

Is. 61:1 *The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;*

I've referenced this scripture so often in my study of prophecy. These were the words read by Jesus in the synagogue in His hometown of Nazareth as told us by Luke. After reading this portion of scripture, He proclaimed the following:

Luke 4:21 *And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.*

From the mouth of Jesus Himself we know that this scripture refers to Him. It is through the obedient sacrifice of the Son of God that spiritual and physical healing and deliverance is provided to the people of planet earth. It stands out to me that Jesus is declaring Himself God's chosen instrument for this purpose and that He knew He had the empowerment of the Holy Spirit upon His life.

What are the good tidings Jesus taught? The message of salvation and deliverance from the judgment of sin through faith in Him, God in flesh. Those good tidings are summarized in the words of Jesus to Nicodemus.

John 3:16-17 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*

"meek" – "depressed (figuratively), in mind (gentle) or circumstances (needy, especially saintly)" Webster: "Mild of temper; not easily provoked or irritated; patient under injuries; not vain, or haughty, or resentful; forbearing; submissive."

"brokenhearted" – Webster: "Having the spirits depressed or crushed by grief or despair."

"captivity" – Interestingly, the Hebrew for this word referenced those who have been transported or lead away into captivity, which I usually associate with the Jewish people who have been taken captive and then scattered abroad throughout the earth. I believe the context and connecting factor with all the categories of people in this verse will be shown to reference the impact of sin on mankind.

"bound" – "to yoke or hitch; by analogy, to fasten in any sense, to join battle....put in bonds"

It would seem that the *meek* and the *brokenhearted* would be referencing the attitudes of those who recognized that they were *captives* and *bound* to sin. It is in our nature to be prideful and selfish; however, the revelation of our sinful condition brings us to a position of meekness. Others are pressed into an

outward expression of meekness or true brokenheartedness through oppression of wicked and unjust people—those whose lives are ruled by sin.

Brokenheartedness also results from grief and despair, which again results from the impact of sin that brought about the curse of death, sickness and sorrow to mankind. The scripture makes it clear that sin binds us and makes us a prisoner to the law. Only by the grace of God through His Son Jesus can we be freed from that captivity.

Romans 8:1–2 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Galatians 3:13–14 “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

Even if we find ourselves in physical prisons as a result of our sinful actions, we can find freedom through the saving grace of God that assures us an eternity of freedom with Him though we may have to suffer the consequences of our sin while still here on planet earth.

I was particularly struck at the Hebrew for the word *bound*. “To join battle” was the phrase that jumped out at me. The law and our sin nature form a yoke that positions us as servants of Satan and puts us at war with the very One Who wants to set us free through His grace. Once we finally surrender and put our faith in Jesus Christ, He empowers us with all the resources necessary to break that yoke and overcome the enemy and live in freedom and victory.

Is. 61:2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD...

I often use this section to example how the prophets did not always understand the timing and connection of the prophecies they gave. When Jesus came the first time as the sacrificial Lamb of God, it was a time of His delight and pleasure to provide salvation for mankind. That is why Jesus stopped reading at this point when He read this section in the synagogue at Nazareth. The rest of this chapter goes on to reference the time of wrath and vengeance (the tribulation period, the 70th week of Daniel) that will end with His coming as King of kings and describes the wondrous time of blessing and happiness that He will bring to His people.

...and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;

Is. 61:3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

Scripture makes it clear that vengeance is a right that belongs exclusively to God and that His vengeance will be directed toward those who are His adversaries/enemies..

Deuteronomy 32:35 To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence....

Psalm 94:1 O LORD God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself.

Jeremiah 46:10 For this is the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries....

Nahum 1:2 God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies.

Though God has executed judgment on the nations at various times throughout history, the time of His final vengeance and wrath before establishing the Messianic Kingdom is known as the Day of the Lord, which we associate with the tribulation as detailed in the book of Revelation. It is also described as a time when He will destroy the sinners out of the land of Israel—and this obviously hasn't happened yet.

Isaiah 13:9 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.

The following verses in Joel give emphasis to the truth that there is a coming day of the Lord that has no comparison in the past and will have no comparison in the future. I believe that day of the Lord will culminate with the battle of Armageddon as described in Revelation 19.

*Joel 2:1-2 Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for **the day of the LORD cometh**, for it is nigh at hand; A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; **there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations.***

The last phrase of verse two begins a description of what will happen beginning with the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom. (Note: I use the terms Millennial Kingdom and Messianic Kingdom interchangeably to reference the 1000 year reign of Jesus on the throne as King of kings.)

In direct contrast to the vengeance that will be taken upon His enemies, the Lord will provide comfort to all those that mourn—all those that are suffering at the hands of the wicked, all those that are looking to the Messiah for deliverance and waiting for His coming.

With verse 3 the focus narrows to Zion/Jerusalem, the city of God. During this time of tribulation God's people will have suffered greatly, and the Lord will immediately transform Jerusalem into a city of beauty, joy, praise and righteousness to His glory. The hearts of the people will be changed to reflect happiness and delight instead of sorrow and mourning. The Hebrew for *trees* indicates "strong trees" which I believe references spiritual strength in particular. They have been brought through the fire and refined as pure gold. I believe this group of people in Zion is that referenced in Zechariah.

Zechariah 13:9 And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.

Is. 61:4 And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.

Again, I believe the focus of the context here is Jerusalem and the nation of Israel in particular, but I would think it would apply to all the nations that will be a part of the Messiah's rule.

The thought provoking part of this verse is the reference to building up cities that have suffered "desolations of many generations." Maybe this is referencing the cities of Israel in particular that were destroyed by many conquerors throughout history and made desolate for many generations. The land has suffered great desolation during much of the last 2000 years in particular even though there has been great progress made in recent years to rebuild the cities of Israel.

Is. 61:5 And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers.

Throughout most of their history the Jewish people have served as slaves and servants to other nations. In the Messianic Kingdom they will be served by the Gentile nations. Obviously, their flocks and crops will be abundant to need the help of other people in maintaining and cultivating them.

Is. 61:6 But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.

I have just really noticed this verse in more recent years in my study of prophecy. We in the church have been described as a "royal priesthood" ...

1Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light....

...but that position is not unique to us alone. It also applies to the believing people of Israel that will enter the Messianic Kingdom. The privilege of the priest is to intercede between God and man. Whom will they serve as Priests? The Gentile nations. Why the Gentile nations? Because ALL of Israel will be saved from that moment on in light of the new covenant that the Lord establishes with them.

Along with the position of Priest they will also serve as Ministers to God. The Hebrew for the word *Minister* identifies one who is a worshipper and a servant. Their lives will reflect their love and obedience to the Savior—just as should ours.

The wording used indicates to me that these are titles of prestige and honor. The people of Israel will finally experience the best that the world has to offer—the wealth of the Gentile nations that have been their enemies in the past as well as the spiritual blessings that are theirs in Christ.

Is. 61:7 For your shame *ye shall have double*; and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them.

Though different words in the Hebrew, the words for *shame* and *confusion* basically mean the same—shame, disgrace, dishonor. I liked the wording of the NAS for this verse: *Instead of your shame you will have a double portion, And instead of humiliation they will shout for joy over their portion. Therefore they will possess a double portion in their land, Everlasting joy will be theirs.*

A double portion was significant in the Jewish culture as belonging to the firstborn son.

Deuteronomy 21:15-17 If a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated, and they have born him children, both the beloved and the hated; and if the firstborn son be hers that was hated: Then it shall be, when he maketh his sons to inherit that which he hath, that he may not make the son of the beloved firstborn before the son of the hated, which is indeed the firstborn: But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated for the firstborn, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath: for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his.

Israel was chosen as the “firstborn” of God among the nations. She will now be inheriting what is her due as the firstborn. She has been in a position of shame for a great many years, but that has not negated her position as the firstborn. Upon establishment of the Messianic Kingdom she will have been restored to fellowship and will receive her inheritance.

Is. 61:8 For I the LORD love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

Because He is righteous and holy, YHWH, God Almighty, loves judgment and hates robbery (things taken by violence) especially under the guise of righteous purposes. This makes me think of what I have learned about church history over the years and of the many injustices and wicked things that have been done “in the name of Christ.”

Jesus was very clear in His example. We are to win others through love and service while being obedient to His authority and His will as revealed in scripture. We are never to try to force others to accept salvation, and we are to be model citizens where we live. The only God-approved reason for disobeying His established authorities is if they direct us to disobey Him. We may not like the authorities that are in position over us, but we are to respect their position. The Lord makes it clear that it is He who sets up kings.

Daniel 2:21 And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:

1Peter 2:13-15 Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men....

In the Kingdom Age Jesus Himself will guide the work of His people—just as He does now for the believer who submits to Him. The “everlasting covenant” spoken of here I believe references the new covenant He promises Israel in the book of Jeremiah. I know I have quoted this section several times, but it is worth repeating and memorizing.

Jeremiah 31:31-33 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Is. 61:9 And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the LORD hath blessed.

The word *known* has a variety of meanings in the Hebrew. The translation that I think best expressed the thought of this verse was the NLT.

“Their descendants will be known and honored among the nations. Everyone will realize that they are a people the LORD has blessed.”

Is. 61:10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me

with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh *himself* with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth *herself* with her jewels.

After reading several translations and taking into consideration the lead in to the next chapter, I tend to think the speaker here is still Jesus. I don't think it is wrong to picture the Father giving honorable garments to His Son. It doesn't mean that the Son didn't already possess the traits being referenced; it is just an outward display of the Father's pleasure in the obedience of His Son. Jesus has the right to wear a garment honoring salvation since He is the source of that salvation for mankind. He deserves to wear a glorious robe of righteousness since He is righteousness embodied in the flesh. The last phrase of verse 10 makes it clear that these garments are adornments and ornaments of beauty. On earth the first time He "had no beauty that we should desire Him" (Isaiah 53:2). When He comes the second time as King, He will be greatly desired and honored.

Is. 61:11 For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.

The Lord uses the prophet to paint a word picture with this verse. Just as surely as the seeds planted in the earth produce beautiful plants when nurtured by the soil, rain, and sunshine, so too will the LORD GOD, Almighty Maker of heaven and earth, plant and nurture seeds of righteousness and praise that will produce beautiful fruit in mankind—especially in Israel, but also in all the nations.