

Isaiah 40-KJV

1 Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

2 Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

3 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

4 Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:

5 And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

6 The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness

thereof is as the flower of the field:

7 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass.

8 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

9 O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

10 Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

I don't know about you, but I find it difficult to simply *read* this passage, music based on it almost always pops into my head. Most often, I start singing the syncopated and paraphrased hymn number 67 in our hymnal:

*1 Comfort, comfort ye my people,
speak ye peace, thus saith our God;
comfort those who sit in darkness,
mourning 'neath their sorrow's load.
Speak ye to Jerusalem
of the peace that waits for them;
tell her that her sins I cover,
and her warfare now is over.*

*2 Yea, her sins our God will pardon,
blotting out each dark misdeed;
all that well deserved his anger
he no more will see or heed.
She hath suffered many a day,
now her griefs have passed away;
God will change her pining sadness
into ever-springing gladness.*

*3 For the herald's voice is crying
in the desert far and near,
bidding all men to repentance,
since the kingdom now is here.
O that warning cry obey!
Now prepare for God a way;
let the valleys rise to meet him,
and the hills bow down to greet him.*

*4 Make ye straight what long was crooked,
make the rougher places plain;
let your hearts be true and humble,
as befits his holy reign.
For the glory of the Lord
now o'er earth is shed abroad;
and all flesh shall see the token
that his word is never broken.*

Other times I attempt to sing to the pieces of Handel's Messiah which use direct quotes from the King