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But Those Who Hope in the LORD Will Renew Their Strength 40: 27-31

But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength **DIG: What is the complaint of the exiles in 40:27? What must they still learn about God before they can be restored to their homeland (40:21 and 28)? As a weary exile, which of these promises would you find most uplifting?**

REFLECT? Practically and theologically, how does one soar like an eagle? Compare verse 31 with Exodus 19:4 and Deuteronomy 32:10-11. How is learning to hope in God like a fledgling bird learning to fly? How has God “caught” you when you have fallen instead of flying? In what way is He teaching you to fly now?

The prophet now turns to Isra’el, pointing to God’s omnipotence, and assures them of His compassion to those who trust Him. In **40:12-21** we have seen the greatness of **God**; in **40:18-26** we have seen the incomparableness of **God**. The point of all this is seen here in **40:27-31**, where **Israel** has a common complaint that **He** overlooks her plight, whether dealing with **the near historical Babylon** and **the far eschatological Babylon**. **Why do you say, O Jacob, and complain, O Isra’el, “My way is hidden from the LORD; my cause is disregarded by my God” (40:27)?** The imperfect tense of the opening verbs highlights the constant nature of the heartbreaking allegations. This was not merely something that had been said once, it was ongoing. **Why do you continue to say?** The choice of words here is not accidental. **Isaiah** subtly reintroduces the theme of **comfort** found in **40:1-11**. This was not just any people; they were **ADONAI’s** Covenant people, **the apple of His eye (Deut 32:10)**, and **His wife**. How could **they** imagine that **He** had forgotten **them (49:14-16)?**

The names of **Jacob** and **Isra’el** are synonymous for all twelve tribes. In **Chapters 40** through **49**, **Isaiah** uses these two words together sixteen times. **God’s** people should never have thought that **He** had forgotten **them**. Nevertheless, that was **their** common complaint. In light of **God’s** greatness and **His** incomparableness, **they** thought **their** condition, **their** state of deprivation, was hidden from **the LORD** and **He** had overlooked the legal justice

that **they** had coming to them. In other words, **God** wasn't fair and **He** didn't care. At first **Israel** viewed **herself** as suffering an injustice when in exile during the Babylonian captivity. Likewise, when **Israel** suffers through the Great Tribulation, **she** will continue to view **herself** as a victim of injustice. In both cases she believes **ADONAI** sees the injustice but overlooks it.

Here, then, the message comes across that in light of **God's** greatness and incomparableness, how can you think **ADONAI** would overlook the justice that is due to you? Again, **Isaiah** brings out the character of **God**, but this time it is no longer related to the Gentile nations and their idolatry (**40:21**), but is related to **Isra'el**. **Do you not know? Have you not heard?** It is understandable why the Gentiles would have not known the greatness and incomparableness of **God** because they did not have the revelation that **Isra'el** had. But because **Israel** *did* have it, how can she not have known or **heard**?

Both **Jacob** and **Isra'el** might speculate about **God's** perceived slowness to act. They could say **He** does not want to act (the argument in 40:1-11), or **He** is unable to act (the argument in **40:12-26**). Consequently, **Isaiah** seems to say, "In light of what I have just said, how can you believe **God** is ignoring you? Don't you understand? **God** is fundamentally different than we are. **He** does not work on our timetable. **He** operates outside of time and has none of our limitations. However, no matter how it seems to in the moment, rest assured that **He** is at work and you can depend on Him."

Isaiah says that there are four reasons why God will not overlook the justice due to Israel. First, Do you not know? Have you not heard? ADONAI is El 'Olam, the everlasting God (40:28a). Here **Isaiah** picks up words already used in context (**40:21**), although here they are in the perfect tense (a past completed action with continuing results), reflecting that the information has long been available. This is the **God** of eternity who knows the beginning from the end.

***God**, You are without beginning or end. You have existed through all time. You are forever the same, unchanging, infinite, boundless, without measure, and limitless. I find peace in knowing that you are my "forever" **God**.*

Secondly, because **YHVH**, which is **God's** personal name, will keep **His** promises to **Isra'el** (see the commentary on **Exodus**, to see link click [Ac](#) - Introduction to the Book of Exodus, specifically **The Use of the Hebrew name ADONAI for YHVH**). **ADONAI is the everlasting God (40:28b)**. Whenever **God's** personal name is used, it is always in reference to **Him** as **the Covenant Keeper**. **God** has made covenants with **Isra'el** and **He** will keep those covenants with **Isra'el**. **She** should not worry; the justice due to **Her** will be

given.

Thirdly, He is the Creator of the ends of the earth (40:28c). Since **the LORD** is the eternal **Creator**, **His** strength is tireless and **His** wisdom without end. **He** can do whatever **He** wishes in **His** own time. Apparent delay never means either lack of awareness or lack of ability on **His** part.

Fourthly, He will not grow tired or weary, and is all knowing, His understanding no one can fathom (40:28d). Therefore, **God is the Covenant Keeper**, eternal, all-powerful, and all knowing. It is because of these four attributes that the justice due to **Isra'el** will indeed come to pass.

He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak (40:29). God will provide **Isra'el** with **strength** and **power** if she will choose to not to rely upon herself but on **ADONAI**. But those who choose to rely upon themselves, **even young men** in the most robust health of their lives, will grow **tired, weary, stumble and fall (40:30).**

But those who wait on the LORD (40:31a NKJ). The Hebrew word *waw*, meaning **but**, points out that it should be read together with the previous verse. Waiting **on the LORD (Psalm 27:14, 130:5)** implies two things. First, complete dependence on **God** and a willingness to allow **Him** to take the steering wheel of your life. To **wait** on **Him** is to admit that we have no other help, either in ourselves, anything else or anyone else. As a result, we are helpless until **He** acts. But that does not mean we get to play the victim. Because secondly, to wait on **Him** is to declare our confidence in **His** eventual action on our behalf. As a result, waiting in Hebrew (*qawa*) is not merely killing time, but a life of confident expectation **(8:17, 25:9, 33:2, 49:23, 64:4).**

*An example of faith was found on the wall of a concentration camp. On it a prisoner had carved the words, "I believe in the sun, even though it doesn't shine; I believe in love, even when it isn't shown; I believe in **God**, even when **He** doesn't speak." Try to imagine those words. I try to envision his skeletal hand gripping the broken glass or stone that cut into the wall. I try to imagine his eyes squinting through the darkness as he carved each letter. What hand could have cut with such conviction? What eyes could have seen good in such horror? There is only one answer: Eyes that chose to see the unseen.*

But, **Jacob** and **Isra'el** were tired of waiting. That is why they are complaining. The justice due me is hidden from my **God**. **He** has overlooked the justice due me. **They** had forgotten what the **Psalms** taught - **He** had not overlooked the justice due **them**. But the time was not right for **Him** to bring forth the justice. Just **wait**. If you fail to **wait**, you will **grow**

tired, weary, and stumble and fall. In addition, **God** will provide **Isra'el strength** and **power** if they will choose to rely on **Him**.



But **those who wait on the LORD will renew their strength.** Those who give up their own frantic efforts to save themselves and turn expectantly to **God** will be able to exchange their worn-out strength for a new strength. It is a different kind of **strength**, as if people become **eagles**, a **strength** brought about by transformation; it is divine **strength**, a **strength** like **ADONAI's** own that does not grow **weary** or **faint**. **They will soar on wings of eagles, they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint (40:31).** The Jews enduring the Babylonian Captivity and the Jews suffering during the Great Tribulation would be reminded that **ADONAI** had not forgotten them. Far from being crushed to the earth by their own helplessness, by either Nebuchadnezzar or the antichrist, those who trust in **the LORD** depend on **Him** to act in **His** own time for their benefit.

***God** knows about the difficulties and problems of His people. If you belong to Him, **He** is able to quiet the storms of life, but sometimes there are lessons for believers to learn in the storm. So when you find yourself in the midst of a storm, instead of feeling sorry for yourself or worse, blaming **ADONAI** for your troubles, look around and find out what lesson He wants you to learn. **The LORD** will not let you pass through a trial unless **He** has something for you to learn. And once you have learned it, don't waste your sorrows. Pray that **God** would allow you to help someone else going through the same thing.*

Hence, we have a message of comfort given to **Israel** in the light of the greatness of **God** and the incomparableness of **God**. This message is also applicable to us today. The key is to **wait on the LORD**. To **renew** literally means to "exchange strength." If we look to **the Lord**, we will exchange our weakness for **God's** great strength. The imagery of a new garment lies behind this idea of exchanging. In **Isaiah 52:1** Jerusalem is told to change her outfit, to put on **garments of splendor** and thus to **clothe** herself **with strength**. Paul commands believers: **Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ** [and with the] **new**



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self, which is being renewed . . . in the image of its Creator (Romans 13:14; Colossians 3:10). This same divine strength is still available for those who are **weak** and discouraged.¹⁵⁸