

ISAIAH 61 (NIV): “Recovery under the Perfect Ruler”

MESSIAH’S MISSION: RESTORE ABUNDANCE AND JOY FOR THE OPPRESSED

The **Spirit** of the **Sovereign LORD** is on **me**, because the LORD has anointed **me** to *preach* 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 *provide for* those who **grieve** in Zion —
to *bestow* on them a crown of beauty instead of **ashes**,
the oil of gladness instead of **mourning**,
and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of **despair**.

MESSIAH’S FOLLOWERS LEAD THE RESTORATION

They will be called oaks of righteousness,
a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor.
They will *rebuild* the ancient **ruins**
and *restore* the places long **devastated**;
they will *renew* the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations.

GOD’S PEOPLE AGAIN BECOME A COMMUNITY LIVING IN SHALOM

Aliens will shepherd your flocks;
foreigners will work your fields and vineyards.
And you will be *called* priests of the LORD,
you will be *named* ministers of our God.
You will *feed on* the wealth of nations, and in their riches you will *boast*.
Instead of their **shame** **my people** will *receive* a double portion,
and instead of **disgrace** they will *rejoice in their inheritance*;
and so they will *inherit* a double portion in their land,
and everlasting joy will be theirs.

GOD’S JUST AND FAITHFUL NATURE GAURUNTEES THIS PROMISE LASTS FOREVER

For I, the LORD, *love justice*; I *hate* robbery and iniquity.
In my faithfulness I will reward them
and make an everlasting covenant with them.

GOD’S BLESSING IS THE ULTIMATE PROMISE

Their **descendants** will be known among the nations
and their **offspring** among the peoples.
All who see them will acknowledge that they are a **people** the **LORD** has blessed.”

ONLY THE MESSIAH WILL DESERVE HONOR FOR THE CHANGE

I delight greatly in the LORD; **my soul** rejoices in my God.
• For he has *clothed me* with garments of salvation
and *arrayed me* in a robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
• 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.”

ISAIAH 61 STUDY KEY:

By using color to highlight the text it is easier visualize the simple themes in this passage. By dividing the text into thought paragraphs, the logic becomes clear.

<p>Red – People of God living in a community blessing, “shalom”</p> <p>Blue – God and the Messiah rule. Their will is sovereign.</p> <p>Black – Nouns and adjectives describing oppression</p> <p><u>Underline</u> – Nouns and adjectives describing blessing</p> <p><i>Italic</i> – Verbs indicating action required to achieve restoration</p> <p>Box – Underlying nature of God that is central to accomplishing His will</p> <p>GREEN – Interpretive titles not present in the original text.</p>
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COMMENTS:

The mission and motto of Leading Edge is derived from the text of this prophecy written by Isaiah. The prophet predicted a “year” when a just king (clearly Israel’s Messiah by the characteristics given this king) arrives to rescue the people of Israel from sadness, poverty and oppression and restore them to joy, justice and plenty. A “day” would also come when this king paid back the oppressors for the humiliation and suffering they unjustly caused.

When Jesus announced his mission at a Scripture reading in Nazareth, Luke reports he turned to this passage in Isaiah and used it to say “the year of the Lord’s favor” had arrived (Luke 4.18-19). Appropriately, he stopped in the middle of a sentence and did not announce “the day of vengeance”. The nature of Jesus’ mission was to bring about the recovery and blessing promised by a faithful God. This he clearly reaffirmed later when he reminded John who was in prison of this same passage (Luke 7.22). Jesus’ mother Mary when singing of her joy of being chosen as the Messiah’s mother also used the language and images of Isaiah promising God’s favor was near (Luke 1.47).

Later when Israel condemns their Messiah to death, they nullify this incredible opportunity Jesus was offering: to usher in God’s “reign of righteousness and blessing” or “shalom.” Rejected now by those He came to help, Jesus waits for the “day of vengeance” to be announced when God’s hammer of justice will fall. Final punishment and reward will then be meted out.

Jesus has not forgotten his mission to restore abundance and beauty for the oppressed. Nor will we forget until he returns to finish the work he began.

How remarkable that these words penned 2700 years ago are relevant today for the highest dreams of modern people and the desire for ultimate justice.