**Isaiah 45-48**

**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 armor,
to open doors before him
    so that gates will not be shut:
**2**I will go before you
    and will level the mountains;
I will break down gates of bronze
    and cut through bars of iron.
**3**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.
**4**For the sake of Jacob my servant,
    of Israel my chosen,
I summon you by name
    and bestow on you a title of honor,
    though you do not acknowledge me.
**5**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,
**6**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.
**7**I form the light and create darkness,
    I bring prosperity and create disaster;
    I, the Lord, do all these things.

**8**“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.

**9**“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’?
**10**Woe to the one who says to a father,
    ‘What have you begotten?’
or to a mother,
    ‘What have you brought to birth?’

**11**“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?
**12**It is I who made the earth
    and created mankind on it.
My own hands stretched out the heavens;
    I marshaled their starry hosts.
**13**I will raise up Cyrus 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.”

**14**This is what the Lord says:

“The products of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush,
    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.’”

**15**Truly you are a God who has been hiding himself,
    the God and Savior of Israel.
**16**All the makers of idols will be put to shame and disgraced;
    they will go off into disgrace together.
**17**But Israel will be saved by the Lord
    with an everlasting salvation;
you will never be put to shame or disgraced,
    to ages everlasting.

**18**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.
**19**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.

**20**“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.
**21**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 Savior;
    there is none but me.

**22**“Turn to me and be saved,
    all you ends of the earth;
    for I am God, and there is no other.
**23**By myself I have sworn,
    my mouth has uttered in all integrity
    a word that will not be revoked:
Before me every knee will bow;
    by me every tongue will swear.
**24**They will say of me, ‘In the Lord alone
    are deliverance and strength.’”
All who have raged against him
    will come to him and be put to shame.
**25**But all the descendants of Israel
    will find deliverance in the Lord
    and will make their boast in him.

Gods of Babylon

**46**Bel bows down, Nebo stoops low;
    their idols are borne by beasts of burden.
The images that are carried about are burdensome,
    a burden for the weary.
**2**They stoop and bow down together;
    unable to rescue the burden,
    they themselves go off into captivity.

**3**“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.
**4**Even to your old age and gray 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.

**5**“With whom will you compare me or count me equal?
    To whom will you liken me that we may be compared?
**6**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.
**7**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.

**8**“Remember this, keep it in mind,
    take it to heart, you rebels.
**9**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.
**10**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.’
**11**From the east I summon a bird of prey;
    from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose.
What I have said, that I will bring about;
    what I have planned, that I will do.
**12**Listen to me, you stubborn-hearted,
    you who are now far from my righteousness.
**13**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 splendor to Israel.

The Fall of Babylon

**47**“Go down, sit in the dust,
    Virgin Daughter Babylon;
sit on the ground without a throne,
    queen city of the Babylonians.
No more will you be called
    tender or delicate.
**2**Take millstones and grind flour;
    take off your veil.
Lift up your skirts, bare your legs,
    and wade through the streams.
**3**Your nakedness will be exposed
    and your shame uncovered.
I will take vengeance;
    I will spare no one.”

**4**Our Redeemer - the Lord Almighty is his name -
    is the Holy One of Israel.

**5**“Sit in silence, go into darkness,
    queen city of the Babylonians;
no more will you be called
    queen of kingdoms.
**6**I was angry with my people
    and desecrated my inheritance;
I gave them into your hand,
    and you showed them no mercy.
Even on the aged
    you laid a very heavy yoke.
**7**You said, ‘I am forever -
    the eternal queen!’
But you did not consider these things
    or reflect on what might happen.

**8**“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.’
**9**Both of these will overtake you
    in a moment, on a single day:
    loss of children and widowhood.
They will come upon you in full measure,
    in spite of your many sorceries
    and all your potent spells.
**10**You have trusted in your wickedness
    and have said, ‘No one sees me.’
Your wisdom and knowledge mislead you
    when you say to yourself,
    ‘I am, and there is none besides me.’
**11**Disaster will come upon you,
    and you will not know how to conjure it away.
A calamity will fall upon you
    that you cannot ward off with a ransom;
a catastrophe you cannot foresee
    will suddenly come upon you.

**12**“Keep on, then, with your magic spells
    and with your many sorceries,
    which you have labored at since childhood.
Perhaps you will succeed,
    perhaps you will cause terror.
**13**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.
**14**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.
**15**That is all they are to you -
    these you have dealt with
    and labored with since childhood.
All of them go on in their error;
    there is not one that can save you.

Stubborn Israel

**48**“Listen to this, you descendants of Jacob,
    you who are called by the name of Israel
    and come from the line of Judah,
you who take oaths in the name of the Lord
    and invoke the God of Israel -
    but not in truth or righteousness -
**2**you who call yourselves citizens of the holy city
    and claim to rely on the God of Israel -
    the Lord Almighty is his name:
**3**I foretold the former things long ago,
    my mouth announced them and I made them known;
    then suddenly I acted, and they came to pass.
**4**For I knew how stubborn you were;
    your neck muscles were iron,
    your forehead was bronze.
**5**Therefore I told you these things long ago;
    before they happened I announced them to you
so that you could not say,
    ‘My images brought them about;
    my wooden image and metal god ordained them.’
**6**You have heard these things; look at them all.
    Will you not admit them?

“From now on I will tell you of new things,
    of hidden things unknown to you.
**7**They are created now, and not long ago;
    you have not heard of them before today.
So you cannot say,
    ‘Yes, I knew of them.’
**8**You have neither heard nor understood;
    from of old your ears have not been open.
Well do I know how treacherous you are;
    you were called a rebel from birth.
**9**For my own name’s sake I delay my wrath;
    for the sake of my praise I hold it back from you,
    so as not to destroy you completely.
**10**See, I have refined you, though not as silver;
    I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.
**11**For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this.
    How can I let myself be defamed?
    I will not yield my glory to another.

Israel Freed

**12**“Listen to me, Jacob,
    Israel, whom I have called:
I am he;
    I am the first and I am the last.
**13**My own hand laid the foundations of the earth,
    and my right hand spread out the heavens;
when I summon them,
    they all stand up together.

**14**“Come together, all of you, and listen:
    Which of the idols has foretold these things?
The Lord’s chosen ally
    will carry out his purpose against Babylon;
    his arm will be against the Babylonians.
**15**I, even I, have spoken; yes, I have called him.
I will bring him, and he will succeed in his mission.

**16**“Come near me and listen to this:

“From the first announcement I have not spoken in secret;
    at the time it happens, I am there.”

And now the Sovereign Lord has sent me,
    endowed with his Spirit.

**17**This is what the Lord says -
    your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel:
“I am the Lord your God,
    who teaches you what is best for you,
    who directs you in the way you should go.
**18**If only you had paid attention to my commands,
    your peace would have been like a river,
    your well-being like the waves of the sea.
**19**Your descendants would have been like the sand,
    your children like its numberless grains;
their name would never be blotted out
    nor destroyed from before me.”

**20**Leave Babylon,
    flee from the Babylonians!
Announce this with shouts of joy
    and proclaim it.
Send it out to the ends of the earth;
    say, “The Lord has redeemed his servant Jacob.”
**21**They did not thirst when he led them through the deserts;
    he made water flow for them from the rock;
he split the rock
    and water gushed out.

**22**“There is no peace,” says the Lord, “for the wicked.”