

Isaiah 61-63:6**THE GRANDEUR OF THE LORD'S FAVOR AND THE GLORY OF ZION****Some Questions for Isaiah 61-63:6****The Good News of Deliverance**

61 The Sovereign LORD has filled me with his Spirit.

*"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me"
Because the LORD has anointed Me
To preach good tidings to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives,
And the opening of the prison to those who are bound;*

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the "poor" (KJV "meek") ([Isa 61:1](#));

You remember when John the Baptist was in prison and John did not understand the prophecies concerning Jesus Christ? John was expecting Him to establish the kingdom momentarily. Jesus is announcing that the Kingdom of God is near. But John wasn't seeing what he expected to see. So, when John was sitting there in prison for a while, he started getting impatient and sent his disciples to Jesus to ask, "Are you the One that we're to look for? Or shall we start looking for someone else?" In other words, "When are You going to get the show on the road? I'm tired of this prison life."

Now John knew that Jesus was the One because he testified of Jesus that the Lord had told him whoever he saw the Spirit descending upon and remaining, that that was the One. And John saw and testified of the Spirit of God descending upon Jesus and resting upon Him there at His baptism. So he knew He was the One, and yet because Jesus wasn't moving right into the kingdom and setting up the kingdom and throwing out the Romans and all of this, he said, "Are you the One or shall we look for another?"

And Jesus did not directly answer John's little inquisition. There may have been more than just a question here. That same day, Jesus had healed many of the sick and He opened up the blind eyes and caused the lame to walk and so forth. And then He said to his disciples, "Just go tell John what you have seen—how that the blind have had their eyes opened, the deaf hear, the lame are walking, and to the poor the gospel is being preached. I'm fulfilling the prophecies, John. You know the Word. You know the Scriptures. I'm doing the things that the Scriptures said. You don't need a direct answer; yes, I am the Messiah. Just go back and tell John the things that you see. John knows the Scriptures well enough. He'll know that I am the One. You don't need to look for anybody else."

² (B) *He has sent me to proclaim
That the time has come
When the LORD will save his people "the favorable year of the LORD" (NASB)
And defeat their enemies.
He has sent me to comfort all who mourn,*

Jesus read this passage from Isaiah 61 in the synagogue in Nazareth. Then he rolled up the scroll, looked at the congregation and said, "*This Scripture has come true today before your very eyes!*" Jesus applied this prophecy of Isaiah, talking about the activity of God's anointed Messiah, to himself! (Luke 4:21).

In 61:2, the next phrase is, "*And with it, the day of God's anger against their enemies*". This is in the same passage, but Jesus didn't read that part. He stopped before this sentence. Why? You guys had this question in your table groups, right? I think Jesus didn't want to confuse His listeners. They may have equated Messiah's coming with immediate political freedom for Israel, immediate military deliverance. Looking back, we know that this deliverance won't come true until Jesus returns to earth again. For now, we are under God's favor. God's wrath is yet to come. Revelation talks a lot about that. You'll see plenty of God's judgment and wrath there. Thank God that we live under God's grace & favor in Christ!

³ *To give to those who mourn in Zion
Joy and gladness instead of grief,
A song of praise instead of sorrow.
They will be like trees – "they will be called oaks of righteousness" (New King James version)
That the LORD himself has planted.
They will all do what is right,
And God will be praised for what he has done – "that He may be glorified."*

Song by Crystal Lewis:

**"He gives beauty for ashes
Strength for fear
Gladness for mourning
Peace for despair**

**When sorrow seems to surround you
When suffering hangs heavy over your head
Know that tomorrow brings
Wholeness and healing
God knows your need
Just believe what He said**

**He gives beauty for ashes
Strength for fear
Gladness for mourning
Peace for despair**

⁴They will rebuild cities that have long been in ruins.

⁵My people, foreigners will serve you.
They will take care of your flocks
And farm your land and tend your vineyards.

⁶**And you will be known as the priests of the LORD,**
The servants of our God. *“Ministers of our God”*
You will enjoy the wealth of the nations
And be proud that it is yours.

1. **61:6**—“Priests of the Lord”— See also Exodus 19:6—“*And you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.* Notice the conditional clause though: [if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant] Ex.19:5
2. In the Old Covenant, God ordained the priests of Israel to stand between him and his people. They brought the peoples’ needs and sins—through the animal sacrifices—to God. They also bring God’s word and its explanation to the people.
3. The great Reformation of the Christian Church began in earnest, following Martin Luther’s nailing of the 95 Theses on the Wittenberg Door in Germany. He began with a scathing critique of abuses in the Catholic Church. As the PROTEST rolled on, Luther continued to compare the practices of the Catholic Church, with what he read plainly in the New Testament. In 1520, Luther wrote in German a pamphlet called “An Open Letter to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate”. “Luther attacked the “three walls” that the [Roman] papacy had built around itself:
 1. **the distinction between the clergy and the laity;**
 2. the right of the pope to decide the interpretation of Scripture;
 3. and the pope’s exclusive right to summon a general council of the Church.” Will Durant, *The Reformation*, pp. 352-353. “First, there is no real difference between clergy and laity; every Christian is made a priest by baptism...Second, since every Christian is a priest, he has the right to interpret the Scriptures according to his own light. Third, Scripture should be our final authority for doctrine or practice.”
 4. “The most revolutionary item in Luther’s theology was his dethronement of the priest. He allowed for priests, not as indispensable dispensers of the sacraments, nor as privileged mediators with God, but only as servants chosen by each congregation to minister to its spiritual wants. Monks should abandon their selfish and often idle isolation, should marry and labor with the rest.” Will Durant, *The Reformation*, p. 376.
 5. This was a major correction in the Church that was long overdue! As Christians we are all priests and servants of the New Covenant! Don’t wait around for the pastor to show up or do something: you are empowered to minister for the Gospel! I love it when someone asks if they can baptize a friend or a family member whom they have shared the Gospel and led to Christ. Any believer can serve the Communion elements at Eastside! We have hundreds of teachers and small group leaders here. Most of your teachers are not clergy. So kudos for putting into practice this prophetic Scripture, “*And you will be known as priests of the LORD, servants of our God.*”

⁷ Your shame and disgrace are ended.
 You will live in your own land,
 And your wealth will be doubled;
 Your joy will last forever.

⁸ The LORD says,

“I love justice and I hate oppression and crime.

I will faithfully reward my people

And **make an eternal covenant** with them. *“and make an everlasting covenant with them”* This is the NEW COVENANT! Jesus said, *“This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you”* (Luke 22:20).

⁹ They—WHO?-- The people with whom God makes an eternal covenant with! That is you and me, in Christ! *“They will be famous among the nations; Everyone who sees them will know That they are a people whom I have blessed.”*

¹⁰ *“I am overwhelmed with joy in the LORD my God! For he has dressed me with the clothing of salvation and draped me in a robe of righteousness.”* (NLT) *“I am clothed with garments of salvation”* When you are in the New Covenant with Christ, you should be filled with joy! God has dressed you up—dressed you up as the saying goes ☺--with His own salvation and righteousness! Compare this passage with Paul in Philippians 3:8-9, *“...that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith...”*

Do you see here, over and over again, the Old Testament is really the “New Testament concealed”, and the New Testament is “The Old Testament revealed”?!

Song: “My hope is built on nothing less
 Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness
 I dare not trust the sweetest frame
 But wholly lean on Jesus’ name
 On Christ the solid Rock I stand
 All other ground is sinking sand; all other ground is sinking sand”

Friends, I really love weddings! I am privileged to officiate quite a few of them! It is such a joy to have one of the best seats in the house, and to help the Bride and Groom exchange their vows to God, and to each other. It is such a celebratory atmosphere! One of the most challenging parts for me is to try and “keep an emotional lid” on things, so they can calmly get through the wedding ceremony, before the reception and the party begins!

The Groom is dressed up in a tux or a nice suit, he gets a haircut, maybe even a manicure, and he is looking good. One of my favorite moments in the wedding, and often one of the best surprises is when, at the beginning of the wedding ceremony, the doors are swung open, and the Bride is revealed. Now, usually I have met with the bride and groom a few times before the wedding, and it’s casual, and she looks pretty normal. But not at that moment on her wedding day! That bride

is really dressed up, made up, beautified to the max, and she looks RADIANT! She's waited most of her life for that glorious moment, and she is BEAUTIFUL!

And God says in Isaiah 61:10b—just after your memory verse—*"I am like a Bridegroom in his wedding suit, or a bride with her jewels."*

¹¹ As surely as seeds sprout and grow,
The Sovereign LORD will save his people,
And all the nations will praise him.

62 I will speak out to encourage Jerusalem;
I will not be silent until she is saved,
And her victory shines like a torch in the night.

² Jerusalem, the nations will see you victorious! *"the nations will see your righteousness"*
All their kings will see your glory.
You will be called by a new name, In Revelation 2, in Jesus' letter to the Church in Pergamum—Jesus will give "a new name, engraved on a white stone" to whoever overcomes.
I want to received that white stone with a new name on it!

- 1. 62:2**—Prophecy for Zion: *"You will be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will bestow"* What does each new name (Hephzibah and Beulah) indicate about God's relationship with His people? "Hephzibah" means "my delight is in her"; and "Beulah" means "married." **What was Zion's name in the past? "Deserted" and "desolate".** But not anymore!!

³ You will be like a beautiful crown for the LORD.

⁴ No longer will you be called "Forsaken,"
Or your land be called "The Deserted Wife."

To the Church—the new Israel—the Apostle Peter writes, *"Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy"* I Peter 2:10.

Your new name will be "Hephzibah"--"God Is Pleased with Her." *"My delight is in her"*
Your land will be called "Happily Married," = "Beulah"
Because the LORD is pleased with you
And will be like a husband to your land.

⁵ Like a young man taking a virgin as his bride,
He who formed you will marry you.
As a groom is delighted with his bride,
So your God will delight in you.

- 1. Do you normally think of God in terms of a loving bridegroom, waiting for his bride?**

2. **62:6**—*“I have posted watchmen [sentries] on your walls, O Jerusalem;”* What are these watchmen to be doing? (hint: not warning of an enemy attack) No sir! They are to be praying fervently, to “give [the Lord] no rest...till he establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth” (vs. 7).

Are you joining those “watchmen”, praying for the peace of Jerusalem until GOD establishes her as the praise of the whole earth?

Jump down to Isaiah 62, verse 10:

¹⁰ *People of Jerusalem, go out of the city
And build a road for your returning people!
Prepare a highway; clear it of stones!*

Put up a signal so that the nations can know = “Raise a banner for the nations”!

God will indeed gather His people out of every land!

Folks, that is you and me: the Gentiles; those who were far off...

¹¹ (D) That the LORD is announcing to all the earth:
“Tell the people of Jerusalem
That the LORD is coming to save you,
Bringing with him the people he has rescued.”

John the Apostle quotes Jesus Himself saying these very words, to God’s people in Revelation 22:12-13—*“Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.”*

And also in Revelation 11:18, *“Lord God Almighty...the time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great...”* In Revelation, there are three groups of people who receive rewards: 1) God’s servants the prophets (18:20; 22:9); 2) the Saints (19:8; 20:9); and “those who reverence God’s name (14:7; 15:4).

1. **62:11**—*“Say to the Daughter of Zion, ‘See, your Savior comes! See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him.’”*

¹² You will be called “God’s Holy People,”
“The People the LORD Has Saved.”
Jerusalem will be called “The City That God Loves,”
“The City That God Did Not Forsake.”

The Lord's Victory over the Nations

63 Who is this coming from the city of Bozrah in Edom? Who is this so splendidly dressed in red, marching along^[a] in power and strength?"

It is the LORD, powerful to save, coming to announce his victory.

² "Why is his clothing so red, like that of someone who tramples grapes to make wine?"

³ (E)The LORD answers, "I have trampled the nations like grapes, and no one came to help me. I trampled them in my anger, and their blood has stained all my clothing. 14—tread winepress

⁴ I decided that the time to save my people had come; it was time to punish their enemies.

⁵ (G)I was amazed when I looked and saw that there was no one to help me. But my anger made me strong, and I won the victory myself. *"So my own arm brought salvation to me"*

⁶ In my anger I trampled whole nations and shattered them. I poured out their lifeblood on the ground."

10. **63:1-6** "Edom", a symbol for God's enemies, means "red". So what might these symbols used in vs. 1-6 mean? **How is "Edom" the opposite of what God is doing in Zion?**

"I trampled them in my anger and trod them down in my wrath...I trampled the nations in my anger; in my wrath I made them drunk and poured their blood on the ground" (Isaiah 63:3, 6).

Compare this Isaiah judgment passage to Revelation 14:10-11—"He—[whoever worships the beast and his statue or accepts his mark]—He too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath...There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name."

Later in Revelation 14—verses 18-20—"Take your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the earth's vine, because its grapes are ripe. The angel swung his sickle on the earth, gathered its grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God's wrath. They were trampled in the winepress outside the city, and blood flowed out of the press, rising as high as horses' bridles for a distance of 1,600 stadia [180 miles]."

So Friends, I see three pictures in this grand passage of Isaiah's prophecy:

1. Messiah was coming, to heal, to pour out compassion, and to proclaim the Good News (this has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ—Jesus said this is fulfilled in your hearing)

2. Israel's future is glorious! Glorious for the Church now, clothed in God's favor and adorned in Christ's righteousness; and glorious in the future for Israel!

3. God's Judgment on His enemies will be terrible! You don't want anyone to be under God's wrath, for those who reject the Good News of Christ.

**In God's grace in Christ, we get something great that we do NOT deserve.
In God's wrath, a person gets what he or she DOES deserve.**

Let's be a herald of Good News, while *"God is still being patient for your sake, not wanting anyone to perish but for all to come to repentance"* 2 Peter 3:9

Every day that Jesus has NOT yet returned, is a day of GRACE, and a day where a person can still turn away from an empty life, and come to know their Creator and Redeemer, the One who can't wait to lavish His love and righteousness upon him. AMEN?

Let's live out each day, joyful in His grace and favor...

1. What stories from the Gospels portray Jesus' ministry in terms of 61:1-3?

2. How do these verses relate to your experiences upon hearing the Good News?

1. Question for you: What would your family, co-workers and the people around you say? Are you still "wearing ashes", or have you tried on the new clothes, of a "crown of beauty", "the oil of gladness", and a "garment of praise"?