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Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

Lesson Leaders:

James Haymon
Barry Hosford

Class Leaders:

Inreach: Pat Hester
Deacon: C M Hester

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

As we experience God’s power in creation, we too can stand in awe of His might and place our trust in Him

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:

Creator God, please help me to trust You more when I see awesome displays of Your power

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:

Thus Israel saw the great work which the Lord had done in Egypt; so the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and His servant Moses

(Exod 14:31 NKJV)

(from "Our Daily Bread", June 23, 2023)

Series: Faith that Pleases God

UNIT 3: The Righteous Live by Faith

NEXT WEEK

Faith in the Fiery Furnace (Dan 3:19-28)

Faith in the Power of God Isaiah 40:12-13, 25-31

Lesson Background and Introduction

Today’s lesson comes from the writings of the Old Testament prophet Isaiah. His text is the first in a group of five referred to as the Major Prophets; those five are the books known as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel. We may wonder what value the Old Testament books of the prophets still have in the New Testament era. After all, the days of those prophets are long gone, and we’re under the new covenant, not the old (Colossians 2:14). The value of the prophets today is firmly established in how many times they are cited by Jesus and the authors of the New Testament. One clue to their value today is to be aware of how often these books are quoted in the New Testament. Isaiah prophesied during some very dismal times for God’s people. His prophetic call came “in the year that King Uzziah died” (Isaiah 6:1; compare 2 Chronicles 26:22), which would have been 740 BC (see 2 Chronicles 26; Uzziah is also known as Azariah in 2 Kings 15:1-7). The final historical event recorded by the prophet is the death of Sennacherib, which occurred in 681 BC (Isaiah 37:38). That makes for a lengthy period of ministry! The text under consideration in our lesson follows a prophecy that warns King Hezekiah of Judah regarding a time when Babylon would carry away Judah’s wealth and people to Babylon (Isaiah 39:5-7); more than 100 years would pass before that happened, but it indeed did happen. This was a punishment from the Lord for the people’s sins, followed by “comfort” in declaring that that punishment would eventually end (40:1-2). The predictions that immediately follow in Isaiah 40:3-5 shift forward more than five centuries for fulfillment, quoted in Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4-6; and John 1:23. The passage of time from pronouncement to fulfillment of these prophecies makes for valuable study. But the study in today’s lesson takes us beyond time-bound prophecies in considering the timeless nature of God Himself.

When the impact of the coronavirus pandemic began to be felt during the spring of 2020, one result was shortages in various commodities. Issues with business closings and logistical limitations meant that goods were not as readily available as before. Stores simply ran out of certain items, even after limiting purchases per customer. Many consumers found themselves frustrated at being unable to purchase the things they wanted (or outright needed) with the convenience to which they were accustomed. Our passage for today reminds us that the God we worship and serve has never been subject to any kind of weakness, attrition, or scarcity in his resources. The prophet’s affirmations of God’s incomparable sustaining power and of his promise to provide strength to those who grow tired or weary have no expiration date. God’s power and strength are indeed available to us today! But here, a caution must be interjected concerning what the Chronicler records: “The Lord is with you when you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you, but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you” (2 Chronicles 15:2). The only restriction regarding our access to God’s resources is our own sin and unwillingness to trust him.

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Power of Creation (Isa 40:12-13)

Power to create the earth (12)

- Creator who laid the foundations of the earth (Ps 102:25)
- Creator who made the heavens (Isa 48:13)
- Creator of the land and waters (Gen 1:9-10)
- Creator of all things on the earth (Isa 42:5)
- Creator of the world (Acts 17:24)

Power to guide (13)

- Guidance that represents we are a child of God (Rom 8:14)
- Guidance into insight (Ps 119:99-100)
- Guidance as a light for our path (Ps 119:105)
- Guidance into understanding (Ps 119:130)
- Guidance into wisdom (Prov 2:6)

Power that is Unequaled (Isa 40:25-31)

Unequaled in greatness (25-26)

- Greatness because He is the Creator (Gen 1:1)
- Greatness because He is the great I AM (Ex 3:13-14)
- Greatness because He proclaimed Himself LORD (Ex 34:5-7)
- Greatness because He is perfect (Matt 5:48)
- Greatness because of His eternal powers (Rom 1:20)
- Greatness because He is immortal (1 Tim 1:17)

Unequaled in understanding (27-28)

- Understanding through spiritual hearing (Mark 4:9)
- Understanding given to those of the kingdom of God (Mark 4:11)
- Understanding that draws people to God (Deut 4:6)
- Understanding through the reading of God's word (Eph 3:2-4)
- Understanding from living wisely (Eph 5:15-17)
- Understanding from reflecting on God's word (2 Tim. 2:7)

Unequaled in sustainment (29-31)

- God sustains by upholding those who fall (Ps 37:23-24)
- God sustains from birth (Ps 71:6)
- God sustains through a willing spirit (Ps 51:12)
- God sustains because He will never forsake His own (Ps 55:22)
- God sustains because He promised to do so (Ps 119:116)
- God sustains because He always finishes what He starts (Phil 1:6)