

## Fact Sheet for “One Day in Nazareth” Isaiah 61:1-4

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Jesus had been baptized by John, called his initial disciples, turned the water into wine at Cana, gone to Capernaum, and then to Jerusalem for the first Passover of his public ministry. Now Jesus was returning to Galilee after driving out the moneychangers from the temple, then speaking to Nicodemus. He first came to Samaria and interacted with the woman at the well. Then he came to Nazareth, a small town that was literally built on the side of a hill. This was where he had grown up with his mother, father, brothers and sisters. They knew him and his family at the synagogue in town, as he had regularly been there. He was a young man of about 30, likely with no gray hair, and about the age when young men would have taken a broader role in synagogue life. But this was no ordinary man. He was God the Son. How much of his divine attributes he had willingly set aside for a time I don't think any of us really know, but he was still God the Son. He was on a mission from the Father. This was right at the beginning of his public ministry that would end in two years. Some who heard him would believe and follow him. Others who were caught up in the ceremony or the politics of the synagogue and the temple would not be able to stomach him. Jesus began to sort them out.

Luke 4:16-30 provides a record of his interaction in the synagogue there. Notice that the two individuals he references were Gentiles!

Now let's take a closer look at that passage from Isaiah.

<sup>ESV</sup> <sup>1</sup> **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;  
<sup>2a</sup> to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,**

This is clearly a Messianic passage, but Jesus stopped reading from the scroll here. He wasn't paraphrasing these words from Isaiah, he was reading from an actual scroll of Isaiah. He stopped before the verse (the sentence) ended. In fact he stopped in the middle of a thought.

*In Hebrew the logical first half of the sentence is separated from the logical second half of the sentence by one very particular accent mark. That mark comes later in the sentence. These accent marks weren't added until centuries after Jesus spoke these words in the synagogue, but they do show a logical break in the thought of the verse. The first half of the verse focus on "the year" and "the day" while the second half focus on the comforting of those who mourn.*

The remainder of the Verse in Hebrew is as follows...

<sup>2b</sup> **and the day of vengeance of our God;  
to comfort all who mourn;**

Jesus deliberately stopped in the middle of the thought of the first half of the verse. Why? It was because of what he said in Luke 4:21, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." God's day of vengeance had not yet arrived. One day it will. Verse three of Isaiah 61 continues with the focus on those who will mourn.

<sup>3a</sup> 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.

These words, largely from the KJV, have been personalized and put to music.

He gave **me** beauty for ashes  
the oil of joy for mourning  
the garment of praise  
for the spirit of heaviness  
that **we** might be trees of righteousness  
the planting of the LORD  
that He might be glorified

This seems to be a good song, but it really removes these words from their context. These verses were written for those who would be mourning in Jerusalem when the day of vengeance would arrive at Jesus' 2<sup>nd</sup> coming.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

Now, here's a question... How would you apply these verses from Isaiah to your own life today... and apply them well? Here's a hint. Look for a bridge, something that is true in our time that was identically true in Isaiah's time. It's not the context of these verses. They were written for those in Jerusalem, during a time that has not yet arrived. What is the same? Consider the character of God and the character of man. These are the same.

Some will hear the gospel and believe. Many will hear and reject Christ. Of those who hear and believe some will be dedicated to Him. Others will hold on to their sin

Let's move to God.

**ESV 1 John 1:5** ¶ This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

He will judge sin, both for the unsaved (Revelation 20:11-15) and for the saved (2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10-12; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

There is great blessing in serving God, but there is also the promise of judgment when you ignore him. Know your Bible well. Serve him with all your heart. Teach this to your children. Tell this to all who will listen.