

He's Got The Whole World . . . – Is 40:12-26

Is 40:12-26; If you've ever wondered whether God is able to do all that he says, and I'm pretty sure you have; Or if you've ever questioned his ability to carry you through . . . Or his power to protect you, or provide for your needs, or change your circumstances – this passage is for you; B/c that's exactly the issue at hand

The Israelites have just been promised the moon for all intents and purposes – that God would show up big time and release them from captivity . . .

And it's like Isaiah anticipates their doubts, and basically says – “Hey, God's got it; You're in good hands”

And he does that by laying out one of the coolest apologetics in all the Bible – for *who* God is, *how* he is, and what he's done

And since he's the same yesterday, today, and forever – the things Isaiah wrote, still hold true today; Giving us **6 Reasons To Trust God**

6 reasons to rely on him no matter what you're going through; 6 reasons to bank on his word no matter what your situation

So let's take this a few verses at a time, and see if we can find them

[12] Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance?

It's a rhetorical question about God, as we find out a little later, and the point is that . . .

1. He's **bigger** than you can imagine (v12)

You can trust God, b/c he's *bigger* than you can imagine

Now, I don't mean that literally – b/c God is spirit (Jn 4:24); And you can't put a size on that; Just like you can't put a size on electricity

You can measure its effect, its force, its energy – but you can't literally measure its size

And the same is true of God

But that doesn't stop Isaiah from trying

So he describes God here with what theologians call **anthropomorphisms**

Anthropomorphisms are descriptions of non-human or inanimate things, using human forms and characteristics

Like saying God has a hand; Does he really have a hand? No, he's spirit; But saying he does helps us understand him; Helps us appreciate how big he is

So big, that when he created the earth it was as if he cupped his hand, filled it with 322 million cubic miles of water, and was like . . .

“Ya, that ought to do it” (pour) – and the **oceans** were formed; God is so big, that all *that*, fits into *this* (hand)

And for the *dust* of the earth he used a measuring cup; And the **mountains**, a balance

It's hard to imagine, isn't it? And that's the point; That's God; He's got the whole world, in his *hands*

➤ Including the **heavens**, the universe at large; That he laid out with the *span* of his hand – the distance between his thumb and pinky

“Let's see (hold up hand at arm's length), how big do I want to make the heavens? How about *that* big”

How do you fathom that? I'm not sure you do; But it sure is cause for trust

B/c big as he is, there's nothing he can't do

➤ Which is summed up by an old kids song we used to sing when the girls were little, called *My God Is So Big*

“My God is so big, so strong and so mighty, there's nothing my God cannot do; The mountains are his, the valleys are his, the stars are his handy work too . . .”

It's true; B/c he's bigger than you can imagine, and trustworthy to the same degree

2. He knows it **all** (v13-14)

Look at v13 as he continues the argument

[13] Who has measured the Spirit of the LORD, or what man shows him his counsel?

IOW who is it that has God figured out? Who has their mind around him? Who's smart enough to give him advice? Who's wise enough to help him out? Nobody, right?

[14] Whom did he consult, and who made him understand? Who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding?

Once again, nobody; Why? B/c he already knows it all

You can trust God implicitly, b/c he knows everything there is to *know*; About everything

And always has; God has never learned a single thing in all his life

You'll never hear him say – “Wow; Learn something new every day”

B/c there's nothing to learn; He already knows it all

➤ And that *includes* the future; Which means that God has never been surprised; Ever B/c he knows every last detail of every last thing that has ever occurred, or ever *will* occur; Including your thoughts, your words, your actions . . .

And the things you almost did, but didn't; He literally knows it all

Not b/c that seems like a good attribute for God; But b/c the Bible tells us so

Like **Is 48:3** where God says of himself . . .

“The former things I declared of old; they went out from my mouth, and I announced them; then suddenly I did them, and they came to pass.”

That's perfect divine foreknowledge

And in **Is 46:10** he says – *I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done*

He knows it all, including the future; And it's one more reason to trust him*****

Third . . .

3. His **power** is off the charts (v15-17)

[15] Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as the dust on the scales; behold, he takes up the coastlands like fine dust. [16] Lebanon would not suffice for fuel, nor are its beasts enough for a burnt offering. [17] All the nations are as nothing before him, they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness.

There was a day when the former Soviet Union would hold annual parades to show off their military might and flex their muscle; And they had it to flex; No doubt about it

Something the North Koreans still do; And so do we to some extent; Especially with air shows

- One of which I'll never forget; I was in college at the time, and a few of us went to the Experimental Aircraft show in Oshkosh, WI
And one particular day, we decided to sneak out onto the flight line to get a better view of the new Harrier jet – one of the first of its kind to take off vertically
And when that thing lifted off, hovering about 100 yards away – let me tell you, there was power in my blood; I could feel it; My chest shook; It was awesome

And that was just one *plane*; If you put that together with *every* plane in the world, and every *ship*, every sub, every tank, every gun, every missile . . .
You've got power with a capital P; Not to mention the *nuclear* arsenal in this world – so powerful the entire earth could be rendered a wasteland
The amount of power possessed by the nations of this world is staggering

- And yet, from God's perspective, it's nothing; Soviets, North Koreans, all of it
B/c v15b says – *Behold, he takes up the coastlands like fine dust* (15b)
IOW just like the dust under the white glove of the drill sergeant is powerless to hide or resist, so too are the nations under the mighty hand of God

In fact, they're flat out irrelevant; *All the nations* [v17] *are as nothing before him, they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness.*

Next to God, the nations of this world are inconsequential; Insignificant; Negligible
Like *dust on the scales* (15); You've seen those; Put God's power on one side, and the world's power on the other – and the world's power is no more significant than dust
Like it's **not** even there; B/c *God's* power is off the charts*****

And all the resources we could muster wouldn't do justice to the worship he deserves b/c of it; Just like v16 says
Lebanon would not suffice for fuel [with its great cedars], *nor are its beasts enough for a burnt offering.*

In light of God's greatness, knowledge, and power – nothing we have suffices for worship; Except our lives; As *living* sacrifices
You can trust him, and you should worship him, b/c his power is off the charts

4. He's **incomparable** (v18-20)

[18] *To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with him?*

None! There's no likeness, no idol, no picture, no representation, no ideology, and no philosophy that even compares with God; He's incomparable
Nothing does him justice, and no idol conveys his power, or knowledge, or size; Not even close

In fact, it's laughable to think otherwise, and even try; That's the tone of v19-20

[18] *To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with him?*

[19] *An idol! A craftsman casts it* [a mere man], *and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and casts for it silver chains* [it can't even adorn itself]. [20] *He who is too impoverished for an offering chooses wood that will not rot; he seeks out a skillful craftsman to set up an idol that will not move.*

IOW the whole **idol** business is pathetic; That's what Isaiah's saying

Not only that, but even if it *were* okay to fashion an idol to represent God, which it *isn't*, based on the 2nd Commandment . . .

But even if it were, it wouldn't even be in the same league with him

Not only b/c a piece of wood or metal or stone could never adequately represent the living God, but b/c it's made by a *man*, and doesn't even move; Hello

It can't even stand up by itself*****

In which case the whole business is an affront to his glory and an insult to his greatness

But it doesn't change the fact that he's incomparable; And should not only keep us away from *idolatry*, but increase our *trust* in him (**Summary**)

- And then, with the question of v12 still lingering, Isaiah answers it in v21-24
[21] *Do you not know? Do you not hear? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? [22] It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in; [23] who brings princes to nothing, and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness. [24] Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when he blows on them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble.*

Who's the one who's bigger than you can imagine? God; And . . .

5. He's **firmly in control** (v21-24)

Emphasized here by repeating the attributes of v12-17, and then adding one more – his transcendence

The one who's bigger than you can imagine, knows it all, has power to spare, and is incomparable – is also **transcendent**; Another big word that means . . .

He's above us; He's other than us; He's beyond us; He's outside of our realm

Just like v22 says – he sits *above the circle of the earth*

And considers *us* like *grasshoppers* – limited in our perspective and vantage point, just like they are in the tall summer grass

Meanwhile, God above sees it all; At the same time*****

Leading him to act accordingly; Like stretching out the *heavens* to his liking (22)

And establishing rulers as he sees fit; And bringing them to nothing at the appropriate time (23-24); All indicating that he's firmly in control

Completely sovereign over the affairs of this world; Including those of your life

- Which is why Jesus could say in Mt 6 – *Do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on . . . your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.* (Mt 6:25,32b)

We may be grasshoppers compared to him, and we may not have the perspective he has . . .

But he still cares for us; And is firmly in control

It's one more reason to trust him when you're not

6. His **capacity** is unlimited (v25-26)

[25] *To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One.*

He returns to his previous question in v18, and then follows it with one more reason to bolster the answer, and trust in his greatness

[26] *Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these?* [referring to the stars and galaxies; and then answers himself] *He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name, by the greatness of his might, and because he is strong in power not one is missing.*

First, in v22, God stretched *out the heavens like a curtain*; Which explains the awesome size we see in the **universe**, compared to the short amount of time it has existed IOW the stars and galaxies really are millions of light years away from us, but the light hasn't taken that long to get here . . .
B/c it was already in transit as God began his stretching

➤ And the number of *stars* in our stretched out universe is mindboggling
In our Milky Way galaxy alone scientists estimate 2-400B stars
Which, if you could count at a rate of 3 per second, and lived to be 100 – you'd cover less than 5%

And when it comes to the universe as a whole, with some 170B galaxies, the number is somewhere around **10²⁵**
That's a 1, followed by 25 zeroes (**10,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000**)
Which is such a big number, that a computer counting 10B stars each *second*, would take 30 million years to complete

And God says he *brings out their host by number* [one by one, every night], *calling them all by name*; That's unlimited capacity; And the *greatness of his might*
Just like **Ps 147:4-5** says – *He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names. [5] Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure.* Ya think?

And not a single one is *missing* from God's eye (26); Not a single one escapes his notice; Ever; So don't you think he has the capacity to watch over you?
And keep track of the hairs of your *head* like Jesus said (Lk 12:7)? I think so*****
After all, he's got the whole *world* in his hands! Stars and all

➤ The question is, are *you*? Are *you* in his hands? (**John 10:27-28**)
Jesus said – *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. [28] I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.*
Is that you? If so, you can trust him; If not, he's calling; And you *too* can trust him
Take a look at this **video** (God@Work – Beth Lange)

My God is so big, so strong, and so mighty – there's *nothing* my God cannot do
I trust he's yours as well

Prayer – God, how thankful we are that you indeed have the whole world in your hands;
Bolster our trust with that truth; And find us faithful to live it out in the various situations of our lives; In sickness and in health; Good times and bad
And receive our tithes and offerings now for the work of ministry at hand