

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11ⁱⁱ

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion— to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory. For I the LORD love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed. I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being 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 with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

ⁱⁱ About Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

The prophet speaks a message of hope to those returning from exile in Babylon. He describes an ultimate year of jubilee—a time of full blessing brought by divine favor. The blessing is accompanied by a day of vindication that will bring full restitution for injustice. Thus he looks back to the Mosaic law regarding the jubilee year and forward to the day of the Lord.

In verses 10-11, the prophet assumes the voice of Zion, the kingdom of God. Zion revels in the

new life given it by God. This new life is described first as a joyful wedding celebration and then as a time of planting and new growth. Both images bespeak mystery and delight. In the same way, God will bring about a new life of justice and praise.