

v8 “God is promising to reward them (the faithful remnant) and to keep covenant with them forever. Not to do so would be injustice and robbery, which Israelite faith found unthinkable in God (cf. Gen. 18:25)” (Oswalt 1998: 573).

vv10-11 “The “I” person speaking in these verses is no longer God but probably the Anointed One, based on similarities with 61:3 (not the community of Zion)” (Smith 2009: 642).

vv10-11 “These two verses are a hymn in which the Anointed One rejoices (a) over what God has done to prepare him (not Israel) for his work of bringing salvation (61:10) and (b) over what God will accomplish through his work (61:11)” (Smith 2009: 642).

v11 “Although Israel will be unable to produce righteousness either before or after the exile, God will produce it and the praise that will result from its appearance, just as surely as, year after year, the earth causes seeds sown in it to sprout. If nature is reliable, how much more so is the Creator of nature!” (Oswalt 1998: 575).

“What Isaiah saw as one messianic work, the Lord Jesus divided into two: the salvific purpose of his first coming (John 3:17), and the judgmental component of his second coming (John 5:22–29; cf. 2 Thess. 1:7–10)” (Motyer 1999: 426). Is this true?

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Jesus read verses 1-2 in his sermon in Nazareth and said, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:16-21). How was it fulfilled? How was it not fulfilled?

What does this passage teach us about God?

How does verse 10 apply to you?

SOURCES CITED

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John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, NICOT, 1998.
Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, New American Commentary, 2009.

ISAIAH 61: THE GOOD NEWS OF THE MESSIAH

OUTLINE OF ISAIAH 40-66

- III. The Holy One of Israel is sovereign over the restoration and salvation of his people (40:1–66:24).
 - A. The Holy One of Israel vindicates his glory over idols by predicting the restoration of his people from Babylon (40:1–48:22).
 - B. The Servant of the Lord will suffer to save his people (49:1–55:13).
 - C. The Holy One of Israel will return blessing to the righteous and retribution to the evil (56:1–59:21).
 - D. The Holy One of Israel will restore his people to a glorious new home (60:1–66:24).
 - 1. The Lord will bring his glory to the people and city of Zion (60:1–63:6).
 - a) The Lord will be the glory of Zion (60:1-22).
 - b) The Servant of the Lord will bring righteousness to Zion (61:1–62:12).**
 - c) The Lord will judge the nations in the winepress of his wrath (63:1-6).
 - 2. The nation prays for redemption of heart and home (63:7–64:12).
 - 3. The Lord responds to the nation’s prayer with the promise of a new heart and home (65:1–66:24).

OUTLINE OF ISAIAH 61

- I. The Anointed One brings good news (61:1-3)
- II. The remnant rebuilds the ruins (61:4-7)
- III. The Lord promises to restore (61:8-9)
- IV. The Anointed One brings salvation (61:10-11)

NOTES

Though Isaiah 61 is not usually taken to be one of the Servant Songs, and the term “servant” is not included in this passage, it shares many similarities with the other Servant Songs. The first verse, “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,” is clearly related to 42:1 and 48:16. As with the Servant in 42:3, 7 and 49:9, the speaker in 61:1 proclaims liberty for the prisoners and brings justice to the oppressed. Isaiah 61 goes a step further in suggesting in a way hitherto unattested that the figure of Isaiah 11 and the Servant are one and the same. The presence of the Spirit upon the Branch in 11:1 is very similar to that of the individual in 61:1. The Branch in 11:1 is ruler, and the figure of 61:1 is “anointed.” Both individuals provide relief for the poor (11:4; 61:1). Even more significantly, the speaker of 61:1 proclaims the day of vengeance of the Lord, an act which belongs to God in 29:20 and 34:8. Isaiah 61 combines the person of the Servant with that of the righteous Branch ruler and the activities of the Lord.

“Some of the good news proclaimed by the Anointed One in chap. 61 appears to be an expanded proclamation about the work of the Servant. The overall function of both the “Anointed One” in 61:1–3 and the “Servant” in chaps. 42 and 49 is to bring God’s salvation to his people so that the nations will see God’s marvelous work and turn to him” (Smith 2009: 632).

v1 “Interestingly, the only places in the OT where Spirit filling and anointing are mentioned together are in connection with the establishment of the kingship, first in Saul (1 Sam. 10:1, 6–7), then in David (1 Sam. 16:13). The classic statement of this conjunction is found in 2 Sam. 23:1–7, where David hymns the function and role of the Messiah.... This is the Messiah, and he is being consciously associated with the Servant by showing that the Messiah does the Servant’s work” (Oswalt 1998: 564).

v1 “Because he has done what no one else could do, he is not only the preacher of the good news—he is the good news, able to give (v. 3) what he announces” (Oswalt 1998: 564).

v3 “The picture of the mourner, with *ashes* on the head, wrapped in sackcloth, with a *spirit* crushed by despair, is replaced by the picture of a party goer with a *beautiful headdress*, smelling of costly oil, and wearing a *garment of praise*” (Oswalt 1998: 567).

v3 “The use of the tree symbolizes stability, permanence, and abundance (cf., e.g., Ps. 1:3). But what is a “righteous oak”? To understand this, one must look back to Isa. 1:29–31. There sin and rebellion, the sin and rebellion of glorifying the human over God, have caused the oaks in which the people have delighted to wither and die. All their efforts to glorify themselves are nothing but seared leaves. Here, then, is clearly an intentional contrast. Instead of the sin of self-exaltation that produces only devouring fire, all those who have accepted the fruits of the Servant’s self-denial are given the eternally fruitful righteousness of God” (Oswalt 567).

v3 “The symbolism of being like oaks may communicate how strong, well-rooted, and glorious these righteous people will be. These are the people that God planted “to bring glory to himself” (60:21b) for all the marvelous things that he has done. This purpose clause indicates that one of the main goals of mankind will be to fulfill this joyful responsibility of glorifying God forever. Those who receive God’s good news, freedom, comfort, and experience this transformation will have many reasons to loudly praise and glorify God’s name” (Smith 2009: 636).

v4 “No matter how long the ruins may have existed, they will be rebuilt, and no matter how terrible the desolation, new life for Israel will spring up again (cf. 35:1–2). Interestingly, history has already borne out these prophecies. Assyria and Babylon are piles of dust, while Jerusalem, in spite of seemingly endless wars and destructions, is a thriving city. God and his purposes are the final determining factors in the continuation or dissolution of all human endeavors” (Oswalt 1998: 571).

v6 “As a *priest* is to be a mediator between humans and God, assisting humans in their worship of God, and teaching humans the ways of God, Israel is to be a priest to the nations” (Oswalt 571-72).