

Almost two thousand years ago there was a small village of about four hundred residents. They named their town the Branch because they were all descendants of King David. Branch was used in the manner we use it in a family tree. There were prophecies dating back a thousand years earlier that it was this family line from which would come an individual man who would change the course of history and reign forever (Isaiah 11:1-2; 9:7). The anticipation of His coming had reached a fevered pitch. Even the non-Jewish world expected a great king to arise in Israel.

Thirty years earlier there were rumors of angelic visitations and messages (Luke 1:32-33). A young women in the town claimed to have miraculously conceived a child. Some thought it might be true, but most thought that it was just to cover up relations she had had with the man who later married her. Certainly her Son was a decent and honest man, but he showed no desire for warfare. He never even complained about the oppression and taxation of Rome. He was more of a studious type of person. When his father died, he faithfully went to work each day as a builder for the Greeks in the nearby city of Sephoris to support the family.

Some time later, John the Baptist began preaching in the wilderness of Judea. Expectations of the coming Messiah rose even higher. After all, if this one to come would overthrow the Romans and set up His kingdom, the entire city of the Branch would be favored as the royal family. Surely they would be freed from all taxation. Some thought it might be John the Baptist, but John denied it (John 1:20).

One day, the quiet man, the one whose mother claimed he was miraculously conceived, left his work and traveled south. He had gone to Judea to be baptized by John the Baptist (John 1:29-30). When He returned a few months later, He had followers with Him. On the Sabbath, He was going to address the congregation in his hometown (Luke 4:16). What would He say about John? What would He say about the coming Savior? It was an excited village that gathered that Sabbath. He opened the scroll to the reading for that day. The portion He was to read was from the prophet Isaiah (the passage we refer to as chapter 61). He read, *¹ The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; ^{2a} to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor...* Isaiah 61:1-2a ²⁰ *And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹ And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."* Luke 4:20-21

Commented [PW1]: Isaiah 11:1-2 (ESV)

¹ There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

² And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

Commented [PW2]: Isaiah 9:7 (ESV)

⁷ Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Commented [PW3]: Luke 1:32-33 (ESV)

³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,
³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Commented [PW4]: John 1:20 (ESV)

²⁰ He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ."

Commented [PW5]: John 1:29-30 (ESV)

²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

³⁰ This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.'

Commented [PW6]: Luke 4:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read.

Whispering broke out everywhere. Maybe Mary was telling the truth. Maybe Yeshua was named salvation because He really was the One! Excitement began to build. The whispers turned to a rumble of conversation. What an amazing passage to apply to Himself! Maybe the muscles He developed working with stone could be used to swing a sword in victory, like the time Jonathan and his armor bearer routed the Philistines. Was this the year of the Lord's favor on the town called "Branch"? ²³ *And he said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Physician, heal yourself.' What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well."*²⁴ *And he said, "Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown."*²⁵ *But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land,²⁶ and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow.*²⁷ *And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian."*

²⁸ *When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath.*²⁹ *And they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff.*³⁰ *But passing through their midst, he went away.* Luke 4:23-30 This was the rejection of Jesus in his hometown of Nazareth which brought about His move to Capernaum, a more central location for His ministry.

The first verses of our chapter today are like many of the prophetic passages about the Messiah. It has predictions of both the first and second coming. It speaks on different levels with multiple applications. The emphasis is on the preaching of good news (Matthew 11:5). Those words are behind our word "gospel." As Jesus quoted verse one and a portion of verse 2, we know it was specifically meant for His first coming. The liberation he was proclaiming was not physical as the people had hoped, but rather was a spiritual one. When Jesus clarified that point by references to the Old Testament explaining that the Gentiles would be more willing to accept Him, they became angry. Their excitement turned to rage and an attempted execution. They thought, "How dare He say they would reject the Messiah, but Gentiles would seek Him?"

The physical deliverance they were hoping for will come at the Second Coming which is evidenced by the very point where Jesus stopped reading. The part He did not read was, ^{2b} *and the day of vengeance of our God;* Isaiah 61:2b The Second Coming is the day of vengeance. Jesus understood the two separate events. He predicted that on that day at the Second Coming all the tribes of the earth would mourn when they see His sign in the sky (Matthew 24:30). **Jesus is rejected now for the same reason He was rejected then. He doesn't offer what the world is looking for.** He didn't come to give us

Commented [PW7]: Matthew 11:5 (ESV)

⁵ the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them.

Commented [PW8]: Matthew 24:30 (ESV)

³⁰ Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

what we desire. He came to deliver us from sin and bring us into a relationship with God. The Day of the LORD is a day of vengeance upon evil (Zephaniah 1:14-18).

to comfort all who mourn;³ to grant to those who mourn in Zion— to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified. Isaiah 61:2c-3 Who are these mourning in Zion. Zechariah, who prophesied over a century after Isaiah gives us the answer. ¹⁰ *"And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.* Zechariah 12:10 A few verses later we are told of the comfort they receive. ¹ *"On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness.* Zechariah 13:1 In the Last Days, in an act of final desperation, the Jewish people will turn to Jesus at His return and be delivered from the enemies that were about to annihilate them.

What is this beautiful headdress they wear instead of ashes? Isaiah has already told us. ⁵ *In that day the LORD of hosts will be a crown of glory, and a diadem of beauty, to the remnant of his people,* Isaiah 28:5 The glory of the LORD will be our crown! I don't separate this Jewish remnant from the rest of the body of Christ. In Him we are one (Ephesians 2:13-18). Though some of these prophecies are specifically about events in their future, salvation gives us a unity that is inseparable. Gladness and praise is the result of our salvation. Joy in the Lord is for every believer regardless of what we endure. It is the deep abiding realization that we are forgiven and loved. Nothing can change that. Oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord speaks of our being firmly rooted and strong "for the glory of the LORD," or it can be translated, "that He might display His beauty."

⁴ *They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.* Isaiah 61:4 The captives in Babylon probably took this as applying to their return, but the rest of the chapter gives us a definite wording that applies to an ultimate fulfillment when the Kingdom of God is established on earth. Throughout Israel today there are mounds of ancient cities that were abandoned. One day Israel will be so full that these will all be rebuilt. The words "many generations" tell us this was for a distant time yet to come.

⁵ *Strangers shall stand and tend your flocks; foreigners shall be your plowmen and vinedressers;* Isaiah 61:5 The USA and a few other affluent nations import much of

Commented [PW9]: Matthew 24:30 (ESV)

³⁰ Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Commented [PW10]: Ephesians 2:13-18 (ESV)

¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility

¹⁵ by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace,

¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

¹⁷ And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.

¹⁸ For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

their manual laborers. This is speaking of the future prosperity of the people of God in the Millennial Kingdom. The next verse explains why we will be served.

⁶ but you shall be called the priests of the LORD; they shall speak of you as the ministers of our God; you shall eat the wealth of the nations, and in their glory you shall boast. Isaiah 61:6 Just as the Levitical priests were to be supported by the people so they could devote themselves to ministering to the LORD (Numbers 18:24), so in the Millennial Kingdom we will be supported as we minister to the LORD and to the nations. God always intended His people to be priests in both the old and new covenant eras (Exodus 19:6; 1 Peter 2:9) This is that great reversal in the last chapter (Isaiah 60:5).

⁷ Instead of your shame there shall be a double portion; instead of dishonor they shall rejoice in their lot; therefore in their land they shall possess a double portion; they shall have everlasting joy. Isaiah 61:7 Once again the idea of the great reversal is emphasized. Perhaps God was driving it home so that the captives in Babylon would have hope for the future. Surely it has given hope to the persecuted people of God since it was first written. I can imagine the believers in the Middle East today clinging to this passage. Dishonor and shame are often the lot of the believer in this life (2 Timothy 3:12). We see things differently from the world. Our hope is not here. We will not compromise. We speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). We should not be living for the praise of man, and that means we will inevitably make enemies. In Pakistan the Christians can only find jobs as laborers. I have had friends who lost their business or job when it became known that they were Christians. Even this Christmas season a friend told me that at an Amazon shipment center there were Muslim and Jewish Holiday signs but no Christian signs, though many of the workers were Christians. Why do they think it was their busiest season? In that day there won't be any other gods mentioned. Everyone will know there is but one true God (Zechariah 14:9).

The double portion is mentioned two other places in the Bible. One is for the firstborn son's inheritance so that he can carry on the responsibilities of the family. The other was Elisha asking for twice the anointing of Elijah (2 Kings 2:9). We can see the spiritual and physical overlap. This Kingdom double portion will surely be both. We will be anointed to minister to a greater extent than we have ever witnessed, and every good thing we can use will be ours.

⁸ For I the LORD love justice; I hate robbery and wrong; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. Isaiah 61:8 God will deal out justice as each person deserves, whether blessing or punishment (Isaiah 40:10). God's sense of justice is something impartial, for which we should be very grateful (1 Kings 8:39). Injustice today is one of the most discouraging aspects of this fallen world. It is one of the things atheists point to when trying to prove there is no

Commented [PW11]: Numbers 18:24 (ESV)

²⁴ For the title of the people of Israel, which they present as a contribution to the LORD, I have given to the Levites for an inheritance. Therefore I have said of them that they shall have no inheritance among the people of Israel."

Commented [PW12]: Exodus 19:6 (ESV)

⁶ and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel."

Commented [PW13]: 1 Peter 2:9 (ESV)

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Commented [PW14]: Isaiah 60:5 (ESV)

⁵ Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and exult, because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

Commented [PW15]: 2 Timothy 3:12 (ESV)

¹² Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,

Commented [PW16]: Ephesians 4:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,

Commented [PW17]: Zechariah 14:9 (ESV)

⁹ And the LORD will be king over all the earth. On that day the LORD will be one and his name one.

Commented [PW18]: 2 Kings 2:9 (ESV)

⁹ When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for you, before I am taken from you." And Elisha said, "Please let there be a double portion of your spirit on me."

Commented [PW19]: Isaiah 40:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.

Commented [PW20]: 1 Kings 8:39 (ESV)

³⁹ then hear in heaven your dwelling place and forgive and act and render to each whose heart you know, according to all his ways (for you, you only, know the hearts of all the children of mankind),

God. But God says the day is coming when He will indeed settle the books (Matthew 16:27). We saw in previous verses, the return of the LORD will result in salvation for the remnant of the Jews (Romans 11:23). They will enter the same everlasting covenant that we have entered through faith in Jesus.

⁹ Their offspring shall be known among the nations, and their descendants in the midst of the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge them, that they are an offspring the LORD has blessed. Isaiah 61:9 I don't believe the resurrected saints of New Jerusalem will be having children in the Millennium, so what is this referring to? Could it be those Jews who are converted at the return of the Lord, who enter the Millennial Kingdom without dying? Or it may be that all the children of the blessed of the Lord in their resurrected state are honored? I tend to think it is referring to the former. These who survive the Great Tribulation and enter the Millennium will have children, grow old and die, and receive their heavenly bodies in the second resurrection (Revelation 20:5; Isaiah 65:20).

¹⁰ I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult 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 like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. Isaiah 61:10 Isaiah sees what is to come and is overwhelmed with gratitude. He doesn't just rejoice; he *greatly* rejoices! His soul spins around in joy. I had a Labrador that would whirl around in circles when I would returned home after a long time away. That is what Isaiah says his soul will do. The reason for this joy is that he has been clothed in the garments of salvation.

Jesus tells the story of a wedding feast in which a man entered without the robe given to all the guests. He must have come in the back door. He was promptly thrown out (Matthew 22:11-12). Paul tells us to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for our flesh to fulfill its lusts (Romans 13:14). With such a future before us, are you sure you are clothed with the garments of salvation? Does your soul whirl for joy for what God has done for us?

¹¹ For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations. Isaiah 61:11 What Israel and the church failed to do, God will accomplish in His time. Even then, the nations will have a choice. We must respond to the opportunity that is set before us. When we witness truth and are given grace we must respond. Righteousness and praise sprout up before us. Is the world witnessing it sprout up on our lives today? Will you be among those with a double portion in that day?

Commented [PW21]: Matthew 16:27 (ESV)

²⁷ For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.

Commented [PW22]: Romans 11:23 (ESV)

²³ And even they, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again.

Commented [PW23]: Revelation 20:5 (ESV)

⁵ The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection.

Commented [PW24]: Isaiah 65:20 (ESV)

²⁰ No more shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not fill out his days, for the young man shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed.

Commented [PW25]: Matthew 22:11-13 (ESV)

¹¹ "But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment.
¹² And he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless.
¹³ Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Commented [PW26]: Romans 13:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Questions

- 1 What did Nazareth expect?
- 2 Where had Jesus been before returning to Nazareth?
- 3 Why did the mood in the synagogue change?
- 4 Why did Jesus stop reading where He did?
- 5 Why was Jesus rejected then and now?
- 6 Who will mourn in Zion? Why?
- 7 What comfort do they receive?
- 8 Describe the great reversal?
- 9 Why are we a part of this?
- 10 What is our crown? Our clothing? Our response?