. Now that is comfort. And He goes on then to tell them what is going to happen. And that's what we're going to look at. But what I want to do today, I want to run you quickly, and I mean quickly, through Isaiah up to this point. I want you to go to Isaiah chapter 1, verse 4. In Isaiah, as this book opens, God is dealing with them according to their sins. He is letting them know you are going to the temple, you are making all these sacrifices, but you are filled with iniquity. So in chapter 1, he describes the state of Israel during this time. He says, **"Alas...,**" chapter 1, verse 4, **"...sinful nation, people weighed down with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, sons who act corruptly! They have abandoned the LORD, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they have turned away from Him."** (Isaiah 1:4) That's the way the book opens. Chapter 1 gives you the setting of these times and yet what is he telling them? He's telling them that their iniquity is gonna be taken care of. That's the comfort that He is giving to them. And then we come to chapter 2. And in chapter 2 verses 2 through 4, what do we hear? We hear that there is a day coming when all the nations are going to come to Jerusalem. It says, **"...many peoples will come and say...,**" verse 3, **"...Let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us His ways...that we may walk in His [ways.]"** For the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. **...He will judge between the nations, [He] will render decisions for many peoples...they will hammer their swords into plowshares...."** It says, **"[...and He will render decisions for many peoples...,]"** it says, **"...Nation will not lift up sword against nation...,**" now listen carefully, **"...and never again will they learn war."** (Isaiah 2:3-4) There's so many people that say we want to bring war to an end. Listen, we can't, but God can. And that's what He's telling them. And so then we move to chapter 7, verse 9 when Isaiah confronts Ahaz. Remember this is during the days of Uzziah. Uzziah dies in chapter 6. Then Ahaz, and

what does he say to Ahaz? If you will not believe, you will not last. “**...If you will not believe, you [will surely] not last.**” (Isaiah 7:9) He’s telling him, the way that you make it, is to wait for Me. The way that you make it is to hope in Me. The way that you make it is to look for Me. The way that you make it is by faith. And then he tells Ahaz that, [a virgin will bring forth a child, his name will be Immanuel, God with us.] (PARAPHRASE, Isaiah 7:14) He tells us in Isaiah 9:6 [And unto us a child will be born and a son will be given and the government will be upon his shoulder. And He will sit on the throne of David.] (PARAPHRASE, Isaiah 9:6-7) So he’s pointing them to the future. He’s pointing them to hope. He’s pointing them to a Messiah. And you’ll see the value of this in our next lesson. And then in chapter 13 to 23, he gives the judgment of the nations. And as he gives the judgment of the nations, what he does is, he starts off talking about the demise of Babylon. Babylon’s not even on the scene. Assyria is the power. And yet God, because He knows the future, because He has it all under His control, is letting them know before they ever hear about Babylon: I’ve got them taken care of. I’m going to judge them. And so He tells about the judgment of the nations. God is going to judge Israel. God is going to judge the nations, but there is a day coming when the warfare will end and when the iniquity—the penalty will be totally paid. In chapter 24, he tells of the earth being laid waste. In chapter 29, he tells about the assault on Ariel; Ariel the lion, Ariel, speaking of Jerusalem. In chapter 35, he tells about the glory of the Lord coming with vengeance and a “highway of holiness” prepared for the “remnant.” And then in 36 to 39, he speaks to Hezekiah. And he tells him about the Babylonian judgment. But then, then He comforts His people. It’s gonna become so real to you, Dear One, that it will be like Him putting His arms around you.