

**Title:** THE UNEXPECTED GOD  
**Text:** ISAIAH 40, MARK 1:1-4

**Teacher:** NATHAN MILLER

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**Encounters: the Jesus we weren't expecting**

### **Hopeful Longings**

- A Story of Hopelessness
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- A Song of Hope
  - The Sovereign Lord
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - The Tender Shepherd

### **The Gospel of Hope**

### **Hopeful Encounters**

*The God we encounter is not the God we expect, though He is the God we hope for.*

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## CONVERSATION STARTER

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- What's the purpose of a prequel? What about them is fascinating? How does knowing the "backstory" shed light on the story itself? Have you seen any of the following "backstories": Wicked; Batman Begins; The Hobbit?
- Read Isaiah 40:1-11. How does Isaiah 40 serve as a "backstory" to the gospel of Mark? Why is the voice in Isaiah proclaiming comfort? What are some images of God that emerge from this text? How do these offer comfort? How do verses 10 and 11 complement one another?
- Read Mark 1:1-8. Why do you think Mark opens his gospel with this quotation from Isaiah? What was the purpose of John the Baptist's ministry? What evidence does John give to indicate his understanding of his ministry? How is John's ministry different from the ministry of Jesus?
- Read the excerpt below. What significance does Tozer give to God working in darkness? Do you agree with Tozer that "it is heartening to learn how many of God's mighty deeds were done in secret"? Why or why not? How does God encourage us to trust him in the dark?
- What do you think Christian hope looks like? How does the sovereignty of God offer you hope? How does the tender care of God offer you hope? How does the God who suffers with us offer us hope?

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**EXCERPT FROM:** *The Knowledge of the Holy*

**BY:** A. W. Tozer

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God constantly encourages us to trust Him in the dark. "I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut asunder the bars of iron: and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel." It is heartening to learn how many of God's mighty deeds were done in secret, away from the prying eyes of men or angels. When God created the heavens and the earth, darkness was upon the face of the deep. When the Eternal Son became flesh, He was carried for a time in the darkness of the sweet virgin's womb. When He died for the life of the world, it was in the darkness, seen by no one at the last. When He arose from the dead, it was "very early in the morning." No one saw Him rise. It is as if God were saying, "What I am is all that need matter to you, for there lie your hope and your peace. I will do what I will do, and it will all come to light at last, but how I do it is My secret. Trust Me, and be not afraid." With the goodness of God to desire our highest welfare, the wisdom of God to plan it, and the power of God to achieve it, what do we lack? Surely we are the most favored of all creatures.