

Weekly Scripture and Sermon Study: History & Context Guide

Isaiah 61:1-4; 8-11

History, Culture, & Context

This section of Isaiah is known as “The Coming of the Messiah” and “The Good News of Deliverance”. This section describes the ministry of the Messiah in both His first coming (vv. 1-2) and His second coming (vv. 2-3). This section highlights the promise of the Israelites’ redemption!

In verses 1-4, we read “The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor.” In Luke 4:14-21, Jesus invokes these verses from Isaiah to announce Himself and His mission! The day the Messiah returns (Christ’s Second Coming) will be “The day of vengeance” and He will comfort those who mourn.



In Verse 4, we see that when the Messiah returns, Israel “will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations.” This section also speaks of “strangers’ or those foreign to Israel coming and joining them in the labor of farming and shepherding and doing the work.

In verses 8-11, we see the Lord speak in vv. 8-9, and then the prophet resumes the narrative in vv. 10-11. The Lord blesses Israel with “...an everlasting covenant” and “Their descendants shall be known among the nations...and “all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed.” Verses 10-11 speaks of Israel as the redeemed that rejoices in God’s blessing for them. Israel “will rejoice and praise in the Lord”. Salvation and righteousness are depicted as clothing worn by a bride and groom. As a bride and groom are dressed with “garland” and “jewels”, so Israel is clothed with righteousness. The Life Application Study Bible commentary explains, “The imagery of the bridegroom is often used in Scripture to depict the Messiah (see Matthew 9:15), while the imagery of the bride is used to depict God’s people (see Revelation 19:6-8).”

This section concludes with, “For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow so the Sovereign Lord will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.”

Questions to Consider

1. When did Jesus quote this section of Isaiah? Why and what was His purpose?
2. Read Luke 4:14-21. What do you think those in the temple were thinking when Jesus said this passage from Isaiah was being fulfilled?
3. Reflect on a time when God turned your “ashes”(v.3) into beauty?
4. What is the “everlasting covenant” described in v. 8?