**Isaiah 41-44**

The Helper of Israel

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

**2**“Who has stirred up one from the east,
    calling him in righteousness to his service[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+41-44&version=NIV#fen-NIV-18454a)]?
He hands nations over to him
    and subdues kings before him.
He turns them to dust with his sword,
    to windblown chaff with his bow.
**3**He pursues them and moves on unscathed,
    by a path his feet have not traveled before.
**4**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.”

**5**The islands have seen it and fear;
    the ends of the earth tremble.
They approach and come forward;
**6**    they help each other
    and say to their companions, “Be strong!”
**7**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 it will not topple.

**8**“But you, Israel, my servant,
    Jacob, whom I have chosen,
    you descendants of Abraham my friend,
**9**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.
**10**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.

**11**“All who rage against you
    will surely be ashamed and disgraced;
those who oppose you
    will be as nothing and perish.
**12**Though you search for your enemies,
    you will not find them.
Those who wage war against you
    will be as nothing at all.
**13**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.
**14**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.
**15**“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.
**16**You will winnow them, the wind will pick them up,
    and a gale will blow them away.
But you will rejoice in the Lord
    and glory in the Holy One of Israel.

**17**“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.
**18**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.
**19**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,
**20**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.

**21**“Present your case,” says the Lord.
    “Set forth your arguments,” says Jacob’s King.
**22**“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,
**23**    tell us what the future holds,
    so we may know that you are gods.
Do something, whether good or bad,
    so that we will be dismayed and filled with fear.
**24**But you are less than nothing
    and your works are utterly worthless;
    whoever chooses you is detestable.

**25**“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.
**26**Who told of this from the beginning, so we could know,
    or beforehand, so we could say, ‘He was right’?
No one told of this,
    no one foretold it,
    no one heard any words from you.
**27**I was the first to tell Zion, ‘Look, here they are!’
    I gave to Jerusalem a messenger of good news.
**28**I look but there is no one—
    no one among the gods to give counsel,
    no one to give answer when I ask them.
**29**See, they are all false!
    Their deeds amount to nothing;
    their images are but wind and confusion.

The Servant of the Lord

**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.
**2**He will not shout or cry out,
    or raise his voice in the streets.
**3**A bruised reed he will not break,
    and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out.
In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;
**4**    he will not falter or be discouraged
till he establishes justice on earth.
    In his teaching the islands will put their hope.”

**5**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:
**6**“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,
**7**to open eyes that are blind,
    to free captives from prison
    and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

**8**“I am the Lord; that is my name!
    I will not yield my glory to another
    or my praise to idols.
**9**See, the former things have taken place,
    and new things I declare;
before they spring into being
    I announce them to you.”

Song of Praise to the Lord

**10**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.
**11**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.
**12**Let them give glory to the Lord
    and proclaim his praise in the islands.
**13**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.

**14**“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.
**15**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.
**16**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.
**17**But those who trust in idols,
    who say to images, ‘You are our gods,’
    will be turned back in utter shame.

Israel Blind and Deaf

**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.

Israel’s Only Savior

**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.
**3**For I am the Lord your God,
    the Holy One of Israel, your Savior;
I give Egypt for your ransom,
    Cush and Seba in your stead.
**4**Since you are precious and honored 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 savior.
**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?”

God’s Mercy and Israel’s Unfaithfulness

**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,
    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 honor 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[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+41-44&version=NIV#fen-NIV-18528d)] me, Israel.
**23**You have not brought me sheep for burnt offerings,
    nor honored 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 offenses.

**25**“I, even I, am he who blots out
    your transgressions, for my own sake,
    and remembers your sins no more.
**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
    and Israel to scorn.

Israel the Chosen

**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,[[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+41-44&version=NIV#fen-NIV-18536f)] 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.

The Lord, Not Idols

**6**“This is what the Lord says -
    Israel’s King and Redeemer, the Lord Almighty:
I am the first and I am the last;
    apart from me there is no God.
**7**Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it.
    Let him declare and lay out before me
what has happened since I established my ancient people,
    and what is yet to come -
    yes, let them foretell what will come.
**8**Do not tremble, do not be afraid.
    Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago?
You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me?
    No, there is no other Rock; I know not one.”

**9**All who make idols are nothing,
    and the things they treasure are worthless.
Those who would speak up for them are blind;
    they are ignorant, to their own shame.
**10**Who shapes a god and casts an idol,
    which can profit nothing?
**11**People who do that will be put to shame;
    such craftsmen are only human beings.
Let them all come together and take their stand;
    they will be brought down to terror and shame.

**12**The blacksmith takes a tool
    and works with it in the coals;
he shapes an idol with hammers,
    he forges it with the might of his arm.
He gets hungry and loses his strength;
    he drinks no water and grows faint.
**13**The carpenter measures with a line
    and makes an outline with a marker;
he roughs it out with chisels
    and marks it with compasses.
He shapes it in human form,
    human form in all its glory,
    that it may dwell in a shrine.
**14**He cut down cedars,
    or perhaps took a cypress or oak.
He let it grow among the trees of the forest,
    or planted a pine, and the rain made it grow.
**15**It is used as fuel for burning;
    some of it he takes and warms himself,
    he kindles a fire and bakes bread.
But he also fashions a god and worships it;
    he makes an idol and bows down to it.
**16**Half of the wood he burns in the fire;
    over it he prepares his meal,
    he roasts his meat and eats his fill.
He also warms himself and says,
    “Ah! I am warm; I see the fire.”
**17**From the rest he makes a god, his idol;
    he bows down to it and worships.
He prays to it and says,
    “Save me! You are my god!”
**18**They know nothing, they understand nothing;
    their eyes are plastered over so they cannot see,
    and their minds closed so they cannot understand.
**19**No one stops to think,
    no one has the knowledge or understanding to say,
“Half of it I used for fuel;
    I even baked bread over its coals,
    I roasted meat and I ate.
Shall I make a detestable thing from what is left?
    Shall I bow down to a block of wood?”
**20**Such a person feeds on ashes; a deluded heart misleads him;
    he cannot save himself, or say,
    “Is not this thing in my right hand a lie?”

**21**“Remember these things, Jacob,
    for you, Israel, are my servant.
I have made you, you are my servant;
    Israel, I will not forget you.
**22**I have swept away your offenses like a cloud,
    your sins like the morning mist.
Return to me,
    for I have redeemed you.”

**23**Sing for joy, you heavens, for the Lord has done this;
    shout aloud, you earth beneath.
Burst into song, you mountains,
    you forests and all your trees,
for the Lord has redeemed Jacob,
    he displays his glory in Israel.

Jerusalem to Be Inhabited

**24**“This is what the Lord says -
    your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb:

I am the Lord,
    the Maker of all things,
    who stretches out the heavens,
    who spreads out the earth by myself,
**25**who foils the signs of false prophets
    and makes fools of diviners,
who overthrows the learning of the wise
    and turns it into nonsense,
**26**who carries out the words of his servants
    and fulfills the predictions of his messengers,

who says of Jerusalem, ‘It shall be inhabited,’
    of the towns of Judah, ‘They shall be rebuilt,’
    and of their ruins, ‘I will restore them,’
**27**who says to the watery deep, ‘Be dry,
    and I will dry up your streams,’
**28**who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd
    and will accomplish all that I please;
he will say of Jerusalem, “Let it be rebuilt,”
    and of the temple, “Let its foundations be laid.”’