

Lesson 29
Isaiah 60:1 – 61:11
Beginning A New Life With The Messiah

Memory verse: “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” (Philippians 4:4 NIV)

Grace is but glory begun,” said Jonathan Edwards, “and glory is but grace perfected.” Whatever begins with God’s grace will lead to God’s glory (1 Peter 5:10), and that includes the nation of Israel.

Isaiah began his “Book of Consolations” (chaps.40 - 66) by promising that “the glory of the Lord shall be revealed” (Is. 40:5). Now he concludes by describing that glory for us. In these seven chapters, he used the word glory in one form or another at least twenty-three times. When God’s glory is on the scene, everything becomes new.

“Arise and shine!” is God’s “wake-up call” to Jerusalem (Chapter 60 v. 14), 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 (Ex. 40:34–38), only to depart because of Israel’s sin (1 Sam. 4:21). God’s glory then came into the temple (1 Kings 8:11), but it departed when the nation turned to idols (Ezek. 9:3; 10:4, 18; 11:22–23). The glory came to Israel in the person of Jesus Christ (John 1:14), but the nation nailed that glory to a cross. Today, God’s glory dwells in His church (Eph. 2:20–22) and in His people individually (1 Cor. 6:19–20); but one day His glory will be revealed to the earth when He answers His people’s prayer: “Thy kingdom come.”

The Babylonian captivity had been the nation’s darkest hour, but that was 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 (Isa. 2:12ff.; 13:6ff.). But the prophet was 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” (Hab. 2:14).

These chapters explain the character of the Israelites in the era following the Lord’s future provision of salvation for them. The salvation in view is the redemption that the Servant would provide in His first and second advents. The fact that the Servant would accomplish His ministry in two advents, separated by thousands of years, was unknown to the Old Testament prophets. Salvation includes deliverance from the power of sin, as well as deliverance from the penalty of sin. Chapter 60 presented the blessings that Israel would enjoy in the future, as a city lit by the rising sun.

Chapter 61 begins by introducing the One who would bring those blessings, the “Sun” that lights that city. The background of this passage is the “Year of Jubilee” described in Leviticus 25:7ff. Every seven years, the Jews were to observe a “sabbatical year” and allow the land to rest. After seven sabbaticals, or forty-nine years, they were to celebrate the fiftieth year as the “Year of Jubilee.” During that year, all debts were cancelled, all land was returned to the original owners, the slaves were freed, and everybody was given a fresh new beginning. This was the Lord’s way of balancing the economy and keeping the rich from exploiting the poor.

If you have trusted Christ as your Saviour, you are living today in a spiritual “Year of Jubilee.” You have been set free from bondage; your spiritual debt to the Lord has been paid; you are living in “the acceptable year of the Lord.” Instead of the ashes of mourning you have a crown on your head, for He has made you a king (Rev. 1:6). You have been anointed with the oil of the Holy Spirit, and you wear a garment of righteousness (Isa. 61:3; 10).

Scripture reading: Isaiah Chapter: Isaiah 60:1-7; 61:1-11

Things to learn: 1) A new beginning 2) Mission of the Messiah 3) Benefits from the Mission

Discussion Questions:

Q1. What can we learn about the future of Israel from Isaiah Chapter 60 verses 1 to 16?

Q2. Discuss the contrast between the present Israel and her future in verses 17 to 22 of Isaiah Chapter 60.

Q3. How is Jesus Christ, the Anointed One in chapter 61 and what benefits will He bring to the people of all ages?