

The Everlasting Covenant

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

SS Lesson for 09/25/2016

Devotional Scripture: Gen 17:1-9

OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW AND KEY VERSE OF THE LESSON

Key Verse: Isa 61:8

Commentary from The Bible Knowledge Commentary

Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

LESSON INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

THE MESSIAH'S ROLE IN THE EVERLASTING COVENANT (ISAIAH 61:1-4)

To heal (1)

Physical healing (Matt 14:14)

Spiritual healing (Isa 53:5)

Healing to prove Jesus' Divinity (Matt 11:2-5)

Healing through His abiding (John 15:1-4)

Healing through growth in faith (2 Thess 1:3)

Healing through growth in knowledge of Jesus (2 Peter 3:18)

To free (1)

Freedom through God's word (Ps 119:45)

Freedom through Jesus' ministry (Luke 4:18)

Freedom through the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 3:17)

Freedom because Jesus has set us free (Gal 5:1)

Freedom through the calling of God (Gal 5:13)

To proclaim His favor (2)

Proclamation of His salvation (2 Cor 6:2)

Proclamation of His covenant (Isa 49:8)

Proclamation that should not be refused (Heb 3:7-8)

Proclamation that is living and active (Heb 4:12)

Proclamation of the kingdom of God (Luke 9:60)

To comfort (3)

Comfort so that we can comfort others (2 Cor 1:3-4)

Comfort to share in all things with others (2 Cor 1:7)

Comfort awaiting us in Heaven (2 Cor 4:17)

Comfort knowing that God will never forsake (Isa 12:1-2)

Comfort through God's love (Phil 2:1-2)

To restore (4)

Restoration that cannot be hindered by distance (Deut 30:4)

Restoration that proves God's grace (2 Chron 30:9)

Restoration that is promised (Acts 3:21)

Restoration of the soul (Ps 23:3)

Restoration of joy (Ps 51:12)

Restoration of God's pleasure (Ps 85:4)

THE MESSIAH'S FULFILLMENT OF THE EVERLASTING COVENANT (ISAIAH 61:8-11)

Through justice (8)

God is just because He judges with righteousness (Ps 9:8)

God is just because He is the only one who justifies (Rom 8:33)

God is just because He is perfect (Deut 32:4)

God is just because He loves justice (Ps 99:4)

God is just because He exercises righteousness (Jer 9:24)

God is just because He does not fail in His righteousness (Zeph 3:5)

Through prosperity (9)

Prosperity through well-being (Ps 35:27)

Prosperity through righteousness (Ps 92:12-14)

Prosperity through delighting in God's word (Ps 1:1-3)
Prosperity through remaining in Jesus (John 15:3-5)
Prosperity into old age (Isa 46:4)
Prosperity through the fear of the Lord (Ps 128:1-2)

Through salvation (10)

Salvation promised through the gospel (Rom 1:16)
Salvation hoped for through faith (1 Thess 5:8)
Salvation made wise through the Bible (2 Tim 3:15)
Salvation at the second coming of Jesus (Heb 9:27-28)
Salvation that is an inheritance (1 Peter 1:3-5)

Through righteousness (11)

A righteousness that brings eternal life (Rom 5:21)
A righteousness that we have in Jesus (1 Cor 1:30)
A righteousness that God made through Jesus (2 Cor 5:21)
A righteousness that we have faith and hope in (Gal 5:5)
A righteousness that comes from God through faith (Phil 3:9)

CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS

COMMENTARY THOUGHTS FROM THOMAS CONSTABLE
CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE NIV STANDARD LESSON COMMENTARY
PRACTICAL POINTS FROM THE BIBLE EXPOSITOR AND ILLUMINATOR COMMENTARY

Introduction

Overview and Key Verse of the Lesson

The lesson reviews the features of **The Everlasting Covenant** God made with Israel. The **study's aim** is to trust the sovereign God to fulfill His promises. The **study's application** is to rely on the promises of God for aid in any present struggle.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

Key Verse: Isa 61:8

For I, the Lord, love justice; I hate robbery for burnt offering; I will direct their work in truth, and will make with them an everlasting covenant.

Commentary from The Bible Knowledge Commentary

61:1-3. In verse 1 all three Persons of the Trinity are mentioned: the **Spirit... the Sovereign LORD**, and the Messiah. Three factors indicate that **Me** refers to the Messiah: (1) The association of the Holy Spirit with the anointing points to Jesus Christ. After being anointed with oil, Israel's first two kings, Saul and David, were blessed with the Spirit's ministry (1 Sam. 10:1, 10; 16:13). Similarly Christ was anointed by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:16-17) to be Israel's King. The Hebrew word for Messiah (*māšāḥ*) means "the Anointed One," and Christ (*christos*, from *chriō*, "to anoint") is the Greek equivalent of *māšāḥ*. (2) Part of this passage (Isa. 61:1-2a) was read by Jesus (Luke 4:18-19) in reference to Himself. (3) The mission of this Anointed One was Jesus' ministry: to **preach good news**, to heal and free (Isa. 61:1; cf. 42:7), to **proclaim... favor and... vengeance** (61:2), and to **comfort** (vv. 2-3). When Jesus read from this passage He stopped in the middle of the sentence, after the word "favor" (Luke 4:18-19). By doing this He was showing that His work would be divided into two advents. In His First Advent He did the things mentioned in Isaiah 61:1-2a; in His Second Advent He will do the things in verses 2b-3. When He returns He will bring judgment on unbelievers (Micah 5:15; Rev. 19:15-20); this will be **the day of God's "vengeance"** (cf. Isa. 34:8; 35:4; 63:4). But the Messiah will also "comfort" Israel, for she will have undergone great persecution, the Great Tribulation, in the preceding years (cf. Dan. 7:21, 24-25; Rev. 12:13-17). When the Messiah comes He will change believing Israelites' sadness to joy, a truth Isaiah mentioned frequently. In place of **ashes**, put on one's head as a sign of mourning (cf. 2 Sam. 13:19; Es. 4:1; Dan 9:3), they will wear **a crown**. Light olive **oil**, when applied to one's face and hair, would soothe him and brighten his spirits (cf. Pss. 23:5; 45:7; 104:15; Ecc. 9:8; Matt. 6:17; Heb. 1:9), thus dispelling **mourning**. Another sign of joy is a bright **garment** (cf. Ecc. 9:7-8). Israel will be righteous (cf. Isa. 54:14; 58:8; 60:21; 62:1-2) and like stalwart oak trees will **display God's splendor** (cf. 35:2; 46:13; 49:3; 55:5; 60:9, 21; 62:3).

61:4-9. After the Messiah's Second Advent Israel **will rebuild her ruined cities**, even those that had been destroyed many years before. Israel will be so revered that Gentiles (**aliens and foreigners**) will join her (cf. 14:1; 60:10) in her farming and shepherding. As a nation of **priests** each one will know **the LORD**, and have access to Him, and mediate on behalf of others, as did the Levitical priests. This was to be one of Israel's functions in the world (Ex. 19:6), but unfortunately she will not fully carry out that responsibility till in the Millennium. **Nations** will bring their **wealth** to Israel (see comments on Isa. 60:5, 11). The **double portion** refers to the inheritance the eldest son in a family would receive from his father's estate (Deut. 21:17). The eldest son was given special honor. Similarly Israel, like the Lord's firstborn (Ex. 4:22), will be honored. Because of these blessings and God's giving Israel **an everlasting covenant** (the New Covenant; cf. Jer. 32:40; Ezek. 16:60; 37:26; Heb. 13:20), people everywhere **will acknowledge that** she is indeed God's special **people**.

61:10-11. In these verses the prophet seems to be speaking for the redeemed remnant who will rejoice (cf. comments on 9:3) in response to God's blessings mentioned in 61:1-9. **Salvation** and **righteousness** are pictured as clothes worn by the people (cf. God's "clothes," 59:17). In other words the Israelites are characterized by salvation (God's redeemed people) and righteousness (those who are living by God's standards; cf. 58:8; 60:21). To picture their joy and blessing **a bridegroom** wore a fancy headgear, like a priest's turban, and the **bride** wore costly jewelry. God will cause Israel's **righteousness to spring up** in (be known by) other **nations** (cf. 61:11; 62:1-2) much **as the soil** sustains the growth of plants.

Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

Isaiah 61 begins with a description of the coming Messiah and His work. He would preach good news to the poor and afflicted and deliver the oppressed and those imprisoned by their sin. This refers to His work at His first coming. However, the "day of vengeance of our God" (vs. 2) refers to Christ's second coming, when He will return as conquering King. Jesus Himself made this distinction in Nazareth by reading only the first portion of the passage and declaring that it was fulfilled that day (Luke 4:18-21). The remainder of Isaiah 61, beginning with "the day of vengeance of our God" (vs. 2), refers to the Messiah's second coming and events related to it. Specifically, the verses detail the blessings Christ will bring at His second advent to His people, Israel (cf. vs. 9). In speaking to His chosen people, the Lord promised that the shame they had experienced through the centuries would be replaced by blessing (Isa. 61:7). The converted remnant of Israel will be elevated to a place of honor in Christ's millennial kingdom and experience "everlasting joy." Isaiah 61:8 explains that God's very character guarantees that His promises to Israel will be kept. He loves "judgment," or justice, as the word is best translated here. He is just in His character (Deut. 32:4). He can do only that which is right, and this assures us that ultimately all injustice will be dealt with and everything will be set right. While God loves justice, He hates "robbery for burnt offering" (Isa. 61:8). This expression is difficult to understand. Some take it as a reference to the hypocrisy of those who rob others while continuing to practice Israel's worship. Others understand it as referring to the unjust robbery of Israel during their captivity. While the precise reference may be obscure, the general meaning is clear: God hates injustice and oppression and every form of wickedness, and there will be no place for this in His kingdom. "I will direct their work in truth" simply means that God will faithfully give them the reward of their work. Again, the emphasis is on God's justice. He will see to it that Israel's work is not in vain. Finally, the Lord said He will "make an everlasting covenant with them." Apparently, this is the new covenant Jeremiah spoke about (Jer. 31:31-34; 32:37-44) and Christ's sacrificial work inaugurated (Luke 22:20; Heb. 9:15-18). That covenant promise assures believing Israel of the Lord's forgiveness and their own obedience to Him. Repentant Israel will experience a complete reversal of fortune when Christ returns. All the nations will acknowledge Israel's special place of blessing in God's plan (Isa. 61:9). The promises the Lord made to Israel are sure because they rest on His character. His promises to us are likewise certain because He, the Just and Faithful One, has made them (2 Cor. 1:20).

Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

One summer found my future wife helping with a church in the Boston area during her college years. Among her responsibilities was working with Vacation Bible School, which the church conducted yearly. During that VBS, she became acquainted with a teenage girl of Asian descent whose first name was Yi (pronounced Ye). One of the Scriptures covered was Jesus' Great Commission, which is recorded in Matthew 28:18-20. Verse 19, as worded in the King James Version, begins with his command to "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." When young Yi heard that verse, she became very excited. "Jesus is talking to me!" she exclaimed. "He wants Yi to go and tell others about him!" Yi was quite thrilled to think that her name was in the Bible. Names are important, none more so than that of Jesus, found throughout the New Testament. Although Jesus is not mentioned in the Old Testament specifically by that name, numerous prophecies there highlight various aspects of his life and ministry that were to come. Today's text includes a passage that Jesus specifically cited and declared as "fulfilled" in himself (Luke 4:21).

Today's study is the final one in this unit of lessons, "The Sovereignty of the Father," drawn from the book of Isaiah. Our passage under consideration, like those of lessons 1 and 2, includes an important messianic thrust. Isaiah 61 appears in the closing section of the book of Isaiah, a section typically delineated as being chapters 60-66. Bryan Beyer rightly refers to these chapters as "the grand finale of God's restoration." Their content was intended to give great hope to God's people in Isaiah's day. Their purpose may be compared with the closing chapters of the book of Revelation. Those chapters offer hope to Christians in any age, particularly those suffering persecution.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

The Messiah's Role in the Everlasting Covenant (Isaiah 61:1-4)

1 "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;

2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn,

3 To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified."

4 And they shall rebuild the old ruins, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the ruined cities, the desolations of many generations.

To heal (1)

Physical healing (Matt 14:14)

14 When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

Spiritual healing (Isa 53:5)

5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

Healing to prove Jesus' Divinity (Matt 11:2-5)

2 When John heard in prison what Christ was doing, he sent his disciples 3 to ask him, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?" 4 Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: 5 The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.

Healing through His abiding (John 15:1-4)

15 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. 3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

Healing through growth in faith (2 Thess 1:3)

3 We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing.

Healing through growth in knowledge of Jesus (2 Peter 3:18)

18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

To free (1)

Freedom through God's word (Ps 119:45)

45 I will walk about in freedom, for I have sought out your precepts.

Freedom through Jesus' ministry (Luke 4:18)

18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed,

Freedom through the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 3:17)

17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

Freedom because Jesus has set us free (Gal 5:1)

5 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

Freedom through the calling of God (Gal 5:13)

13 You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.

To proclaim His favor (2)

Proclamation of His salvation (2 Cor 6:2)

2 For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.

Proclamation of His covenant (Isa 49:8)

8 This is what the Lord says: "In the time of my favor I will answer you, and in the day of salvation I will help you; I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people, to restore the land and to reassign its desolate inheritances,

Proclamation that should not be refused (Heb 3:7-8)

7 So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, 8 do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert,

Proclamation that is living and active (Heb 4:12)

12 For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Proclamation of the kingdom of God (Luke 9:60)

60 Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

To comfort (3)

Comfort so that we can comfort others (2 Cor 1:3-4)

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.

Comfort to share in all things with others (2 Cor 1:7)

7 And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

Comfort awaiting us in Heaven (2 Cor 4:17)

17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

Comfort knowing that God will never forsake (Isa 12:1-2)

12 In that day you will say: "I will praise you, O Lord. Although you were angry with me, your anger has turned away and you have comforted me. 2 Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The Lord, the Lord, is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation."

Comfort through God's love (Phil 2:1-2)

2 If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.

To restore (4)

Restoration that cannot be hindered by distance (Deut 30:4)

4 Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the Lord your God will gather you and bring you back.

Restoration that proves God's grace (2 Chron 30:9)

9 If you return to the Lord, then your brothers and your children will be shown compassion by their captors and will come back to this land, for the Lord your God is gracious and compassionate. He will not turn his face from you if you return to him."

Restoration that is promised (Acts 3:21)

21 He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.

Restoration of the soul (Ps 23:3)

3 he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Restoration of joy (Ps 51:12)

12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

Restoration of God's pleasure (Ps 85:4)

4 Restore us again, O God our Savior, and put away your displeasure toward us.

The Messiah's Fulfillment of the Everlasting Covenant (Isaiah 61:8-11)

8 "For I, the Lord, love justice; I hate robbery for burnt offering; I will direct their work in truth, and will make with them an everlasting covenant.

9 Their descendants shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people. All who see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the posterity whom the Lord has blessed."

10 I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

11 For as the earth brings forth its bud, As the garden causes 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.

Through justice (8)

God is just because He judges with righteousness (Ps 9:8)

8 He will judge the world in righteousness; he will govern the peoples with justice.

God is just because He is the only one who justifies (Rom 8:33)

33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.

God is just because He is perfect (Deut 32:4)

4 He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.

God is just because He loves justice (Ps 99:4)

4 The King is mighty, he loves justice — you have established equity; in Jacob you have done what is just and right.

God is just because He exercises righteousness (Jer 9:24)

24 but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the Lord.

God is just because He does not fail in His righteousness (Zeph 3:5)

5 The Lord within her is righteous; he does no wrong. Morning by morning he dispenses his justice, and every new day he does not fail, yet the unrighteous know no shame.

Through prosperity (9)

Prosperity through well-being (Ps 35:27)

27 May those who delight in my vindication shout for joy and gladness; may they always say, "The Lord be exalted, who delights in the well-being of his servant."

Prosperity through righteousness (Ps 92:12-14)

12 The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; 13 planted in the house of the Lord, they will flourish in the courts of our God. 14 They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green,

Prosperity through delighting in God's word (Ps 1:1-3)

1 Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. 2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.

Prosperity through remaining in Jesus (John 15:3-5)

3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. 5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

Prosperity into old age (Isa 46:4)

4 Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.

Prosperity through the fear of the Lord (Ps 128:1-2)

128 Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways. 2 You will eat the fruit of your labor; blessings and prosperity will be yours.

Through salvation (10)

Salvation promised through the gospel (Rom 1:16)

16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

Salvation hoped for through faith (1 Thess 5:8)

8 But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.

Salvation made wise through the Bible (2 Tim 3:15)

15 and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Salvation at the second coming of Jesus (Heb 9:27-28)

27 Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, 28 so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

Salvation that is an inheritance (1 Peter 1:3-5)

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade — kept in heaven for you, 5 who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

Through righteousness (11)

A righteousness that brings eternal life (Rom 5:21)

21 so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

A righteousness that we have in Jesus (1 Cor 1:30)

30 It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God — that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

A righteousness that God made through Jesus (2 Cor 5:21)

21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

A righteousness that we have faith and hope in (Gal 5:5)

5 But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope.

A righteousness that comes from God through faith (Phil 3:9)

9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ — the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from Thomas Constable

Verse 1

Isaiah spoke for the Messiah, as is clear from what he said about Him (cf. Isaiah 49:1; Isaiah 50:4). The Spirit of sovereign Yahweh would be upon Him (cf. Isaiah 11:2; Isaiah 48:16). This is a verse in which all three members of the Trinity appear. This verse indicates that He would possess supernatural wisdom and capacity (cf. Genesis 41:38; Exodus 31:3; Numbers 11:17; Numbers 11:29), and that He would be able to bring justice and righteousness to the earth through His spoken word (cf. Isaiah 11:2; Isaiah 32:15-16; Isaiah 42:1; Isaiah 44:3; Isaiah 48:16; Isaiah 59:21). His possession of the Spirit is a result of God anointing Him for His mission. He would need divine enablement by the Spirit to fulfill it (cf. 1 Samuel 10:1; 1 Samuel 10:6-7; 1 Samuel 16:3; 2 Samuel 23:1-7; Matthew 3:16-17). This Anointed One would do the Servant's work.

The mission of the Anointed One would be to announce good news to distressed people (cf. Psalm 25:16-21; Matthew 9:12-13; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:31-32). In other occurrences of this verb, it is the hope of Israel that is in view, specifically deliverance from Babylon and deliverance from sin (cf. Isaiah 40:9; Isaiah 41:27; Isaiah 52:7; Isaiah 60:6). What "announcing good news to the afflicted" means, follows next (through Isaiah 61:3). First, it means He would mend the hearts of those so broken by life that they despair of having any hope. Second, it means the Anointed One would liberate those so enslaved that they could not break free (cf. Isaiah 1:27; Isaiah 11:3-5). Captives are in bondage to another person, and prisoners are bound to a place.

Verses 1-3

The mission of the Anointed One (61:1-3)

These two chapters begin with an introduction of the Servant (Messiah) and His mission. Some scholars regard Isaiah 61:1-3 as a fifth Servant Song. [Note: E.g, Robert B. Chisholm Jeremiah, "The Christological Fulfillment of Isaiah's Servant Song of Solomon," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 163:652 (October-December 2006):401-4, regard 61:1-3.] That the Servant of the Servant Songs is the same person as the Anointed One (Messiah) of chapter 11, is clear from what Isaiah wrote about Him.

"The Anointed One now appears for the second time. As in the second Servant Song (Isaiah 49:1-6), he speaks in his own person about himself and his God-given ministry." [Note: Motyer, p499.]

Verse 2

Third, proclaiming good news means He would bring, for God, a year of favor and a day of vengeance. God's favor would last much longer than His vengeance. A prolonged time of blessing is in view, followed by a short time of punishment for oppressors.

When Jesus Christ read this passage in the Nazareth synagogue and claimed that He fulfilled it, He stopped reading after "the favorable year of Yahweh" and did not read "and the day of vengeance of our God" (Luke 4:18-19). He meant that He was the Anointed One of whom Isaiah spoke, and that He had come to bring salvation. The day of salvation had begun (cf. Isaiah 49:8; 2 Corinthians 6:2). However, the day of vengeance would not begin until much later, specifically at the end of the Tribulation when He will return (cf. Isaiah 34:8; Isaiah 35:4; Isaiah 63:4; Daniel 7:21; Daniel 7:24-27; Micah 5:15; 1 Peter 1:11; Revelation 12:13-17; Revelation 19:15-20). [Note: See Gary Yates, "The Use of Isaiah 61:1 (and 58:6) in Luke 4:18-19," *Exegesis and Exposition* 2:1 (Summer 1987):13-27.]

Fourth, announcing good news means the Anointed One would comfort those who mourn because they believe their sins have doomed them (cf. ch 12; Isaiah 40:1-2; Isaiah 49:13; Matthew 5:3-4). God would accept them in spite of their sin because of the Servant's work.

Verse 3

Fifth, proclaiming good news means He would give joy to the mourners among the Israelites in place of their sorrows. Sixth, it means they would become a blessing like large trees are, flourishing in righteousness by demonstrating the saving and enabling grace of God, and so glorifying Him. God's righteousness would make them strong and durable.

Verse 4

Those who formerly mourned in Israel, because of their downtrodden and deprived conditions, would rebuild their land, which others had destroyed. These destructions had come on Israel because of her sins. God predicted that the cities that opposed His people would suffer destruction and never rise again (cf. Isaiah 13:19-22; Isaiah 34:8-17). But the cities and land of His people, though terribly decimated throughout history, would be rebuilt (in the Millennium).

Verses 4-11

The benefits of the mission of the Anointed One (61:4-11)

The Anointed One would fulfill God's ancient promises to Israel.

"The Servant of Jehovah celebrates the glorious office committed to him, and expounds the substance of the gospel given him to proclaim. It points to the restoration of the promised land, and to the elevation of Israel, after its purification in the furnace of judgment, to great honour and dignity in the midst of the world of nations." [Note: Delitzsch, 2:428.]

Verse 5

Flocks and crops would again flourish in the Promised Land, and the Israelites would be so blessed that their former Gentile oppressors would even serve Israelite farmers.

Verse 6

However, the Israelites would not oppress their former oppressors. Rather than tilling the land and tending flocks, the Israelites would serve in the exalted position of being priests of Yahweh. They would mediate between God and the Gentiles. As the priests in Israel lived off the contributions of their fellow Israelites in the past, so all the Israelites would live off the contributions of the Gentiles in the future. The nation would finally become the kingdom of priests that God intended it to be (cf. Exodus 19:6; Deuteronomy 33:10).

"All that we can safely infer from his prophecy Isaiah, that the nationality of Israel will not be swallowed up by the entrance of the heathen into the community of the God of revelation." [Note: Ibid, 2:429.]

Verse 7

Instead of the shame that Israel suffered formerly because of God's judgments on her, she would enjoy the double portion of blessing bestowed on the favored firstborn son in Israelite society (cf. Deuteronomy 21:17). As God's firstborn Son of Solomon, Israel would enter into her promised bountiful and joyful inheritance (Exodus 4:22).

Verse 8

Israel could count on these promises because of who Yahweh is: a lover of justice (faithful to His promises to Israel) and a hater of iniquitous robbery (Israel's enemies taking what did not belong to them). God would give Israel her inheritance and would make a new, everlasting covenant with her (cf. Isaiah 49:8; Isaiah 55:5; Jeremiah 31:31; Jeremiah 32:40; Ezekiel 16:60; Ezekiel 37:25-26; Malachi 3:1-2; Matthew 26:27-28; Hebrews 9:11-22; Hebrews 13:20).

Verse 9

The physical seed of Abraham would continue to exist and to be identifiable as Israel, as God promised the patriarch and his descendants (Genesis 12:1-3). Furthermore, Israel would be a witness to the rest of the earth's population. Thus all the earth would be able to worship and praise Yahweh.

Verse 10

Isaiah now spoke for Zion, who rejoiced in the Lord for the gifts that He would give her in the future. Yahweh will have clothed her in garments of salvation and wrapped her in a robe of righteousness, like a bride for her wedding day. Salvation is "unto" (for the purpose of and expected results toward) righteousness. Israel's joy in that day (the Millennium) will be like that of a bride on her wedding day, ecstatically adorned with a turban and jewels.

Verse 11

Finally, the harvest of righteousness that the Lord planted in Israel, when He redeemed her by the Servant's work, would come to fruition (cf. Isaiah 55:10-11). With that righteousness will come praise, not only from Israel, but from the whole earth.

(Adapted from URL:<http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/dcc/isaiah-61.html>)

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Following the Israelites' conquest of Canaan and allotment of the land, we read this summary: "So the Lord gave Israel all the land he had sworn to give their ancestors, and they took possession of it and settled there. ... Not one of all the Lord's good promises to Israel failed; everyone was fulfilled" (Joshua 21:43, 45). Yet we read earlier that various locations in the promised land had not been conquered by the Israelites; such areas remained in the hands of the peoples who lived there (13:13; 15:63; 16:10). We reconcile these passages by recognizing that God had done all he promised to provide victory for his people, but they were responsible to finish the task. The promised land would be fully theirs only as they exerted the effort and trust required by the Lord. Today's text records some profound blessings on God's people. Yet we may look around us and wonder, "How can this ever happen? When will it take place?" In many nations, followers of Jesus are persecuted intensely, even to

death. Why does “righteousness and praise” not “spring up before all nations” (Isaiah 61:11)? It’s at this point that the church should take a close and painful look in the mirror. Are we dedicated to fulfilling the Great Commission, or has it become the Great Omission? God has done his part in giving his Son to establish his “everlasting covenant” (Isaiah 61:8), but are we failing on our end like Israel of old? The fields are still “ripe for harvest” (John 4:35). It’s our move.

Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

1. When the Spirit rests on the Messiah, He will deliver the downcast ones (Isa. 61:1)
2. The year of the Lord's favor will bring vengeance on evil (vs. 2)
3. The year of the Lord's favor will bring comfort to those who mourn (vss. 2-3)
4. Everything that has been ravaged will be restored (vs. 4)
5. God will restore justice to the earth and will make a new covenant with Israel (vs. 8)
6. God will honor His people Israel among the Gentiles (vs. 9)
7. God will cause righteousness to flourish everywhere (vss. 10-11)