

<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 41:21-42:17 (NIVUK)**

<sup>21</sup> 'Present your case,' says the LORD.  
 'Set forth your arguments,' says Jacob's King.

<sup>22</sup> 'Tell us, you idols,  
 what is going to happen.  
 Tell us what the former things were,  
 so that we may consider them  
 and know their final outcome.  
 Or declare to us the things to come,  
<sup>23</sup> tell us what the future holds,  
 so that we may know you are gods.  
 Do something, whether good or bad,  
 so that we will be dismayed and filled with fear.

<sup>24</sup> But you are less than nothing  
 and your works are utterly worthless;  
 whoever chooses you is detestable.

<sup>25</sup> 'I have stirred up one from the north, and he comes –  
 one from the rising sun who calls on my name.  
 He treads on rulers as if they were mortar,  
 as if he were a potter treading the clay.

<sup>26</sup> Who told of this from the beginning, so that we could know,  
 or beforehand, so that we could say, "He was right"?"  
 No one told of this,  
 no one foretold it,  
 no one heard any words from you.

<sup>27</sup> I was the first to tell Zion, "Look, here they are!"  
 I gave to Jerusalem a messenger of good news.

<sup>28</sup> I look but there is no one –  
 no one among the gods to give counsel,  
 no one to give answer when I ask them.

<sup>29</sup> See, they are all false!  
 Their deeds amount to nothing;  
 their images are but wind and confusion.

**Sunday 25 January 2026**

**1. 'Your idols are utterly useless, unlike me!' (41:21-29)**

- 'idol, say something!'



- 'idol, do something!'

- 'you're completely useless!'

- 'by contrast, look what I have done!'

'no one foretold it'  
 What is the rhetorical function of 41:26-27?

- 'all other gods are useless'



**Andover  
 Bible  
 Church**

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!'

## 2. 'Here's a preview of your future as my people!' (42:1-7)

- Holy Spirit
- no more distress
- just and fair
- the creator YHWH...
- ...has chosen you!

**42** 'Here is my servant, whom I uphold,  
my chosen one in whom I delight;  
I will put my Spirit on him,  
and he will bring justice to the nations.  
<sup>2</sup> He will not shout or cry out,  
or raise his voice in the streets.  
<sup>3</sup> A bruised reed he will not break,  
and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out.  
In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;  
<sup>4</sup> he will not falter or be discouraged  
till he establishes justice on earth.  
In his teaching the islands will put their hope.'  
<sup>5</sup> This is what God the LORD says –  
the Creator of the heavens, who stretches them out,  
who spreads out the earth with all that springs from it,  
who gives breath to its people,  
and life to those who walk on it:  
<sup>6</sup> 'I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness;  
I will take hold of your hand.  
I will keep you and will make you  
to be a covenant for the people  
and a light for the Gentiles,  
<sup>7</sup> to open eyes that are blind,  
to free captives from prison  
and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

Genesis 22:18  
'and through your offspring  
all nations on earth will be  
blessed'

### Jesus or Judah?

Does Isaiah 42:1-7 refer to Jesus as God's special servant, or to Judah in final, new creation form?

### Isaiah 41:8-10

<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.

### Matthew 12:9-21

<sup>13</sup> Then he said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' So he stretched it out and it was completely restored, just as sound as the other. <sup>14</sup> But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus.

<sup>15</sup> Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place. A large crowd followed him, and he healed all who were ill. <sup>16</sup> He warned them not to tell others about him. <sup>17</sup> This was to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

<sup>18</sup> 'Here is my servant whom I have chosen,  
the one I love, in whom I delight;  
I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations.

<sup>19</sup> He will not quarrel or cry out;  
no one will hear his voice in the streets.

<sup>20</sup> A bruised reed he will not break,  
and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out,  
till he has brought justice through to victory.

<sup>21</sup> In his name the nations will put their hope.

<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>8</sup> 'I am the LORD; that is my name!

I will not yield my glory to another  
or my praise to idols.

<sup>9</sup> See, the former things have taken place,  
and new things I declare;

before they spring into being

I announce them to you.'

<sup>10</sup> Sing to the LORD a new song,

his praise from the ends of the earth,  
you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it,  
you islands, and all who live in them.

<sup>11</sup> Let the wilderness and its towns raise their voices;  
let the settlements where Kedar lives rejoice.

Let the people of Sela sing for joy;  
let them shout from the mountaintops.

<sup>12</sup> Let them give glory to the LORD  
and proclaim his praise in the islands.

<sup>13</sup> The LORD will march out like a champion,  
like a warrior he will stir up his zeal;  
with a shout he will raise the battle cry  
and will triumph over his enemies.

<sup>14</sup> 'For a long time I have kept silent,  
I have been quiet and held myself back.

But now, like a woman in childbirth,

I cry out, I gasp and pant.

<sup>15</sup> I will lay waste the mountains and hills  
and dry up all their vegetation;

I will turn rivers into islands  
and dry up the pools.

<sup>16</sup> I will lead the blind by ways they have not known,  
along unfamiliar paths I will guide them;

I will turn the darkness into light before them  
and make the rough places smooth.

These are the things I will do;

I will not forsake them.

<sup>17</sup> But those who trust in idols,  
who say to images, "You are our gods,"  
will be turned back in utter shame.

### 3. 'Be sure that I have the agency to save you!' (42:8-17)

- 'I'm going to do something new!'

- 'Isn't YHWH great! 🎵'

'Sing to YHWH a new song' What is the rhetorical function of 42:10-13?
---

- 'Isn't YHWH mighty! 🎵'

- 'I've waited long enough, I'm now going to let loose!'

'I will lead the blind' In Isaiah 42:18-20, Judah is described as blind: <sup>18</sup> 'Hear, you deaf; look, you blind, and see! <sup>19</sup> Who is blind but my servant, and deaf like the messenger I send? Who is blind like the one in covenant with me, blind like the servant of the LORD? <sup>20</sup> You have seen many things, but you pay no attention; your ears are open, but you do not listen.'
--

- 'idols cannot save you like I can!'

## For reflection on Isaiah 41:21-42:17

- 41:21-29
1. Idols are things that we wrongly sacrifice time and energy towards, hoping for blessing as a result. What are the idols that you are tempted to worship?
  2. Imagine you asked your idol to predict the future like in 41:21-24 and 41:28-29. What difference might this make to your life?
  3. What do you make of God declaring his plans before he does them, in 41:25-27?
- 42:1-7
- |   |  |
|---|--|
| If Judah:   | If Jesus:  |
| 4. What aspects of God's new creation are underdeveloped in your thinking? Why? | 4. What aspects of Jesus are underdeveloped in your thinking? Why? |
| 5. What aspects of the future sound most appealing to you? Why?                 | 5. What aspects of Jesus sound most appealing to you? Why?         |
6. What do you make of the *scale* of 42:1-7?
7. If you thought about 42:1-7 more, what difference could this make in your life?
- 42:8-17
8. How do you feel about the way YHWH compares himself to idols in 42:8-9 and 42:17? Why?
  9. How much can you say/sing the words of 42:10-13, and *mean them* today? How do you feel about the prospect of being able to say/sing these words earnestly in eternal life?
  10. How do you feel about the imagery of 42:14-16? Why?

### 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?