

The God Who Is

Leader's Guide

The God Beyond Compare

Isaiah 40:12-31

Background

Again we will be looking at a passage written by the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah is one of the greatest prophets of God in the Old Testament. The book bearing his name was written to God's people (the Israelites) near 700 BC. The book of Isaiah is divided into two major sections (chapters 1-39 and chapters 40-66). Where the first section warns Israel of impending doom if they do not repent of their sins, the second section was written to console Israel in a time of (future) trials. The passage we'll be looking at kicks off the consolation section. Even though the specific application to the Israelites is in the past, you'll easily see how this passage, with its grand view of God, can renew us and give us perspective in troubling times today.

Read Isaiah 40:12-28 quietly to yourself.

Write down what you learn about who God is from each group of verses.

(After they have had some time to work on their own, have them share their answers, and ask them the correlating questions.)

v.12 *Big – creator of earth and heavens – can hold earth in hands*

Ask: How can this verse help us with perspective when our problems seem to overwhelm us?

vv.13-14 *Wise – All-knowing – Omniscient*

Ask: Have you ever felt like you needed to enlighten the Lord or “show Him the right way”?

vv.15-17 *Big (again) – More powerful than the nations*

vv.18-20 *He is beyond compare (esp. to idols)*

Ask: A.W. Tozer wrote that “The essence of idolatry is the entertainment of thoughts about God that are unworthy of Him.” When or why do we think unworthy thoughts about God?

vv.21-22 *King – rules above the earth and heavens*

vv.23-24 *More powerful than rulers and kings*

Ask: In vv.15-17 and now in vv.21-22, we learn that God is more powerful than nations and the rulers of them. What comfort can we find in this?

vv.25-26 *Creator – without equal – power and strength – knows all*

v.28 *Everlasting – creator – beyond time – doesn't run out of energy - wise*

Why do you think God challenges us to compare Him to counselors, nations, idols, princes and rulers?

So we can see that He is so much bigger than any of them. Therefore we can trust Him completely because He is all-wise, all-powerful, and He loves us. Even when it seems like others are in control, they are really under God's control.

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Isaiah 40:12-31

Do you ever feel like v.27? How does the rest of this passage answer how you feel?

Now read vv.29-31. (Aloud as a group)

What does it mean to hope in the Lord?

It means we are trusting in Him to be the solution to our problems; not our own giftedness, other people's kindness, government laws or leaders, etc. The word "hope" is defined as "a desire accompanied by expectation of fulfillment".

What are other things we sometimes put our hope in? How do they compare to God?

What is promised to those who do hope in the Lord?

Strength renewed – soar like eagles – not grow weary

Verse 31 might be better translated, "But those who hope in the Lord will exchange their strength for His." In light of this passage (learning about His mighty strength), how does that make you feel?

Passages For Further Study:

Genesis 1
Job 38-41
Psalm 2
Matthew 11:28-30

Questions for personal reflection:

1. Are you feeling tired and weary (v.30)? Ask God to help you determine if you are trying to live in your own strength, or if you need to exchange your strength for His!
2. What (or who) are you putting your hope in? How does it/do they compare to God? Do they promise you the same thing that God does in v.31?
3. Go back, look at the passage again, and reflect on all the different aspects of God we looked. What part of God's character means the most to you? Meditate on that, and maybe even memorize one of the verses that talk about it.

"There is a God we want, and there is a God who is—and they are not the same God.

The turning point of our lives is when we stop seeking the God we want and start seeking the God who is."