

Isaiah 40:1-31 Discussion Guide

Pray

Apart from God, we can do nothing. Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion. Throughout your time together, continue asking God for help.

Read Scripture

Read Isaiah chapter 40 together.

Bible Study: The HEAR Method

The bulk of your time will be spent discussing God's Word together. HEAR is an inductive Bible study method that looks closely at what the Bible says to discover what it means so that we can faithfully apply it to our lives.

HEAR stands for:

- **Highlight:** read and observe everything in the passage carefully.
- **Examine:** based on your observations, discover what the passage means in its context.
- **Apply:** determine how the meaning of the passage applies to your life.
- **Respond in prayer:** pray God's Word back to Him.

Remember:

- Walk through the Bible study together using the HEAR method and talk about what stuck out most to you in the passage.
- Make sure you move discussion to the application section of your study.
- Affections, beliefs, and practices: Make sure to apply the passage to all your life.

Pray

- Take time to pray for one another and ask for His grace to apply His Word to our daily lives.

Open: In what ways might people today feel restless and rootless, like exiles?

Context: "In the first 39 chapters, Isaiah addressed his 8th-century BC contemporaries. This section climaxed with the prediction of an exile to Babylon (39:6-7), which would end up occurring in the 6th century BC (586) when the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and took Israel captive. In chapters 40-55, Isaiah addresses those of this future exiled generation with words of hope. Through Isaiah, God comforts his people with the good news of his return as king to bring physical and spiritual redemption." (ESV Study Bible)

"Isaiah wrote in the 8th century BC, but here he looks forward 200 years to the Babylonian exile. The exile of God's people in history was always a pointer to something bigger and deeper, which is humanity's exile from God. Ever since Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden, we have lived in exile. So Isaiah 40 is for us all today." (Tim Chester)

Study:

- 1) Isaiah is given a message with which to comfort people. The heart of this message is in verse 9. What is it? What might this be comforting—and why might it not be?
- 2) Verse 10 says that "*the Sovereign LORD comes with power*". How is this illustrated in verse 3-5?

- 3) How do the promises in verse 10 contrast with what the exiles have experienced so far (vs 2)? Why is the time of punishment and exile over, according to verse 2?
- 4) In verse 11, what does Isaiah say God does when he comes? What did all this mean to those who were in exile in Babylon? How was it fulfilled in Jesus' time?
- 5) What comparisons does Isaiah make in verse 12-26? What are all these comparisons good news for God's people (vs. 27-31)?
- 6) Why is all this a motivation to lift up our voices in praise and worship to God?

Apply:

- 7) Why is this message still relevant for people today? What might you want to say to people who are...
 - Feeling guilt and shame?
 - Facing the consequences of their sin?
 - Feeling abandoned by God?
 - Feeling frail or afraid?
 - Doubt God's power to redeem?
- 8) What does it say about God that He desires to bring comfort to His people even though they're about to experience some very difficult circumstances due to their choices? How does this encourage you personally as you relate to God on a daily basis?
- 9) How does this passage of Scripture encourage you to trust and rely on God? (Be as specific as possible)

PRAY:

- Take time thank God the He truly is the One who always keeps His promises.
- Take time to thank God that the disposition of His heart is to comfort His people.
- Take time to pray and ask for help to trust Him more during times of confusion.
- Ask God to give you opportunities to share with others the comfort and freedom of the Gospel.

NOTE: most questions taken from or adapted from *Isaiah: Here is your God* by Tim Chester.