

Review

We have had two studies in Isaiah 40, and saw God speak comforting words to the Jews through Isaiah. They were told to prepare their hearts for the coming of God's glory. They were reassured that God Himself would reign from Jerusalem, and that He would be their shepherd. We pick up in verse 12, as Isaiah begins to remind them about God's unfathomable greatness and power.

40:12 God's Hand Measures

No matter where you look in Scripture, there's no way around it: God is big and powerful. The span of a man's hand is about 8 or 9 inches. Scientists tell us that to get to the Andromeda Galaxy traveling at the speed of light would take 2.2 million years. And yet, God is described as measuring that distance in spans of His hand! And so, we really cannot even begin to fathom how big and powerful God is.

40:13-14 Are We God's Counselors?

Now that we have this perspective, we can zoom back down to our little microscopic selves and wonder why we try to direct the Spirit of the Lord. Why do we try to be God's counselor and tell Him what He should be doing?

Has He hired any of us as His consultants? Have we educated Him about anything? Sometimes we act like that, but it is far from being reality. When Job thought he had a handle on what was going on, God got in his face and asked Him questions like this (Job 38-39). Job was left speechless.

40:15-17 The Nations Are As Nothing

You've no doubt heard of something being "a drop in the bucket," describing something so insignificant that it would take millions or billions to make a difference. This is the origin of that phrase.

Of course, we would never think of saying that the nations of the earth are like a drop from a bucket. Nations consist of millions of people. They have armies and large amounts of land. But remember the verses

we began with tonight. God is huge and indescribably powerful. Truly, the nations are regarded by Him as a speck of dust on a bathroom scale.

While we live in concern about China's financial strength, North Korea's nuclear program, and many Middle Eastern nations' terrorists, they are less than nothing before God.

40:18-20 An Idol Likened To God?

My family has a game that we frequently play at restaurants. When the napkins are rolled up with a little piece of paper, we hold them under the table where we cannot see, and try to tear them into the shape of a baby. The winner is the one who makes their piece of paper look most like a baby. But most often, they don't look anything like babies. Frequently they look like E.T., a loaf of bread, or a bug, but rarely like a baby.

Of course, now we have a real baby at the table, my granddaughter. She is alive and interesting. She interacts with us and provides us with hours of fascination and tons of love. Those paper babies get thrown away with the used napkins and chicken bones. They're completely useless and incomparable to our real baby.

We've spent the last six verses talking about God's power, His size, and His view of the nations. Now, with all of this perspective, God wants us to see something: idols. Idols that man makes to represent God.

God made man, and now man tries to make God. When man tries to make God, he may use metal dug up from the ground. Or, if he can't afford that, then he will try to find some wood that won't rot. He'll try and carve a statue that is balanced so that it won't wobble like a bad table, or - worse yet - fall over! That's a bad characteristic for anybody's god.

From this perspective, you can understand the offense God takes to idols.

40:21-24 The Circle Of The Earth

Many years before, God had asked Job,

Job 38:4-7 "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the

earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding, who set its measurements? Since you know. Or who stretched the line on it? On what were its bases sunk? Or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

God and the angels were the only ones who saw the origin of the earth's foundations (Job 38:4-7). God looked down upon His creation, and what did He see? A circle. A spherical earth.

Man, of course, did not have the advantage of seeing the earth from space until Soviet Cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin looked down on it on April 12, 1961.

Before that, mathematics had aided man in learning that the earth on which he lived was spherical. But before those scientific and geographic advancements, most men thought the earth was flat. You can hardly blame them... after all, since they didn't understand gravity, then how could they fathom people living on the sides - or bottom - of a round earth?

But all through the Bible, God demonstrated that He knew the earth was a sphere in space. The oldest book of the Bible shows this clearly:

Job 26:7 He stretches out the north over empty space and hangs the earth on nothing.

Job 26:10 He has inscribed a circle on the surface of the waters at the boundary of light and darkness.

In the proverbs, wisdom is described as saying,

Prov. 8:27 "...I was there, when He inscribed a circle on the face of the deep"

Jesus described an event happening at the same time around the world, saying,

Luke 17:34-36 "I tell you, on that night there will be two in one bed; one will be taken and the other will be left. There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken and the other will be left. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left."

Simultaneously on the earth, there are events taking place during the morning, the afternoon, and the middle of the night. This can only happen on a spherical earth.

But even here, God's point is not simply that He sees the earth, spherical and suspended in space. It is really about His greatness, power, and size. And again, He asks the question...

40:25 To Whom Will You Liken Me?

What idol could possibly represent God? What statue or icon could a person make that would justify saying, "this is the equal of God"?

If you were to shape Mount Everest to be a Mount Rushmore-esque representation of God, it wouldn't come close. If you were to carve the whole earth to look like God's face, it would fall woefully short.

40:26 God Has Created The Stars

God has created the stars. The nearest star to us is the sun, and it is 93 million miles away. The next nearest star is Proxima Centauri (one of the three Alpha Centauri stars), which is about 25 million million miles from the sun.

In 2003, it was estimated that from earth, we can see 70,000 million million million stars. That's about ten times as many stars as there are grains of sand on all the earth's deserts and beaches.

God has created the stars. What can man create to represent Him?

God calls all of the stars by name, not missing one. Meanwhile, we can't even see them all, much less count them. So what makes us think that we can hide our sin from God?

40:27-28 God Does Not Become Tired

We can't wait for God to get sleepy, either. I often wonder if the reason crime increases so drastically at night is because there is less conviction in the dark? Certainly, bar and club owners know that keeping the place dim is better for business. Is it because man thinks God cannot see in the dark? Do they think that God is asleep at night?

God doesn't get tired, and He's never distracted. One of my favor-

ite scenes in the Bible is the "god competition" between Elijah and the prophets of Ba-AL on Mount Carmel. Elijah said...

1Kings 18:23-29 “Now let them give us two oxen; and let them choose one ox for themselves and cut it up, and place it on the wood, but put no fire under it; and I will prepare the other ox and lay it on the wood, and I will not put a fire under it. Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD, and the God who answers by fire, He is God.” And all the people said, “That is a good idea.” So Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, “Choose one ox for yourselves and prepare it first for you are many, and call on the name of your god, but put no fire under it.” Then they took the ox which was given them and they prepared it and called on the name of Baal from morning until noon saying, “O Baal, answer us.” But there was no voice and no one answered. And they leaped about the altar which they made. It came about at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, “Call out with a loud voice, for he is a god; either he is occupied or gone aside, or is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and needs to be awakened.” So they cried with a loud voice and cut themselves according to their custom with swords and lances until the blood gushed out on them. When midday was past, they raved until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice; but there was no voice, no one answered, and no one paid attention.

"Maybe your god is busy. Maybe he's in the bathroom. Maybe he's on vacation. Or maybe he's asleep," Elijah had suggested. But the true God is never occupied or asleep. Our way is never hidden from Him, no matter how dark our surroundings.

40:29-31 Wait On The Lord

God does not grow weary, but He knows that we do. There is no

limit to His power, but ours is frequently drained. The promise He has made is that if we wait on Him, He will give us strength, increase our power, and enable us to run the race.

Are you taking hold of this promise tonight? Has the world wiped you out? Are your coworkers draining your strength? Have difficult family situations made you too weary to walk? Wait on the Lord.

How do you wait on the Lord? It's very simple. Find a quiet place, get into the presence of God, and.... wait. That's it.

Psa. 27:14 Wait for the LORD; Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the LORD.

Psa. 40:1-2 I waited patiently for the LORD; And He inclined to me and heard my cry. He brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay, and He set my feet upon a rock making my footsteps firm.

Is. 40:31 ...those who wait for the LORD will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.