

Waiting on the Lord

Bob Young

Text: Isa. 40:28-31

Introduction

Isa. 40:31 is a favorite, but do we understand? What is this text about? What are the principles? Here is a great promise—is it for us? For whom? What is Isa. 40 about? Let us study afresh these vs./chap. of comfort and renewal.

I. We can KNOW/UNDERSTAND God, 40:1-17

Wait on God, Ps. 46:10

See God

Know God

Depend on God

These are favorite themes of the psalmists and prophets.

The text becomes more specific...

Know God's judgment, 1, 2. Many deny this aspect of God, but Isa. ties it to comfort. God repays sin.

Know God's plan/purpose, 3-5. Explains why many do not understand God's judgment.

Know God's eternity, 6-8.

Know God's strength, 9-10. We do not believe God's power to alter the outcome of the struggles of this world, Eccl. 8.

Know God's compassion, 11.

Know God's wisdom, 12-13, cf. Job 38-41

Know God's power in the affairs of men and over nations, 15-17.

Add ONE: Know God's stamina, perseverance, 28. Just tuck this one back and wait on it.

II. We must WORSHIP God, 40:18-31

What do you worship? 18-20, cf. 44:6-20. Amazing!—the prophet warns against the futility of idolatry.

We are here—what do we worship? Whom do we worship? Illus: playing church, who does no child ever want to be God? Children don't even know/learn that God is present.

Theology—theo/logy. Talk about God. Why are theologians always talking about other theologians? Is real preaching that which castigates others or reveals God? Talk about God with directness and intimacy and immediacy.

There is a God of heaven who has made himself known beginning in the Garden, and man refused to worship, choosing to exalt self.

Many OT passages are against the gods of neighboring peoples. The God of Moses contrasts sharply with these gods who may even demand human sacrifice.

God is the one who liberates in the Exodus from Egypt and the arrival in the new land.

If the gods about are cosmic deities, the God of heaven is a God of human history.

If other gods are worshiped in royal courts with priesthoods, armies, tribute, and special garb, the God of the Hebrews is associated with fleeing slaves for whom fairness is important, and justice and conduct are supreme above elaborate rituals.

This is the ideal. But in actual practice, the Hebrews became like the nations about them. They desired a king, and the monarchy came, followed by the two kingdoms. In theory, the king was to protect the poor, but in practice, Israel developed a royal court, abundant living, priesthood, armies, and wars and alliances with neighboring nations. The state became God's instrument. It was Israel's failure to live up to its original calling that prompted the rise of prophecy.

My point is that the biblical pattern is historical—relationship with Yahweh is the result of God’s actions in the life of man and the history of mankind. The basic metaphor is that of Exodus—journey toward a future goal, always in accord with God. Know God; worship God. In the OT prophets, idolatry refers to anything that gets set up in the place of God. In the NT, idolatry refers not only to religious practices but also to the pursuit of anything ahead of God—money, power, pleasure.

Here is any important lesson for us—idolatry is a real threat among us, Col. 3:5, materialism.

We, as the Hebrews, can fall into slavery when we make divine the things around us. Frankly, our nation has done that—material things are worshiped, houses, lands, boats, pleasure, leisure. Lk. 16:13, you cannot give yourself to God and to money. [Tues p.m. TV new special: expensive things in Oklahoma.]

The man/woman relationship is worshiped, sex is exalted.

Social standing, power, position, prestige, prominence are all worshiped.

Peer acceptance may get ahead of God. Certainly self may get ahead of God.

Others may get ahead of God, even good causes. For example, the elimination of poverty may become more important than the worship of God.

Whom/what do you worship?

III. We must BE LIKE God. IMITATE God.

Man becomes like what he worships. Worship God, be like God.

Keep the OT context, but use NT verses. Heb. 12:16, Esau, context is vv. 14-17. Verb = desecrate, as in Mt. 12:5; Acts 24:6. KJV-profane, NIV-godless. Means common, as opposed to holy. Similar to clean/unclean. See also in 1 Tim. 4:7; 6:20; 2 Tim. 2:16. In 1 Tim. 1:9 and Heb. 12:16, refers to persons far from God. Profane, calling holy things common. Ethically deficient.

Great definition of profanity—use as common that which is holy. That’s why we can describe hell as hell in a religious context, but it becomes a curse word elsewhere. We’ve not taught our children. We’ve made unclean things that are in a proper context clean.

But I have another concern with our language, we have lost our sense of God. We do not know God; we do not worship God; we therefore cannot be like God. We are profane, as Esau, look at the context.

Profane, this is the answer to movies, TV, and this is major influence on our language. Culture, society, nation is losing sense of God, knowledge of god. We are not showing others God in our own lives.

There is not reason to worship what we do not know, Acts 17.

Why did you not see such, speak such. Profane.

Why do not men teach boys to respect women? Some men may not, many men do, but double whammy. Is also function of society mad about money and power. People seeking what God has not given. Double responsibility.

Expand to include respect in general. When lose respect for God, lose respect for everything else, even other human beings, even self. Letter to editor, fear countrymen more than fear terrorists.

Do we know God, worship God, imitate God?

Conclusion

Isa. 40:28-31, special group. Those who hope in the Lord. Do you?

Do you seek to know him above all else? Speak about him, relate to Him? Do we really come to worship him? Are we becoming more and more like him?

Wonderful promise—renewal, soaring, running, walking, stamina.