

DAY NINE:

GOD'S GLORY REVEALED AGAIN

INTRODUCTION

The 66 chapters of Isaiah's prophetic book forecast two major changes for Israel. The first 39 chapters of Isaiah mainly focus on God's future punishment of his people for their disobedience. God is going to allow other nations to dominate and decimate them. They will be dragged away from their land. In the first part of his prophetic book, Isaiah warns that Israel is in big trouble and very difficult times are on the horizon. Then in chapter 40, Isaiah changes tack and speaks of a new season following this incredibly tough time – a season of hope and comfort, a season of God's working in power, a season of God living close to his people, a season of God's glory being seen by all. In other words, a season of revival.

SCRIPTURE: ISAIAH 40:1-5

*Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her
that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for,
that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.*

*A voice of one calling: In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord;
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain.
And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together.
For the mouth of the Lord has spoken."*

DEVOTION

When did this new season of great blessing prophesied by Isaiah come about? Well, it is not straightforward. In some ways it came about 200 years after Isaiah's prophecy when God's people returned from their exile in Babylon. As Isaiah had prophesied, the Babylonians ransacked Jerusalem and replanted most of the Jews throughout their Empire. But from 538 BC a significant group of Jews started coming back home. They rebuilt Jerusalem and re-established the Jewish nation in their own land. It was a new season of God's blessing.

But then Isaiah's prophecy was also fulfilled almost 700 years after he spoke it, when Jesus arrived on earth. All the Gospel writers link 40:3 ("a voice of one calling in the wilderness") with the ministry of John the Baptist who



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preceded Jesus. As Isaiah prophesied, Jesus came and died. Then he was resurrected. The Holy Spirit came. The church was born. It was a new season of God's blessing for his people as Isaiah predicted.

But in some ways this prophecy is still yet to be fulfilled. 40:5 speaks of all people seeing the glory of God together. This will occur when Jesus returns to this earth as king (Rev. 1:7). It will be the ultimate new season of God's blessing for his people. So this prophecy by Isaiah is not just predicting one historical event that happened thousands of years ago, but a series of new seasons in which God would work in revival blessing.

This is what we are preparing the way for. A fresh season in which God shows himself in greater glory. It may be the return of Jesus which we expect at any time. That would be the ultimate answer to our prayers. But it may also be a season of revival. During revival people sense the presence of God powerfully. Conviction, contrition, repentance and prayer grow. People thirst for God and his word. Lukewarm Christians come alive. Many non-believers are saved. "The rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed" (40:4-5). This is worth praying and preparing for.

PRAYER RESPONSE

Lord, Israel had to wait almost 200 years for their revival. May we not have to wait that long. Please come in your power. Do the impossible. Bring conviction of sin. Draw our hearts to you. Show your power. May many people see your glory and turn to you.

PRAYER FOR REVIVAL

Lord I ask that you work in the lives of our community leaders – our politicians, our business leaders, our media and social media influencers, our school principals, our bosses. May those with significant influence become aware of you. May they see your greatness and follow you.

