

Connect Group Notes

Sermon: A Voice in the Wilderness

Reading: Isaiah 40:1-11

Date: 1st December 2024 (AM)

Introduction

Advent is the start of the church calendar. It's the season when we remember Christ's coming – both His second coming as Judge and Redeemer and His first coming as our Saviour. The prophet Isaiah began his ministry to Judah in 739 BC, the year that King Uzziah died (Is. 6:1). For more than fifty years he preached, announcing that God would judge Judah for her apostasy, but afterwards through her He would bring His salvation to the whole world.

Read Isaiah 39:5-8, 40:1-11

1. Where do you look for encouragement and hope when you find yourself getting discouraged?
2. Isaiah 39:5-7 announces that the Babylonian armies will come and carry the people of Judah off into exile. What possible comfort can there be in the light of that terrible prophecy (see Isaiah 40:1-2)? (NB 'Double for all her sins...' It doesn't mean that God's judgment was unjust - twice as much as Judah's sins deserved; the word 'double' means, 'the equivalent' or 'counterpart').
3. Read verses 3-5. The people in exile might feel they were in a wilderness experience. Do you sometimes? How does this prophecy give deep comfort and hope? (See also Mark 1:1-3).
4. Verses 6-7 might sound like an unpromising message to announce to the world, but why is this such an important truth for us all to take to heart?
5. Verses 9-11. How does God's comfort come to the world and what does it look like?

Pray for:

- Choose a verse, read it out and pray about it. (It doesn't matter if someone chooses the verse you were going to pick!)
- That this week we will think and live in the light of Christ's Second Coming
- Someone you can invite to one of the Christmas events at church