**Isaiah 40:12-31**

**Introduction**

Sometimes we sing the song, “How Great You Art?” The proper response when we consider the Creator of the Universe is to simply stand in awe of Him.

* Read Isaiah 40:12-17

**40:12-17**

Our text begins with four rhetorical questions (40:12):

1) Who measured the waters of earth in the palm of his hand?

2) Who marked off the heavens by the span?

3) Who can calculate the dust of the earth?

4) Who can weigh the mountains and hills in scales?

The obvious answer to these questions is that no human can accomplish any of them. As a matter of fact, we cannot even come close to any of these things… But God can do all of them!

(1) Who measured the waters of earth in the palm of his hand?

Water covers ¾ of the earth’s surface, but God can hold all the vast oceans in the palm of His hand. In Psalm 33:6-7 God puts the waters in a heap and places them in storehouses.

(2) Who marked off the heavens by the span?

James Webb Telescope was launched December 25, 2021 and you can look up on the internet the amazing images that we are seeing from deep space which we have never been able to see before. It is truly amazing to see the vastness of space and all the galaxies which exist! You look at that and you think about how we will never be able to explore all that is in existence but God marks it off with his span (distance from the thumb to the pinky).

(3) Who can calculate the dust of the earth?

Abraham was promised his descendants would be as many as the dust of the earth (Gen 13:16). The clear idea is that your descendants will be too many to number. What is impossible for man is simple for God!

(4) Who can weigh the mountains and hills in scales?

The mountains are an amazing sight to see. Some people enjoy hiking them, others like to see the view they give, and others are simply happy to stand at the bottom and gaze upward. In our minds the mountain are immovable and secure. Yet God can easily weigh them like we do our fruits and vegetables at the supermarket.

The prophet is trying to impress upon us how powerful and great is the God that we serve! “God is glorious and great, far beyond human imagination.”[[1]](#footnote-1) Inspired by John Oswalt: If we cannot measure creation how can we comprehend the power of the Creator?![[2]](#footnote-2)

The questions Continue in **40:13**:

Who is God’s counselor and teacher?

Who taught God justice?

God is the one who created wisdom and always possessed it (Prov 8:22-31). There is no one who instructs God or gives Him an angle that He has not considered. Rather, He is the one who teaches and instructs us (Ps 94:10; 119:66). It is because of Him we know what wisdom and justice truly are. It is Him we rely on for wisdom.

Finally, in **40:15-17** the section ends with a few statements concerning the nations:

The nations are pictured as insignificant in the eyes of God. They are as a drop of water in a bucket and a speck of dust (40:15). They are nothing and meaningless (40:17). One important clarification needs to be made here. God is not saying that He has no concern or care for the nations (God cares for all nations) but it is a statement the nations are not in control. We are often amazed by human power and wealth, but God is not!

God alone is worthy of worship and awe but there is no sacrifice that is adequate to truly honor Him. Even our best attempts to honor God fall short.

**Lessons**

What are we supposed to learn from this powerful section?

(1) Shows the Folly of idolatry (40:18-20)

When you serve the real God with unlimited power it is hard to change and serve a idol that you have to double check if it is level as it is being built. Counterfeit gods will not do once you realize the greatness of the True God. How foolish to turn money into an idol (Mt 6:24) when we serve the God of the Universe. How foolish to serve or turn our attention to anything else and away from such a powerful God.

(2) Do not trust in nations or leaders (40:21-26)

The one who is really in control of events is God not the earthly powers that happen to be in charge at the moment (40:22). We think the nations with the power and wealth are the ones who are most important. We concern ourselves with the nations who have power (modern day: China, Russia, USA) and those who rule these nations (often our concern over those who run for political office). Those who obtain positions of power we are often so impressed with… they are individuals that we study yet world leaders often come to powerful briefly and fade quickly (40:23-24). If ruling a nation is supposed to be impressive how about controlling the stars and creating constellations (40:26). We should be impressed by God’s greatness, might, strength, and power.

(3) No problem is too great for this God (40:27-31)

40:18: To whom will you compare God?

40:21: Do you not know?

God’s greatness is truly evident from other revealed scripture. Isaiah was not declaring anything new to the nation. Today, you were not shocked to find our that God is great. But sometimes we know of God’s greatness but we fail to allow it to impact our life.

What problem do you have? Are you going to wait for a political to fix it? Are you going to look to our nation for the answers? Are you going to rely on a statue for the answer? Or are you going to turn to the God who created you, loves you, and marks off the heavens with His hand?

40:28: Do you not know

40:29-31: God’s power benefits you!

If you lack strength, God can give it. If you need help, God can provide it. If you need wisdom, God can grant it. If we truly understand the greatness and power of God will we struggle with our faith? Will we have moments of doubt? What we face will be unimportant, we will face it with the confidence that God is able to help.

1. Gary Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, 110. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Actual quote: “If we cannot even take the measure of the physical world, how can we take the measure of God?” John Oswalt, *Isaiah 40-66*, 59. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)