

Isaiah 61:1-8 NIV

“The people God selected to hear good news”

“**The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.**

“He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, ⁽²⁾ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, ⁽³⁾ and provide for those who grieve in Zion-- to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.

“They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor. ⁽⁴⁾ They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations.

⁽⁵⁾ Aliens will shepherd your flocks; foreigners will work your fields and vineyards.

⁽⁶⁾ And you will be called priests of the LORD, you will be named ministers of our God. You will feed on the wealth of nations, and in their riches you will boast.

⁽⁷⁾ “Instead of their shame my people will receive a double portion, and instead of disgrace they will rejoice in their inheritance; and so they will inherit a double portion in their land, and everlasting joy will be theirs.

⁽⁸⁾ “For I, the LORD, love justice; I hate robbery and iniquity. In my faithfulness I will reward them and make an everlasting covenant with them.

**This scripture should be special to all of us,
Imagine a young man who’s a standout in the
community.**

**He’s responsible, likeable, hard-working,
and respects his parents.**

**He leaves his small town for a while, goes to
a big city and becomes famous--
the talk of the nation—
a household word
all over the country.**



**After all this notoriety, the small-town guy
returns and attends his home church.**

Leaders ask him to read a Scripture.

He opens his Bible to the prophet Isaiah and reads what you just read: **“The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.”**

That’s what Jesus did.

The first time back home in Nazareth, he read this Scripture in his childhood synagogue.

Isaiah wrote this text 700 years before Jesus came.

This Scripture has unpleasant aspects to it.

It’s something we’ve all endured.

Recall listening to a boring speaker?

The preacher, professor, or teacher inspires yawns, drowsiness, and clock-watching.

When Isaiah first presented this text, folks pooh-poohed him.

As Jesus read this Scripture 700 years later and said this it applied to him, folks pooh-poohed Jesus, too.

Whether or not you feel disdain toward me, you probably wonder how this text can benefit you.

Part of the problem relates to the difficulty of connecting with some terms in this Isaiah text.

The terms *sovereign*, *anoint*, and *preach* often snag people.

Those three don’t grab us like *Super Bowl*, *Olympics*, and *Powerball*.

So my today is to persuade you that it’s worth your time to understand this text.

I wish it were as simple as the old Arab proverb:

“Three things make a house uninhabitable: tak, nak and bak.”¹

Are you on the edge wondering what *tak*, *nak*, and *bak* are?

I’ll explain TAK and BAK before I tell you about NAK.

The three things that make a house uninhabitable:

TAK, leakage of rain.

BAK is bugs

NAK is a

woman’s nagging.



Before wives start throwing mental darts at me, I want to side with you about NAK, the nagging part:

You see probably see nagging this way:

“If that lazy guy would put down his beer, turn off the ball game, get off his rump, fix the roof, and kill the bugs, I wouldn’t need to nag!”

Now that you know about Tak, Nak & Bak, let’s look at the three terms:

***sovereign*, *anoint*, and *preach*.**

The expression “sovereign Lord” means that God is in charge of everything.

Lots of people boast that they don’t need God.

¹ It’s an explanation for a phrase in Proverbs 19:13

They’re tough and defiant:

“God isn’t real.

“I can live the way I want.”

“Who is God to tell me what to do?”

For most of my 55/56 college year, I worked as a stock boy at a five and dime store in Bartlesville, Oklahoma.

They paid me 58 cents an hour to unload boxes of merchandise from trucks, put it on an elevator, take it to the second floor of the store, check the manifest or order, and put products in the proper storeroom bins.

When the sales people on the main floor needed to restock their shelves, they sent orders to me and my co-workers.

We’d take lilac defleurs cologne, cheap perfume, toys, shoes, candy or whatever they needed to restock the display shelves.

It was a busy store with lots to do.

A co-worker about my age took frequent breaks.

One afternoon he rested comfortably among some boxes—asleep, in fact.

“Aren’t you afraid that Mr. Ward (the manager) will find you?” I asked him.



“I’m not afraid of Mr. Ward,” he said boldly.

When I came to work a few days later I saw him leaning against the storefront.

My co-worker wasn’t defiant.

He looked sad—nearly in tears.

Mr. Ward must have caught him napping
I never saw the young man again.

Many people refuse to acknowledge God.

They act brashly and self-reliant.

They stay defiant until God pulls the plug on their heart or their lungs, or they face some brutal reality.

Then many blame God for letting bad things happen to them.

When folks censure God for such things, they actually admit that he is in charge don’t they?

Even though they haven’t done and refuse to do what the “the guy up there” wants them to do.

Only when they face disaster, do some realize God’s sovereignty.

Our heavenly Father remains in charge from beginning to end of creation.

And everything in between.

Anointed, our second term refers to the historical fact that Israel anointed men who’d been chosen to be prophets, priests, and kings.

Jesus was unique.

**God made him prophet, priest, and king—
His chosen person.**

Later we’ll talk more about his exclusiveness.

We know of God’s sovereignty.

We know He anointed or chose Jesus.

And preach?

Preach is merely a fancy word for tell.

A few years ago, I waited in a store line.

The Baltimore Ravens were scheduled to play the
San Francisco Forty-niners in the Super Bowl.

Several people in line and one of the clerks
kept saying, “Go Forty-niners!”

No one there supported the Baltimore Ravens.

I didn’t have a favorite.

**But being the troublemaker,
I brashly said, “Go Ravens!”**



In some places, I might have started a riot.

The clerk seemed a little annoyed with me.

He didn’t think of it that way, but we were
both proclaiming.

Preach means—to proclaim.

What did God send Jesus to proclaim?

Good news!

Read any newspaper; listen to a news broadcast

on any network. Check on-line.

95 % of what you hear and read is bad news:
murders, kidnapping, inflation, taxes, the economy,
job prospects, Covid19, corruption among political
leaders, war, and uncertainty.

The same was true in Isaiah’s time.

It was that way in Jesus’ time.

They didn’t hear any more good news than we do.

Not much news is good, is it?

**If there’s one piece of good news you’d like to
hear, what would it be?**

- **God has forgiven you for that really dumb thing you did years ago?**
 - **The rift separating you and your loved one has been healed?**
 - **That you found life real purpose and significance?**
- **Your children are doing well, living happily and responsibly?**
 - **That you are completely free of a disease that’s plagued you.**

What Good News would you like to hear?

There’s a vital fact about good news.

Many of us stumble along, going by the advice of friends, or what we hear on The View, or a morning talk show.

We might be religious and go to church, but we really don't follow Jesus.

At times bad news overwhelms us.

We hear preachers talk.

We read Christian literature from time to time.

But we just don't see how Jesus can help.

I've mentioned before that for two years I worked at a service station south of Portland, Oregon, that had a B17 bomber over it.

My manager Dean and I were at the station together one day, when a man drove to one of the side entrances.

His car had an official seal on the door.

“Tell him I'm not here,” Dean ordered, as he sneaked out the other side door.

This went on for weeks.

I didn't know what it was about, but thought it had something to do with taxes.

One day the car suddenly appeared again.

This time I didn't cooperate with Dean's evasion plan.

Even if he was my boss, I was tired of trying to cover for him.

Thinking I'd suffer consequences, I pointed out Dean to the man

Then I went outside so they could talk.

When he left, Dean approached me and said, “Bob, I wish I had talked to him a long time ago. I don't owe them anything. They owe me money.”

THE TAX MAN COMETH...

Many of us worriedly, constantly look over our shoulders.

We're anxious about many things.

We try various means to forget them.

We use the latest remedies, gimmicks, and advice.

But the worries don't go away.

They only increase.

Sometimes we get really down.

“Hell is the place where one has ceased to hope,” wrote A.J. Cronin.

It's hell, isn't it, when we see no solutions to our problems?

We rarely admit it, but here's what troubles us.

Two things can go wrong with our life-picture.

This pair never changes for any man or woman.

- 1. As long as we try to evade God, we'll never be happy. Whether we are denying God, running from God, or avoiding full commitment, it doesn't matter. Life cannot work without a good relationship with God.**
- 2. We must do things God's way.**

We know we should put him in charge of our lives and do things his way.
Yet we fear it will make us different from our friends.
No one likes being *different*.



When we try to evade God’s control, we make the same mistake my friend Dean did with the tax man.
The sooner we put God in full control, the quicker we’ll be at ease.

Running from him only makes us more anxious.
Our health suffers.
Our productivity decreases.
Personal relationships weaken.
Fearfulness shakes our faith.

Here’s the good news:

Jesus helps us win over our worries.

We overcome anxiety by trusting in God's promises, believing in God’s **Sovereignty**

Do you want real freedom?

Turn your life fully over to Jesus.

- He frees you from your past, because he paid the price for all your mistakes.

- He gives the best advice there is on how to deal with present.
 - I do much better physically if I’m not sitting around worrying and thinking about me.
- We grow stronger when we serve others.
- **Jesus frees you from anxiety about the future**, because he connects you with the most powerful force in the universe.

“The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news” Jesus, the Son of God.

Bob Blair
PO Box 176
Cleghorn, IA 51014

www.robertblairbooks.com