

Comfort for Adonai's People ~ Part 2

Yesha'yahu 40:12-26

In my last post, we began to explore **Comfort for Adonai's People ~ Part1** in **Yesha'yahu 40:1-11**. In this post, we continue to explore **Comfort for Adonai's People** in **Yesha'yahu 40:12-26**.

The series of rhetorical questions that follow in these verses have one intention - to demonstrate the uniqueness of the **One True God**. This assured **Adonai's** people that God not only wanted to deliver them, but He was able to do so.

12 Who has counted the handfuls of water in the sea, measured off the sky with a ruler, gauged how much dust there is on the earth, weighed the mountains on scales, or the hills in a balance?

Adonai is in control and knows everything about His creation, both heavens, and earth. Unlike the gods of the surrounding nations that were identified with aspects of nature (**Ba'al** was the god of storm, thunder, and lightning), **Yeshua** is not only a gentle **Shepherd** but also the powerful **Creator**. The picture here is one of Him pouring the water of the oceans of the world out of His hand. Three-quarters of our world is water. There is so much water on this planet that if it were flattened out, the entire earth would be under 1.5 *miles* of water. And yet the Lord measures all of that water with His hand. **Adonai** holds the heavens with His hand. The fact that it would take millions of light-years to cross our galaxy alone means that **Adonai's** ruler is humongous. Thirty thousand cubic tons of cosmic dust fall to our planet each year. And the Lord measures it all. ¹

13 Who has measured the Spirit of Adonai? Who has been His counselor, instructing Him? 14 Whom did He consult, to gain understanding? Who taught Him how to judge, taught Him what He needed to know, showed Him how to discern?

Who counsels this One who measures the seas with His palm, who holds the heavens in His hand, who weighs mountains? Do you ever try to counsel the Lord in your prayer - advising Him about what should happen, how He should work, or what He should do? The best way to pray is to cast our cares upon Him and to share our burdens with Him, but then to say, "*Lord, Your will be done because You know best.*"

Adonai does not need a teacher. He is inherently wise and advises others (see Job 38:1-42:5).

15 The nations are like a drop in a bucket; they count like a grain of dust on the scales. The islands weigh as little as specks of dust.

The dust of the earth was used to express shame, smallness, and insignificance in the **Tanakh**. In this passage, the dust of the nations makes no significant difference in the scales.

16 The L'vanon would not suffice for fuel or its animals be enough for burnt offerings.

The Isra'eli considered that the land with magnificent forests and most varied animal life was **L'vanon**. In addition to supplying lumber for the temple of **Shlomo**, the cedars of **L'vanon** provided barges for **Egypt** and ships for **Tzor**.

17 Before Him, all the nations are like nothing. He regards them as less than nothing.

Bavel must have seemed invulnerable once **Y'hudah** suffered defeat by the **Bavelim** and her leaders were carted off into exile; but no human power, not even **Bavel**, could compare with **Adonai**. The message is that **Adonai** could and would deliver **Y'hudah** from captivity in **Bavel**.

¹ Statistics taken from Jon Courson's Application Commentary Old Testament Volume 2.

18 With whom, then, will you compare God? By what standard will you evaluate Him? 19 An image made by a craftsman, which a goldsmith overlays with gold, for which he then casts silver chains?

Images in the ancient Near East were either cast or carved. Here, the reference is clearly to cast images. These would have been anywhere from four to ten inches high. Thousands of idols throughout the Near East have been uncovered by archaeologists. ²

20 A man too poor to afford an offering chooses a piece of wood that won't rot, then seeks out a skilled artisan to prepare an image that won't fall over. 21 Don't you know? Don't you hear? Haven't you been told from the start? Don't you understand how the earth is set up? 22 He who sits above the circle of the earth - for whom its inhabitants appear like grasshoppers - stretches out the heavens like a curtain, spreads them out like a tent to live in.

The picture of the universe described here is the prevailing view of the cosmos in the ancient Near East. The sky was a dome that arched over the disk of the earth, which sat on top of an ancient ocean. Under the sea was the netherworld, virtually a mirror image of the space above the earth. Thus, the entire universe was an enormous sphere, cut in the center by the earth. Nevertheless, here it is the earth itself that is described as circular. ³

23 He reduces princes to nothing, the rulers of the earth to emptiness.

Adonai warns us not to put too much stock in leaders and judges. Don't build your life hoping you'll find a politician, judge, or Supreme Court nominee who is perfect and flawless. It won't happen.

24 Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely their stem taken root in the ground, when He blows on them, they dry up, and the whirlwind carries them off like straw.

Recapping the previous verses, **Adonai** is not only superior to the gods of the nations; He is far above the rulers of the countries as well. He is the ultimate ruler. His throne is not on earth, but above the **circle of the earth**. Those gods are no match for **Adonai**.

25 "With whom, then, will you compare Me? With whom am I equal?" asks the Holy One. 26 Turn your eyes to the heavens! See who created these things! He brings out the army of them in sequence, summoning each by name. Through His great might and His massive strength, not one of them, is missing. ~ Isaiah 40:12-26 (CJB)

Nothing compares to **Adonai**. The religions of the ancient Near East believed the stars were gods. **Y'hudah's** doctrine asserted that **Adonai** created the stars. The fact that He knew them by name indicates that they were His creation and they were protected by His power.

In my next post, we conclude our examination of **Comfort for Adonai's People ~ Part 3** in **Yesha'yahu 40:27-31**.

² The IVP Bible Background Commentary – Old Testament.

³ Ibid.