

Advent: A Season of Expectation  
Looking Forward with Hope  
Isaiah 40:1-11

Hope can take many forms. For children, hope might center on what they'll open on Christmas Day. As we get older, hope can shift from excitement to expectation and from surprises to survival. Hope keeps us going, and hope is what advent is all about. Before the coming of Jesus, God's people waited with hope-filled anticipation for the coming of a Savior. We have the privilege of using every Advent season to reflect on the hope that was fulfilled in the coming of the Lord Jesus.

1. Our hope lies in God's compassionate comfort toward us.
  
2. Our hope lies in the promise of the prophetic voice.
  
3. Our hope lies in the inaugurated kingdom of our Lord.

In the third chapter of John, when we read that God loved everyone so much that He sent His Son, we are amazed that He would love us that much, and even more so that He would shed His own blood for our sins, conquer death, and would be coming back some day. The whole point of the gospel is that we are players in the story. He lives in us and one day those of us who have placed our hope and confidence in Christ will all be together—those we've mourned, those we love, and those we miss. He is the King worthy of our worship. He is the Shepherd worthy of our loyalty. He is the Lord worthy of our service. He is the Promise worthy of our hope.

Reflection

How would meditating on God's amazing attributes help you in times of suffering? How does this chapter point directly to the cross of Jesus Christ as the atonement for our sins? How did John the Baptist fulfill the predictions of Isaiah 40:3-5? How can preachers of the gospel seek to level mountains and raise valleys now? How is the glory of the Lord revealed in the restoration of the Jews to the promised land after Babylon? How is it more clearly revealed in the person and work of Jesus Christ? How do verses 6-8 exalt the greatness of God's eternal word? How is Isaiah 40:9, "Behold your God!" the centerpiece of the entire chapter? What do you need to do with this chapter to be reminded of the goodness of God in situations that do not go your way or in those times when you don't feel like God is paying attention?