

## Focus on Isaiah 61:1–4, 8–11

### WHAT is important to know?

— From “Exegetical Perspective,” William P. Brown

Zion’s response to this pronouncement is total, unabashed joy, with whole heart, mind, and being (vv. 10–11; cf. Deut. 6:5). Her restoration is tantamount to being clothed by God in fine array: garments and jewelry become emblematic of God’s saving work (cf. 52:1). Zion thus obtains a new identity as one uniquely blessed by God. The clothes make the city. And as Zion is clothed with new garments, so the earth is clothed with new life. The conclusion of the lection returns to the garden. The earth’s fructification is a sign of righteousness resurrected (see also 45:8). God has plotted this restoration with care, wielding not the sword but a garden spade.

### WHERE is God in these words?

— From “Theological Perspective,” Scott Bader-Saye

A restored Israel, living as a jubilee community, will stand as a sign of God’s blessing to the nations around it, a kind of sacramental enacting of the salvation toward which it points. To be missional is to live as a people of good news, liberation, justice, and comfort in such a way that the world may take notice and be drawn to the ways of God. Jesus declares himself to be the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy, the one to bring good news, healing, and release. As we walk through the last days of Advent, we remember not just *that* Jesus came but *why* Jesus came—to usher in a jubilee celebration that would have no end.

### SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?— From “Pastoral Perspective,” Cynthia A. Jarvis

The God who can build up ancient ruins is also the God who can redeem the ruin a prodigal son believes he has made of his life; the God who shall raise up the former devastations is also the God who means to pick up a daughter’s broken parts; the God who shall repair the ruined cities and the devastations of many generations is also the God who can repair even the ruined nation that has forgotten its way in the world.

### NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

— From “Homiletical Perspective,”  
Donald Booz

Advent is a time of waiting and preparation for God to transform the world through Jesus Christ. Isaiah’s words tell us that this transformation is not to be an empty hope but a sure promise. God is the Lord of all times and places. Isaiah guarantees that God will cause “righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations” (v. 11). Jesus proclaims that he is the one who will bring God’s transformation to a broken world. According to the prophet, God will bring about systemic transformations as an “everlasting covenant.” Is it possible that the promises of God could produce a major transformation in the local faith community?