

<u>Isaiah 1-5</u> <b>Introduction</b> How can one be spared judgement and live happily ever after?	<u>Isaiah 6-39</u> <b>New Creation</b> God will rule over a new, perfect and eternal creation	<u>Isaiah 40-55</u> <b>New relationship</b> God will restore his people from exile to a permanent relationship	<u>Isaiah 56-66</u> <b>Who</b> God will choose the humble and reject the proud
--	---	--	--

Isaiah 40-55 explained in under 60 seconds:  
[youtu.be/z-S3q76crLM](https://youtu.be/z-S3q76crLM)

Isaiah 40-48  
**‘I’m coming to get you!’**  
 YHWH tells his people he will act to fix their relationship

Isaiah 49-55  
**‘Here’s the plan!’**  
 YHWH’s suffering servant will bear the penalty for sin, permanently fixing their relationship

**Isaiah 40:27-41:20 (NIVUK)**

<sup>27</sup> Why do you complain, Jacob?  
 Why do you say, Israel,  
 ‘My way is hidden from the LORD;  
 my cause is disregarded by my God’?

<sup>28</sup> Do you not know?  
 Have you not heard?  
 The LORD is the everlasting God,  
 the Creator of the ends of the earth.  
 He will not grow tired or weary,  
 and his understanding no one can fathom.

<sup>29</sup> He gives strength to the weary  
 and increases the power of the weak.

<sup>30</sup> Even youths grow tired and weary,  
 and young men stumble and fall;

<sup>31</sup> but those who hope in the LORD  
 will renew their strength.

They will soar on wings like eagles;  
 they will run and not grow weary,  
 they will walk and not be faint.

**41** Be silent before me, you islands<sup>a</sup>!  
 Let the nations renew their strength!  
 Let them come forward and speak;  
 let us meet together at the place of judgment.

<sup>2</sup> Who has stirred up one from the east,  
 calling him in righteousness to his service?<sup>b</sup>

He hands nations over to him  
 and subdues kings before him.

He turns them to dust with his sword,

**Sunday 18 January 2026**

Complaint: ‘God’s inaction means he doesn’t care about me!’ (40:27)

God’s apparent inactivity  
 ...is not explicitly mentioned in Israel’s complaint.  
 How persuaded are you that it is implied?

Answer: ‘No! God is tirelessly *working for you...*’ (40:28-31)

(but not in the way you expect)

Soar like eagles – now or later  
 Isaiah 40:29 is translated in present tense, but 40:31 in the future. To what extent does this matter? What questions does it raise about the message of 40:29-31?

*working*: God is unsettling the nations (41:1-7)

(Cyrus, King of Persia, cf. Isaiah 44:28, 45:1)

<sup>a</sup> The ESV opts for *coastlands*

<sup>b</sup> Or *east*, / *whom victory meets at every step*



Isaiah 40-48  
**'I'm coming to get you!'**  
YHWH tells his people he intends to fix their relationship

40:1-11 'Tell exiled Judah I'm coming!'	40:12-26 'There's no other creator like me!'	40:27-41:20 'No need to be insecure, I want to restore you!'	41:21-29 'Your idols are useless!'	42:1-7 'A preview of your future!'	42:8-17 'Be certain! I have the agency to deliver!'
--	---	---	---------------------------------------	---------------------------------------	--

to wind-blown chaff with his bow.  
<sup>3</sup> He pursues them and moves on unscathed,  
by a path his feet have not travelled before.  
<sup>4</sup> Who has done this and carried it through,  
calling forth the generations from the beginning?  
I, the LORD – with the first of them  
and with the last – I am he.'  
<sup>5</sup> The islands<sup>c</sup> have seen it and fear;  
the ends of the earth tremble.  
They approach and come forward;  
<sup>6</sup> they help each other  
and say to their companions, 'Be strong!'  
<sup>7</sup> The metalworker encourages the goldsmith,  
and the one who smooths with the hammer  
spurs on the one who strikes the anvil.  
One says of the welding, 'It is good.'  
The other nails down the idol so that it will not topple.

<sup>8</sup> But you, Israel, my servant,  
Jacob, whom I have chosen,  
you descendants of Abraham my friend,  
<sup>9</sup> I took you from the ends of the earth,  
from its farthest corners I called you.  
I said, "You are my servant";  
I have chosen you and have not rejected you.  
<sup>10</sup> So do not fear, for I am with you;  
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.  
I will strengthen you and help you;  
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.  
<sup>11</sup> All who rage against you  
will surely be ashamed and disgraced;  
those who oppose you  
will be as nothing and perish.  
<sup>12</sup> Though you search for your enemies,  
you will not find them.  
Those who wage war against you  
will be as nothing at all.

Craftsmen  
In what tone do you hear Isaiah's voice in 41:7? Why?

*for you, part 1:*  
you are chosen (41:8-14)

<sup>c</sup> The ESV opts for *coastlands*

<u>42:18-44:5</u> 'Despite your sin, I want you back!'	<u>44:6-28</u> 'Your idols are useless compared to me!'	<u>45:1-14</u> 'I can even use Cyrus to restore you!'	<u>45:15-25</u> 'You feel my absence, but all will feel my presence!'	<u>46:1-13</u> 'Babylon's idols will end up in captivity'	<u>47:1-15</u> 'I'll humiliate Queen Babylon'	<u>48:1-22</u> 'Despite your stubbornness, I'll rescue you from Babylon!'
---	--	--	--	--	--	--

<sup>13</sup> For I am the LORD your God  
who takes hold of your right hand

and says to you,

Do not fear; I will help you.

<sup>14</sup> Do not be afraid, you worm Jacob,  
little Israel, do not fear,

for I myself will help you,' declares the LORD,  
your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

<u>'Worm'?</u> In what sense/tone does God call Israel a 'worm'?
---

<sup>15</sup> See, I will make you into a threshing-sledge,  
new and sharp, with many teeth.

You will thresh the mountains and crush them,  
and reduce the hills to chaff.

<sup>16</sup> You will winnow them, the wind will pick them up,  
and a gale will blow them away.

But<sup>d</sup> you will rejoice in the LORD  
and glory in the Holy One of Israel.

<sup>17</sup> The poor and needy search for water,  
but there is none;  
their tongues are parched with thirst.

But I the LORD will answer them;  
I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them.

<sup>18</sup> I will make rivers flow on barren heights,  
and springs within the valleys.

I will turn the desert into pools of water,  
and the parched ground into springs.

<sup>19</sup> I will put in the desert  
the cedar and the acacia, the myrtle and the olive.

I will set junipers in the wasteland,  
the fir and the cypress together,

<sup>20</sup> so that people may see and know,  
may consider and understand,

that the hand of the LORD has done this,  
that the Holy One of Israel has created it.

**for you, part 2:**

look at what God's got in  
store for you! (41:15-20)

Isaiah 35:6-7

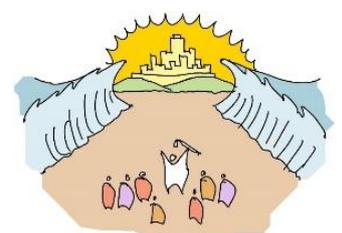
Water will gush forth in the wilderness  
and streams in the desert.

<sup>7</sup> The burning sand will become a pool,  
the thirsty ground bubbling springs.

Isaiah 35:1-2

The desert and the parched land will be glad;  
the wilderness will rejoice and blossom.

Like the crocus, <sup>2</sup> it will burst into bloom;  
it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy.



<sup>d</sup> The ESV opts for *and*

### **For reflection on Isaiah 40:27-41:20**

- 40:27 To what extent do you experience the feeling that ‘my way is hidden from the LORD; my cause is disregarded by my God’? How does that manifest for you?  
When and where would this feeling be most pronounced?
- 40:28-31 When experiencing 40:27, what hinders you remembering the *creatorship* of God?  
What do you make of the imagery?  
By these verses alone, in what ways are you left feeling dissatisfied or incomplete?
- 41:1-7 In light of the complaint of 40:27, how does it feel to hear that God *is* actively working, but in judgement?  
How do these verses help expand your view of God’s agency and power?  
What do you make of the idol-makers in 41:6-7?
- 41:8-14 How do these verses about *chosenness* impact your 40:27 experience?  
What might hinder you from accepting these verses fully?  
What would change in your life if these verses truly shaped your thinking?
- 41:15-20 How do you visualise these verses? Were there any specific scenes that caught your eye?  
What is difficult about reading these verses devotionally?  
What would it mean for your day-to-day if these words really sank in?

### **Bonus Bible-handling for Isaiah 40-55**

1. How would you describe the genre of Isaiah 40-55? How might that fit the *Art Gallery* analogy?
2. Isaiah 40-55 repeats certain themes over and over. What might the function be of this literary choice?
3. How does Isaiah use the theme of idols in Isaiah 40-55? Some preachers indicate *rebuke* – to what extent do you agree with this?