

<u>Isaiah 1-5</u> Introduction How can one be spared judgement and live happily ever after?	<u>Isaiah 6-39</u> New Creation God will rule over a new, perfect and eternal creation	<u>Isaiah 40-55</u> New relationship God will restore his people from exile to a permanent relationship	<u>Isaiah 56-66</u> Who God will choose the humble and reject the proud
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Isaiah 40-55 explained in under 60 seconds:
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 42:18-44:5 (NIVUK)

¹⁸ ‘Hear, you deaf; look, you blind, and see!
¹⁹ 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?
²⁰ You have seen many things, but you pay no attention; your ears are open, but you do not listen.’
²¹ It pleased the LORD for the sake of his righteousness to make his law great and glorious.
²² But this is a people plundered and looted, all of them trapped in pits or hidden away in prisons. They have become plunder, with no one to rescue them; they have been made loot, with no one to say, ‘Send them back.’
²³ Which of you will listen to this or pay close attention in time to come?
²⁴ Who handed Jacob over to become loot, and Israel to the plunderers?
 Was it not the LORD, against whom we have sinned? For they would not follow his ways; they did not obey his law.
²⁵ So he poured out on them his burning anger, the violence of war. It enveloped them in flames, yet they did not understand; it consumed them, but they did not take it to heart.
43 But now, this is what the LORD says – he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel:
 ‘Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.
² When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.

Sunday 1 February 2026

1a. ‘You were so stupid, Judah, you deserved to be banished...’ (42:18-25)

- blind and deaf
- the law of Moses was brilliant...
- ...but Judah disobeyed God and received his curses

Mosaic covenant curses
 cf. Leviticus 26 or Deuteronomy 28 to see God’s curses for disobedience

- punishment entirely deserved

1b. ‘...but now I want you back!’ (43:1-7)

- nation establishing
- cf. Red Sea/Jordan crossings

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!'
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- cf. Egypt given up to the Red Sea



- a global gathering

³ For I am the LORD your God,
 the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour;
 I give Egypt for your ransom,
 Cush^a and Seba in your stead.
⁴ Since you are precious and honoured in my sight,
 and because I love you,
 I will give people in exchange for you,
 nations in exchange for your life.
⁵ Do not be afraid, for I am with you;
 I will bring your children from the east
 and gather you from the west.
⁶ I will say to the north, "Give them up!"
 and to the south, "Do not hold them back."
 Bring my sons from afar
 and my daughters from the ends of the earth –
⁷ everyone who is called by my name,
 whom I created for my glory,
 whom I formed and made.'

⁸ Lead out those who have eyes but are blind,
 who have ears but are deaf.
⁹ All the nations gather together and the peoples assemble.
 Which of their gods foretold this
 and proclaimed to us the former things?
 Let them bring in their witnesses to prove they were right,
 so that others may hear and say, 'It is true.'
¹⁰ 'You are my witnesses,' declares the LORD,
 'and my servant whom I have chosen,
 so that you may know and believe me
 and understand that I am he.
 Before me no god was formed,
 nor will there be one after me.
¹¹ I, even I, am the LORD,
 and apart from me there is no saviour.
¹² I have revealed and saved and proclaimed –
 I, and not some foreign god among you.
 You are my witnesses,' declares the LORD, 'that I am God.
¹³ Yes, and from ancient days I am he.
 No one can deliver out of my hand.
 When I act, who can reverse it?'

The 2nd Exodus
 How persuaded are you by the interpretation that 43:1-7 is written using the theme of the 2nd Exodus?

2. 'Only you have a saving God like me!' (43:8-21)

- 'other nations don't have a saving God...'

- '...unlike you Judah!'

Why Babylon?
 Rank these possible uses of the destruction of Babylon by Isaiah in 43:14 (difficult!)

1. A historical example of God's agency/power (most readers will be post-538BC return from exile)
2. The start of God's 2nd Exodus ('I'll rescue you from Babylon, and then fix our relationship forever!')
3. Babylon represents the evil world order that will be destroyed (see e.g. Isaiah 13-27, Revelation 17-18)
4. Babylon is an example of a 43:9 godless nation (as suggested today)

^a That is, the upper Nile region

42:18-44:5 'Despite your sin, I want you back!'	44:6-28 'Your idols are useless compared to me!'	45:1-14 'I can even use Cyrus to restore you!'	45:15-25 'You feel my absence, but all will feel my presence!'	46:1-13 'Babylon's idols will end up in captivity'	47:1-15 'I'll humiliate Queen Babylon'	48:1-22 'Despite your stubbornness, I'll rescue you from Babylon!'
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¹⁴ This is what the LORD says –
your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel:
'For your sake I will send to Babylon
and bring down as fugitives all the Babylonians,^b
in the ships in which they took pride.

¹⁵ I am the LORD, your Holy One,
Israel's Creator, your King.'

¹⁶ This is what the LORD says –
he who made a way through the sea,
a path through the mighty waters,

¹⁷ who drew out the chariots and horses,
the army and reinforcements together,
and they lay there, never to rise again,
extinguished, snuffed out like a wick:

¹⁸ 'Forget the former things;
do not dwell on the past.

¹⁹ See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the wilderness
and streams in the wasteland.

²⁰ The wild animals honour me, the jackals and the owls,
because I provide water in the wilderness
and streams in the wasteland,

to give drink to my people, my chosen,
²¹ the people I formed for myself
that they may proclaim my praise.

²² 'Yet you have not called on me, Jacob,
you have not wearied yourselves for^c me, Israel.

²³ You have not brought me sheep for burnt offerings,
nor honoured me with your sacrifices.

I have not burdened you with grain offerings
nor wearied you with demands for incense.

²⁴ You have not bought any fragrant calamus for me,
or lavished on me the fat of your sacrifices.

But you have burdened me with your sins
and wearied me with your offences.

²⁵ 'I, even I, am he who blots out
your transgressions, for my own sake,
and remembers your sins no more.

Proposed function of 43:14-21
God's statement in 43:7-13 is worked out in a specific example
of *Babylon* not having a saving God vs *Judah* who does!

- '*Babylon* don't have a saving
God!'

- But YHWH, who destroyed Egypt
during the 1st Exodus, says...

- ...'I will rescue *you* with a new
(2nd) Exodus!'

Isaiah 35 parallels
wilderness → water → way → redeemed people → praise



**3a. 'You were the one who walked
away from *me*...' (43:22-28)**

- 'you disobeyed my law!'

- 'Yet I *will* have mercy on you!'

^b Or *Chaldeans*

^c Or *Jacob*; / *surely you have grown weary of*

- 'but to be clear, *you* were the problem!'

²⁶ Review the past for me,
let us argue the matter together;
state the case for your innocence.
²⁷ Your first father sinned;
those I sent to teach you rebelled against me.
²⁸ So I disgraced the dignitaries of your temple;
I consigned Jacob to destruction^d and Israel to scorn.

3b. '...but *I* am still committed to you!' (44:1-5)

- super chosen

- cf. Isaiah 35:6-7

- cf. Isaiah 32:15, 42:1

- cf. Isaiah 43:1

44 'But now listen, Jacob, my servant,
Israel, whom I have chosen.

² This is what the LORD says –
he who made you, who formed you in the womb,
and who will help you:
do not be afraid, Jacob, my servant,
Jeshurun,^e whom I have chosen.

³ For I will pour water on the thirsty land,
and streams on the dry ground;
I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring,
and my blessing on your descendants.

⁴ They will spring up like grass in a meadow,
like poplar trees by flowing streams.

⁵ Some will say, "I belong to the LORD";
others will call themselves by the name of Jacob;
still others will write on their hand, "The LORD's,"
and will take the name Israel.



'I WILL QUOTE WHO I WILL QUOTE'
What is the rhetorical function of YHWH proclaiming a compilation of his previous promises?

For reflection on Isaiah 42:18-44:5

In Isaiah 40–55, God addresses an exiled and insecure Judah, whose experience of banishment and curses has led them to doubt that YHWH will permanently fix his relationship with them.

1. How much do you share Judah's reluctance to trust God?
2. To what extent are you aware that God is a *person* and not a mere *force*?
- 42:18-43:7 3. God's people bring blindness and disobedience, and yet God wishes to single-handedly fix his relationship with them. How do you feel about this *one-sidedness*?
4. How do these verses help with your answers to (1) and (2)?
- 43:8-21 5. To what extent does God's historical works in the Old Testament help you to trust him?
6. How do you feel about God's repeated promise of a 2nd Exodus?
7. How do these verses help with your answers to (1) and (2)?
- 43:22-44:5 8. How do you feel about the *one-sidedness* of God's grace in these verses?
9. Were there any particular highlights that resonated with you?
10. If you believed these verses more, what differences might this make in your life?

^d The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them.

^e *Jeshurun* means *the upright one*, that is, Israel.

Next Sunday (8 February):

- Isaiah 44:6-28
- Match Day (parking vouchers available)