

## Isaiah 40

### Behold Your God

**In this New Year, above all else, resolve to live life as one who truly “knows God.”**

#### INTRODUCTION:

I don't know about all of you, but 2004 was a very slow, boring, uneventful year. We are really hoping God will do something to liven things up a bit in 2005!! ☺

I am sure virtually no one here this morning would agree with that! Neither do I! I don't remember the last year that was slow, boring or uneventful. For that matter, I don't remember the last year that did not have some major life changing event, even border-line traumatic!

It seems like every year has within it significant events and circumstances that affect us and play a part in changing us in some way.

2005 will too! Some of these things you can look ahead and know they are coming. Maybe the birth of a child, a wedding, graduation, new job, etc. Maybe you already have surgery scheduled for some significant health problem you have been facing. Maybe your marriage and family is in the middle of a hurricane and you know it is picking up strength!

Many things (as it was last Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup>) you don't know. Is someone close to you going to be diagnosed with cancer? Is someone you love going to go into eternity? Will you see one of your children make unwise choices that will bring hard consequences into their lives?

Lets go to a familiar place in Scripture. One I am sure most of you know very well, but maybe have never thought of it in the way we will see it this morning.

The book of Isaiah is a fantastic book. Isaiah the prophet and his book are rich in historical content as well and deep in theology.

John Oswalt (one of the more skilled writers on Isaiah in the last 10 years) has said:

“I would contend that if all the other sixty-six books were destroyed, leaving Isaiah's book alone, we would still have all the essential biblical truth, at least in elemental form.”

“I would even go so far to say that no book of the Bible puts all the elements of biblical theology together as Isaiah does.”

The book of Isaiah opens not in chronological historical order, but in thematic order.

Ch. 1 & 2 pronouncing judgment – but each chapter ends with a proclamation of hope and promised forgiveness to a repentant people.

Ch. 2 & 4 form one unit again pronouncing judgments but concluding with promised hope.

Ch. 5 is the picture of Israel as a vineyard God destroying His unproductive vineyard allowing other nations to trample them underfoot.

Ch. 6 – This very familiar chapter is not just the commissioning of the prophet Isaiah, but the overriding point of the entire book. Judah and Jerusalem are unclean and the people are unclean. In order for them to experience God’s grace their sins must be cleansed, just as the prophets lips were cleansed.

The rest of chapters 7 – 39 go on to historically describe an unclean nation. They continuously and repeatedly place their trust in surrounding nations rather than their God.

However, throughout the entire first half of the book God repeats His promises of forgiveness through the prophet Isaiah. In the midst of promised judgment for sin is a constant thread of promised hope and forgiveness for a repentant people.

The first section of the books concludes with the stories of Hezekiah.

Ch. 36 Hezekiah sins against God in relying on Egypt as he tries to win his war against Assyria.

Ch. 37 Hezekiah repents and God delivers Judah.

Ch. 38 God heals Hezekiah and prolongs his life.

Ch. 39 Hezekiah forgets Who his strength came from and flaunts his wealth before the Babylonians.

Ch. 39 and the first half of the book ends with a promise of judgment on the people of Judah by the Babylonians.

Right in the middle of this, immediately following one of the most horrific prophecies of judgment in the book we come to Isaiah chapter 40, which is where we are going to spend the remainder of our morning.

Maybe you just came out of a year that felt like a war with Assyria. God gave you the victory and you are rejoicing in it. Praise the Lord! But what where will you be in a week or a month or so, when difficulty arises again? We have no idea what this year will hold.

Maybe you feel like you are in the middle of Babylonian captivity now, you see no end in sight and you wonder whether God has forgotten about you.

Isaiah message to Judah is for all of us today.

**In this New Year, above all else, resolve to live life as one who truly “knows God.”**

- I. The comforting Lord (vv. 1 – 11)
- II. The incomparable Lord (vv. 12 – 26)
  - a. The Lord of creation (vv. 12 – 20)
  - b. The Lord over creation (vv. 21 – 26)
- III. The dependable Lord (40:27 – 31)