



Highlights From the Book of Isaiah

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Restoration of Israel to God (60:15-22)

- Today we will be looking at Isaiah 60:15-22 as we work our way through the *remainder* of the 60th chapter that we started last week (when we covered the first 14 verses).
- Isaiah 60 is part of a larger section of the book of Isaiah (Isaiah 60-62) which I have entitled, “*Jerusalem as the Light of the World.*”
- I consider Isaiah 60-62 to be the “crown jewel” of the book of Isaiah because in it, many of the major themes and streams of thought that have been building up throughout the entire book come together.

Restoration of Israel to God (60:15-22)

- These major themes and streams of thought include:
 - The purification of the people of God by the coming Messiah who as the:
 - *Suffering Servant* suffers on their behalf (53:1-12)
 - *Divine Warrior* conquers their sin (59:15b-21)
 - The coming together of the nations of the world to be a part of the people of God as they bring their resources and offerings to honor and worship the God of Israel (2:1-4; 11:10-16; 25:6-9; 42:6-7; 49:5-13; 51:4-5; 55:5; 56:6-7).
 - The transformation of “*Zion*” (aka. “*Jerusalem*”) from the physical capital of ancient Israel, to the birthplace of the New Covenant, and ultimately to the eternal heavenly city, aka. the “*new*” or “*heavenly*” Jerusalem (cf. Rev 21:2, Heb 12:22)

Restoration of Israel to God (60:15-22)

- Another thing that I have repeatedly pointed out as we have worked our way through the book of Isaiah, is how Isaiah often describes physical events that would occur in ancient Israel in such a way as to *prefigure later* events.
- This was *especially* true in Isaiah 40-55 where I repeated showed that Isaiah uses language that was (at one level) descriptive of the return of the Jewish exiles from Babylonian captivity to *prefigure* more significant later events such as:
 - The New Covenant period when people of God scattered throughout the world are brought back to their Creator and Redeemer.
 - The future eternal state when people from every tongue, tribe, and nation will be brought to their ultimate home in God's heavenly kingdom.

Restoration of Israel to God (60:15-22)

- We saw Isaiah doing this in the text that we covered last week in **Isaiah 60:1-14**.
- In that text we saw Isaiah use language that he had used earlier in the book (49:18a, 22b) to describe a return from Babylonian captivity to *now* describe (in **60:4ff**) a future “coming” of the faraway nations of the world to Zion, crowding the streets as they use their wealth to honor the people of Israel while they sing praise to the God of Israel.
- And I pointed out that the events described there were *partially* fulfilled at the *first* advent of Christ and the coming of the New Covenant, but that they will find their *ultimate* fulfillment in the eternal state that takes place after the *second* coming of Christ.

Restoration of Israel to God (60:15-22)

- The text that we are looking at this morning *continues* to describe events which find their fulfillment in the New Covenant and the eternal state.
- I will cover this text in three parts:
 - The Future Transformation of Zion and its Citizens (60:15-18)
 - The LORD as the Light of Zion (60:19-20)
 - The Godly Citizens of Zion (60:21-22)

The Transformation of Zion (60:15-18)

60:15 You were once abandoned and despised, with no one passing through, but I will make you a permanent source of pride and joy to coming generations. ¹⁶ You will drink the milk of nations; you will nurse at the breasts of kings. Then you will recognize that I, the LORD, am your Deliverer, your [Redeemer], the Powerful One of Jacob. ¹⁷ Instead of bronze, I will bring you gold; instead of iron, I will bring you silver; instead of wood, I will bring you bronze; instead of stones, I will bring you iron. I will make [peace] your overseer, and [righteousness] your sovereign ruler. ¹⁸ Sounds of violence will no longer be heard in your land, or the sounds of destruction and devastation within your borders. You will name your walls, 'Deliverance' and your gates, 'Praise.'

60:15 *You were once abandoned and despised, with no one passing through, but I will make you a permanent source of pride and joy to coming generations.*

- “*abandoned and despised*” are words that are sometimes used to describe an abandoned wife (Isaiah 54:6; Judges 15:2)
- Here they are used here to describe Zion as it was in the past when she was left by the LORD to experience the dire consequences of her sin.
- At one point (during the Babylonian captivity) Zion had become a *ruined territory*, “*with no one passing through*”.
- The country had been so depopulated and impoverished that merchants no longer wanted to go there to trade (cf. 33:8; Jer 9:10).
- But a time is coming when Zion will be brought back to a *right* relationship with the LORD, and he will make her “*a permanent source of pride and joy to coming generations*”.

60:16 *You will drink the milk of nations; you will nurse at the breasts of kings. Then you will recognize that I, the LORD, am your Deliverer, your [Redeemer], the Powerful One of Jacob.*

- Though to our ears the language used here seems somewhat odd, this is similar to what was said of Zion in 49:23, where it says, “*Kings will be your children's guardians; their princesses will nurse your children.*”
- What is being described here is a process whereby Zion will receive rich nourishment from the nations – similar to what we saw described last week in 60:1-14.
- Restored Zion will have at her disposal the resources of the world and the riches of kings.

60:16 *You will drink the milk of nations; you will nurse at the breasts of kings. Then you will recognize that I, the LORD, am your Deliverer, your [Redeemer], the Powerful One of Jacob.*

- The final two lines of this verse repeat the wording found in Isaiah 49:26b – “*Then all humankind will recognize that I am the LORD, your deliverer, your Redeemer, the powerful ruler of Jacob.*”
- The difference being that in Isaiah 49:26b it was “*all humankind*” that came to recognize the true character of the LORD, here it is Zion *herself* who will acknowledge all that the LORD has done for her.

60:17 *Instead of bronze, I will bring you gold; instead of iron, I will bring you silver; instead of wood, I will bring you bronze; instead of stones, I will bring you iron. I will make [peace] your overseer, and [righteousness] your sovereign ruler.*

- God declares in what manner He will beautify and stabilize Zion, namely by the replacement of good materials with materials that are even better.
- The outward beauty and stability of these materials will reflect the inward character of its citizens.
- God will make “*peace*” to be Zion’s “*overseer*”.
- Likewise, “*righteousness*” will be her “*ruler*”.
- This is not just a strong way of saying that the government will be peaceful and the rulers righteous, but rather, peace *itself* will be the government, and righteousness the rulers – as vicegerents of the Lord.
- In other words, human rulers will no longer be needed.

60:18 *Sounds of violence will no longer be heard in your land, or the sounds of destruction and devastation within your borders. You will name your walls, 'Deliverance' and your gates, 'Praise.'*

- “*violence*” (Hebrew: *ḥāmās*) will be a thing of the past.¹
- “*destruction and devastation*” of property will likewise cease.¹
- The community of Zion will give wholehearted recognition to what has been done for them by naming their city walls “*Deliverance*”.¹
- Where formerly her gates shut out the intruder, now the responsive giving of “*Praise*” consumes its inhabitants.²
- From the Lord to his people flows everything they could need (“*Deliverance*”); from the people to the LORD flows back endless “*Praise*”.²

¹ Mackay, John L. – *A Study Commentary on Isaiah Volume 2: Chapters 40-66* – pp. 508–509.

² Motyer, J. Alec. *The Prophecy of Isaiah* (p. 498).

The LORD as the Light of Zion (60:19-20)

60:19 The sun will no longer supply light for you by day, nor will the moon's brightness shine on you; the LORD will be your permanent source of light—the splendor of your God will shine upon you. ²⁰ Your sun will no longer set; your moon will not disappear; the LORD will be your permanent source of light; your time of sorrow will be over.

60:19 *The sun will no longer supply light for you by day, nor will the moon's brightness shine on you; the LORD will be your permanent source of light— the splendor of your God will shine upon you.*

- Isaiah returns to the thoughts with which he had begun this chapter, namely that Zion will be “*light*”.
- The passage does not actually state that the sun will be done away with, but merely that it will “*no longer supply light for [Zion] by day*”.
- Instead of the sun and moon, the **LORD** will provide light for Zion.
- In Revelation 21:23 and 22:5 these figures are applied to the New Jerusalem in the eternal state.
- “*the splendor of your God will shine upon you*” – darkness, the result of sin, is dispelled, and pure uncreated Light shines forth in Zion.

60:20 *Your sun will no longer set; your moon will not disappear; the LORD will be your permanent source of light; your time of sorrow will be over.*

- Zion will never again have a sun that sets nor a moon that disappears.
- This unbroken presence of light is due to the fact that the LORD will become an *eternal* light for Zion.
- *“your time of sorrow will be over”* – this *“time of sorrow”* was the period of sin and ignorance when the light of God’s presence was not known.
- In that day, when His presence is near, there will no longer be any *“sorrow”*.
- For every citizen of Zion the *“time of sorrow”* will be over.

The Godly Citizens of Zion (60:21-22)

60:21 All your people will be godly; they will possess the land permanently. I will plant them like a shoot; they will be the product of my labor, through whom I reveal my splendor. ²² The least of you will multiply into a thousand; the smallest of you will become a large nation. When the right time comes, I the LORD will quickly do this!”

60:21 *All your people will be godly; they will possess the land permanently. I will plant them like a shoot; they will be the product of my labor, through whom I reveal my splendor.*

- The focus switches from Zion to the *inhabitants* of the restored city, “*your people*”.
- Because of the status they have received through the work of the Servant (cf. 53:11) and because of the way they conduct themselves, they are declared to be “*godly*”.
- All whose status and conduct would pollute the sacred city are barred from it (cf. 35:8; 52:1; Rev. 21:27).

60:21 *All your people will be godly; they will possess the land permanently. I will plant them like a shoot; they will be the product of my labor, through whom I reveal my splendor.*

- Those who are permitted to enter as citizens of the city enjoy the ultimate fulfillment of the covenant made with Abraham, for “*they will possess the land permanently*” (cf. 57:13; Gen. 12:7; Neh. 9:8).
- However, the promise is not to be thought of as fulfilled by occupancy of territory in the Middle East.
- The significance of “*the land*” was always in its being the place of divine presence and of fellowship with the LORD.

60:21 *All your people will be godly; they will possess the land permanently. I will plant them like a shoot; they will be the product of my labor, through whom I reveal my splendor.*

- Although “*shoot*” here is the same word as is used of the Messiah in 11:1 (“*A shoot will grow out of Jesse's root stock*”), here it refers to the LORD’s *people* in language similar to that of 61:3 (“*They will be called oaks of righteousness, trees planted by the LORD*”).
- They exist because of the divine initiative to “*plant*” them so that they would take root and grow in the way he intended.
- As the LORD’s workmanship, “*the product of [his] labor*”, these citizens of Zion reflect the “*splendor*” of the one who made them.

60:22 *The least of you will multiply into a thousand; the smallest of you will become a large nation. When the right time comes, I the LORD will quickly do this!”*

- Here what Isaiah says about the people who make up the city of Zion is that their influence will be out of proportion to their size: *“the least of you will multiply into a thousand; the smallest of you will become a large nation”*.
- This is the direct **opposite** of what happened to the people of Israel in Isaiah 30:17, where it states that **one** enemy is able to chase a thousand Israelites, because Israel had trusted in military power rather than in the Lord.
- **Now** Isaiah sees a day in which that situation will be **reversed** – when out of the ragged remnants of a defeated Israel would come a handful of his frightened disciples who, empowered by the Spirit of God, would shake an entire empire – and ultimately, the world.

60:22 *The least of you will multiply into a thousand; the smallest of you will become a large nation. When the right time comes, I the LORD will quickly do this!”*

- This is the climax of a theme that runs throughout the OT and that the NT picks up on as well (cf. 1 Cor 1:26-31): the power of the weak, the triumph of the unlikely, and the fruitfulness of the barren.
- The kingdom of God is not made with human strength; it is built by human weakness, through which God can move (cf. Mic. 5:2).
- This thought, and indeed the entire chapter, is summed up in the last part of this verse.
- How is it possible that this, all these wonderful promises, even understood as imagery, could ever happen?
- Because the one who is speaking is the Lord! (“*I the LORD will... do this!*””)

60:22 *The least of you will multiply into a thousand; the smallest of you will become a large nation. When the right time comes, I the LORD will quickly do this!*”

- At this point, with the benefit of hindsight, we know that the promises here refer to two events: the first and second coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ.
- Paul may be alluding to this verse when he says that God brought forth his Son in “*the fullness of time*” (Gal 4:4).
- Although it may take a long time for all things to be ready, nevertheless, “*When the right time comes... the LORD will quickly do this!*”

60:22 The least of you will multiply into a thousand; the smallest of you will become a large nation. When the right time comes, I the LORD will quickly do this!"

- This is the way it was with the first coming.
- It seemed that the Messiah would never come.
- But when the time was right, he was suddenly present, and those who were not prepared had no time to get prepared.
- So it will be at the end of this age.
- Suddenly the sun will leap over the horizon, and God's everlasting day will be here.

60:22 The least of you will multiply into a thousand; the smallest of you will become a large nation. When the right time comes, I the LORD will quickly do this!”

- In the meantime, the task of the people of God is to draw on all his resources to reflect to the world as much of his light as he now makes available to us.
- If we will, the nations will continue to come streaming to him as they have for two thousand years.

Allusions to
Isaiah 60
in Revelation 21

Rev 21:1 *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband... ²³ And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. ²⁴ By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, ²⁵ and its gates will never be shut by day--and there will be no night there. ²⁶ They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. (ESV).*

Isaiah 60:19 *The sun shall be no more your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give you light; but the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. (ESV)*

Rev 21:1 *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband... ²³ And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. ²⁴ By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, ²⁵ and its gates will never be shut by day--and there will be no night there. ²⁶ They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. (ESV).*

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Isaiah 60:3 *And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. (ESV)*

Rev 21:1 *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband... ²³ And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. ²⁴ By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, ²⁵ and its gates will never be shut by day--and there will be no night there. ²⁶ They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. (ESV).*

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Isaiah 60:11a *Your gates shall be open continually; day and night they shall not be shut...(ESV)*

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Isaiah 60:19 *The sun shall be no more your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give you light; but the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. (ESV)*

Isaiah 60:3 *And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. (ESV)*

Isaiah 60:11a *Your gates shall be open continually; day and night they shall not be shut...(ESV)*

Isaiah 60:13 *The glory of Lebanon shall come to you... ¹⁴ The sons of those who afflicted you shall come bending low to you. (ESV)*

Next Time

- I hope to cover *The LORD Will Rejuvenate His People* (61:1-11)

Class Discussion Time

- In the introduction to today's class I talked about how I have repeatedly pointed out as we have worked our way through the book of Isaiah, how Isaiah often describes physical events that would occur in ancient Israel in such a way as to prefigure later events.
- Is there anyone who is having a hard time seeing this and would like to discuss it or ask further questions?

Class Discussion Time

- After class last week, someone was telling me that they sometimes have a hard time figuring out when Isaiah is being literal and when he is being figurative.
- What are some clues that help us figure out whether Isaiah is being figurative versus literal?
- Some suggestions of things to think about as we try to answer this question:
 - First of all, often in Isaiah it is not ***either/or*** but ***both/and***. In other words, sometimes what Isaiah is talking about did ***literally*** take place (e.g. return from Babylonian exile) and yet that physical event still ***prefigures*** an even ***greater*** future event (i.e. the New Covenant or the eternal future state)
 - If the New Testament quotes or strongly alludes to a passage in Isaiah and the New Testament writer interprets Isaiah figuratively – then we ***know*** that the passage can be understood figuratively.
 - If an future event Isaiah describes has ***never*** occurred historically and is ***unlikely*** to occur in the future – that could be a clue that what he has written is to be understood figuratively, especially if there is an obvious figurative correlation between what Isaiah is describing and what we know will happen in the future.