

## 1) Handel's Messiah: Bringing Scripture to Life

Week 1 of 7, John Kincaid, Summer, 2013

### 2) Handel's Thanksgiving

- This music is Handel's expression of thanks to God
- Handel appreciated God's gift: His Son Jesus Christ
- Handel's thank-you note was 250 pages of music
- Handel wrote it in only 3 weeks!
- Then he shared it with the world
- Messiah was performed to benefit others

### 3) Handel's Enduring Gift

- 2 great composers of church music: Bach & Handel
- Others come and go; their music endures
- Handel's Messiah unites generations of singers

### 4) Messiah Has 3 Parts

Part 1: Christmas - Prophecy & Christ's birth

Part 2: Easter - His Death & Resurrection

Part 3: Christ's Return - The Second Coming

### 5) The Recording

- Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus
- Directed by Sir Georg Solti
- Considered to be among the best performances

### 6) Music and Theology in Harmony

- Notice how beautifully one text flows into another
- Diverse Scripture passages unite into one song
- How the message returns to its heart: Isaiah 40
- Handel carefully chose certain songs to be solos
- When to use male voices, parts or full chorus
- Handel's music harmonizes with theology

### 7) The God of All Comfort – 2 Cor.1:3-4

- Isaiah 40:1-5 was originally intended for Israel
- Various cultures have worshipped this same God
- God's Word is eternal truth, for every generation
- The Bible has fresh insight for new circumstances
- Handel realized the Bible's significance for his life
- We relate Isaiah's words to Christ's birth, but...
- 700 years earlier, what was the original message?

### 8) Israel Under David and Solomon

- Israel flourished under David and his son Solomon
- David killed Goliath, a great victory for Israel
- It was not David's ability or courage – it was faith
- Not by might nor by power but by my Spirit, Zec.4:6
- David trusted the Lord to deliver him
- After David and Solomon died, the nation split

### 9) The Divided Kingdom

- Divided kingdom of Israel had 2 parts
- Northern part kept the name Israel
- Their king was not a son of David
- The southern part was called Judah
- Their king descended from David
- They kept Jerusalem as the capital

### 10) Assyrian Captivity

- The northern part Israel fell to the Assyrians

- The people were taken into captivity in 722 BC
- The people of Judah narrowly escaped
- They believed they were miraculously spared because their king and Temple were in Jerusalem
- They thought God would never allow these to fall: Messiah, son of David, would live in the Temple

### 11) Isaiah's Ministry

- Isaiah tried to wake up the people of Judah
- They had become complacent and insincere
- Isaiah confronted them with their sin
- He prayed they would repent to avoid disaster
- But they would not listen.

### 12) Babylonian Captivity

- 135 years passed after the northern kingdom fell
- 586 BC: a new super-power came from Babylon
- Jerusalem and Solomon's Temple were destroyed
- The people of Judah were taken into captivity

### 13) How Could This Happen?

- People of Judah were in shock
- How can the Temple be gone?
- They felt disillusion & despair
- And they fell silent about God

### 14) Where Was God in All This?

- In hard times of trial / testing, the temptation is: to think that God doesn't love you anymore, or that God has abandoned you, or that there is no God.
- That's just what Satan wants you to think
- Have you ever felt abandoned by God?
- If so, then you can relate to how they felt

### 15) The Light Shines in the Darkness (John 1:5)

- Then out of the despair, we hear the voice of Isaiah
- Isa.40:1 - Comfort my people. Like a lullaby.
- Like a parent reassuring an injured child
- God said "It's all right. I will bring you home."
- The prophecy came over a century before the exile

### 16) The Journey Home

- Persia conquered Babylon, ending Judah's exile
- King Cyrus set free the Babylonian captives
- Centuries earlier, their ancestors left Egypt
- For Judah, it was like reliving the Exodus.
- But how would they get back home?
- Could their loved ones survive the difficult trip?

### 17) A Highway in the Wilderness

- Isaiah spoke of a highway in the wilderness
- It would be straight and level, without obstacles
- Moses wandered through the desert for 40 years
- But this journey would be easier than the Exodus
- When the exile began they felt abandoned by God
- But going home, they knew God was with them
- This road was also God's highway to Jerusalem

### 18) All Flesh Shall See It

- Their neighbors had slandered God's reputation:
- How could God allow His people to be exiled?

- This God had allowed His Temple to be destroyed
- His people had been taken as slaves to Babylon
- But now the people were restored to their land
- God used the exile to give Himself greater glory
- All people would see that God's Word is truth

### 19) Musical Word Pictures

- Handel's music paints the same picture as the text
- In Every Valley, pitches climb on the word "exalted"
- The word "low" rolls down to the bottom of the hill.
- The music for the word "crooked" twists and turns
- The words "plain" and "straight" are long & smooth

### 20) Hallelujah Chorus, Part 1

- And the Glory = the Hallelujah Chorus of Part 1
- God preserved the words of Isaiah for us across 27 centuries and over 100 generations.
- Hear now the gift of music God created in Handel

### 21) Comfort Ye – Isaiah 40:1-3

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.  
 Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her  
 that her warfare is accomplished,  
 that her iniquity is pardoned.  
 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.

### 22) Every Valley – Isaiah 40:4

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

### 23) And the Glory – Isa.40:5

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.

### 24) Accountability

- What does the Messiah expect of us?
- How can we prepare the way for Him to come?
- 2 prophets, Haggai & Malachi, offer an answer
- They lived just after the return from Babylon
- These prophets wanted worship to be acceptable
- They prepared for the coming of God's Son
- God will separate the wheat from the chaff

### 25) All Have Sinned and Fallen Short (Rom.3:23)

- The prophets were thankful Messiah was coming
- But they knew they fell far short of His standard
- They encouraged others to repent and get ready
- Haggai is more focused on the house
- Malachi is concerned about what will be served
- Their words are very relevant for us today
- We prepare for Christ's Second coming

### 26) Faded Glory

- The people were happy to be home from exile
- But they were far from Israel's former glory
- Jerusalem paled in comparison to Isaiah's vision
- There were no jewels on the gates
- The people of Judah were disillusioned

### 27) Rebuilding the Temple

- Haggai encouraged them to rebuild the Temple
- But the new building was a cheap imitation
- Haggai reminded the people of the future glory
- It will become even greater than Solomon's temple

### 28) Malachi and the Priests

- Malachi wrote about 80 years after Haggai
- Malachi feared that priests were trying to fool God
- Religious leaders had become corrupt, greedy
- Only the sons of Aaron had access to the altar
- Malachi said they were doing a terrible job
- They kept the best of everything for themselves
- They were giving impure offerings to God

### 29) And He Shall Purify

- Malachi could see a better day in the future
- God's Messiah will purify the sons of Levi
- They will become worthy to make offerings
- The refiner's fire removes impurities inside
- No one deserves God's grace
- Malachi calls us to purity, sincere worship
- This Christmas, don't just go through the motions
- Reach out to others; God has reached out to you

### 30) Thus Saith the LORD – Haggai 2:6-7

Thus saith the LORD of hosts;  
 Yet once, a little while, and I will  
 shake the heavens, and the earth,  
 the sea, and the dry land; And I  
 will shake all nations, and the  
 desire of the nations shall come

### 31) The Lord, Whom Ye Seek – Malachi 3:1

The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his  
 temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom  
 ye delight in: behold, he shall come,  
 saith the LORD of hosts.

### 32) But Who May Abide - Malachi 3:2

But who may abide the day of his coming?  
 And who shall stand when he appeareth?  
 For he is like a refiner's fire.

### 33) And He Shall Purify - Malachi 3:3

And he shall purify the sons of Levi,  
 that they may offer unto the LORD  
 an offering in righteousness.