

<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
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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 45:1-25 (NIVUK)**

**45** 'This is what the LORD says to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their armour, to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut:  
<sup>2</sup>I will go before you and will level the mountains;<sup>a</sup> I will break down gates of bronze and cut through bars of iron.  
<sup>3</sup>I will give you hidden treasures, riches stored in secret places, so that you may know that I am the LORD, the God of Israel, who summons you by name.  
<sup>4</sup>For the sake of Jacob my servant, of Israel my chosen, I summon you by name and bestow on you a title of honour, though you do not acknowledge me.  
<sup>5</sup>I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged me,  
<sup>6</sup>so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting people may know there is none besides me. I am the LORD, and there is no other.  
<sup>7</sup>I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the LORD, do all these things.

**Sunday 15 February 2026**

**1a. YHWH choosing Cyrus... (45:1-4)**

- usurping kings
- removing obstacles
- nothing unobtainable
- knowing YHWH (benefits Israel)
- honour and reputation

**1b. ...demonstrates his God-ness (45:5-12)**

- global knowledge of God
- creator control

<sup>a</sup> Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint; the meaning of the word in the Masoretic Text is uncertain.

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!'

- creatures can't argue with creator

<sup>8</sup> 'You heavens above, rain down my righteousness; let the clouds shower it down.

Let the earth open wide, let salvation spring up, let righteousness flourish with it;

I, the LORD, have created it.

<sup>9</sup> 'Woe to those who quarrel with their Maker, those who are nothing but potsherds among the potsherds on the ground.

Does the clay say to the potter, "What are you making?"

Does your work say, "The potter has no hands"?

<sup>10</sup> Woe to the one who says to a father,

"What have you begotten?"

or to a mother, "What have you brought to birth?"

<sup>11</sup> 'This is what the LORD says –

the Holy One of Israel, and its Maker:

concerning things to come,

do you question me about my children,

or give me orders about the work of my hands?

<sup>12</sup> It is I who made the earth

and created mankind on it.

My own hands stretched out the heavens;

I marshalled their starry hosts.

<sup>13</sup> I will raise up Cyrus<sup>b</sup> in my righteousness:

I will make all his ways straight.

He will rebuild my city and set my exiles free,

but not for a price or reward,

says the LORD Almighty.'

<sup>14</sup> This is what the LORD says:

'The products of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush,<sup>c</sup>

and those tall Sabeans –

they will come over to you and will be yours;

they will trudge behind you,

coming over to you in chains.

They will bow down before you

and plead with you, saying,

"Surely God is with you, and there is no other;

there is no other god."

### 1a. YHWH uses Cyrus... (45:13)

- to take Israel from Babylon

### 1b. ...to show his God-ness (45:14)

- to Egypt, Cush and Seba

<sup>b</sup> Hebrew *him*

<sup>c</sup> That is, the upper Nile region

<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!'
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The logic of YHWH's God-ness (45:1-14)

Which is the more likely chain of logic? Can you improve on these chains?

Chain A

1. Cyrus is how God's 2<sup>nd</sup> Exodus will begin
2. Jewish reader confused that Cyrus is Gentile
3. YHWH's God-ness explains (2)
4. Reader can trust God's 2<sup>nd</sup> Exodus is on track

Chain B

1. Cyrus is a specific temporal promise (c.700BC)
2. Cyrus frees Israel from exile in 538BC
3. If God can predict and fulfil the Cyrus plan, the reader can trust God can accomplish his grand 2<sup>nd</sup> Exodus

<sup>15</sup> Truly you are a God who has been hiding himself,  
the God and Saviour of Israel.

<sup>16</sup> All the makers of idols will be put to shame and disgraced;  
they will go off into disgrace together.

<sup>17</sup> But Israel will be saved by the LORD  
with an everlasting salvation;  
you will never be put to shame or disgraced,  
to ages everlasting.

<sup>18</sup> For this is what the LORD says –  
he who created the heavens,  
(he is God!);  
he who fashioned and made the earth,  
(he founded it; he did not create it to be empty,  
but formed it to be inhabited!)

– he says: 'I am the LORD, and there is no other.

<sup>19</sup> I have not spoken in secret,  
from somewhere in a land of darkness;  
I have not said to Jacob's descendants,  
"Seek me in vain."

I, the LORD, speak the truth;  
I declare what is right.

<sup>20</sup> 'Gather together and come;  
assemble, you fugitives from the nations.

Ignorant are those who carry about idols of wood,  
who pray to gods that cannot save.

<sup>21</sup> Declare what is to be, present it –  
let them take counsel together.

Who foretold this long ago,  
who declared it from the distant past?

Was it not I, the LORD?

And there is no God apart from me,  
a righteous God and a Saviour; there is none but me.

**2a. Judah, 'God is hiding!' (45:15)**

**2b. YHWH, 'I will permanently reveal myself to all nations! (45:16-25)**

- idols vs YHWH:  
disgrace vs eternal salvation

- only creator

- revealer

- global gathering

- 'idol, say something!'



Green or purple

In the Isaiah 40-48 header on p2-3, green represents *comfort*, and purple *God's God-ness*. Should 45:15-25 be in a green or purple box?

- global gathering (cont.)

<sup>22</sup> ‘Turn to me and be saved,  
all you ends of the earth;  
for I am God, and there is no other.

<sup>23</sup> By myself I have sworn,  
my mouth has uttered in all integrity  
a word that will not be revoked:

all will submit:

before me every knee will bow;  
by me every tongue will swear.

a. as redeemed

<sup>24</sup> They will say of me,

“In the LORD alone  
are deliverance and strength.”

b. as conquered

All who have raged against him  
will come to him and be put to shame.

a. as redeemed

<sup>25</sup> But all the descendants of Israel  
will find deliverance in the LORD  
and will make their boast in him.

### **For reflection on Isaiah 45**

In Isaiah 40–55, God addresses an exiled, insecure Judah who feels that God has hidden himself (45:15). In Isaiah 45, God answers that doubt, using the promise of release from Babylon to assure them that he will accomplish his greater 2<sup>nd</sup> Exodus promises of eternal life.

Diagnostic 1. How does the experience of God *seeming inactive or hidden* lead you to doubt his promises?

45:1-14 2. Reading a promise about Cyrus and applying it to your life today can feel like a big leap.  
How might that connection be made?

3. How does God’s use of Cyrus (45:1-4, 13-14) speak into the doubts you identified in (1)?

4. What parts of 45:5-8 caught your eye? Why?

5. What do you make of the disputation between creator and creature in 45:9-12?

45:15-25 6. What do you make of the *eternal* scale (45:17) of God’s response to Judah?

7. What do you make of the *all nations* breadth (45:20, 22-25) of God’s response?

8. How does God ridiculing idols again (45:16, 20-21) help address your answer to (1)?

9. What do you find compelling or uncomfortable about the portrayal of universal judgement and salvation in 45:22–25?

Prayer 10. Are there particular areas in your life which need repentance or prayer?

### **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?