

Isaiah 61:1–4, 8–11

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.

**Psalm 126**

1 When the Lord restored the fortunes of | Zion,*
we were like | those who dream.

2 Then our mouth was filled with | laughter,*
and our tongue with | shouts of joy;

then they said among the nations,
“The Lord has done great | things for them.”*
3 The Lord has done great things for us; |
we are glad.

4 Restore our fortunes, | O Lord,*
like streams in the | Negeb!

5 Those who | sow in tears*
shall reap with | shouts of joy!

6 He who goes out weeping,
bearing the seed for | sowing,*
shall come home with shouts of joy,
bringing his | sheaves with him.

1 Thessalonians 5:16–24

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise prophecies, ²¹but test everything; hold fast what is good. ²²Abstain from every form of evil.

²³Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

John 1:6–8, 19–28

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. . . .

¹⁹This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” ²⁰He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.” ²¹And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.” ²²So they said to him, “Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” ²³He said, “I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ as the prophet Isaiah said.”

²⁴(Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) ²⁵They asked him, “Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?” ²⁶John answered them, “I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, ²⁷even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.” ²⁸These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.