

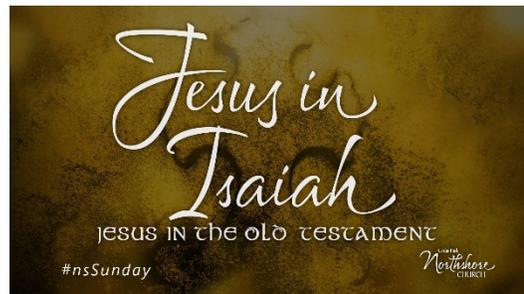
Jesus in the Old Testament: Isaiah – Conqueror

I don't know how it happened, but it appears that Thanksgiving was secretly *moved up* in the calendar, because it is just a few days away... can the Holidays really be just around the corner?



We *kicked off* the season here yesterday by inviting our community into this place for our annual Christmas Bazaar. This week we'll decorate the place for the season. And next Sunday we will begin to place our focus, as I like to traditionally do, on the four themes of Advent that lead us up to Christmas.

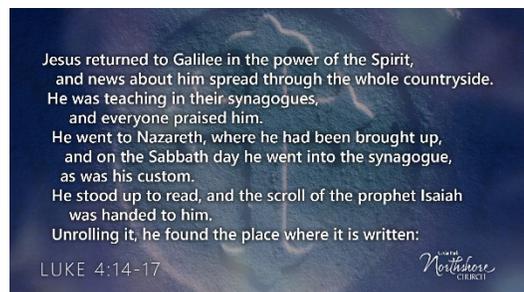
So with all of that in the days ahead, today we will wrap up our series of 11 messages finding **Jesus in the Old Testament** (a *short* message because the Deacons have asked to reserve some time at the end of the service). We'll be looking to the last chapters of Isaiah, picking up where we left off last week.



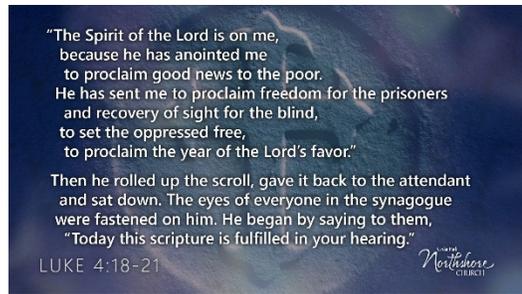
Before turning to the Old Testament in our Bibles, let's look to the New Testament, today from the Gospel of Luke, chapter 4. The chapter starts with Jesus in the wilderness, fasting for 40 days, and being tempted by the enemy. After the devil's temptation is thwarted by the Word of God, Jesus returns home.

¹⁴ Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. ¹⁵ He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

¹⁶ He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:



18 “The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the
prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,
19 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”⁹



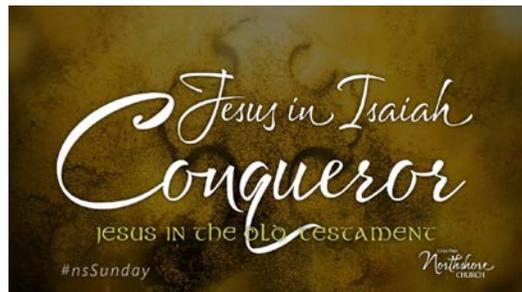
²⁰ Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. ²¹ He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”¹

If we were to keep reading, we would see how controversy erupted among those gathered that day, because it was *crystal clear* what Jesus was saying, the remarkable **claim** that Jesus was making. This passage from Isaiah was known to be a Messianic prophecy, a prominent passage containing God’s Promise of a Messiah, One who would rescue His people.

When He said, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing,” Jesus was claiming that He, indeed, is the Promised Messiah. With the prophesy uttered by Isaiah centuries before, Jesus was proclaiming His mission, taking on the work proclaimed in the ancient text, not merely the first words of Isaiah 61, but all of it.



Isaiah 61 is a Promise that the Messiah will be victorious, that He will be Conqueror.

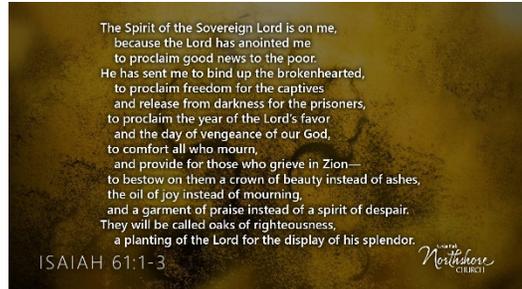


¹ The New International Version. (2011). (Lk 4:14–21). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

The Promise starts with the **Source**: God in three persons.

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, ²

The Messiah is charged and sent by the Father, and is empowered by the Spirit. Jesus was uniquely anointed and filled with the Spirit at baptism, and strengthened and carried by the Spirit through His temptation. Now His **preaching** and **work** is identified as a work of the Spirit.



The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me,
because the LORD has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor. ³

This is the Gospel, **good news** to the poor... not merely poor because of lack of wealth or material goods, but more profoundly poor with nothing of worth as we stand before our Holy God. *Poverty* is a relative term; we are all poor when we stand before God without Jesus.

He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim freedom for the captives
and release from darkness for the prisoners, ⁴

Sin destroys and imprisons. Not only breaking hearts with sadness and despair, but trapping and entangling... binding people in darkness. Jesus, the Messiah, is on the mission to repair, restore, and release.

² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor ⁵

Jesus ended his quotation of Isaiah with a promise of the **favor of God**. Notice that it does not say “a” year of favor... but “the” year of the Lord's favor. Sometimes small words like **a** and **the** are really important; this is one of those times.

² The New International Version. (2011). (Is 61:1). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

³ The New International Version. (2011). (Is 61:1). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

⁴ The New International Version. (2011). (Is 61:1). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

⁵ The New International Version. (2011). (Is 61:2). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

This proclamation is so much more than a promise of a short period of favor (a year isn't much time at all). The year of favor is a reference to the **Year of Jubilee** specified in God's law. Every 50th year (the year after 7 sevens), a year of Jubilee was proclaimed among God's people. It was a year when slaves were freed and property was returned to the original owner.

When Jesus said that He was on a mission to proclaim **the year of the Lord's favor**, it was a mission of freeing slaves. We were bound in slavery to sin... but Jesus proclaims freedom, Jubilee. With the Lord's favor, Jesus says that the time has passed and slaves are free. What was meant to be God's all along is returned to God.

Like I said, Jesus stopped there... and it does not appear to be an accident. Jesus said that He came "to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor," and Isaiah continues, saying "and the day of vengeance of our God."

What was Jesus *up to* that day? Was He *sanitizing* the Scripture? Did Jesus only intend to claim the first part, as if God possibly changed His mind about vengeance and judgement? Maybe it was some sort of cosmic *bait and switch*?

I think the key to understanding what Jesus was *up to* is remembering how He taught on what He quoted, saying, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." Jesus was proclaiming His identity and work as Messiah, but His **first coming** was focused on proclaiming favor and good news, healing the brokenhearted, and freeing captives.

Nevertheless, there will be a day of vengeance... a day of the **second coming** of Jesus that will include justice and vengeance. That day was prophesied in Isaiah 61 as well as Isaiah 63.

Hear these words of the Messiah prophesied in Isaiah 63:



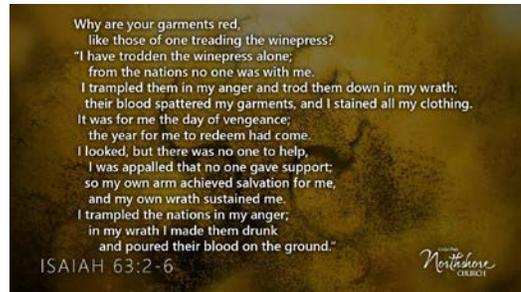
² Why are your garments red,
like those of one treading the winepress?

³ “I have trodden the winepress alone;
from the nations no one was with me.
I trampled them in my anger
and trod them down in my wrath;
their blood spattered my garments,
and I stained all my clothing.

⁴ It was for me the day of vengeance;
the year for me to redeem had come.

⁵ I looked, but there was no one to help,
I was appalled that no one gave support;
so my own arm achieved salvation for me,
and my own wrath sustained me.

⁶ I trampled the nations in my anger;
in my wrath I made them drunk
and poured their blood on the ground.” ⁶



“His truth is marching on...” Isaiah 63 is the Scriptural basis for the *Battle Hymn of the Republic*. It is a song of victory as we trust God to conquer all sin and evil. As sure as we have seen the Promises of God fulfilled in Jesus, we will see this Promise fulfilled by Jesus in the end, vanquishing all foes.

Until that day, that both glorious and
terrible day, we have Jesus:

to comfort all who mourn,
³ and provide for those who grieve in Zion—
to bestow on them a crown of beauty
instead of ashes,
the oil of joy
instead of mourning,
and a garment of praise
instead of a spirit of despair.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
a planting of the LORD
for the display of his splendor. ⁷



⁶ *The New International Version*. (2011). (Is 63:2–6). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

⁷ *The New International Version*. (2011). (Is 61:2–3). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Beauty replaces ashes. Joy replaces mourning. Praise replaces despair. And those who were previously described as poor... with Jesus the Messiah, His people are called ***oaks of righteousness***. Not righteous in our own strength or for our own glory, but because we are planted by and rooted in the Lord, for His splendor and glory.

Reading a scroll from Isaiah 61, Jesus said, "Today this scripture is fulfilled..." He certainly meant *that very day* some 2,000 years ago. But here's the thing... this scripture is fulfilled **today** too.

The prophesy in Isaiah 61 not only includes the mission and work of Jesus, it includes the mission and work of His redeemed people. That is *us*, the Church.

Read on:

⁴ They will rebuild the ancient ruins
and restore the places long devastated;

Who is they? We are they! We who believe are called to be in the work of fulfilling this Promise.

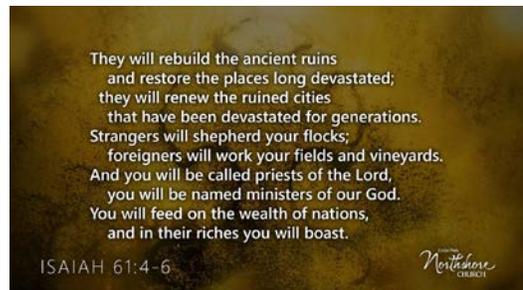
they will renew the ruined cities
that have been devastated for generations.

Make no mistake about it: God loves cities and so should God's people. God loves Kenmore and Bothell and Lake City and Seattle. Churches of our ilk have a poor reputation of abandoning cities; **we** are digging in.

⁵ Strangers will shepherd your flocks;
foreigners will work your fields and vineyards.

This makes it clear to us that God's Kingdom is not merely a race or a tradition or a culture... it spans all people, even different people.

⁶ And you will be called priests of the LORD,
you will be named ministers of our God.



Priests and ministers. Priests are those who stand in the gap, representing people to God... serving as the bridge in prayer and work and sacrifice. Ministers are also those who stand in the gap, representing God to the people. This is our work together, not merely an ordained few, but all of us together are called to worship God and serve all people these ways.

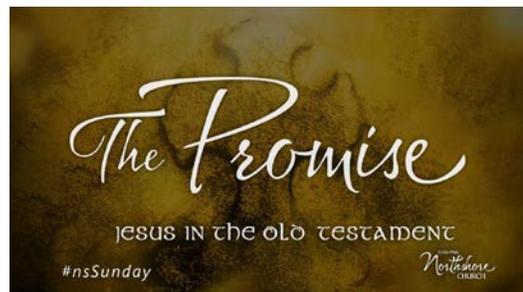
You will feed on the wealth of nations,
and in their riches you will boast. ⁸

Do you know what could keep me up at night? (I say *could* because I rarely lose sleep.) **Money.** We are not sitting on any surpluses; our appetites for ministry are bigger than our resources. We are stretching every dollar to do all we can to build God's work here in Kenmore. So this Promise encourages me. Where will the money come from? It appears that it will come from "the nations." God will release the wealth from those around us.

Practically, that means we can trust God for funds; where He guides He provides. I am certain that one of the ways, the main way really, that funds will come is that God will bless tithers. I've seen it time and time again, God blesses those who know what to do with it; He blesses those who habitually, and even sacrificially, support the work of God. Maybe it would be great if Microsoft and Boeing and all the other employers represented here would simply cut the Church some big checks... but that is rarely how it works. The way the *wealth of nations* makes it into the ministry is **through** tithers. We are called to be part of God's work in this way; if you are not routinely giving, get in the habit and see what God does through you.

There is much more here in Isaiah 61, but you are getting the idea, our time is short, and I want to make one final point.

I have said before that an important *big idea* from this series is Promise. As we have studied these various Old Testament passages, starting in Genesis and now through Isaiah, we have witnessed how God fulfills His ancient promise through Jesus.



⁸ The New International Version. (2011). (Is 61:4-6). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

With every passage studied, our faith is built because we learn about Jesus, knowing Him deeper. And, with every Promise kept, our faith is built because we can be confident in the Promise Keeper; we can be confident in the Promise being kept in our lives and throughout eternity. That is an important big idea.

But this week, especially, I've been struck with how this study demonstrates the **patience** of God. Through our study, we have seen how God allowed centuries and millennia to pass as His Promise was made and fulfilled.



God is so very patient, and we are so very not.

I don't know about you, but I am thankful for the patience of God. The God who so patiently *laid out* and fulfilled His Promise over millennia, certainly has patience for me.

We have special opportunities for thankfulness in the coming days. As we pause to give thanks, let's be thankful for God's patience. I know I am thankful that God is patient with my thickheadedness, my cold heart, my blind eyes that overlook need and opportunity, and my foolish pride. And I am grateful for this truth, this big idea, demonstrated in Scripture that there is simply no way that I could possibly exhaust God's patience.

Let's pray together today, giving thanks to the Patient Promise Keeper.

