

The Year of the LORD'S FAVOR

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; ² to proclaim the year of the LORD'S favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; 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. 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.

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. 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. 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. 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.

I greet you with grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Risen Lord and the Holy Spirit who lives within us as believers, empowering us.

As we look at our lesson from Isaiah, questions arise. Who is the anointed one in our lesson that will bring the year of the Lord's favor? When is this going to happen? Is it limited to a literal year? What will it be like? Can we be part of what is described here? All this and more, may we hear from the Spirit.

JESUS – THE ANOINTED – His Proclamation to the people of Nazareth

In Luke 4, the anointed is identified. The occasion is the Lord Jesus in his home town of Nazareth, as he reads and proclaims scripture, this very lesson from Isaiah 61. He reads halfway through verse 2, stopping before the words, ‘and the day of vengeance of our God;’, ending at “to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor” Luke records what is next, 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 (ESV) An amazing statement. This section in Isaiah is fulfilled in Jesus. There was an immediate fulfillment in the first advent, the first time Jesus came. You would have thought this statement would have caused quite a stir, but in the next verse it says, ²² **And all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. And they said, “Is not this Joseph's son?”** That, is about to change. Jesus cuts to what is keeping them from repentance.

He adds, ²³ **And he said to them, “Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, ‘Physician, heal yourself.’...”** and then he says, **“... What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.”** Luke 4:23 (ESV) Jesus as miracle worker, they wanted it there. It was as if they wanted their own personal genie to give them everything they wanted. Jesus continues to apply the scripture and cut to their real problem, 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 4:16-30 (ESV) Jesus through a miracle disappears and they can not kill him. Why so angry. You see both the widow and Naaman were Gentiles, in the Jewish mind they are not supposed to be helped by our personal God, he is for us not for them. There was no repentance, no love of God in their hearts, they sought to kill the giver of life. Any sin will do that. It becomes more important than God. It separates you from God. What is keeping you from the Lord Jesus. We come with empty hands, not with conditions, seeking mercy.

JESUS – THE FIRST ADVENT - bringing the good news – with open arms – the days of grace

His arms are open wide. Look at our lesson, Jesus ready **“...to bring good news ...to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, ... the opening of the prison to those who are bound;** ^{121 2} **to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor,”** Isaiah 61:1-4 (ESV) A year that starts for you at salvation and continues throughout eternity, the good news of salvation by grace through faith, a gift for all to receive. (Eph 2:8-10) To recover from the brokenheartedness of sin, be liberated, free from the chains of sin, and to enjoy the favor that the Lord’s provides. There is a beautiful headdress, not ashes, oil of gladness, not mourning, a garment of praise, not a faint spirit. We are oaks of righteousness that comes from the perfect righteousness of Christ that is given to us as new creations in Christ, free from the penalty and power of sin. (2 Cor 5:17,21) We will live in new cities not ancient ruins, lasting from generation to generation. This is what the Lord provides, may you rejoice and receive his gift of life and not be left to your own devices. Now is the time to come to faith and believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, that came to die for you, and rose for you, making your resurrection possible to all who would believe. That is now, being part of this coming kingdom since the kingdom comes to your heart now as you receive the forgiveness of sins. That is now – the first advent.

JESUS – SECOND ADVENT – suddenly in judgment ushering in the new heavens and earth

Yet, Isaiah also speaks of the 2nd Advent, saying, “...**the day of vengeance of our God;**” which is also part of the coming ‘day of the Lord’ as He returns at in judgment to end our present world and usher in the new kingdom. That day will be suddenly. Do not be unaware. Jesus warned ³⁷ **For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.** ³⁸ **For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark,** ³⁹ **and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.** Matt 24:36-39 (ESV) The flood was sudden. In Genesis 7, it says, “¹¹ **...on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened.** Gen 7:11 (ESV) You say, who believes in a world wide flood covering everything, where did all that water go, that’s impossible. Yet on all the highest mountains there are remains of sea life, so they once were under water. You see, if the mountains were lower, and the sea floor higher, easily enough water. How can that happen? Read about that in the book “In the Beginning” some 300 pages with lots of color pictures. It is also on creationscience.com. You can read about the hydroplate theory, that ties scientifically, what we see in geology, the ocean ridge & trenches, mountain ranges parallel to that ridge, coal, oil, most of the fossils, ice age, grand canyon, layered deposits, some 25 features, all as a result of a powerful flood that agrees with the laws of science, and what is recorded in the Bible. Only eight souls were saved from that flood, heeding God’s warnings. That warning is here today. God is a God of justice and there is justice coming. In verse 8 of our lesson, 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 (ESV) He desires mercy toward you, not judgment, covenant with the Lord. Look what he provides, “¹⁰ **... clothed ...with the garments of salvation; ...covered ...with the robe of righteousness,... beautiful headdress, ...** ¹¹ **...righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations.** Isaiah 61:8-11 (ESV) All of this won for you on a cross given to all who receive this gift of life.

LIVE IN THE NEW REALITY – THE LORD’S FAVOR – YOU ARE ANOINTED

As believers we are to live in the reality of this gift. How can we not help but rejoice, living in the joy of knowing Jesus. (1 Thes 5:16, Phil 4:4) He provides and is with us always. (Matt 28:20) Peter tells us, ³ **His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,** 2 Peter 1:3 (ESV) Everything through Him. How can we not be thankful, unless we are running away from Him, busy with the ruined ideas of the world. Paul told the Colossians, ⁸ **See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.** Col 2:8 (ESV) We live and abide in Christ, not according to the world, living in the favor of the Lord receiving from

Him through word and sacrament. The warning - stay away from the corruption in the world. We too, just like Jesus, anointed to share the good news of the life we have with others. He is right there as you live in His favor. May God grant this to us all.

In His name we pray, AMEN. May the peace of God that passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. AMEN.