

**The Future Glory of Zion;  
The Glory of God in His Church Through Jesus Christ**

Today we arrive at Isaiah 60. This is a passage that is not easily interpreted, as we will show. All agree that it is prophetic of God's future blessing on "Zion." The primary debate in its interpretation is whether this chapter contains a prophecy of a future age of blessing for the nation of Israel in an earthly 1,000 year millennium or it is a prophecy of "the Israel of God", that which is experienced and enjoyed by "Zion", the people of God in this church age. In other words, those who believe in a pre-millennial, dispensational interpretation of Scripture, believe this passage foretells a future earthly kingdom for ethnic Jews in national Israel. Those who are amillennial (my position), see this as a prophecy of those in the Church, those who are redeemed by Jesus Christ, both Jews and Gentiles, in this current church age.

Let us read first read the chapter, and then we will consider its interpretation.

- <sup>1</sup>Arise, shine, for your light has come,  
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.
- <sup>2</sup>For behold, darkness shall cover the earth,  
and thick darkness the peoples;  
but the LORD will arise upon you,  
and His glory will be seen upon you.
- <sup>3</sup>And nations shall come to your light,  
and kings to the brightness of your rising.
- <sup>4</sup>Lift up your eyes all around, and see;  
they all gather together, they come to you;  
your sons shall come from afar,  
and your daughters shall be carried on the hip.
- <sup>5</sup>Then you shall see and be radiant;  
your heart shall thrill and exult,  
because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you,  
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.
- <sup>6</sup>A multitude of camels shall cover you,  
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;  
all those from Sheba shall come.  
They shall bring gold and frankincense,  
and shall bring good news, the praises of the LORD.
- <sup>7</sup>All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered to you;  
the rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you;  
they shall come up with acceptance on My altar,  
and I will beautify My beautiful house.
- <sup>8</sup>Who are these that fly like a cloud,  
and like doves to their windows?
- <sup>9</sup>For the coastlands shall hope for Me,  
the ships of Tarshish first,  
to bring your children from afar,  
their silver and gold with them,  
for the name of the LORD your God,

and for the Holy One of Israel,  
because He has made you beautiful.

<sup>10</sup>Foreigners shall build up your walls,  
and their kings shall minister to you;  
for in My wrath I struck you,  
but in My favor I have had mercy on you.

<sup>11</sup>Your gates shall be open continually;  
day and night they shall not be shut,  
that people may bring to you the wealth of the nations,  
with their kings led in procession.

<sup>12</sup>For the nation and kingdom  
that will not serve you shall perish;  
those nations shall be utterly laid waste.

<sup>13</sup>The glory of Lebanon shall come to you,  
the cypress, the plane, and the pine,  
to beautify the place of My sanctuary,  
and I will make the place of My feet glorious.

<sup>14</sup>The sons of those who afflicted you  
shall come bending low to you,  
and all who despised you  
shall bow down at your feet;  
they shall call you the City of the LORD,  
the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

<sup>15</sup>Whereas you have been forsaken and hated,  
with no one passing through,  
I will make you majestic forever,  
a joy from age to age.

<sup>16</sup>You shall suck the milk of nations;  
you shall nurse at the breast of kings;  
and you shall know that I, the LORD, am your Savior  
and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.

<sup>17</sup>Instead of bronze I will bring gold,  
and instead of iron I will bring silver;  
instead of wood, bronze,  
instead of stones, iron.

I will make your overseers peace  
and your taskmasters righteousness.

<sup>18</sup>Violence shall no more be heard in your land,  
devastation or destruction within your borders;  
you shall call your walls Salvation,  
and your gates Praise.

<sup>19</sup>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.

<sup>20</sup>Your sun shall no more go down,

nor your moon withdraw itself;  
for the LORD will be your everlasting light,  
and your days of mourning shall be ended.  
<sup>21</sup>Your people shall all be righteous;  
they shall possess the land forever,  
the branch of My planting, the work of My hands,  
that I might be glorified.  
<sup>22</sup>The least one shall become a clan,  
and the smallest one a mighty nation;  
I am the LORD;  
in its time I will hasten it.

### I. A summons to Zion to greet the light that is dawning upon her (vs. 1, 2)

*<sup>1</sup>Arise, shine, for your light has come,  
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.*

Zion, the city of Jerusalem, is commanded to take note of the fact that God’s salvation has come to it. They could expect before long to receive God’s favor upon them. The people of God were to arise in anticipation of its arrival. It is as though they were to rise ready for the “new day” that was dawning upon them. The people of God were soon to enter the promised new age of the Messiah.

Perhaps the restoration from Babylon is in view, but as we have shown, these chapters of Isaiah’s prophecy were directed to the Jewish remnant that had returned from Babylon, who were expecting the arrival of the promised Messiah, the Son of David, who would usher in the Kingdom of God, the restored Kingdom of Israel. The desolate city of Zion described in the previous chapters, which had existed in that depressed state for some time after the exiles returned, would come to experience God’s blessing when He brought salvation to them.

“Your light” is an allusion to the glorious presence of God with all of God’s blessing that comes with it. The arrival of the presence of God is likened to the sun rising and bathing them in warm sunlight, which brings fruitfulness to the land. Or, it is like a sudden burst of glory (light) from heaven shining upon “Zion”, which lies in the midst of a dark earth. Zion stands forth illuminated and is seen from afar. The result will be peoples coming to the “light” of the city.

Some see this as a prophecy of the Lord Jesus in bringing the light of the knowledge of God to His people. For example, we read in Luke’s Gospel of **Zechariah** declaring the nature of the ministry of his son, **John the Baptist**, as the forerunner of the Messiah:

“And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest;  
For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways,  
<sup>77</sup>To give knowledge of salvation to His people  
By the remission of their sins,  
<sup>78</sup>Through the tender mercy of our God,  
With which *the Dayspring from on high has visited us;*  
<sup>79</sup>*To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death,*  
To guide our feet into the way of peace.” (Luke 1:78-79)

We see the Lord Jesus Himself as “the light” that God had promised would come into the world. The “darkness” of which the Light dispelled, speaks of the lost condition of sinners who are in need of the life, or light, that the Messiah would bring to His people. We read in **John 8:12** our Lord’s words, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”

This “light” involves God imparting knowledge and spiritual life to His people. It was to Christians Paul wrote in **Ephesians 5:14** reads,

“Awake, you who sleep,  
Arise from the dead,  
And *Christ will give you light.*”

Also in John’s Gospel we read,

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and *we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,*) full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14)

We read in **verse 2** that the light of the Lord would shine forth upon Zion in a world of darkness.

*<sup>2</sup>For behold, darkness shall cover the earth,  
and thick darkness the peoples;  
but the LORD will arise upon you,  
and His glory will be seen upon you.*

The land was covered with darkness before the dawn of light shown forth. This makes it clear that the light and darkness here is to be understood as metaphorical. There will never be a time when there is a literal darkness covering the earth for a prolonged period of time and then light finally comes. Israel had encountered a period of darkness. The presence and blessing of God had been removed from her and the darkness of His disfavor and its accompanying judgment existed. But now their condition was going to be reversed. They were to arise from the dust and welcome its coming.

The Scriptures in many places set forth the fallen world to be a *dark place* respecting the knowledge of God. The prologue of John’s Gospel sets forth the Lord Jesus as the “Light” that comes into the “darkness” of sinful mankind.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. <sup>4</sup>*In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.* <sup>5</sup>*And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.* <sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>This man came for a witness, *to bear witness of the Light*, that all through him might believe. <sup>8</sup>He was not that Light, but was sent *to bear witness of that Light.* <sup>9</sup>*That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.* (John 1:1-9)

Consider these verses also:

“And this is the condemnation, that *light is come into the world*, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” (John 3:19)

“Then Jesus said to them, ‘A little while longer *the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going.*’” (John 12:35)

“*I have come as a light into the world*, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.” (John 12:46)

“For God, For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give *the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* (2 Cor. 4:6).

The Old Testament teaching of the coming Kingdom of the Messiah uses this metaphor of darkness and light in a number of different passages. One that is probably most familiar to us is **Isaiah 9:1ff**. There we read:

Nevertheless the gloom will not be upon her who is distressed,  
As when at first He lightly esteemed  
The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,  
And afterward more heavily oppressed her,  
By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan,  
In Galilee of the Gentiles.

<sup>2</sup>*The people who walked in darkness  
Have seen a great light;  
Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death,  
Upon them a light has shined.*

<sup>3</sup>You have multiplied the nation  
And increased its joy;  
They rejoice before You  
According to the joy of harvest,  
As men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

<sup>4</sup>For You have broken the yoke of his burden  
And the staff of his shoulder,  
The rod of his oppressor,  
As in the day of Midian.

<sup>5</sup>For every warrior's sandal from the noisy battle,  
And garments rolled in blood,  
Will be used for burning and fuel of fire.

<sup>6</sup>*For unto us a Child is born,  
Unto us a Son is given;  
And the government will be upon His shoulder.  
And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

<sup>7</sup>*Of the increase of His government and peace  
There will be no end,  
Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom,  
To order it and establish it with judgment and justice  
From that time forward, even forever.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.* (Isa. 9:1-7)

This, of course, is a prophecy of the Lord Jesus coming to Galilee in order to perform His teaching ministry. Matthew declared that this prophecy was fulfilled with the onset of our Lord's earthly ministry (Cf. Matthew 4:13ff). Jesus Christ was the Savior, the promised Son of David, who would establish His kingdom. All those who received the forgiveness of sins through faith in Him, entered into this promised kingdom. This is the same kingdom prophesied before us in Isaiah 60. It is not a prophecy of an earthly, Jewish millennial kingdom. It is the one Kingdom of God that was "at hand" and was established by our Lord Jesus, who now rules over that Kingdom as the Promised Son of David. The Kingdom in view is that which our Lord Jesus inaugurated and assumed Kingship over through His life, death, resurrection, and ascension to His throne in heaven.

As we stand back and look at Isaiah 60, I believe, we can see how and why it is that there are two distinct ways to interpret this Old Testament prophecy, one position believes this and passages like it to foretell a future Jewish millennium, the other position believes it foretells this church age. Those who are dispensational premillennialists claim that they interpret these Old Testament prophecies "literally." They see this as a prophecy of a physical, political nation comprised of ethnic Jewish people principally. Those who are amillennial claim that they interpret these Old Testament prophecies as metaphorically portraying the salvation that God has brought to the world through Jesus Christ. The dispensational premillennialist

anticipates an earthly Davidic kingdom in a 1,000 year future millennium.<sup>1</sup> The amillennialist declares that the present Kingdom of God is foretold in terms that the people of ancient Israel would have understood and anticipated. But we would also argue that the New Testament revelation of God's Word interprets the Old Testament revelation. "God meant what He said in the Old Testament; God declares what He meant in the New Testament."

The reason that this is so very important is so that we, the people of God, see the glory of God in the Church, and glorify God for Who He is and what He is doing through His Church. I am concerned that even the people of God fail to see the glory of God as they should because of the failure to recognize the fulfilment of these prophecies in this church age. Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus:

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles--<sup>2</sup>if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you,<sup>3</sup> how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already,<sup>4</sup> by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ),<sup>5</sup> which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: ***6that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel,***<sup>7</sup> of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.

<sup>8</sup>To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,<sup>9</sup> and ***to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery,*** which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ;<sup>10</sup> to the intent ***that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places,***<sup>11</sup> according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,<sup>12</sup> in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.<sup>13</sup> Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

<sup>14</sup>For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,<sup>15</sup> from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,<sup>16</sup> ***that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,***<sup>17</sup> ***that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,***<sup>18</sup> ***may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height--***<sup>19</sup> ***to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.***

<sup>20</sup>Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,<sup>21</sup> ***to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever.*** Amen. (Eph. 3:1-21)

Now before we proceed in the consideration of our passage, I may underscore that this prophecy is of this church age by looking forward to the first few verse of the next chapter before us, Isaiah 61. There we read these words:

"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me,  
Because the LORD has anointed Me  
To preach good tidings to the poor;  
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,  
To proclaim liberty to the captives,  
And the opening of the prison to those who are bound;  
<sup>2</sup>To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD,

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<sup>1</sup> John MacArthur teaches this view. On verses 1 and 2 he wrote, "This expressed the glory of Jerusalem during the millennial kingdom", on verse 3, "Only believing Jews and Gentiles will enter the earthly kingdom after the Day of the Lord, but as the 1,000 years goes along children will be born and nations will become populated by those who reject Jesus Christ", and on verse 7, "Animal sacrifices brought by other nations during the millennial kingdom will glorify the house of God's glory even more." See *The MacArthur Study Bible* (Thomas Nelson, 1997), p. 1047.

And the day of vengeance of our God;  
 To comfort all who mourn,  
<sup>3</sup>*To console those who mourn in Zion,*  
 To give them beauty for ashes,  
 The oil of joy for mourning,  
 The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;  
 That they may be called trees of righteousness,  
 The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.”  
<sup>4</sup>And they shall rebuild the old ruins,  
 They shall raise up the former desolations,  
 And they shall repair the ruined cities,  
 The desolations of many generations.  
<sup>5</sup>Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks,  
 And the sons of the foreigner  
 Shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers. (Isa. 61:1-5)

This is the passage that our Lord Jesus read in the synagogue at Nazareth at the onset of His earthly ministry. After reading Isaiah 61:1 and part of verse 2, we read what occurred:

<sup>20</sup>“Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. <sup>21</sup>And He began to say to them, *‘Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.’* <sup>22</sup>So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth.” (Luke 4:20-22)

And so, we have the Lord Jesus declaring that the prophecy of Isaiah regarding the coming Kingdom promised to “Zion” was beginning to be “fulfilled” at the onset of His ministry. This underscores the interpretation that has been historically held by those who are reformed, over against the dispensational interpretation that was first popularized in evangelicalism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Those who are dispensational, teach that the prophecy of Isaiah 60 is of a future earthly millennial kingdom, but that with Isaiah 61, a different prophecy is set forth of this church age, for all know and acknowledge the words of our Lord Jesus in the Synagogue of Nazareth. Those who have been reformed understand these passages as prophetic of the glory of the church in this age and ultimately in the eternity in the New Jerusalem in a new heavens and new earth.

Here are **Matthew Henry’s** introductory words on Isaiah 60. His words reflect the historical reformed understanding of the passage:

This whole chapter is all to the same purport, all in the same strain; it is a part of God’s covenant with his church, which is spoken of in the last verse of the foregoing chapter, and the blessings here promised are the fruits of the word and Spirit there promised. The long continuance of the church, even unto the utmost ages of time, was there promised, and here the large extent of the church, even unto the utmost regions of the earth; and both these tend to the honor of the Redeemer. It is here promised, I. That the church shall be en-lightened and shone upon (vs. 1, 2). II. That it shall be enlarged and great additions made to it, to join in the service of God (vs. 3-8). III. That the new converts shall be greatly serviceable to the church and to the interests of it (vs. 9-13). IV. That the church shall be in great honor and reputation among men (vs. 14-16). V. That it shall enjoy a profound peace and tranquility (vs. 17, 18). VI. That, the members of it being all righteous, the glory and joy of it shall be everlasting (vs. 19-22). Now this has some reference to the peaceable and prosperous condition which the Jews were sometimes in after their return out of captivity into their own land; but it certainly looks further, and was to have its full accomplishment in the kingdom of the Messiah, the enlargement of that kingdom by the

bringing in of the Gentiles into it, and the spiritual blessings in heavenly things by Christ Jesus with which it should be enriched, and all these earnest of eternal joy and glory.<sup>2</sup>

We are using Matthew Henry's outline of this chapter. And so, whereas we already described verses 1 and 2 as "A summons to Zion to greet the light that is dawning upon her (vs. 1, 2)", we will change that description to "That the church shall be en-lightened and shone upon (vs. 1, 2)". Let us now move on, and consider that...

## **II. The church shall be enlarged and great additions made to it, to join in the service of God (vs. 3-8).**

*<sup>3</sup>And nations shall come to your light,  
and kings to the brightness of your rising.*

The Zion that was now bathed in light, the blessing and knowledge of God, is a place to which Gentiles come to see and learn of them. The people of Zion know God and their knowledge of God is drawing even Gentiles to come and learn from them.

**Matthew Henry's** comments on this verse include:

"By the light that shines upon thee," the light of the glorious gospel, which the churches hold forth, in consequence of which they are called *golden candlesticks*. This light which discovers so much of God and his good will to man, by which life and immortality are brought to light, this shall invite all the serious well-affected part of mankind to come and join themselves to the church, that they may have the benefit of this light to inform them concerning truth and duty.

The footnote in the New Reformation Study Bible records: "The prophecy has been fulfilled day by day since the coming of the gospel (Acts 9:15; 11:18)"<sup>3</sup>

One can also see in this prophecy a fulfilment of Genesis 22:18, in which God had promised Abraham: "And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because you have obeyed my voice."

We next read **verse 4**:

*<sup>4</sup>Lift up your eyes all around, and see;  
they all gather together, they come to you;  
your sons shall come from afar,  
and your daughters shall be carried on the hip.*

This describes the joy of the people as they gather together and are journeying to the light of Zion. Again, this is metaphorical in the sense that they are coming to the glory of this blessed Zion (which is the Lord Jesus Himself).

*<sup>5</sup>Then you shall see and be radiant;  
your heart shall thrill and exult,  
because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you,  
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.*

The "you" is Zion itself. Wealth and prominence are restored to Zion. Gentiles are the source of much of this wealth. Some say that this described the wealth that Darius the Persian sent to Jerusalem to assist in its rebuilding. We read that this was the decree of Darius as recorded in **Ezra 6:8** and **9**:

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<sup>2</sup> *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. 4 (Fleming H. Revell Company, n.d.), p. 349f.

<sup>3</sup> *The Reformation Study Bible* (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995), p. 1131.

Moreover I issue a decree as to what you shall do for the elders of these Jews, for the building of this house of God: Let the cost be paid at the king's expense from taxes on the region beyond the River; this is to be given immediately to these men, so that they are not hindered. <sup>9</sup>And whatever they need-- young bulls, rams, and lambs for the burnt offerings of the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the request of the priests who are in Jerusalem-- let it be given them day by day without fail..."

But one cannot help but see a foreshadowing of the Zion of **Revelation 21:10** and **11**, Zion, when her full glory will be manifest. John wrote:

And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her light *was* like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.

We also read **Revelation 21:23**,

The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light.

**Isaiah 60:6** reads:

*<sup>6</sup>A multitude of camels shall cover you,  
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;  
all those from Sheba shall come.  
They shall bring gold and frankincense,  
and shall bring good news, the praises of the LORD.*

Some have seen this prophecy as applying to the Gentile "three" kings who brought gifts to the infant Jesus. On the phrase, "kings come to the brightness" it was said: "They come to Christ (42:6; 49:6). The wise men who came to see Jesus were Gentiles if not "kings" in some sense."<sup>4</sup>

For those who claim they take Scripture literally and that this applies to a future millennium, this verse is a problem. Will all the wealth that is supposed to come to Zion at that time going to be transported by way of camel? It would also mean that the ancient nations of Midian and Eohah would need to be restored. No, it is best to understand the Lord communicating to these ancient Israelites in language they would understand, that the plans for the future of His people are glorious.

We then read **verse 7**:

*<sup>7</sup>All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered to you;  
the rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you;  
they shall come up with acceptance on my altar,  
and I will beautify my beautiful house.*

Further wealth comes to Zion from neighboring nations. They are going to the altar in Jerusalem to worship. Notice it as the animals themselves that are coming from these lands in order to be sacrificed on the altar of Jerusalem. The idea is that these Gentiles would be seeking to worship in Jerusalem.

**John Calvin** taught that we should not think that this was fulfilled in the temple of Herod that was built by the Jews after Babylonian captivity, but rather we should view it as a prophesy of Gentiles coming to

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

faith in Christ, joining themselves to the temple that God has glorified--His own church. Here are Calvin's words on the phrase, "And I will glorify the house of My glory":

Under the glorification of the temple He declares the true restoration of the people; for the chief part of their happiness was, that the temple should stand, in which men called on God in a right manner; and we must begin with this, that God reigns amongst us, by which we are made truly happy. For this reason, when the Lord declares that the Church shall be restored, He mentions the temple, the glory of which He will restore; as if He had said, "My house is now exposed to the mockery of the Gentiles, but I will at length restore to it that glory of which it has now been deprived." It is evident from Zechariah, Haggai, and Malachi, that this was not completed immediately after the return of the people. We must not imagine that its true dignity consisted in that splendid building by which Herod cunningly endeavored to gain favor; and therefore the dignity or honor, which is here mentioned, was not manifested till God opened the gate of heaven to Jerusalem, and then openly called all the Gentiles to the hope of eternal salvation.<sup>5</sup>

We next read **verse 8**:

*<sup>8</sup>Who are these that fly like a cloud,  
and like doves to their windows?*

The many Gentiles that are coming to this glorified Zion are so numerous they are described metaphorically as clouds and flocks of doves descending on the place. But it is worded in a question, the people of Zion who see them coming do not at first identify them.

### **III. The new converts shall be greatly serviceable to the church and to the interests of it (vs. 9-13).**

**Verse 9** speaks further of the Gentiles coming to Zion:

*<sup>9</sup>For the coastlands shall hope for Me,  
the ships of Tarshish first,  
to bring your children from afar,  
their silver and gold with them,  
for the name of the LORD your God,  
and for the Holy One of Israel,  
because He has made you beautiful.*

Here we read that God Himself speaks. All are looking to Him, even those who live in the outer regions of the coastlands, the gateway to the Gentiles. And ships are coming from Gentile lands, they are bringing worshippers to Zion with their gifts revealing their dedication and devotion. What are they intending to do? They will to build up the "city."

We read of those travelling to Zion in **verse 10**.

*<sup>10</sup>Foreigners shall build up your walls,  
and their kings shall minister to you;  
for in My wrath I struck you,  
but in My favor I have had mercy on you.*

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 283.

We see God is blessing them. He even made their enemies to be at peace with them. This had immediate reference to the support for rebuilding the temple which Cyrus the Persian rendered on behalf of the few returning exiles. But it may be seen more clearly as the building up of the spiritual house of God of which we are a part. Again, we may read **Calvin's** comments:

“Now, Cyrus accomplished it, when he supplied them with a large amount of gold and silver. But in him these things were merely shadowed out. They were actually fulfilled in Christ, to whose reign they must certainly relate; for, first, Christ employed a few apostles (Matt. 10:1), who could not be sufficient for so great a work; but afterwards He raised up strangers, from among whom He chose pastors, and wished that their foreign princes should be nursing-fathers of the Church.”<sup>6</sup>

We see that God's wrath is no longer upon His people. It has been removed. Now God's grace is upon them.

***<sup>11</sup>Your gates shall be open continually;  
day and night they shall not be shut,  
that people may bring to you the wealth of the nations,  
with their kings led in procession.***

A time of peace exists. There would be no reason to fear attack so the gates could be left open. The idea is that there is peace and security in Zion. But actually this is secondary to the context. For the idea here of the gates being opened continually is that there is such a stream of travellers bringing their gifts that the gates have to be left over continually to allow their entrance. This was not fulfilled literally in history, nor does it need to be seen in a carnal way of being fulfilled literally in a future age. The point is that these people flowing in are dedicated to the God of Zion, rendering full homage to Him. Even kings of nation submit to Him, indicating that they seek to govern their kingdoms in the light of His laws and rules.

We read in **verse 12**,

***<sup>12</sup>For the nation and kingdom  
that will not serve you shall perish;  
those nations shall be utterly laid waste.***

God is the judge of nations. He has determined that those nations that refuse to submit to Him will suffer His judgment. Will this only occur at the end of time? No, it occurs in history. God sets up kings and deposes them.

**Verse 13** recalls the blessing of God in the days when Solomon had built the temple in Jerusalem. This new “temple” would be more glorious.

***<sup>13</sup>The glory of Lebanon shall come to you,  
the cypress, the plane, and the pine,  
to beautify the place of my sanctuary,  
and I will make the place of my feet glorious.***

King Hiram of Lebanon had assisted Solomon greatly in the building of the ancient temple long before Isaiah's time. Here the language speaks of a similar effort by Gentile lands to build the “temple” of God. The temple which the New Testament refers is the temple of the church which is comprised of living stones, the people of God (Eph. 2:21; 1 Peter 2:5)

“The place of my feet” speaks of where God dwells and rules, in other words, in “Zion.”

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid. pp. 286f.

#### **IV. The church shall be in great honor and reputation among men (vs. 14-16).**

Even those who formerly afflicted His people, will come and serve them, desiring to be numbered among them.

***<sup>14</sup>The sons of those who afflicted you  
shall come bending low to you,  
and all who despised you  
shall bow down at your feet;  
they shall call you the City of the LORD,  
the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.***

There is an acknowledgment that Zion is the place where God dwells and therefore, Zion itself is highly revered by peoples. Those who formerly persecuted her, are now bowing down to her and serving her. (One cannot help but think of Paul in this respect). But it speaks of Zion's ultimate triumph over its foes who had opposed it and sought its destruction.

The earthly city of Jerusalem is never described in this fashion after the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. It is described by Paul in Galatians: "For this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children (Gal. 4:25). The earthly Jerusalem in this age is also referred to in the book of Revelation: "And their dead bodies will lie *in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt*, where also our Lord was crucified" (Rev 11:8).

We then read in **verse 15**:

***<sup>15</sup>Whereas you have been forsaken and hated,  
with no one passing through,  
I will make you majestic forever,  
a joy from age to age.***

The "eternal" city of the heavenly Jerusalem answers to this. One day it will come down from God out of heaven and take its place in the center of the new heavens and earth, and it will be the eternal capital of the Kingdom of God in which the Lord Jesus will reign as King. It was the city that Abraham looked and ordered his life in the prospect of its coming.

"For he (Abraham) waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. <sup>16</sup>But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them" (Heb 11:10, 16).

As we see also in **Hebrews 12:22**, " But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels." And also in **Hebrews 13:14**, "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

Let us remember the context in which these words were given. The prophet Isaiah left these words for a remnant of Israel that had returned from Babylon to read and ponder. Theirs was a pitiful condition. The walls of the city were broken down. The temple was in ruins. They were small in number. They were easy prey for any and all marauding bands that went through the land. And here, they read of a glorious future for themselves as the people of God. It gendered hope. It required faith. It must have certainly resulted in love on their part as they heard the promises and believed.

We too, might see our condition as the people of God to be quite a pitiful thing. It may be hard to imagine a glorious future in which this will be realized. But we are to be as Abraham and look forward in faith to a city whose builder and Maker is God and order our lives in this life and in this world accordingly, in faith and obedience, as pilgrims journeying to our heavenly city.

**Verse 16** reads,

***<sup>16</sup>You shall suck the milk of nations;  
you shall nurse at the breast of kings;  
and you shall know that I, the LORD, am your Savior  
and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.***

This speaks of drawing the wealth off kings; therefore, it is a way of showing the ascendancy and power of the Kingdom of God over all other kingdoms. All others are subordinate to the rule that comes forth from Zion.

#### **V. The church shall enjoy a profound peace and tranquillity (vs. 17, 18).**

**Verse 17** states the same idea:

***<sup>17</sup>Instead of bronze I will bring gold,  
and instead of iron I will bring silver;  
instead of wood, bronze,  
instead of stones, iron.  
I will make your overseers peace  
and your taskmasters righteousness.***

The city is all glorious in splendor. It surpasses the former city and temple in splendor and in security. The city is a center of wealth. And instead of walls of stone, it has walls of iron, which speaks of its inability to be overthrown.

The place is characterized by peace and righteousness, as we read in **verse 18**.

***<sup>18</sup>Violence shall no more be heard in your land,  
devastation or destruction within your borders;  
you shall call your walls Salvation,  
and your gates Praise.***

#### **VI. The members of the church being all righteous, the glory and joy of it shall be everlasting (vs. 19-22).**

There is no wrath upon the people of God within His Kingdom. It is characterized by joy and peace. **Verses 19 and 20** read:

***<sup>19</sup>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.  
<sup>20</sup>Your sun shall no more go down,***

*nor your moon withdraw itself;  
for the LORD will be your everlasting light,  
and your days of mourning shall be ended.*

God is always watching over His people, providing for them, blessing them, protecting them, and preserving them. As we read in **Revelation 22:5**:

“And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the **sun**; for the Lord God gives them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.”

And all of the citizens of this Zion are righteous before God. This is a spiritual city comprised of true spiritual people, ones born again of the Spirit, who’s Savior and Lord is Jesus Christ. **Verse 21**:

*<sup>21</sup>Your people shall all be righteous;  
they shall possess the land forever,  
the branch of My planting, the work of My hands,  
that I might be glorified.*

The people, all of them, are righteous. They had experienced a transformation and made into a righteous people so that they are now regarded as right with the Lord.

Christians are “righteous” or justified through the righteousness of another, even their Saviour Jesus Christ. His righteousness is imputed to them. But He also sanctifies them, making them righteous, making them holy in His sight. He first does this by regeneration, causing them to be born again, giving them a new nature to desire and aspire to that which is true, right, and good. It places within them a hatred of sin. Most of all, it places within them a love for God that moves the to believe on Him, obey Him fully, and look to Him for strength. It is all done to the end that it might glorify/magnify Him.

*<sup>22</sup>The least one shall become a clan,  
and the smallest one a mighty nation;  
I am the LORD;  
in its time I will hasten it.*

This describes the blessing of God on His people. To ancient Jews a major sign of God’s blessing was having many children born into the family. Life is given and that abundantly. But notice, it is all in God’s timing. It will not come before or later than what He has purposed.

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<sup>14</sup>Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. <sup>15</sup>But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie. <sup>16</sup>“I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.” <sup>17</sup>And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely. (Rev 22:14-17)