



**Carstairs-Bancroft United Church**  
April 28, 2022  
**DAILY ENCOURAGEMENT**  
**DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC**  
**By Rev. Maria Szabone Berces**



Photo: Our Daily Bread

Beloved Ones,

**Today's Inspiration in one sentence**

**“I will sustain you and I will rescue you.”**

(Isaiah 46:4)

**Did You Know?**

**AUTHOR**

**Isaiah's** name means *“The Lord is salvation”*; he was son of Amoz; and is often thought of as the greatest of the writing prophets.

He was a contemporary of Amos, Hosea and Micah, beginning his ministry in 740 BC, the year King Uzziah died. He was married and had at least two sons.

**DATE**

Theologians date the Book of Isaiah between 740 and 680 BC.

**IN TEN WORDS OR LESS**

A coming Messiah will save people from their sins.

**DETAILS**

Many of them challenge the claim that Isaiah wrote both halves of the book (chapters 1-39 and chapters 40-66) that bears his name. Yet his is the only name attached to it.

Theologians divide the book of Isaiah into these two parts: 1. The *Book of Judgement* (chapters 1-39); 2. The *Book of Comfort* (chapters 40-66).

Like most prophets, Isaiah announced the bad news of punishment for sin. But he also described a coming Messiah who would be “pierced for our transgressions, ... crushed for our iniquities; ... and by his wounds we are healed.” (53:5)

These prophecies of redemption balance the depressing promises of God's discipline against Judah and Jerusalem, which were overrun by Babylonian armies about a century later. The “Book of Comfort” (chapters 40-66) describes God's restoration of Israel, His promised salvation, and His eternal kingdom.

(The NIV Study Bible; Hebrews; & Know Your Bible; Barbour Publishing)

**Personal Insight**

Two verses of today's Scripture passage might be familiar to those of you whom birthdate I know. These are part of the E-card I send out on these special days: **“... you whom I have upheld since your birth, and have carried since you were born. 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.”** (Isaiah 46:3-4)

I believe words of encouragement like these can't be repeated enough, and with the prayer's phrasing below, God's love for us can “never grow old”. As we age, and our bodies - including our hair - is worn by the unsparing time, our merciful Creator continues to sustain and carry us through trials and challenges.

This is a stunning and comforting reassurance in all stages of our lives.

Grace and peace to you all,

Rev. Maria



## Carried by Love

*I have made you and I will carry you.*

Isaiah 46:4

### READ Isaiah 46:1 – 10

My four-year-old grandson sat on my lap and patted my bald head, studying it intently. “Papa,” he asked, “What happened to your hair?” “Oh,” I laughed, “I lost it over the years.” His face turned thoughtful: “That’s too bad,” he responded. “I’ll have to give you some of mine.”

I smiled at his compassion and pulled him close for a hug. Reflecting later on his love for me in that cherished moment also caused me to ponder God’s selfless, generous love.

G. K. Chesterton wrote: “We have sinned and grown old, and our Father is younger than we.” By this he meant that the “Ancient of Days” (Daniel 7:9) is untainted by sin’s decay—God is ageless and loves us exuberantly with a love that never falters or fades. He’s fully willing and able to fulfill the promise He made to His people in Isaiah 46: “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” (v. 4).

Five verses later He explains, “I am God, and there is none like me” (v. 9). The great “I am” (Exodus 3:14) loves us so deeply that He went to the extreme of dying on the cross to bear the full weight of our sin, so that we might turn to Him and be free of our burden and gratefully worship Him forever! – By **James Banks**

### REFLECT & PRAY

**Beautiful Savior, I’m so thankful Your love for me never grows old! Help my love for You to grow ever deeper. Amen.**

In what ways does God carry you through each day? How can you draw new strength from Him in this moment?

### SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

Through the words of Isaiah, God compares the strength of Babylonian gods to Himself. The specific gods mentioned are Bel and Nebo (Isaiah 46:1–2). Bel, also known as Marduk (Jeremiah 50:2), was the chief god of the city of Babylon and the national god of Babylonia. He was considered to be the god of order and destiny. Nabu was believed to be the son of Marduk and the one who knows all and sees all. With a twist of irony, God says that He does what these two gods can’t do—rescue His people (Isaiah 46:3–7). – By **J.R. Hudberg**

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