

## Isaiah 40:1-11

### Translation with Prosodic Annotations

The translation offered below is designed to enhance appreciation of the poetry and prosody of the underlying Hebrew text. The bulk of the notations provided relate to the operation of the general rule and the length rule.

Even if one possesses little or no knowledge of Hebrew, the translation may prove helpful in getting a sense of how ancient Hebrew poetry works. The device of attaching words in English translation, with an indication of one dominant accent, serves to point to underlying prosodic units in the Hebrew. Minimal use of capitalization and the lack of punctuation are intentional. Capitalization serves to mark the onset of a macrounit of prosody, referred to as a “stanza” in the text model I take Isa 40:1-11 to instantiate.

Sometimes I have chosen to place the accent in an unexpected place so as to mimic some prosodic feature of the underlying text. The mimicking is not always in terms of a one-to-one correspondence. The goal has been to furnish a global approximation of the poetry and prosody of the Hebrew text, even if the results are necessarily piecemeal. The rich texture of the original simply cannot be mapped onto a translation in another language except in fits and starts. I wish to thank David Curzon for going over a draft of the translation, and for helping me to avoid unnecessary archaisms and awkward expressions. I sometimes retain, in imitation of the Hebrew, examples of chiasm, inversion, and ellipsis which perforce result in a less idiomatic rendering.

It is not possible, of course, to reproduce every case of two stresses in a row in the original or to suppress every case of two stresses in a row in translation without analogy in the original. Nevertheless, some attempt has been made to mimic the overall frequency of stress clash in the Hebrew text. The reproduction of metrical feet in translation is an equally daunting task. Some attempt has been made to represent shorter feet in Hebrew with shorter feet in English, and longer with longer, but no attempt has been made to avoid dactyls and first class paeons, though of course they are non-existent in Hebrew.

Symbols (see [www.ancienthebrewpoetry.typepad.com](http://www.ancienthebrewpoetry.typepad.com) for a full explanation)

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↻	A strophe made up of three lines
↻	1:(1:1) in structure; the strophe
↻	↻ concludes a strophe; ↻ a stanza; ↻ a section
2:(2:2)	A line consisting of three versets, each of which contains two stress units, the last two of which form a pair
22/50/120 10/5/2	A poetic composition made up of 22 lines, 50 versets, and 120 stress units, with a total of 10 strophes, 5 stanzas, and 2 sections

## Isaiah 40:1-11

1	☞	Give c6mfort, give c6mfort, my p6eople	y6ur God s6ays	3:2
2	☞	sp6ak to the h6eart of Jer6usalem	cry 6ut to h6er	<u>3:2</u>
	☞	that her s6ervitude is 6ver	her in6iquity at6oned	2:2
	☞	she rec6eived from Y6hweh's h6and	d6ouble for 6all her s6ins	<u>3:3</u>
4/8/20				
3	☞	The v6oice of one crying:            in the r6ange land prep6are            the w6ay of Y6hweh		2:(2:2)
	☞	make str6aight in the w6ild	a h6ighway for our G6od	<u>2:2</u>
4	☞	ev'ry rav6ine will be r6aised	ev'ry m6ount and h6ill made l6ow	2:3
	☞	the steep sl66pe m6ade a pl6ain	rough r6idges, a v6ale	3:2
5	☞	and Y6hweh's gl66ry will app6ear	all fl6esh as 6one will s6ee it    Y6hweh's m66uth has sp6oken	<u>(3:3):3</u>
5/12/29				
6	☞	The v6oice of one s6aying: cry 6ut	6I said: what shall I cry	3:2
	☞	6all fl6esh is gr6ass	all its spl6endor like a f6ield's bl6oom	<u>2:3</u>
7	☞	the gr6ass is s6ear	the bl6oom gone p6ale	2:2
	☞	for Y6hweh's br6eath	bl6ew up6on it	<u>2:2</u>
4/8/18				
8	☞	The p6eople to be s6ure are gr6ass            the gr6ass is s6ear            the bl6oom gone p6ale		3:(2:2)
	☞	but the w6ord of our G6od	st6ands for6ever	<u>2:2</u>
9	☞	g6et yourself 6up            a l66fty m6ount	o h6eraldess to Z6ion	(2:2):2
	☞	l6ift your v6oice with p66ower	o h6eraldess to Jer6usalem	3:2
	☞	l6ift it, d66n't be afr6aid            s6ay to the t66owns of J6udah            y66ur God is n6ear		<u>(3:3):2</u>
5/13/30				
10	☞	My L66rd Y6hweh is n6ear    as a h6ero he c66mes            his 6arm r6ules on his beh6alf		(3:2):3
	☞	his rew6ard is w6ith him	his pr6ize bef6ore him	<u>3:2</u>
11	☞	like a sh6epherd he f6eeds his fl66ck	with his 6arm he g6athers the l66mbs	3:3
	☞	he c6arries them in his b66som	he esc6orts the mother 6ewes	<u>2:2</u>
4/9/23				
22/50/120    10/5/2				

## Addendum

### 22 Line Poems and 22 Line Subunits of Poems of 34 plus Lines: A First List

Identified by other scholars: Prov 2:1-22; Pss 33, 34, 38, 66, 72, 103; Job 10, 14, 27; Lam 5. Identified by the present writer: Isa 1:10-20; 28:14-22; 35:1-10; 41:21-42:4; 46; 48:1-11; Jer 4:1-9; Joel 1:1-12; Amos 2:6-16; 5:16-27; Pss 7; 17; 19; 22:2-19; 31:2-17; 35:11-28; 42; 51; 59; 77; Prov 4:1-19; 6:1-19; 6:20-35; 8:1-21; Job 4, 8; 11; 28:12-28; Cant 1:2-14.