

## Isaiah 40:3

An Original Translation from the LXX by Tyler Robbins

Revised October 2016

### 1. FINISHED TRANSLATION:

- **Isa 40:3:** The voice of a man crying out in the wilderness, “You must prepare Yahweh’s way! Make our God’s highways straight!”

### 2. THOUGHT-FLOW DIAGRAM:

- φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ
  - ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου
  - εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν

### 3. DETAILED TRANSLATION NOTES:

Isa 40:3	φωνή	βοῶντος	ἐν	τῇ	ἐρήμῳ	ἐτοιμάσατε	τὴν	ὁδὸν	κυρίου	εὐθείας
	nsf	pagasm	prep	dsf	dsf	2 <sup>nd</sup> ,pl,p,a,imp	asf	asf	gsm	apf
	voice	He is calling, crying out	in	the	wilderness	You must prepare	the	way	of the Lord	immediately
	The voice of a man crying out in the wilderness, “You must prepare the Lord’s way immediately!									
	The voice of a man crying out in the wilderness, “You must prepare Yahweh’s way!									

φωνή:

- (1) **Case:** the subject nominative of the sentence.

βοῶντος:

- (1) **Classification:** a substantival participle, functioning as a noun. The participle is masculine, so I chose to render it as “the voice of a man,” not the more generic “the voice of one.”
- (2) **Voice:** simple active
- (3) **Tense-form:** context suggests a descriptive present. Isaiah hears this cry and describes it as he sees it unfolding. In NT context, this clearly had an iterative, repetitious sense in the preaching and baptizing ministry of John the Baptist.
- (4) **Case:** genitive of possession; the voice belongs to this man

ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ:

- (1) **Preposition:** the preposition is expressing spatial location
- (2) **Dative:** in the dative because it is the object of the preposition. It is also functioning as a dative of space.

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- (3) **Article:** used to distinguish this “wilderness” as a particular place (e.g. Mk 1:4, 12-13). It should be translated.

ἐτοιμάσατε:

- (1) **Voice:** simple active, indicating the recipients (i.e. the fellow Israelites) are being commanded to perform the action of the verb.
- (2) **Tense-form:** context suggests a descriptive present. This preparation is repentance, and those who listen to this prophet will be exhorted to begin living lives appropriate for repentance. They will be commanded to begin living by the spirit of the Covenant law, not merely the external letter of it (cf. Lk 3:7-14). It *could* be an iterative (“begin preparing”). But, this may be importing far too much into the LXX than the text actually warrants.
- (3) **Mood:** an imperative of command.

τὴν ὁδὸν:

- (1) **Case:** an accusative of direct object, describing what the listeners must prepare.
- (2) **Article:** the article particularizes an otherwise completely abstract quality (“way”) and makes it definite. This is Yahweh’s highway they’re preparing!
- (3) **Translation:** I believe context makes it clear they are being commanded to prepare the way for Yahweh’s return to lead them out of exile (cf. especially Isa 40:10-11). A path will be made from the east back to Jerusalem, and Yahweh will gather up His sheep in His arms and lead them back along this new path. However, the word here is generic. The normal gloss is *way* or *road*. Isaiah used a much more particular word in the second clause, so I left this as the generic “way” here.

κυρίου:

- (1) **Case:** a genitive of possession; this is Yahweh’s highway
- (2) **Translation:** this is the divine name in Hebrew (יהוה), and the Jews who translated this into Greek used κυρίου (“LORD”). English translations differentiate between the Divine Name and other uses of “lord” by capitalizing the word. I translated this as “Yahweh” to make this very clear. English readers may be more familiar with the older “Jehovah,” but the correct pronunciation is actually *much* closer to “Yahweh.” The Divine Name ought to be translated as such, not as the generic God or Lord.

εὐθείας:

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- (1) **Case:** an adverbial accusative of manner, describing *how* Yahweh’s highways must be made. They must be made straight.

ποιεῖτε	τὰς	τρίβους	τοῦ	θεοῦ	ἡμῶν
2 <sup>nd</sup> ,pl,p,a,imp	apf	apf	gsm	gsm	1 <sup>st</sup> ,pl,g
You must make	the	route, path	of the	God	your
Make the paths of our God!"					
Make our God’s highways straight!"					

ποιεῖτε:

- (1) **Voice:** simple active.
- (2) **Tense-form:** context suggests a descriptive present, like the preceding verb.
- (3) **Verb:** an imperative of command.

τὰς τρίβους:

- (1) **Case:** the accusative of direct object which receives the action of this “making.”
- (2) **Translation:** the word here means something like “a beaten path,” (cf. BDAG, s.v. “7433 τρίβος”). In this context, I translated it as “highway.”

τοῦ θεοῦ:

- (1) **Case:** a genitive of possession

ἡμῶν:

- (1) **Case:** the possessive pronoun is a social genitive of relationship.