

BEHOLD YOUR GOD (1-4)

* **Waiting Upon Our Everlasting God**

Isaiah 40:27, 28

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* **The Omnipotent and Omniscient God**

Isaiah 40:12-14

* **Jehovah Weighs the Nations**

Isaiah 40:15-17

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hand of God, God would have destroyed them! If the nations of the earth in concert had sent men with the most highly designed equipment to stop the hand of God, He would have walked right over the top of them. And He would have done it as a very little thing! All nations are less than nothing and vanity before the might, before the infinite glory, of the only God of heaven and earth, who must be served!

III. Emptiness

Certainly we are able to say when we consider the truth of these verses: How great is God! But these words were meant to be a comfort to God's people in Judah who were witnesses of God's judgment on this nation. How do these words serve to comfort those who were disdained for the sake of God and His kingdom? How would this serve to bolster and encourage those who would see their friends and fellow countrymen killed by the edge of the sword? How would this sustain them in their long journey to a foreign kingdom many miles away to be held captive there? What is worse: How would this give comfort when they saw as it were the cause of God's kingdom

destroyed, making it virtually impossible for the Christ to be born?

Look at God, believer! Nothing takes place apart from His will and good pleasure. Today, too, we see what goes on in the nations of this world. What we see can be just as distressing as what God's saints in Israel saw. The events that surround us certainly are not falling in favor, it seems, of the church and the cause of Christ's kingdom. Our world, our society, the nations of this world, grow progressively more evil. We live in the last days. We even see the development around us into the one-world empire of man. But consider who our God is: He holds the nations in His hand. He governs them in the way He chooses. All the events going on in Israel God was using for one end: the birth of Christ. For us it is the second coming of Christ and the establishment of the kingdom of heaven. We only need bow before the living God and understand how great He is. If He is for us, nothing can be against us. All nations are vanity, emptiness, before the great power, honor, and glory of our God! Rest in Him in child-like faith. He directs all things for the salvation of His people. O Lord, how great Thou art!

THE REFORMED WITNESS HOUR

October 6, 2013
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Waiting Upon Our Everlasting God
Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma

Dear radio friends and those who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ,

It is my pleasure to be with you for the next several months on the Reformed Witness Hour. We pray our time together in the Word of God will be profitable. In the next several broadcasts we will study a number of verses out of Isaiah 40—a beautiful chapter of the Bible that describes who God is in comparison to man. Today we are going to consider Isaiah 40:27-28, “Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.” We are going to study these verses of Isaiah 40 first because they explain to us what was going on in the nation of Israel. They explain why Isaiah speaks the message of this chapter.

Do you know what a remnant is? It is a leftover. My wife has on the shelves of a closet in our house little plastic boxes containing pieces of material that are left over after she makes her various quilts. These left-over

pieces of material are remnants. Well, this word “remnant” is used by the prophet Isaiah no fewer than 16 times in this book of his writings. Out of those 16 times, for sure 10 times he uses this word to refer to the very few people of God, those few true believers that were left yet in the nation of Israel. These he calls “the remnant”: out of the millions in Israel, those few people (leftovers, if you will) who yet faithfully clung to Jehovah, His covenant, and its promises.

Throughout his prophecy Isaiah addresses the nation of Judah or Israel as a whole in terms of judgment and destruction. Because she had forsaken the way of righteousness and begun as a nation to follow after the horrible sins of the heathen nations around her, she was ripe for judgment. Therefore Isaiah pronounces woe upon her. These pronouncements of doom and destruction were spoken to the nation as a whole.

But within that nation, remember, was the remnant who, according to grace, still looked in hope for the coming Messiah. These too heard the prophetic

cies of judgment. And because they longed for the coming of their Messiah, such prophecies smashed to pieces their hopes. As a result this remnant became despondent, that is to say, they became disheartened and discouraged. God was angry with Israel—rightfully so. The remnant saw the debauchery: the fornication and adultery, the drunkenness, the heresies Israel had now embraced. They knew Israel deserved punishment. But what of the promise of God’s covenant that he would send a Savior who would deliver them from sin? God was now angry. God was now filled with vengeance. Had He forgotten them?

So Isaiah is now sent by God to address this remnant of Israel, the true Judah, the true sons of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The words of this chapter are addressed to them—not the wicked nation as a whole, but to the faithful remnant who yet believed. And the word Isaiah was to speak to them was: “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people! Speak comfortably to Jerusalem!” Isaiah was sent to speak words of comfort and encouragement to a despondent remnant. And the word of comfort was this: behold your God! Everyone needs a good dose of theology, that is, the study of who God is, since there are so many misconceptions about God afloat today. But we need

a good dose of this too, just for encouragement and strength to continue to fight the good fight of faith.

WAITING UPON OUR EVERLASTING GOD

I. *Jacob’s Despondency*

The believing saints in Israel had become despondent. It is for this reason that Isaiah addresses them as he does in verse 27: “Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God?” It is striking that these questions are not asked of those who were walking in their sin. They are not addressed to those in Israel that in their pride were arrogantly acting as if God did not see their sin or that God was not going to judge them for those sins. This is what many in Israel were thinking. They walked arrogantly in their sin, as if God did not see it, as if their ways were hid from Him. They did not even give a second thought to the fact that God would punish them for their heinous sins. In their estimation, God did not judge them in their sin. So they continued on blatantly, openly, and unrepentantly in their fornication, drunkenness, idolatry, frivolous party life, and so on.

But Isaiah is not asking these questions to the wicked

valuable in His sight. But the comparison being made here is between the power, honor, and glory of man in comparison to God.

So, what then is the result of this weighing? This: the nations are as a drop of a bucket and are counted in value as the fine dust on the balance. All the super powers of today, the greatest nations on earth, are nothing more than a drop of a bucket in comparison to God in might and glory. A drop in a bucket. How insignificant are the nations. Not only are the individuals that make up that nation insignificant, but all those individuals put together as a whole are insignificant. They are as the small

or fine dust on a scale. A thin, microscopic layer of dust on man’s pan of the balance in comparison to God on the other. This dust would not even affect the balance. It would not make it move in the least sense. It might as well be as if there is nothing there. Indeed, it *is* as if nothing is there! We read in verse 17, “all nations are as nothing—no, *less than nothing!*—they are *vanity.*” That is, they are nothing more than emptiness in comparison to God! Man does not even compare. Put the greatest of all men on man’s side of the balance—nothing happens.

Put the most powerful and glorious nation of the earth on the scale—no movement. Put all the nations one by one on that balance. The balance does not even reveal a faint tremor! Then take all the nations together as a whole—one grand and glorious kingdom of man—man in all his might and power and glory. The rod that weighs God and man does not even strain. Why? Because man at his greatest is nothing, less than nothing, in comparison to God.

My family and I lived through a hurricane when I served as missionary on the island of Jamaica. When God sent the winds of that hurricane with gusts up to 200 miles an hour, the island was decimated. We watched helplessly as the winds ripped up large sections of our roof and blew

them over the top of the hill next to our house. We watched as one by one the trees of our yard were ripped up by their roots and laid flat. Power lines were flung into the air, houses destroyed, and many parts of the island flooded. All that occurred by the hand of God, who takes up the islands as a very little thing.

Dear listener, if all the nations of the earth sent the strongest of their armies to the island of Jamaica to stay the

...man at his greatest
is nothing,
less than nothing,
in comparison to God.

God on one side of the balance and all nations with all their knowledge, riches, and power on the other. And we will weigh them one against another to see which one is most powerful. Who is greater: God or man?"

II. Weighed

We read in verse 15, "Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance." Again, we read in verse 17, "All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity."

To understand the comparison being made here in these verses we need to know what a balance is. It is a scale used to weigh the worth of something. A balance is made of a thin rod that has on each end a pan of equal weight. The exact center of this rod rests on the point of a wedge that supports the rod. This balance can be used for various things. But the one that is alluded to in our text is to weigh the value of money. On the one side of the balance we put a weight of one pound, let us say. When we do, the side with the weight goes down and the empty side is up. But we then begin to place gold coins in the opposite pan. One coin does not shift the balance. Two do not. We continue to place gold coins on that balance until it lifts the

one pound weight on the other side. When we finally put just the right amount of gold on the scale, so that the two pans are balanced at an equal height, we can say that we have one pound of gold. A monetary value is placed on that one pound of gold, so we can say it is worth so much in weight. That then is a balance.

This balance Isaiah uses to compare the value of man over against God. God is the weight that is placed on the one side of the scale. When He is placed in the pan on the one side of the scale, obviously the other pan goes up. So heavy is God in honor and glory that it is a wonder that the scale is able to hold His weight! Now we take man and place him in the other side of the scale. How many men will it take to weigh the same as God? How many men will it take to outweigh God? This is the test. God weighs man in the balance to see what he is worth in comparison to Him.

What do you think is the value of man in comparison to God? The test here is not to say that you and I as God's people have no value at all. We are God's children. He loves us and cherishes us. He has condescended to us and through the cross of Jesus Christ has adopted us into His family and household. We belong to Him! From that point of view we are precious,

nation of Israel and those who were walking in their sin. He is addressing the elect remnant in Israel who had become discouraged. These people had raised their complaint to God and perhaps even to other believers. Isaiah, therefore, addresses believers whose faith was being tested and found wanting—for they were doubting God's good hand. They were beginning to waver and to question God. They grew faint and weary in their ways.

What were these saints saying? My way is hid from Jehovah. They thought Jehovah had turned away from them, too, in anger and weariness over the unbelief of the nation as a whole. Their way refers to the rocky and narrow straits through which God now led them. These few saints were surrounded by unbelief and sin. Others refused to hear their admonitions. They were, no doubt, ridiculed and mocked for their faithful stand on the Word of God. They were labeled as narrow-minded extremists who were far too strict in living the law of God. Their place in the church of that day had become small and despised. They were but a remnant, and the rest of Israel that walked in unbelief was large and powerful. This made life difficult for those

faithful few in Judah. They had no standing. No one—not even friends—cared to listen to them. So they raised the voice of complaint before God: my way is hid from Jehovah. He does not seem to see how difficult my way is. He does not seem to listen to my prayers. Has He forgotten to be kind?

The next complaint stands in close connection with the first: my judgment is passed over from my God. Or, more simply, God has failed to maintain the cause of the righteous. My judgment, my right cause, has been passed over by God. God does not undertake my cause. He does not defend my righteousness. Where is God in everything that is happening in the church?

Indeed, where is God in everything we see happening in the church of today? Sometimes the same complaints are shared by us who stand in the midst of the apostasy so rampant about us. So many denominations of churches and independent churches trample underfoot the commandments of God. They give their approval to fornication and adultery, to abortion and homosexuality. Their members desecrate the Sabbath. They walk in the same ways as the world around them,

*Indeed, where is God in
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of today?*

their lifestyle being totally worldly and unbelieving. Their heresies stink to high heaven—making God a female, making salvation dependent on man, despising the sovereignty of God in creation and providence. And the church and her members that strive still to remain faithful are small and despised today. Her voice and her warnings are ignored. How easy it is to say: My way is hid from God and the just cause I represent is passed over by Him.

But then there is the question that is meant to reprove God's saints who waver and doubt God: "Why sayest thou this, O Jacob, and speakest these things, O Israel?" Why do you say this, Jacob? Why do you speak this about God, Israel? Notice how God addresses this remnant. He calls them Jacob and Israel. God addresses these faithful few as Israel and Jacob because they were true Israel. Those in this nation who did not believe were called such only because they belonged to the nation that housed or encased true Israel and Jacob. God saw this elect few as the very core or kernel of the nation of Israel.

But these names are appropriate as applied to the faithful few in this nation too. They were Jacob—the natural-born sons of Jacob—true. But they were also sons of Jacob from another point of view: they were now

complaining as Jacob did when he was faced with the possible death of Benjamin: "All these things are against me!" This is what the remnant of faithful saints in Israel were saying: all these things going on in the nation are against us! They had forgotten the truth: if God is for us, nothing can be against us!

So they were appropriately called Jacob. But then they were called Israel too. And this is a reminder that God's promises to Israel are sure and they would indeed be fulfilled. Why do you say these things Jacob, Israel?? Behold your God!

II. *Jehovah's Encouragement*

Consider the God whom you serve!! He is the everlasting God, Jehovah. This God whom you serve is from everlasting to everlasting. That means He knows the end from the beginning and everything that takes place in between. He was there before the world began and He will exist when the history of this present world is long over. He is God, after all. Do you think your ways are hid from his all searching and all knowing eye? Do you think he does not know what is going on in Israel and in the nations around you? He knows because he is an everlasting God. The God who has planned all these things. And he is Jehovah—the never-changing, ever-faithful God in the work

magnificent, so transcendent is God in all His glory!

That then is God—the One who upholds all things and the One who is so marvelous that we cannot offer enough praise in our worship of His name.

This God we place on the one side of the balance in order to be compared to man. On the other side of the balance we place the nations. When comparing God to man, we take man not as an individual but as a nation. A nation consists of a compilation of all the individuals that comprise it. A nation is only as powerful as its citizens, of course. If the citizens of a nation are for the most part ignorant, superstitious, and immoral, the power of such a nation is greatly diminished. If its citizens are educated, having great understanding about the world we live in and the laws that govern creation, that nation is powerful and rules over other lesser nations. It is also true that when each man stands alone, without others, he will not be able to achieve what he desires. He needs others. He needs to sharpen his thoughts and experiments against what others think.

If we were to use our own nation as an example, the interaction of knowledgeable men and women has produced a powerful nation. Look at what we have been able to accom-

plish in the way of technology, medicine, engines of warfare, comforts and luxuries. Look at how self-sufficient and powerful our nation has become.

So, when Isaiah here in verses 15 and 17 speaks of nations, he is going beyond the knowledge and know-how of individual men. He is putting these great minds of men together, and he is comparing God to entire nations of the world, great and small.

But more. Isaiah in verse 17 lumps all these nations of the world together as one. It is as if he says to the believers in Israel, "Let's not just put one individual or several great individuals together in that balance. Let's put the nations together in that balance. No, let's not just put the nations together in that balance as individual nations. Let's lump them together, so that all the nations of this world, lending their power together, can be compared with God."

Someday that will be true, you realize. More and more our world is looking toward a one-world empire, when all the nations of this world will lend their power and wealth to one-world government. It will be the kingdom of man. It will be when man has reached the apex of his power and fulfilled all the desires of his heart. Isaiah says: "Go ahead—lump them all together as one. We will put

and preserves this creation. We know how easy it is to speak a word. But our words are ineffectual. That is not true of God. His word always produces results. God takes up the isles as a very little thing!

This simple statement establishes the fact that God is God. No man upholds and preserves creation. God does. If this is the case, then He must be worshiped as God. So Isaiah turns to that subject in verse 16. We read, “Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering.” The worship of Jehovah in the Old Testament was done by means of sacrificing. God had taught this to His people since the fall of man into sin. God’s people in Israel would come into the temple to bring a lamb or a goat or a bullock or a turtle dove. These were offered as sacrifices. A huge supply of wood was also needed to burn in order to offer these sacrifices. Both the wood to burn and the animals of these sacrifices are what Isaiah is speaking of in verse 16. The point Isaiah is making is that God is so great, so mighty, so transcendent as God that all the trees of Lebanon could not supply wood sufficient for a sacrifice to God. So great is God, so terrible is He in His majesty, that all the animals found in that forest were not enough to offer as sacrifices to Him.

It is striking that Isaiah speaks of Lebanon. Lebanon, during the days of the kings of Israel, was a majestic and mighty forest that spanned hundreds of miles and grew on high majestic mountainsides. It was north of Canaan, located in the possession of the Zidonians or Phoenecians. Lebanon was known in that day for its costly and precious cedar and fir trees, and the wood they produced. When Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem, Hiram king of Tyre assisted by sending cedar trees from Lebanon. Much of the furniture, walls, and floors of the temple were made out of cedar wood from Lebanon. Isaiah speaks of that mighty forest of Lebanon with its precious wood. The cedar wood of Lebanon, Isaiah says, is not precious enough or plentiful enough to be a proper oblation to Jehovah—so great and glorious is He as God.

Neither are the animals in that forest enough to sacrifice to God as a proper token of worship, so great is He. We are reminded of the number of animals Solomon offered up to God upon the dedication of the temple in Jerusalem. We read in I Kings 8:5 that the sheep and oxen “could not be numbered for multitude.” Now Isaiah says to God’s people: Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering—so great, so

He performs. How can you say, “My judgment is passed over by God?” Is not God faithful to His covenant, and from its promises does He ever waver? God always maintains the cause of the righteous man. God dwells with us and smiles on us in His favor. God never forsakes His own. God never puts away His people. God’s promises are sure because of the Messiah that was yet to come. Though the nation of Israel as a whole will be punished and scattered and destroyed, God will save His Israel, His true Israel, because your God, O Jacob, is Jehovah!

That same word of encouragement we hear today too. God knows what is going on in the world and in the churches of today. He sees it. The ways of His people are not hid from Him any more than they were in Israel’s day. God sees and knows and will indeed judge. And He will do so because He is the everlasting God, Jehovah. God’s remnant according to grace is viewed together with Jesus Christ. They are in Him. They are covered in His blood. Their sins are forgiven them. They are righteous in Christ. For His sake, God’s promises are as sure today as they were then. He remains faithful to the cause of the righteous. He will preserve His true church

through judgment, that is, by way of judging and punishing the false church of our day.

This Jehovah is the Creator of the ends of the earth and will not faint or grow weary. God has created all things on earth and in heaven. He has created the ends of the

earth, that is, the universe and all things that it contains. All power belongs to Him in heaven and on earth. God is almighty. By a simple word He called each creature into existence. How then can you say that God has grown weary with what was going on in Israel? How can you even think that God faints or is exasperated with what is going on to the point that He has simply given up on Israel? Do you really think God has thrown up His hands in despair and said, “I’ve had enough! I can’t take it anymore! I quit! I am tired of man thwarting my will.” God is the Creator of all things. He does not forsake or quit His work. Behold your God! The unbelief and apostasy of Israel were under the sovereign control of the Creator! He brings these things about. Does God grow weary in carrying out these details of His plan? Does He become exasperated at what He has willed to do? Examine who God is! He never grows weary

*Is not God faithful
to His covenant,
and from its promises
does He ever waver?*

and never becomes faint in carrying out His plan for what He has created.

Then, to make an impact upon the hearts of these saints, God places this

knowledge of who He is before them with a two-fold question. Have you not known? Have you not heard?

Come now, My beloved people! You know who I am! The objective knowledge of Me you have known in your generations since the beginning of time. I have always left you with My witness. You have been told who I am! You have heard! The knowledge of who God is has been handed down from father to son through oral tradition. It has been passed on to these believers in the line of their generations through the preaching of the gospel as well.

Now, they knew who God is. Besides, this knowledge was not simply theirs objectively. It was a subjective knowledge that was worked in their hearts by the Holy Spirit. What they knew about God they also believed. You believe in Me as God! Do you really need to complain and say that your way is now hid from Me and your just cause is passed over by Me? Come now! Have you not known? Of course you

have! Have you not heard? Of course you have! Believe it!

We too, people of God, must believe that, in all the ways God leads His true church in

these last days, even though those ways may be difficult, He fulfills His will and good pleasure. His ways are beyond our understanding

at times. Isaiah says that to the elect remnant in verse 28, "There is no searching of God's understanding." It is not, of course, that God contradicts in His being what He tells us in His Word. It is not as if God's understanding of what is going on in this world is different from our understanding—from what He tells us in His Word. That would be folly. It is just that our human understanding bumps up against the limits of this present world in which we have been placed. God's understanding of the events of this world goes beyond our understanding. His ways are in the sea and His footsteps are not known.

For that reason, there is no searching of His understanding. But this we know: the knowledge of God is always good and wise. Sometimes we may not fully understand why God does what He does. We do not always understand why we are led

*Examine who God is!
He never grows weary
and never becomes faint
in carrying out His plan
for what He has created.*

their coastlines. And indeed this is true in a certain sense.

Isaiah explains to us in a very picturesque way what God does with these seashores. He "takes them up, he lifts them up." Immediately what comes to mind is a huge being that is able to reach down and lift up the shoreline, no, the continents of this earth and its isles, and hold them in his hand. Isaiah spoke earlier, if you recall, in verse 12, of holding the *waters* of the earth in the hollow of his hand. Here we are given the picture of this great Being, this massive God, holding the inhabitable parts of the earth in His hand and watching them as the waves beat upon their shores. One is reminded of the spiritual (hymn?): "He's got the whole world in His hand." Now, we know that this is not literally true. But there is an amazing truth presented to us here.

That truth is that of God's providential care over His creation. He upholds and preserves, as it were by His

hand, the earth and the seas. They continue to exist only because God holds them up, so to speak. If God were for a moment to remove His almighty hand, everything in this world would perish! The laws of nature

are under God's control. God keeps the dry land, the isles, the inhabitable parts of the earth, from plunging back into the depths of the seas. Peter speaks of this truth in connection with the destruction of the earth by the waters of the Flood. We read in II Peter 3:5, "...by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water." So, the picture presented here is not that God picks up the shorelines and curiously looks at them, and then puts them down again. The idea is that God takes up, He holds, the earth and all its creatures in His hand in order to uphold and preserve the earth and its inhabitants.

Now, from a human perspective that is quite a feat! A feat far beyond the capability of a man, that is for sure! But Isaiah adds that God is able to take up

*God holds up the earth
as if He is holding
between His thumb
and forefinger
a little particle of sand.*

the isles as a very little thing! The very little thing referred to here is a granule of sand. God holds up the earth as if He is holding

between His thumb and forefinger a little particle of sand. In other words, for God to take up the isles is not a great feat to Him at all! It is as easy as it would be for us to hold something very small in our hand. Peter says that God by the word of His mouth upholds

THE REFORMED WITNESS HOUR

October 27, 2013
No. 3695

Jehovah Weighs the Nations
Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma

Dear Radio Friends,

Introduction

In the three verses we consider today out of Isaiah 40 the prophet compares Jehovah to man. We read in verses 15-17, "Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity." It is this direct rather than implied comparison between God and man that makes these verses of Isaiah 40 stand out from among the rest. Say what you will, man thinks very highly of himself. He boasts about his great accomplishments and his ability to accomplish what he wants. Man thinks he is someone great. So, Isaiah places man alongside of God and now makes a comparison between them. We wish to examine that comparison today. Placed side by side with one another, is man indeed so great in comparison to God?

JEHOVAH WEIGHS THE NATIONS

I. Identified

Before making the comparison between God and man we need to identify them. We know who they are already, of course, but Isaiah gives God's people a couple of important facts both about God and man. The focus of our attention, however, must be on God and who He is. This, after all, is what is ultimately going to give to believers the greatest of comfort. At the end of verse three we are told, "Behold, he (God) takes up the isles as a very little thing." The term "isles" here ought not to call our attention to the islands of the seas as much as the coastlines of the seas. The Israelites were no doubt reminded of the Great Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and its vast coasts, from which and to which many of their own ships had sailed and returned. You and I have a much more universal idea of the many different shorelines that surround the continents and islands of our globe. It is as if the continents are held up out of the sea by

through the flood and the fire. Why do the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer for their just cause? We may not fully know the answer to that. But we do know that the ways God leads us are *His* ways and they are always filled with goodness and wisdom. This is why there is never any reason to complain and question God.

III. Israel's Need

So, Isaiah addresses a certain need that he saw among the believers remaining in Israel. That need was to see and submit to the eternal purposes of God regarding the nation and church of which they were a part. Nothing escapes the knowledge, the eye, or the control of our sovereign God. The apostasy that we see in the church world around us today, just as the apostasy of Isaiah's day, is under God's control. Even when there is so much sin and unbelief rampant in modern false Christianity today—ungodly living and heresy—God

is working all things for the good of His true church. Neither may we fail to see His design in all of this: He always saves His church through judgment.

*But we do know that
the ways God leads us
are His ways and they
are always filled
with goodness and wisdom.*

God knows the way of the righteous, but the way of sinners shall perish.

But there was one other need of which Isaiah reminds the

church in this world. She must humbly submit to the will of God and wait for her salvation. God's promises are sure. The Messiah would come. God's people would indeed be redeemed. Israel must trust that God's way for them was best and that He would bring about the coming of Christ. So also today. God leads His church unto the second coming of Christ. He directs the events of the world and the church today to bring about that coming. His promise is sure: Christ comes and comes quickly, to bring final and complete salvation for the church. Now we wait patiently on the will of God and trust Him in His ways. Behold your God!

THE REFORMED WITNESS HOUR

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*The Shepherd of the Covenant
Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma*

Dear Radio Friends,

Introduction

The nation of Israel was under God's ban. God had judged her and found her wanting. She now lay under condemnation and punishment. Quite simply, God was going to destroy this nation, her cities and her towns. Her land was going to be left to her desolate. And that because of her great sin against Jehovah. She had rejected Him. She no longer knew Him but thought of God as only one god among many others whom she also worshiped. Her citizens walked in arrogance and pride. They were characterized by fornication and adultery, by drunkenness and reveling, and by greed and fraud. God had warned this nation repeatedly by means of His prophets, but the people had rejected the prophets and the Word they brought. They had even killed many of the prophets who had warned her of the doom that was to come. Now this nation was ripe for judgment. She lay under God's ban—she was soon to be destroyed.

But within this nation of Judah or Israel God still had His people. They were only a rem-

nant. But these few believed and had remained faithful. Yet, with the threat of destruction their faith had wavered. What about them? Had God forgotten them? Would they too be destroyed for the sins of the nation? Had God forgotten their ways? Had their righteous cause been passed by? To this elect remnant God now sends Isaiah with the words of Isaiah 40. He is sent to comfort these people? How? By telling them to behold their God. They must take a close look at their God: who he is.

In verses 10 and 11 of Isaiah 40 Isaiah reveals to these faithful few in Israel a most important truth about their God. He is a shepherd, and they were His sheep. These verses read as follows: "Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." The figure of a shepherd and sheep is common to Scripture. In it is

heavens, and He uses the wicked of this world to fulfill His sovereign will and good pleasure for the salvation of His church.

God did this in Israel's day. Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldean Empire were but tools in the hand of God. God is all wise and all powerful. He used this empire to punish a sinful people but also to preserve His church. God would not forsake His remnant now. The same was true when Christ came into the world. Satan and the wicked world thought they had the upper hand. But God was using them to secure our salvation. God's counsel shall stand. And Christ stands at the heart of that counsel of God. The same is true as far as Christ's second coming is concerned. God holds all things in His powerful hands and leads us in the way of knowledge and understanding.

III. The Comfort

This in turn is of great comfort to the believer. Behold your God! He is omnipotent. He holds all things under His sov-

ereign control. He upholds the universe by His hand. It is all there in His hand. He is omniscient. He governs the universe in His wisdom and knowledge. If this God is for us, who can be against us? That was the point Isaiah was making to the remnant in Israel. They were asking in despair: Is this God for us? He seems to have forgotten us. He seems to have forsaken us together with the wicked in Israel. But God in His wisdom and power always preserves and protects His people.

There is nothing more reassuring to us than those words. God never forsakes His people. He never forgets us in our needs. Has He not provided for us a Savior? Has He not redeemed us from our sin and guilt. We are purchased with a price. We belong to God. We belong to our Savior. That means that this great God of heaven and earth has graven His church and the name of His individual saints on the palm of His hand. That same hand that controls the universe. Nothing will ever separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus!

man is but a creature of God's hand. Man is but a tiny creature in God's hand. This is true as far as man's strength is concerned. Can man hold the waters of the earth in the hollow of his hand? Can man measure the entire universe with the span of his hand? Can man hold the soils of the earth with a pinch of his fingers? How man likes to boast in his own power. Look at what great feats he has accomplished in building, in medicine, in technology, in military might! Man pushes himself to the limit in his sports. Look at the vain imagination of man in his computer-enhanced movies. Man is made out to be a super hero. It is all make-believe. Man does not have super-human strength and abilities! After all is said and done, man is only man—a creature of God's hands among many other creatures. What, then, is implied in these questions? God alone is all powerful, and the strength that man has is given to him by his Creator.

Likewise, God is all-knowing and all-wise in His ways. Who is man? Man must gather together with many counselors to keep from making errors. Man must be educated and learn his skills. He must be instructed and taught knowledge and understanding. Even then his knowledge is so, so limited in its

scope. He might become adept in one area or field but remain totally ignorant in another area of life. Man thinks himself so wise and so knowledgeable. He boasts of his knowledge. But

*God is great
and man is small.*

what man is
like unto God
who is infinite
in knowledge;
who was taught

by no one, who in wisdom made all things perfectly? Man often fails in his experiments and projects. Man cannot always attain unto what he tries to achieve!

What, then, does this say about man in relation to God? Man must bow the knee to his Creator. He must kiss God's Son, who sits at God's right hand in power. When the enemies of God rise up together and attempt to break away from God or to foil God's eternal plan, man fails. In the last days, the wicked will rise up against God's people and scorn them. The wicked world and the false church will persecute the true church of Christ in this world. We will see the rise of the kingdom of antichrist. The enemies of the cross will seem to have the upper hand. The unbelieving world will establish a kingdom of man. He will believe that he is in control of this earth, and its destiny. Even now we see this happening in our society. Even now we experience but small birth pains of the coming of Christ. But our God is in the

revealed God's great love and care for His people. This is the first truth God's people must learn about their God! He loves, nurtures, leads, and protects His sheep.

THE SHEPHERD OF THE COVENANT

Shepherd and Sheep

The comparison Isaiah makes between God and a shepherd is not as real to us as it would have been to an Israelite. Many in Israel were shepherds, and if they were not, most were certainly knowledgeable of what a shepherd did. When Isaiah spoke these words, God's people then could appreciate what this said to them about God. A shepherd devoted his life to tending the needs of his flock of sheep. His central task was to see to it that his particular flock of sheep were fed and watered each day. Day after day he would lead his sheep from the fold, that is, the stable or barn and into the hills where he found them grass and water.

This task of the shepherd was not a simple one. He did not just sit under the shade of a rock or tree and laze about all day. Sheep are ignorant animals. Not only do they entirely depend on someone to find sufficient pasture and water for them each day, but sheep are also prone to wander as if there is not a

danger in the world. Like a little child in a grocery store when left unattended, they wander away without any thought of danger. In their ignorance they do not worry about food or safety.

So, the shepherd did much more than simply take his sheep out of the fold and let them wander in the hills all day. He equipped himself with his rod or staff. He led the sheep into the green pastures and then stood constant guard over them. If one wandered off, he took his rod and prodded that sheep back into the flock. Sometimes he had to run after the stubborn sheep that did not listen to him. And since a sheep is so helpless, the shepherd would even risk his own life to fight off predators. All of this belongs to the care and nurture of a flock. The term "feeds" in verse 11 of our text literally refers to "shepherding" a flock and not simply to feeding it.

One cannot help but notice the motivation behind all of this labor the shepherd bestows on his sheep. He is not a hireling, that is, a man hired for a day to take care of the sheep in the absence of the shepherd. The shepherd in a very real way learns who his sheep are. Many times that shepherd even gives them names. He learns the character of each sheep. Because he is with them day in and day out he develops a love for these

sheep. Some of us who are pet owners can appreciate that. The shepherd, out of his love for his sheep, cares for them. He, in love, takes care of their needs and protects them from enemies. He lays down his life for his sheep—so much does he care for them. And, in turn, the sheep love their shepherd. They totally trust him. They hear his voice call to them and they, out of their love for him, follow him. All of this is implied in verse 11 of the Word of God before us, “He shall feed his flock like a shepherd,” and so on.

Isaiah, in describing God to the faithful in Israel, wants them to know Him first and foremost as the Shepherd of His sheep. We must remember once again that these sheep were not the nation of Israel or Judah as a whole. This nation was under God’s curse. But the sheep of God are those who know His voice and follow Him. God’s sheep are always and ever those who are given to believe in Him. That was true in Isaiah’s day and it is still true today. There are many in the church today who like to think of themselves as God’s sheep. But they are not. This is proven by the fact that they do not believe on God or follow Him and Jesus Christ. The remnant in Israel were God’s sheep to

whom Isaiah now spoke. You believers must behold your God! He is your Shepherd! He does everything with a strong hand—and that hand is powerful. He is a God of strength, and His arm rules over all things. That God is leading you right now. He is caring for you right now. He is protecting you right now. But God *shall* feed you. He *shall* gather and carry you. He *shall* gently lead you. That has the idea of the future. Implied, of course, was the destruction that would come upon this nation. Israel was going to be taken captive. Many would be killed. The rest would be led away into a strange land—to the city of Babylon. But God’s sheep need not worry. Why? Because even if they walk through the valley of the shadow of death they could be assured that their Shepherd was present protecting them and caring for them. God would not forsake His people. Why? Because God loves His people! They are His. The relationship He shares with them is the same as that of a shepherd and his sheep.

Now, we are going to describe the shepherd’s care for his sheep in a moment. But we want to take note of what God was expressing here in this comparison. These believing saints

*God’s sheep are
always and ever
those who are given
to believe in Him.*

majesty of a mountain or what can be seen with a telescope. Look at the house God has built! Now let us ask the questions of verses 13 and 14. Who directed the Spirit of Jehovah when He moved upon the face of the deep and this world was called forth? The Spirit is the giver of life. Thy Spirit, O Lord, makes life to abound. Well, who directed the Spirit to create all things? Who was God’s counselor? What mighty men did He sit down with and consult about how to build this universe? Where did God get His education? Who taught Him His trade? Who instructed Him how to do what He has done? Who bestowed on God the knowledge needed to build this present universe in all its intricate design? Who said to God, “Well, maybe that is not the best way of doing things. Maybe you should try a different way. This way is faulty.” This is what Isaiah means when he asks, “Who taught God the path of judgment?” Who taught God the right way of doing things? Whom did God need to plan the universe and then build it according to the exact specifications of His plan?

The answer? No one! God did not need anyone. He is all-knowing and all-wise. He is the omniscient God! Look at the universe! How many thousands of solar systems inhabit space! Look how the planets orbit the sun and the moon the earth.

The music of the spheres—the harmony of the planets—cries out to us of the wisdom of our God. The plants dependent on the rain, the animals dependent on the plants. Man and beast dependent on the air we take in. The plants dependent on the air we breathe out. All of this is a bold testimony of the knowledge and understanding of God. The laws of nature man is able to discover shows forth the earth’s grand design. Man discovered gravity, but it was always there. Man studies the DNA strands that make up a man or woman’s genetic makeup. One mutated gene can cause illness, deformity, or even death. Did man make all of this? Can man even control all of this? O the depth of the knowledge, understanding, and wisdom of God! And all God had to do is speak a Word—an all-powerful Word—and the grand and glorious building of this creation stands fast. It was not a difficult thing for God! Behold your God! This is your God.

II. The Reality

But there is more implied in these questions than simply to know who God is. It is true that the emphasis in them is to focus our attention on God—but there is a reality expressed in these verses that cannot be overlooked: God is great and man is small. God alone is God and

is written in the mountains and hills and the dust that covers the earth! Certainly, if this great God of heaven and earth is so mighty, then who need doubt that He is strong to save as well. It took a miracle to put the world in place; it took a miracle to hang the stars in space. But when He saved my soul, cleansed and made me whole, it took a miracle of love and grace! Need God's people in Israel fear? God is all powerful to save, to lead them as a flock. He would indeed come with redemption! Christ would be born, and God would deliver these saints from their sins. Need we ever fear, beloved saints? Christ has come and has accomplished our salvation. Is it too big a thing for Him to come again and bring our salvation to its perfect end? All of this is measured out by the all powerful hand of God. .

But then, let us move along to the next questions. The second and third questions both have to do with another attribute of God: His omniscience. So we take the last two questions together. We read in verses 13 and 14, "Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of

understanding?" Man sets out to build a huge, breath-taking skyscraper. Architects, engineers, construction companies are hired with a host of men.

These men are highly trained in their area of expertise. They went through years of education. They have much experience behind them. As a result these are men of understanding and knowledge in their fields of labor. These men all sit down and consult with each other and begin to draw up a detailed plan. With many opinions and minds put together they begin to choose the right way to construct that new building—a magnificent and amazing feat of man. Years are spent erecting that building. Men like ants all over the place putting up a huge structure that will stun the imaginations of men.

Believing saints: behold your God! Look at the seas, the universe, the mountains and plains. Examine the intricate design of this creation. Look at yourselves, how fearfully and wonderfully you are made. Look through the microscope and discover a whole world of living organisms that cannot even be seen with the naked eye. All of this together makes up the huge, magnificent, amazing world we live in. The One World Trade Center will not compare with the

|| *A God of might and miracle* ||
|| *is written in the sky!* ||

	He is with His sheep,	
	and He will never forsake them,	
	no matter what the difficulties	
	through which He leads them.	

belonged to God's covenant. God had established it with Abraham and with his believing seed. Not with the whole of Israel, mind you, but with the elect in Israel only. Only with those who were of the faith of Abraham—only with His sheep. But God uses this figure of our text to remind these faithful saints of that relationship of

God's covenant. God's covenant is this: He is our God and we are His people. These words express an intimate bond of love and fellowship that God Most High has established with His people. In that relationship God is a shepherd. He has chosen His sheep from eternity. He has saved His sheep in Christ. He loves them with an eternal and unchangeable love. And He dwells with them—not as an equal, not as a buddy. God's friendship with us is that of a shepherd who rules with his arm. He is the one who leads and guides. He cares for His sheep. He protects His sheep. In all of this, however, His relationship with His sheep is one of unfailing love! He is with His sheep, and He will never forsake them, no matter what the difficulties through which He leads them. And we who are the sheep of His fold trust that God! We follow Him. We are devoted to

Him. We find our all in Him. We would not know what to do if we could not follow Him.

The point that Isaiah forces upon the hearts of these despairing saints in Israel is this: Behold your God! Contemplate

who He is. Understand who He is. He is your Shepherd who leads you. Maybe we do not always understand the ways through which He leads us, but one thing we can be certain of: God does everything for the sake of His people. Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, God tells Isaiah! So Isaiah comforts the elect remnant in Israel: behold your Shepherd!

The Shepherd's Care

Isaiah describes what God does as the God of the covenant when He speaks of God as Shepherd. God indeed feeds His sheep, that is, as we mentioned, He nurtures His sheep. How has God shown us His great love and care? Look at what He has done for us! God has chosen us from eternity and knows us by name. He has called us out of the darkness of unbelief and into His flock. God then pours out the countless blessings of salvation Christ has earned upon us. God leads each of His sheep together

with the flock into the green pastures of His Word. God feeds us with the bread and water of life. He gives us a name and place in the church. There He gives us under-shepherds that care for us on His behalf. Through them we are able to hear the voice of our good Shepherd—and, hearing His voice, follow Him.

He loves us dearly, and even when He leads us through the valley of the shadow of death we have no fear. God is with us along life's pathway, always watching over us and caring for us. He protects us from our enemies, Satan and this world. And when we stray into sin—such dumb sheep we are—He seeks us out and rescues us. He will not suffer our feet to be moved, even though we so often stumble into the way of our sin. This is the care that our God gives to us. Behold that God, believing saints! This Word of God before us speaks to believers today just as well as to the saints of God then. This God is our God forever and ever. That Word we must hear in our joys and in our sorrows.

But that Word we cannot hear apart from Jesus Christ. This is why. We are told by Jesus Himself that the shepherd will lay down his life for his sheep. And that is so very true. God laid down His life in the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ. In order to protect us from harm and

punishment, in order to conquer our enemies, Christ went to the cross and laid down His life—He suffered and died under the burden of the wrath of God. In this way He has redeemed from destruction those for whom He died.

This then explains for us what Isaiah now teaches us in verse 10: Behold this, O Israel: God will come in strength, and His arm shall rule for Him. When will God come? Oh, God would come after the captivity and deliver the remnant back to Jerusalem once again. God would not forget His people in the land of captivity. They would return to Canaan. But the reference here is to another day. It is to the day of the coming of the Messiah. In that day God will come in the person of His Son. When He comes it will be in strength. Why? Because His arm that would rule for Him was none other than Christ Himself. The arm is a symbol of man's strength and his skill or ability to achieve what he wills. This is exactly what Christ would do. By means of His death and resurrection Christ would be exalted at the right hand of God, there to rule on God's behalf. He would rule in strength and grace over the sheep of God's hand. He would rule over all nations and peoples with a rod of iron for the good of His church and for God.

places using His fingertips. All of the universe is but a span of God's hand.

Is a man able to count the sand that is on the shores of the seas? Can man count all the particles of dirt that are found in an open field?

Are we able to comprehend all the dust of the earth?

Are we able to comprehend all the dust of the earth? God is.

God is. He has all the dirt and sand and peat moss, and clay, and gravel and so on measured to its tiniest granule. He has done so in a measure, Isaiah tells us. Translators disagree on what measure is referred to here. The Hebrew term refers to the number three, and it is thought by some that a measure refers to a third or two-thirds of some sort of measuring device. The Latin Vulgate, however, translates this term as three fingers. I believe that is the correct interpretation. It refers to that pinch of salt or spice I spoke of earlier. God has comprehended the dust of the earth as a pinch of spices between His thumb and His first two fingers.

There is added to this figurative language of verse 12 the mountains and hills of the earth. But this time Isaiah speaks of a scale and a balance. These devices used for measuring are accurately translated. A scale is something we step on to mea-

sure our weight. The weight of our body forces the needle to find its number. A balance also measures weight. An item is placed on one side of the balance. Weight is then added to the other side of the balance until

which time the balance evens out. Either way, the idea is the same in both these terms. God

has weighed out exactly how many, where, and to what extent the mountains and hills would cover the earth. Man may be able to carve a path through some of the mountain passes, but man is not able to move or remove a mountain. Can he weigh them on his scale or in his balance? Man is so, so small and insignificant in comparison to the mountains and hills of this earth. Well, God has put them in place and knows exactly their weight and measurements.

Now, what do these questions bring to the believer's mind? How great God is! How powerful He is! How high and lofty He is! How all-sufficient He is! What stands on the foreground in this question is the omnipotence of God. He is all powerful to do what His *hand* has chosen to do! Our heavenly Father is omnipotent, and that you cannot deny! A God of might and miracle is written in the sky! It is written in the sea. It

*THE OMNIPOTENT AND
OMNISCIENT GOD*

I. The Idea

Let us consider the first question Isaiah places before God's people in verse 12, "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?" The hand is an important member of the body. We use it for almost everything we do. But have you ever considered your hand as a measuring device? We have so many clever devices today that we use for measuring: a measuring cup or spoons, a ruler or tape measure, an odometer, and so on. But consider the hand once as a measuring device. When we cup our hand, then we can hold so much water in the hollow of it. We can stretch out our hand and measure from the tip of the thumb to the tip of our little finger. We can take a pinch of salt or spice between our thumb and our fingers. At times we use our hand in this way too. Well, the hand of a man is used in this manner in the question Isaiah asks here in verse 12. Notice: who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand? What man is able to take all the water of this earth and measure it in the hollow of his hand? Well, God does. All the rivers and lakes

that abound with water added together with all the seas God holds in His cupped hand. The oceans are a vast underwater world, the depths of which man has not even begun to explore. The discovery and exploration channels have revealed to us just a little bit of the life that goes on in the seas miles and miles below the surface. These waters God holds in the hollow of His hand. He has measured them. That means that God has determined every drop of water that the seas and lake and rivers contain. One is reminded of the bounds that God appointed to these bodies of water to keep them in their place. What man is capable of measuring the waters of this earth with his hand?

Then, too, we are told that God has meted out heaven with the span. A span is the length of an outstretched hand between the thumb and the tip of the little finger. God has measured out exactly according to His design the vast expanse of the universe using His hand from thumb to little finger. Again, the universe is a whole world, the depths of which man has only begun to explore. He can view it through his telescopes. He can send space probes out to other planets. But the universe is so huge that man could never even begin to measure it. Yet God has done so. He did it when He called the universe into existence and put the stars in their

Again, behold, O Israel—Christ's reward is with Him and His work before Him. In Christ's rule over the church and the nations of this world, He would earn and give to His chosen people, His sheep, the inheritance of the godly. This He would accomplish by means of the work given to Him by God. But Christ would also give to the wicked their just reward. God in Christ will judge them according to their deeds and find them guilty. That too is a part of the work Christ would accomplish at the cross. The cross would be a stone of stumbling to those who stumble at the Word.

The last part of verse 11 is, in my estimation, the most beautiful and affectionate part of the knowledge we as saints have of our God. Perhaps one of the biggest concerns of believing parents is that their children too are comprehended in God's covenant with them. They take vows upon themselves in that regard. They vow before God and His church that they will to the utmost of their power raise their children in the fear and nurture of God. They understand full well that God does not choose every child born into the church. Look at Israel in Isaiah's day. The vast majority of Israel were Israel only in name. They were not truly believers. These people were fellow citizens with the remnant—perhaps family and friends. But they were not God's

sheep! But what did this say to believing parents in Israel? What great fears they must have had. Would God cut them off in their generations too, as he had done with so many in Israel?

We who live in the last days can appreciate the fear of these parents! The temptations that surround our children today are so great! How can we be assured that God will preserve our children from judgment? Indeed, some of our own children have given in to temptation and even now tread the path to destruction. That bothers the believing parent. It frightens him or her. Will God forget us in our generations? Cut us off too? Behold your God! He is the Shepherd of His sheep and He will gather the lambs in His arms and carry them in His bosom. Beautiful! Those who are His little lambs—the little children of the church—He will gather with His arm and carry them. There is that arm of God again! That powerful arm of God endowed with strength and ability. That arm who is Christ.

Christ will gather His children. As a shepherd carries the little lambs when the way is difficult or the enemy approaches, so also God protects the little children of His church. God exhibits a special care for them. He holds them close to His heart. He carries them in His very bosom. He saves and

leads and protects our children too!

There are also ewes in the flock, female sheep who are nursing those lambs. They are caring for them. They are busy in the home and family pouring their all into raising those little lambs. The shepherd recognizes the need of these sheep too. He does not force them to hurry and march to the watering hole or to green pastures. He lets them take their time as they nurse their lambs. These the shepherd gently leads, that is, with care and kindness. Jesus knows our every need and He shows God's great love and kindness by leading mothers with special care. God knows their needs too as they care for the children of the church. And God grants the necessary strength and guidance that will keep them safe as well. Do we have any need to despair when we know Him as the Shepherd of the covenant?

III. The Sheep's Trust

What words of great comfort these were! When nothing but doom and destruction was heard. When apostasy and un-

godliness were all around. When everything seemed dismal and bleak. To hear: Jehovah, the faithful God of the covenant, will come and will as a shepherd feed His sheep. That gave strength to go on. Indeed, comfortable words. But would these saints hearken to those words? Or would they satisfy them for a few days or weeks only to be forgotten again. If that were the case, if that is what they would do, then the comfort given would be lost again. Everything would go back to gloom again. These saints would go back to despairing! Is that what we do? Do we hear a message of this sort and are comforted for a day only to pick up our burdens again? Then this Word of God will not have much of an impact on us.

Sheep trust their shepherd. They trust him implicitly. They follow him and love him, trusting that he will take care of them. Dear believer, are we of so little faith that we do not trust that our good Shepherd will take care of us? He is God. He is in control. All things work together for our good! Fear not, little flock! God has given us the kingdom! Now trust!

THE REFORMED WITNESS HOUR

October 20, 2013
No. 3694

The Omnipotent and Omniscient God
Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma

Dear radio friends,

Introduction

We have been considering in our broadcasts a beautiful chapter in the Bible: Isaiah 40. In today's broadcast we will be studying together verses 12-14 of this chapter. They read: "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?"

Three rhetorical questions. Isaiah places these three questions before the few believers in Israel merely for effect, with no answer expected. He uses them in order to make his point. Who is so absolutely powerful as your God? Who is so absolutely wise as your God? The answer to these questions is implied. No one! These questions are asked in order that the elect remnant

in Israel would be forced to behold their God. That God is the Shepherd of His covenant who loves and cherishes His people as a shepherd his sheep. He protects His people from their foes and carefully leads them by His Word and Spirit. This is what we considered last week in the verses that precede our text here in verses 12-14. Today, we will find out just how powerful and wise our Shepherd is.

Before considering the three questions of this passage of God's Word before us, we ought to take note of the simple, earthy examples used. The prophet does not become involved in a lofty, philosophical dialogue about the attributes of God. He is not speaking here in abstractions. He does not launch off into some deep theological discourse. Isaiah uses something very real to every one of us to get his point across. Look at God as He reveals Himself to us into His creation. It does not take anything more than to behold God by means of the works of His hands. So we behold God today through the spectacles of creation.