



## Isaiah 61.<sup>1-3</sup>— Meditation

---

<sup>1</sup>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;  
<sup>2</sup>to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD,  
and the day of vengeance of our God;  
to comfort all that mourn;  
<sup>3</sup>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.

### **m**editation

---

From the moment of its composition and utterance, this beautiful passage undoubtedly served as comfort and encouragement to every “meek,” every “heart broken;” to all “captives” and “prisoners,” who heard the promise. These and many other vulnerable populations had been abused and belittled and oppressed by their persecutors and prosecutors for as long as the historical record runs. Perhaps even worse, these vulnerable populations all too often yielded to their oppressors’ propaganda, coming to believe themselves to be of little worth and filled with insecurity, and a sense of inferiority.

But, through Isaiah, the Lord had “good tidings” for such beleaguered souls. Isaiah told of a time of healing and liberty and opening; “a time of the Lord’s acceptance;” a time when God would accept and value all those rejected and discarded by this world and its twisted values.

Luke reports that immediately after his forty-day ordeal in the desert, Jesus traveled to his home town of Nazareth where he visited the synagogue, and, according to his habit, read a passage of scripture—on this occasion choosing to read these verses from Isaiah. Upon completing the reading, Jesus announced,

“This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.”<sup>1</sup>

With Jesus’ endorsement of the passage and his adoption of its values as guide to his ministry, the promised comfort and encouragement of the passage surely expanded to include many more similarly vulnerable individuals and populations with which this world abounds.

---

<sup>1</sup> Luke 4.<sup>21</sup>

Jesus would reveal as no other before or after him the vast extent of God's appreciative and accepting character. This would come as especially good news to those so long accustomed to belittlement and abuse. Imagine how they felt after their long winter of insecurity and suggested inferiority! Imagine the utter and complete reversal of fortune. Imagine the comfort of casting off the sackcloth that had so long chafed their souls, and having their seared consciences clothed in the softness of pure linen. Imagine the newfound sense of tree-like strength because of the husbandman's care and skill. Imagine the praise they offered to God because of his acceptance of them.

Actually, it is to be hoped that we are not under the necessity of imagining the accepting nature of God that brings such healing and liberation. Hopefully, we number ourselves among the fortunate unfortunates who have felt and experienced the accepting character of a God who cannot be praised or glorified enough.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

*(edition: april 22, 2024)*