

<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 46:1-47:15 (NIVUK)**

**Sunday 22 February 2026**

**46** Bel bows down, Nebo stoops low;  
 their idols are borne by beasts of burden.<sup>a</sup>  
 The images that are carried about are burdensome,  
 a burden for the weary.

<sup>2</sup> They stoop and bow down together;  
 unable to rescue the burden,  
 they themselves go off into captivity.

<sup>3</sup> 'Listen to me, you descendants of Jacob,  
 all the remnant of the people of Israel,  
 you whom I have upheld since your birth,  
 and have carried since you were born.

<sup>4</sup> Even to your old age and grey hairs  
 I am he, I am he who will sustain you.  
 I have made you and I will carry you;  
 I will sustain you and I will rescue you.

<sup>5</sup> 'With whom will you compare me or count me equal?  
 To whom will you liken me that we may be compared?

<sup>6</sup> Some pour out gold from their bags  
 and weigh out silver on the scales;  
 they hire a goldsmith to make it into a god,  
 and they bow down and worship it.

<sup>7</sup> They lift it to their shoulders and carry it;  
 they set it up in its place, and there it stands.  
 From that spot it cannot move.  
 Even though someone cries out to it, it cannot answer;  
 it cannot save them from their troubles.

<sup>8</sup> 'Remember this, keep it in mind,  
 take it to heart, you rebels.

<sup>9</sup> Remember the former things, those of long ago;  
 I am God, and there is no other;  
 I am God, and there is none like me.

**1. 'I will carry you, but your idols are dead weight!' (46:1-13)**

- establishing shot: rocking idols carried off into exile
- 'I will carry you, kiddo!'
- 'but your idols need carrying!'
- 'when you get released from Babylon, remember I did it!'

<sup>a</sup> Or are but beasts and cattle



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!'

(Cyrus, King of Persia)

- 'trust me, I'll be really good to you!'

Letting go of idols

When you're tempted toward idolatry, which is more persuasive, and why?

1. **Present impotence:** idols literally need you to carry them
2. **Future defeat:** God promises to cart them off

<sup>10</sup> I make known the end from the beginning,  
from ancient times, what is still to come.

I say, "My purpose will stand,  
and I will do all that I please."

<sup>11</sup> From the east I summon a bird of prey;  
from a far-off land, a man to fulfil my purpose.

What I have said, that I will bring about;  
what I have planned, that I will do.

<sup>12</sup> Listen to me,  
you stubborn-hearted,  
you who are now far from my righteousness.

<sup>13</sup> I am bringing my righteousness near,  
it is not far away;  
and my salvation will not be delayed.

I will grant salvation to Zion,  
my splendour to Israel.

**2. 'I will humiliate Queen Babylon'**  
(47:1-15)

- 'shame!'

**47** 'Go down, sit in the dust,  
Virgin Daughter Babylon;  
sit on the ground without a throne,  
queen city of the Babylonians.<sup>b</sup>  
No more will you be called  
tender or delicate.

<sup>2</sup> Take millstones and grind flour;  
take off your veil.

Lift up your skirts, bare your legs,  
and wade through the streams.

<sup>3</sup> Your nakedness will be exposed  
and your shame uncovered.

I will take vengeance;  
I will spare no one.'

<sup>4</sup> Our Redeemer – the LORD Almighty is his name –  
is the Holy One of Israel.

<sup>5</sup> 'Sit in silence, go into darkness,  
queen city of the Babylonians;<sup>b</sup>  
no more will you be called  
queen of kingdoms.

- cheerleader Isaiah 🎵

- 'shame!'

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<sup>b</sup> Or *Chaldeans*

<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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<sup>6</sup>I was angry with my people  
and desecrated my inheritance;  
I gave them into your hand,  
and you showed them no mercy.

- 'didn't you know: you were my rod of anger?'

Even on the aged  
you laid a very heavy yoke.

<sup>7</sup>You said, "I am for ever –  
the eternal queen!"

- 'pride comes...'

But you did not consider these things  
or reflect on what might happen.

<sup>8</sup>'Now then, listen, you lover of pleasure,  
lounging in your security  
and saying to yourself,  
"I am, and there is none besides me.

I will never be a widow  
or suffer the loss of children."

<sup>9</sup>Both of these will overtake you  
in a moment, on a single day:  
loss of children and widowhood.

- '...before a fall'

They will come upon you in full measure,  
in spite of your many sorceries  
and all your potent spells.

<sup>10</sup>You have trusted in your wickedness  
and have said, "No one sees me."

- 'pride comes again...'

Your wisdom and knowledge mislead you  
when you say to yourself,  
"I am, and there is none besides me."

<sup>11</sup>Disaster will come upon you,  
and you will not know how to conjure it away.

- '...before another fall!'

A calamity will fall upon you  
that you cannot ward off with a ransom;  
a catastrophe you cannot foresee  
will suddenly come upon you.

<sup>12</sup>'Keep on, then, with your magic spells  
and with your many sorceries,  
which you have laboured at since childhood.

- 'sURe, kEeP gOinG wITh yOuR mAgIC!'

Perhaps you will succeed,  
perhaps you will cause terror.

- 'your idiot advisors...'

<sup>13</sup> All the counsel you have received has only worn you out!

Let your astrologers come forward,  
those stargazers who make predictions month by month,  
let them save you from what is coming upon you.

- '...will all be judged!'

<sup>14</sup> Surely they are like stubble;

the fire will burn them up.  
They cannot even save themselves  
from the power of the flame.

These are not coals for warmth;

this is not a fire to sit by.

<sup>15</sup> That is all they are to you –

these you have dealt with  
and laboured with since childhood.

All of them go on in their error;

there is not one that can save you.

Apologetic

Is your version of God 'allowed' to judge Babylon this fiercely? Why?

**For reflection on Isaiah 46-47**

In Isaiah 40–55, God addresses an exiled Judah, who has 'settled' for life in Babylon, which *feels* safer than trusting in God. Stubborn-hearted Judah (46:12) feels that God's promised 2<sup>nd</sup> Exodus (eternal life) seems rather risky and too good to be true. At least with Babylon and idols, they know what they are getting...!

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|------------|---|
| Diagnostic | 1. In what way(s) are you most tempted to 'settle for Babylon' instead of living for God's new creation?                          |
| 46:1-13    | 2. What do you find visually compelling in this prophecy? Why?  |
|            | 3. How do you feel about the way God contrasts (a) his <i>carrying</i> Judah, with (b) their idols needing <i>to be carried</i> ? |
|            | 4. How does this passage help you to no longer 'settle for Babylon' and instead trust God's promise of eternal life?              |
| 47:1-15    | 5. Is your version of God 'allowed' to judge Babylon this fiercely? Why?  |
|            | 6. What parts of this prophecy caught your eye, and why?  |
|            | 7. How do these verses undermine your 'settling for Babylon'?   |
|            | 8. What differences would you see in your life if you knew these verses better?   |
| Prayer     | 9. Are there particular areas which you need to repent of or pray for?  |