



Foundations of the Earth

Lesson 3 September 20, 2026

Bible Basis: Isaiah 40:21-31

Bible Truth: Isaiah declares that God is the absolute power in whom we should depend.

Memory Verse: “Has thou not known? Has thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding: (Isaiah 40:28)

Lesson Aim To help students recognize God’s greatness, trust His awareness of their lives, and find strength by waiting on Him.



Historical and Background Context

Isaiah 40 speaks comfort to a **weary and discouraged people** who felt forgotten, hopeless, and powerless in exile. Instead of focusing only on their pain, Isaiah lifts their eyes to the greatness of God.

The main message is simple: when life feels overwhelming, remember who God is. He is sovereign over creation, aware of His people, and strong enough to renew the weary.

This passage is divided into **three powerful movements:**

1. **God's Sovereignty** — He is above all creation (vv. 21-24)
 2. **God's Awareness** — He knows and sees everything (vv. 25-27)
 3. **God's Strength** — He renews and empowers the weary (vv. 28-31)
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Background Scripture Connection: How Isaiah 40:1-8 Connects with Isaiah 40:21-31

Isaiah 40:1-8 announces comfort through God's unfailing Word; Isaiah 40:21-31 shows why that comfort is trustworthy by revealing the greatness, awareness, and strength of God.

Quick Lesson Recap

In earlier lessons, Isaiah pointed to God's future restoration: the Messiah's peaceful kingdom and the celebration of salvation on God's holy mountain.

Those promises lead into today's lesson by reminding us that God not only promises restoration—He also has the power to bring it to pass.

The Lesson

Teacher transition: Isaiah begins by helping students look up before they look inward. Before we talk about our weakness, our questions, or our waiting, we first need to see the greatness of the God Isaiah is describing.

I. God's Power Over Creation (Isaiah 40:21-22)

21 Do you [who worship idols] not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told to you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth [the omnipotence of God and the stupidity of bowing to idols]?

22 It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; [It is He] who stretches out the heavens like a veil And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.

What's Happening Here?

What is happening in Isaiah 40:21–22 is a dramatic shift in perspective: God is trying to get His people to stop looking at their circumstances as though their circumstances are bigger than God.

Isaiah is contrasting the greatness of God with the smallness and weakness of idols—and, by extension, human beings.

1. “Do you not know? Have you not heard?” — Verse 21

Isaiah is almost saying:

“How could you have forgotten who God is?”

These are rhetorical questions. Israel had already been taught about God's power. They had a history with Him.

They knew the stories:

- God created the heavens and the earth.
- God delivered Israel from Egypt.
- God established His covenant.
- God had repeatedly demonstrated His power.

So Isaiah asks, “Don't you know? Haven't you heard?”

The problem wasn't a lack of information. The problem was losing perspective.

2. “From the beginning” and “foundations of the earth”

Isaiah takes them all the way back to creation.

He's essentially saying:

“Look at the world God created. What does creation tell you about the Creator?”

If God established the foundations of the earth, then the current crisis Israel is experiencing isn't outside His ability to handle.

This becomes especially important because Isaiah 40 is speaking comfort to people who feel powerless.

The message is:

Your circumstances may be overwhelming, but your God is not overwhelmed.

3. “He sits above the circle of the earth” — Verse 22

Now Isaiah gives us this magnificent picture:

God is above it all.

The word picture isn't saying God is physically sitting on a chair in outer space. Isaiah is communicating God's supremacy and sovereignty.

Think about the perspective:

From the human level, everything can look enormous.

But from God's perspective, He is above creation.

That's why Isaiah continues:

“And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers.”

That isn't primarily an insult toward humanity. It's a contrast of scale.

Imagine looking down from an enormous height. Things that seem huge to us become tiny from that perspective.

Isaiah is saying:

What looks enormous to you is not enormous to God.

4. “He stretches out the heavens like a veil”

This is beautiful imagery.

Isaiah portrays God as stretching out the heavens almost like someone stretching out a piece of fabric.

The heavens—which appear unimaginably vast to us—are presented as something God effortlessly spreads out.

The point isn't to give a scientific description of the universe.

The point is theological:

Creation is enormous to us, but it is completely under God's authority.

5. “And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in”

Think about putting up a tent.

You unfold it, stretch it out, and establish it.

Isaiah uses that familiar picture to communicate something extraordinary:

God established the heavens with ease.

The One who created the heavens is now being compared with the idols Israel is tempted to trust.

And that's where the passage becomes powerful.

The contrast is:

Human perspective	God's perspective
"Everything is falling apart."	God is still sovereign.
"The enemy is powerful."	God is greater.
"I don't know what will happen."	God sees the whole picture.
"My problem is enormous."	Your problem is not bigger than God.
"Where is God?"	God is above it all.

II. God's Power Over Human Authority and Human Doubt (Isaiah 40:23-27)

23It is He who reduces dignitaries to nothing, Who makes the judges (rulers) of the earth meaningless (useless).

24Scarcely have they been planted, Scarcely have they been sown, Scarcely has their stock taken root in the earth, But He merely blows on them, and they wither, And a strong wind carries them away like stubble.

25"To whom then will you compare Me That I would be his equal?" says the Holy One.

26Lift up your eyes on high And see who has created these *heavenly bodies*, The One who brings out their host by number, He calls them all by name; Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power, Not one is missing.

[27](#)Why, O Jacob, do you say, and declare, O Israel, “My way is hidden from the LORD, And the justice due me escapes the notice of my God”?

What’s Happening Here? Isaiah 40:23–27

Verses 23-27 continue the movement from God’s authority over creation to His authority over rulers, then address Israel’s deeper fear: “Has God forgotten us?”

Verse 23 — God Is Greater Than Human Power

“It is He who reduces dignitaries to nothing...”

Isaiah is talking about kings, rulers, judges, political powers, and people who appear to have tremendous authority.

From a human perspective, rulers can seem untouchable.

They have:

- armies
- wealth
- influence
- authority
- political power
- the ability to make decisions affecting thousands or millions

But Isaiah says God can reduce them to nothing.

Teaching Point: No human authority is ultimate authority. A king may sit on a throne, but God sits above the throne.

Verse 24 — Human Power Is Temporary

Isaiah gives us a striking agricultural image:

“Scarcely have they been planted... scarcely has their stock taken root...”

Then God blows on them, and they wither.

Think about a newly planted plant.

It has barely established itself when something happens—and it is gone.

Isaiah is emphasizing how temporary human power really is.

A ruler may rise to prominence and think:

“I have arrived. I am established. I am powerful.”

But God says:

“You are not permanent.”

Empires rise.

Empires fall.

Kings rise.

Kings die.

Governments change.

Generations pass.

But God remains.

That's why Isaiah's comparison is so important.

Teaching Point: Human beings may look powerful for a moment, but God is powerful forever.

Verse 25 — God Asks the Ultimate Question

“To whom then will you compare Me?”

This is the central question of the passage.

God isn't asking because He doesn't know the answer.

He's challenging Israel's thinking:

“Who is My equal?”

Can you compare God to an idol?

No.

Can you compare God to a king?

No.

Can you compare God to an empire?

No.

Can you compare God to creation?

No.

Can you compare God to anything?

Nothing is His equal.

And notice the title:

"the Holy One."

This emphasizes God's uniqueness, purity, majesty, and absolute otherness.

God isn't simply a greater version of humanity.

He is God.

Verse 26 — "Lift Up Your Eyes"

Now Isaiah tells Israel:

"Lift up your eyes on high..."

This is a fascinating command.

They've been looking down at their circumstances.

God says:

"Look up."

Look at the heavens.

Look at the stars.

Look at the vastness of creation.

And ask yourself:

"Who created all of this?"

The answer is:

God did.

"He Calls Them All by Name"

Isaiah says God knows the heavenly bodies individually.

The picture is of God commanding the vast host of the heavens and not losing track of a single one.

"Not one is missing."

And this is where the passage begins to become deeply personal.

Because Isaiah is preparing Israel for a comparison:

If God knows every star, surely He knows you.

If God doesn't lose track of the stars...

He hasn't lost track of Israel.

Verse 27 reveals the heart issue beneath Israel's fear. After hearing that God rules creation, rulers, and the stars, Israel still struggles with this painful question: Does God see what we are going through?

Verse 27 — Israel's Complaint

And now Isaiah finally reveals what's really going on inside Israel.

"Why, O Jacob, do you say... 'My way is hidden from the LORD'?"

In other words:

"God doesn't see me."

"God doesn't know what I'm going through."

"God isn't paying attention to my situation."

And then:

"The justice due me escapes the notice of my God."

Israel feels like God has overlooked them.

They're essentially saying:

"God has forgotten about me."

And that is the issue Isaiah is confronting.

Look at the Progression

This is what makes Isaiah 40 so powerful:

Verses 21–22

God is greater than creation.

He created the heavens and earth.

Verses 23–24

God is greater than rulers.

Kings and governments are temporary.

Verses 25–26

God is incomparable.

Nothing in creation can equal Him.

Verse 27

So why do you think He has forgotten you?

That's the question.

Here's the Spiritual Lesson

Israel's problem wasn't necessarily that they believed God didn't exist.

Their problem was that their circumstances had become bigger in their minds than their understanding of God.

They looked at their situation and concluded:

"God doesn't see me."

Isaiah says:

"Lift your eyes."

Look at the Creator.

Look at the heavens.

Look at the stars.

Look at the rulers.

Look at creation.

Then ask:

"Do you really think the God who created and sustains all of this has somehow lost sight of you?"

And Isaiah's answer comes in the very next verses:

III. God's Strength for the Weary (Isaiah 40:28-31)

28Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth Does not become tired or grow weary; There is no searching of His understanding.

29He gives strength to the weary, And to him who has no might He increases power.

30Even youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men stumble badly,

31But those who wait for the LORD [who expect, look for, and hope in Him] Will gain new strength *and* renew their power; They will lift up their wings [and rise up close to

God] like eagles [rising toward the sun]; They will run and not become weary, They will walk and not grow tired.

What's Happening Here?

This is the climax of Isaiah 40. After showing that God rules creation and human authority, Isaiah now shows what God does for weary people: He renews their strength.

Israel has been saying, essentially, "God doesn't see us. God has forgotten us. Our situation is too difficult."

God's response is:

"Have you forgotten who I am?"

And then Isaiah reveals not only who God is, but what God does for people who are weary.

Isaiah 40:28–31 — From Weariness to Renewed Strength

1. Verse 28 — Remember Who God Is

"Do you not know? Have you not heard?"

Notice that Isaiah repeats the question from verse 21.

Why?

Because Israel's problem is not that God has changed.

Their perception of God has changed.

They have forgotten His character.

Isaiah reminds them:

"The Everlasting God"

God doesn't have a beginning or an ending like human beings do.

Our strength has limits.

Our lives have limits.

Our understanding has limits.

God has no such limitations.

"The LORD"

This is Yahweh—the covenant God of Israel.

This is important because Isaiah isn't talking about some distant, unknown deity.

He's reminding Israel:

"The God who made a covenant with you is still your God."

They may feel forgotten.

But God has not forgotten His covenant.

"The Creator of the Ends of the Earth"

Remember verses 21–22.

God created the earth.

God stretched out the heavens.

God knows the stars.

God governs the nations.

Now Isaiah brings it home:

The Creator of everything is the God who cares about you.

That's the foundation for verses 29–31.

2. "He Does Not Become Tired or Grow Weary"

This is a major contrast.

God never runs out of strength.

You do.

I do.

Human leaders do.

Young people do.

Strong people do.

Eventually everyone becomes tired.

But God doesn't.

And that's incredibly important because the God who never becomes weary gives strength to those who do.

3. "There Is No Searching of His Understanding"

In other words:

God's understanding is beyond our ability to completely comprehend.

You may not understand what God is doing.

But that doesn't mean God doesn't understand what is happening.

That's a huge distinction.

You can say:

"I don't understand."

without having to conclude:

"God doesn't understand."

Your knowledge is limited.

His isn't.

4. Verse 29 — God Gives Strength to the Weary

"He gives strength to the weary..."

Notice something beautiful.

God doesn't only give strength to the strong.

He gives strength to the weary.

He doesn't say:

"Get strong and then come to Me."

He says:

"If you're weary, come to Me."

And:

"To him who has no might He increases power."

This is grace.

God specializes in meeting people at the point of their weakness.

5. Verse 30 — Even Strong People Get Tired

Isaiah intentionally uses young people as the example.

"Even youths grow weary and tired..."

Why young people?

Because youth is commonly associated with energy, strength, and endurance.

Isaiah says:

Even the people who seem to have the most strength eventually reach their limit.

Even vigorous young men:

"stumble badly."

The message is:

Human strength is insufficient.

You cannot sustain yourself forever.

Eventually you reach a place where your own strength isn't enough.

And that's precisely where verse 31 begins.

6. Verse 31 — “But Those Who Wait for the LORD...”

This is the turning point.

BUT.

Everything changes here.

“Those who wait for the LORD...”

Biblical waiting doesn't simply mean:

“Sit around and do nothing.”

The Hebrew idea carries the sense of looking expectantly, hoping, trusting, and patiently depending upon God.

So waiting on God means:

“I don't see the answer yet, but I still trust the One who does.”

“I don't understand the process, but I trust the God who understands everything.”

“I'm tired, but I'm not giving up on God.”

7. “Will Gain New Strength”

This is the beautiful exchange:

Your weakness → His strength.

Your exhaustion → His renewal.

Your limitation → His limitless power.

God doesn't simply tell the weary:

“Try harder.”

He says:

“Receive strength from Me.”

8. “They Will Rise Up on Wings Like Eagles”

This is poetic imagery of rising above what once overwhelmed you.

Notice the progression:

Rise

“They will lift up their wings...”

Run

“They will run and not become weary...”

Walk

“They will walk and not grow tired.”

That's fascinating.

Isaiah doesn't promise that you'll always be soaring.

Sometimes you're going to run.

Sometimes you're simply going to walk.

But God's promise is:

He will give you strength for whichever season you're in.

And Here's the Part I Really Want You to See

The final verse doesn't say:

“Those who wait on the LORD will never become tired.”

It says:

“They will run and not become weary; they will walk and not grow tired.”

Why?

Because Isaiah has already acknowledged:

Human beings get tired.

The answer isn't pretending you're never tired.

The answer is knowing where to go when you are tired.

The Message of Isaiah 40:31

You don't have to manufacture the strength you need.

There is a source of strength beyond yourself.

When you're tired:

Wait on Him.

When you're confused:

Wait on Him.

When you don't understand:

Wait on Him.

When you feel forgotten:

Look up.

When your strength is gone:

Draw from His strength.

Because the God who created the heavens, knows every star by name, rules over the nations, and never becomes weary...

He is the same God who gives strength to the weary.

Ultimate Teaching Point:

"God doesn't promise that we will never become weary; He promises that our weariness does not have to have the final word. When our strength runs out, His doesn't."

And that's why Isaiah 40:31 isn't merely a verse about endurance.

It is a verse about dependence.

The secret to renewed strength isn't finding more strength within yourself—it is learning to wait on the God whose strength never runs out.

“Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God...” (Isaiah 40:28)

And then comes the promise:

He does not faint.

He does not grow weary.

His understanding is unsearchable.

The Powerful Teaching Point

When your circumstances make you feel forgotten, Isaiah tells you to change your perspective before you conclude that God has changed His position.

Israel said:

“God doesn't see me.”

God's response is essentially:

“Look up.”

Because sometimes the answer to “Where is God?” isn't found by looking harder at the problem.

It's found by looking higher at God.

Key Word Study

Word	Meaning
Wait	To hope expectantly, to remain in confident trust and dependence on God
Renew	To exchange — literally to trade in your weakness for God's strength
Mount up	To ascend, to rise above — as an eagle catches the wind and soars effortlessly

Word	Meaning
Faint	To be exhausted, to collapse under the weight of life's burdens

Life Application

Three Questions to Take Home:

1. **Are you trying to carry what only God can carry?** Many of us are exhausted because we are relying on our own strength. This passage reminds us that human strength always runs out — but God's never does.
 2. **Do you feel unseen or forgotten by God?** Isaiah 40:26-27 declares that the God who knows every star by name has not lost track of you. Your situation is not hidden from Him.
 3. **Are you truly waiting on God — or just waiting?** Biblical waiting is not passive — it is **active trust and dependence**. It means staying in prayer, staying in the Word, and staying in faith even when you cannot yet see the answer.
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Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to you personally that God *never* grows weary?
 2. Have you ever felt like God had forgotten about you? How did He show you otherwise?
 3. What is the difference between waiting *on* God and simply waiting *for* God?
 4. How can you apply the promise of Isaiah 40:31 to something you are currently facing?
 5. In what areas of your life do you need to exchange your weakness for God's strength this week?
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Closing Prayer Focus

Close the lesson by inviting students to:

- **Acknowledge** God's greatness and incomparable power
 - **Surrender** the areas where they have been relying on their own strength
 - **Ask** for a renewed spirit and the ability to wait on God with faith and patience
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