

ISAIAH CHAPTER 60

SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO

If you have been following the news recently you know there are some fierce skirmishes going on between Israel and the Hezbollah. Experts say that Iran is behind the Hezbollah, and you may recall that the Iranian president has vowed to wipe Israel off the face of the earth. He is not the first to make such an attempt and he is doomed to the same results as others who have tried. Israel is still God's chosen people and God has plans for them, as chapters 60 and 61 of Isaiah tell us. Things may look dismal in the Middle East right now, but God has a bright future for them. Let us first take a quick overview of these chapters, then we will look more closely at the details. And we need to keep in mind that Isaiah was writing around 700 B.C., 2,700 years ago.

In Isaiah chapters 60-62, the picture shifts again as Isaiah describes the future glory of Jerusalem in the Millennial Kingdom. **Zion**, another name for the Holy City of **Jerusalem** and the chosen people of God, **the Jews**, is told to wake up. She is urged to look and see the glory of her future fulfilled blessings during the Millennium after Christ returns and sets up His kingdom right here on the earth with its capitol city being Jerusalem. Nations that persecuted Israel will in that day honor and serve her, and Jesus' presence will transform not only the city but also her people. God repeats His promise to avenge and comfort His people in chapter 61, verses 1-3. The land of Israel and its people will be restored (61:4-9) as God clothes Zion in "*garments of salvation*" (61:10). In Isaiah 62:1 God announces that He will continue to work on Jerusalem's behalf until her righteousness, salvation, and glory are recognized by the rest of the world. Her restoration has been guaranteed (62:2-7) by the promise and power of God (62:8, 9). And so Isaiah foresees a great crowd awaiting the approach of Jesus to the Holy City of Jerusalem (62:10-11). And the greatest wonder of all is that these people, the inhabitants of the Zion in this time, will be called "*the Holy People*," for all will be redeemed by the Lord (62:12).

One of the most persistent themes of Old Testament prophecy holds that at history's end God will set up a kingdom on earth. Its capital will be Jerusalem, and from the Holy City, the Messiah, a descendant of David, will rule over all the people of the world. This theme is seen here in Isaiah 60:1-61:6, as well as in many other prophetic passages. In the Old Testament's bright vision of the future, the kingdom comes following God's crushing defeat of all evil and the great spiritual conversion of the Jews which then leads to the conversion of a great number of Gentiles as well. There are a large number of passages expressing the Old Testament prophets' vision of this coming glorious kingdom. The picture created in Isaiah 60:19, 20 is similar to the one we see in Revelation 21-22.

Isaiah chapter 60 describes the dawning of a new day. "*Arise and shine!*" is God's wake-

up call to Jerusalem in verse 1 because a new day is dawning for Israel. This light is not from the sun but from the glory of God shining on the city. God's glory had once dwelt in the tabernacle according to Exodus 40:34–38, only to depart because of Israel's sin (1 Samuel 4:21). God's glory then came into the temple, according to 1 Kings 8:11, but it departed when the nation turned to worshipping idols.¹ The glory then came to Israel in the person of Jesus Christ (John 1:14), but the nation nailed that glory to a cross.

The Babylonian Captivity had been Israel's darkest hour, but that is not the darkness Isaiah was describing. He was describing the awful darkness that will cover the earth during the Day of the Lord (Amos 5:18) when God punishes the nations of the earth for their sins (Isaiah 2:12; 13:6). But the prophet is also describing the glorious light that will come to Israel when her Messiah returns to reign in Jerusalem. Then *"the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea"* according to Habakkuk 2:14. Israel's sons and daughters who have accepted Christ as Savior will come home again (Isaiah 60:4, 8–9), and all of them will know the Lord.

It will be the dawning of a new day for the nations of the world as well as for Israel.² The Gentiles will come to Jerusalem to worship the Lord and to share the wealth. Isaiah sees ships and caravans bringing people and wealth to Jerusalem from all over the world (60:5–7); and the nations that refuse to honor and obey the Lord and His city will be judged by Him (60:12). Even Israel's old enemies will see the light and help to serve the Lord (60:10, 14).

In verses 15–22, God describes some of the joys and wonders of the glorious kingdom. Israel will no longer be hated but will be enriched by the Gentiles and nursed like a beloved child.³

As in the days of King Solomon (1 Kings 10:21, 27), precious metals will be plentiful. It will be a time of peace and safety (60:17) for all who believe in the work of Christ, Jews and non-Jews as well. Jews and Gentiles will be united in one body as brothers and sisters in the kingdom of God.

The city Isaiah describes here is the capital city of the restored Jewish nation, and Jesus Christ shall sit on the throne of David and judge the world righteously. Now let us take a more detailed look at Isaiah chapter 60.

Isaiah 60:1-3 NAS:

1 "Arise, shine; for your light has come, And the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

2 "For behold, darkness will cover the earth And deep darkness the peoples; But the Lord will rise upon you And His glory will appear upon

¹ Ezekiel 9:3; 10:4, 18; 11:22–23.

² Isaiah 60:3, 10–13.

³ Isaiah 60:4, 16; 49:23; 61:6.

you.

3 “*Nations* will come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising.

Because of Jesus’ redeeming work (Isaiah 59:19, 20-21), **light**, meaning blessing, will fall on Israel, who in turn is to **shine** as a spiritual light to the **nations**, the rest of the world, revealing God’s Word and glory to them. In that way, Israel will be instrumental in removing the spiritual **darkness** that has spread throughout the world.⁴ When **Jesus** returns to live among His people the rest of the nations will be attracted to the light of **His glory** (verses 19-20) and they will flock to Israel for the **light**, the blessings that salvation brings, freeing them from spiritual darkness. This will occur in the Millennium. Though everyone entering the Millennium will be saved, people will be born during that 1,000-year period of time, and some will reject Jesus Christ. But the glory of the King, Jesus, in Jerusalem, and His mighty power will draw those unbelievers to His **light**. They will come to salvation because of God’s work on Israel’s behalf.⁵

Isaiah 60:4-9 NAS:

4 “*Lift up your eyes round about and see; They all gather together, they come to you. Your sons will come from afar, And your daughters will be carried in the arms.*

5 “*Then you will see and be radiant, And your heart will thrill and rejoice; Because the abundance of the sea will be turned to you, The wealth of the nations will come to you.*

6 “*A multitude of camels will cover you, The young camels of **Midian** and **Ephah**; All those from Sheba will come; They will bring **gold** and **frankincense**, And will bear good news of the praises of the Lord.*

7 “*All the **flocks** of Kedar will be gathered together to you, The **rams** of Nebaioth will minister to you; They will go up with acceptance on My altar, And I shall glorify My glorious house.*

8 “*Who are these who fly like a cloud And like the doves to their lattices?*

9 “*Surely the coastlands will wait for Me; And the ships of Tarshish will come first, **To bring your sons from afar**, Their **silver** and their **gold** with them, For the name of the Lord your God, And for the Holy One of Israel because He has glorified you.*

The *you* and *your* of this chapter are feminine singulars, addressing the mother-city, Zion,⁶ whose sons and daughters (verse 4) are of every nationality, not only Jews.⁷ There will be an abundance of joy as well as material possessions. Animal sacrifices brought by other nations during the millennial kingdom will glorify the house of God’s glory even

⁴ Isaiah 29:18; John 12:35; Acts 26:18; Rom. 2:19; Col. 1:13; 1 Peter 2:9.

⁵ Walvoord, John F. ; Zuck, Roy B. ; Dallas Theological Seminary: *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Wheaton, IL : Victor Books, 1983-c1985, S. 1:1115.

⁶ Isaiah 49:14–23; 51:17–23; 54:1–10.

⁷ Psalm 87:3–6; Galatians 4:26.

more.⁸ If you want to learn more about animal sacrifices in the New Testament you can read Ezekiel 45:18-25.⁹ But in doing so you may become a little confused so let me give you what I hope will be helpful in understanding these verses.

Ezekiel chapters 1-24 refer to Israel's historical removal from her land; chapters 25-32 to historical judgments against other nations; and chapter 33 to a call for repentance and then the fall of Jerusalem. So in chapters 34-39 Israel's literal, future return to the same land that was taken away from them in the dispersion of A.D. 70 seems to be the most natural way to interpret these chapters. Ezekiel 38 and 39 describes a future invasion of Israel and its aftermath during the time just before Jesus' return. It would therefore logically follow that chapters 40-48 would continue the story of Israel in a chronological sequence describing the Millennial Kingdom after Christ returns and destroys all the ungodly of the world. In addition to the believing Jews there will also be believing Gentiles in the kingdom as sheep of the Great Shepherd (Matthew 25:31-46). Ezekiel 40-48 includes a description of the new temple (40:1-43:12); the new worship (43:13-46:24); and the new boundaries of the land (47:1-48:35).

As we look at this verse describing the millennial temple it is essential that we do not get confused. No animal sacrifice either before Jesus came or after Jesus came could save or can save a person.¹⁰ Jesus blood sacrifice on the cross is the only sacrifice that provides us salvation, and it only comes through our faith in what He has done. He paid the price for sin for everybody who has ever lived or ever will live. There is no other way to Heaven whether you're a Jew or Gentile, whether you're Muslim or Hindu or anything else. Faith in Christ's atoning death is the only way to salvation, forgiveness of sins, and eternal life in Heaven. So what is Ezekiel saying in Ezekiel 45:18-25; 40:39; and 43:18-27?

Many have objected to the thought of animal sacrifices being re-instituted during the Millennium. Since these sacrifices, it is argued, revert back to the Levitical sacrificial system, they would seem to be out of place in the Millennium. This has caused some to take the passage symbolically rather than literally. However, no difficulty exists if one understands the proper function of these sacrifices. First, animal sacrifices *never* took away human sin; only the sacrifice of Christ can do that (Heb. 10:1-4, 10). In Old Testament times Israelites were saved by grace through faith, and the sacrifices helped restore a believer's fellowship with God. Second, even after the Church began, Jewish believers did not hesitate to take part in the temple worship (Acts 2:46; 3:1; 5:42) and even to offer sacrifices (Acts 21:26). They could do this because they viewed the

⁸ See Ezekiel 45:18-25.

⁹ In verse 18 of Ezekiel 45, "*the first month*" seems to establish, not a mere dedication, but an annual purification of the sanctuary; of which there is nothing said in the Mosaic law. As a new festival, this feast of consecration is to prepare for the passover; so the passover itself is to have different sacrifices from those of the Mosaic law of the Old Testament. Instead of one ram and seven lambs for the daily burnt offering, there are to be seven bulls and seven rams. Also, the feast of tabernacles had its own offerings, which diminished as the days of the feast advanced, here the same are appointed as on the passover. The feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread are here combined and focus on remembering God's deliverance of the nation from Egypt and Christ's death providing deliverance from sin. These festivals will continue during the Millennium as a week long feast of remembrance, which will serve much the same purpose as the bread and the cup do now.

¹⁰ See also Ezekiel 40:39 and 43:19-27.

sacrifices as memorials of Christ's death.¹¹

Levitical sacrifices were connected with Israel's worship of God. When the Church supplanted Israel in God's program (Romans 11:11-24) a new era began. The Levitical sacrificial system, which looked forward to Christ, was replaced by the Lord's Supper, which looked back to His death and forward to His second coming (1 Corinthians 11:24, 26).¹²

At Christ's second coming Israel will again assume her place of prominence in God's kingdom program (Romans 11:25-27). The Lord's Supper will be eliminated, because Christ will have returned. It will be replaced by animal sacrifices, which will be memorials or object lessons of the supreme sacrifice made by the Lamb of God. The slaughtering of these animals will be vivid reminders of the Messiah's suffering and death.¹³ Such sacrifices will undoubtedly then be used as food.

The millennial sacrifices will differ from the Levitical sacrifices though there are some similarities (see comments on Ezek. 45:18-25). Other passages also refer to a sacrificial system in the Millennium (Isaiah 56:7; 66:20-23; Jeremiah 33:18; Zechariah 14:16-21; Malachi 3:3-4).¹⁴

These sacrifices only point to Christ as the one true Lamb who takes away sin. Since the death of Christ we have celebrated the Lord's supper that looks back to Calvary and Christ's death by eating bread and drinking wine representative of His body and blood, but in no way diminishes the cross and what was done there. Israel rejected their Messiah, Jesus, at the cross, but when they accept Him at the end of the Tribulation and move into His kingdom for the Millennium, they will celebrate memorial sacrifices that point to Him. They will have missed the memorial of the Lord's Supper, but will then have their own memorial sacrifice to Christ during the 1,000 years of the Millennium.

Some people will raise the question of the reference to the apostasy of the Antichrist in the temple during the last half of the Tribulation, which we read about in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4. Which temple is this and what will it be like? No one can really say because this is the only reference to a temple in the Tribulation anywhere in Scripture. The Jews have been planning the construction of a new temple for quite some time. They have not begun construction, however, because they feel they must build it on the site of the old Temple. The problem being that a mosque of Islam is now on that site which is referred to as the *Dome of the Rock*.

It seems very unlikely that the temple the Jews want to build will ever be constructed while the Muslims have control of the *Dome of the Rock*. Any attempt to destroy that

¹¹ Walvoord, John F. ; Zuck, Roy B. ; Dallas Theological Seminary: *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Wheaton, IL : Victor Books, 1983-c1985, S. 1:1305

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

structure and build a Jewish temple on that site would ignite a full scale war involving the entire Muslim world coming against Israel.

Because we have no way of knowing how or what kind of temple will exist during the last half of the tribulation, I would suggest that this may be either a much smaller building than the one described in Ezekiel 40 ff., or it could even be a pre-fabricated structure that is set up shortly before or even during the tribulation. So based on all the evidence available in Scripture, I would have to conclude that the temple described in Ezekiel is the temple that will be built in Jerusalem once Christ sets up His rule there after the beginning of the Millennium.

Now getting back to Isaiah 61, verse 8 is a figurative way of describing the large numbers of Gentiles coming into Jerusalem. Verse 9 tells us that because of God's favor toward the people of Jerusalem, the city will attract worldwide attention.¹⁵ Trading vessels will return Israel's faithful remnant of believers as they bring riches to Jerusalem.

Isaiah tells the Jews of His day, around 700 B.C., to open up their eyes and see clearly. If we simply look around us and only see the existing problems we may easily get discouraged. But if we look up or if we look ahead according to God's promises in the Bible, the situation is very different. Everything around us will then look much brighter **because of the certainty that God is near.** The wealth of the world is going to be delivered to the Jews who accept Christ and to Gentile believers as well.

At the beginning of the Millennium when the Jews will be brought back to Israel, her sons and daughters will come from great distances (verse 9). Also Israel will rejoice because redeemed people from the nations, all over the world (verse 5), will want to join Israel in her worship in Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:16-19). Those people will bring wealth to Israel.¹⁶ Examples of the kinds of wealth to be brought are gold, incense, flocks, rams, and silver (Isaiah 60:6-7, 9). Examples of the nations that will bring those riches are: (a) Midian, south of the Dead Sea; (b) Ephah, a branch of the Midianites; (c) Sheba, probably the Sabaeans in southwest Arabia (Isaiah 43:3); (d) Kedar in northern Arabia; (e) Nebaioth, apparently an Arabian tribe; and (f) Tarshish (probably in southwestern Spain; Isaiah 23:1), whose ships will bring not only riches but also Israelites. Some of this wealth will be used as offerings (60:7; 56:6-7) and some will be used to adorn the temple (60:13), undoubtedly the millennial temple (Ezekiel 40-43). This wealth, brought in haste (60:8), will all be to honor the Lord, who will have made evident His glory in Israel.¹⁷

Isaiah 60:10-14 NAS:

10 "Foreigners will build up your walls, And their kings will minister to you; For in My wrath I struck you, And in My favor I have had compassion on you.

11 "Your gates will be open continually; They will not be closed day or

¹⁵ Isaiah 23:1; 41:1.

¹⁶ Isaiah 60:11; 61:6; Hag. 2:7-8; Zech. 14:14.

¹⁷ Isaiah 60:21; 35:2; 46:13; 49:3; 55:5; 61:3; 62:3.

night, So that men may bring to you the wealth of the nations, With their kings led in procession.

12 “For the nation and the kingdom which will not serve you will perish, And the nations will be utterly ruined.

13 “The glory of Lebanon will come to you, The juniper, the box tree and the cypress together, To beautify the place of My sanctuary; And I shall make the place of My feet glorious.

14 “The sons of those who afflicted you will come bowing to you, And all those who despised you will bow themselves at the soles of your feet; And they will call you the city of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

Israel will occupy the foremost position in the world's political, economic, religious, and social structures. Foreigners and kings (verses 3, 11) will assist in rebuilding Jerusalem's walls, evidence of God's favor and compassion in contrast with His anger when they had been disobedient in the past (Isaiah 57:16-18). The flow of wealth into Jerusalem will be steady (60:11). And any nation that might try to rise up against Israel will be defeated by God (60:12). God will rule the nations with a rod of iron.

Wood will be brought from Lebanon for the temple construction, thus making it a place of beauty for God. God called the temple His sanctuary and the place of His feet. People from the nations that formerly despised Israel will recognize that Jerusalem, or Zion, is God's chosen city, the place where He lives.¹⁸

Here the Scripture gives us a picture of the glory and peace of Millennial Jerusalem, as Gentile believers join hands with Jewish believers to establish the new theocracy and its glorious capital, Jerusalem. The empire of Jesus will be supreme and will have no opposition or rebellion. Apparently, as in Ezekiel 40-48, a beautiful temple is to be built in Jerusalem (Isaiah 60:13), to which even the converted descendants of Israel's persecutors will come as worshipers.

Isaiah 60:15, 16 NAS:

15 “Whereas you have been forsaken and hated With no one passing through, I will make you an everlasting pride, A joy from generation to generation.

16 “You will also suck the milk of nations And suck the breast of kings; Then you will know that I, the Lord, am your Savior And your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.

During this time of blessing, righteousness will be evident throughout the land. In contrast with Israel's having been forsaken and hated when they were disobedient, God will cause others to now take pride in her. Much as a nursing child gets sustenance from

¹⁸ Walvoord, John F. ; Zuck, Roy B. ; Dallas Theological Seminary: *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Wheaton, IL : Victor Books, 1983-c1985, S. 1:1115.

its mother, so Israel will be sustained by the wealth of the nations. This blessing will cause Israel to recognize all the more that the Lord God really is the one and only true God of the world, her Savior (43:11), Redeemer (41:14), and her Mighty One (49:26)¹⁹

Isaiah 60:17-22 NAS:

17 *“Instead of bronze I will bring gold, And instead of iron I will bring silver, And instead of wood, bronze, And instead of stones, iron. And I will make peace your administrators And righteousness your overseers.*

18 ***“Violence will not be heard again in your land,** Nor devastation or destruction within your borders; But you will call your walls salvation, and your gates praise.*

19 *“No longer will you have the sun for light by day, Nor for brightness will the moon give you light; But **you will have the Lord for an everlasting light,** And your God for your glory.*

20 *“Your sun will no longer set, Nor will your moon wane; For **you will have the Lord for an everlasting light,** And the days of your mourning will be over.*

21 *“Then all your people will be righteous; They will possess the land forever, The branch of My planting, The work of My hands, That I may be glorified.*

22 *“The smallest one will become a clan, And the least one a mighty nation. I, the Lord, will hasten it in its time.”*

The Jewish “remnant,” those who accept Christ as Savior, will increase and fill the land. The glory of the Millennial kingdom is contrasted with the humiliation of the disloyal pre-Exilic kingdom of Israel. There will be glory in place of contempt, wealth in the place of poverty, righteousness in place of injustice, unending peace instead of bloodshed and war. The glory and light of God’s favor and presence described in verse 19: “No longer will you have the sun for light by day, Nor for brightness will the moon give you light; But **you will have the Lord for an everlasting light,** And your God for your glory,” points forward specifically to conditions after the Millennium in Heaven rather than during the millennial kingdom (Revelation 22:3-5). But during the Millennium there will be continuous revival and prevailing godliness in all of society rather than the recurrent sin and evil that existed throughout all of history. God’s plan for a perfectly righteous and obedient human race will then at last be realized on earth, as the tiny minority of true believers expands into a great number and a mighty nation.

The city will be peaceful and joyful. Also God will protect her as she reflects His Light and Glory to all the world (verse 19; also see verses 1, 2). Her people will be righteous, displaying God’s splendor, and they will be numerous. Israel’s great increase in numbers and power resulting from God’s work will bring them into a never before experienced world prominence. The Millennium will be a utopia for which many people have longed.

¹⁹ Op cit.