

Isaiah 60 The Glory of Zion

Zion is a major theme in Isaiah. Through all the ups and downs of the history of Israel, Zion stands out. In fact, it is mentioned 48 times in the book! As I read through them, Zion is sometimes the equivalent of Jerusalem, the great City of God. Is. 52:1: **“Awake, awake, put on your strength, O Zion; put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city.”** Sometimes, Zion refers to a mountain. Is. 8:18: **“Behold, I and the children whom the LORD has given me are signs and portents in Israel from the LORD of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion.”** Sometimes Zion refers to a people. Is. 51:16: **“And I have put my words in your mouth and covered you in the shadow of my hand, establishing the heavens and laying the foundations of the earth, and saying to Zion, ‘You are my people.’”**

But, through them all, Zion pictures the place where God dwells, the place where God works, the place where God’s special revelation is given, the place that is dear to his heart. ZION!

Ultimately, It is the place where God’s people find salvation, peace, comfort, ALL God’s blessings. This is why when Israel was in captivity they would sing the songs of Zion. This is why we read the Psalmist say, **“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! ‘May they be secure who love you!’”** (Ps. 122:6) In the NT Paul quotes Isaiah 52:7 as he refers to God’s messenger when he says: **“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns.’”** From this perspective, God’s blessings ALWAYS end up in Zion! With this in mind, cp. 60 is about the glory of Zion. I have 2 big truths about the glory of Zion.

1. The Glory of Zion is Divine. As I read Isaiah I am amazed at the contrasts. At one moment, he speaks about the great sins of the people. Look at 58:1: **“Cry aloud; do not hold back; lift up your voice like a trumpet; declare to my people their transgression.”** And He tells them their sins. They fast, but do not humble themselves. They seek their own pleasure. They quarrel and fight. They try by their own works to reach God (58:2-4). And he tells the people what to do. They must repent and do what God says with a heart that seeks and loves God. And we see this happen throughout their history, especially Judah. They turn away from God and his commands and judgment comes. They repent and turn back to the Lord and blessings follow. But then we come back to 59, and again, we see their sin. 59:2: **“but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you . . .”** And then he goes on and uses pictures of spiders’ webs and venomous snakes as he describes their sin. In v. 9 he says, **“justice is far from us, and righteousness does not overtake us; we hope for light, and behold, darkness, and for brightness, but we walk in gloom . . .”** And then we come to 59:15: **“The Lord saw it, and it displeased him . . .”** and v. 16: **“He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no one to intercede: then his own arm brought him salvation, and his righteousness upheld him.”** And then in v. 20: **“A redeemer will come to Zion . . .”**

This is a truth we must come to know and understand. We fall short of God’s glory! The glory of sinful mankind can never produce the glory of God. If we build the house, we labor in vain! If we build the city, we labor in vain. God must build the city! And God WILL build the city! In Isaiah 60, this is what we see. Look at vv. 1-2: **“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. 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.”

Look at v. 13: “**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 off my feet glorious.**” And the 2nd part of v. 14: “**they shall call you the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One Israel.**” V. 15: “**I will make you majestic forever, a joy from age to age.**” And in v. 16: “**I, the Lord, am your Savior and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.**” Ultimately, Zion is glorious because it is the place where God dwells.

2. The Glory of Zion is Attractive. Look at vv. 3-9: “**And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. 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. 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. 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. 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. Who are these that fly like a cloud, and like doves to their windows? 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.**”

These descriptions go WAY BEYOND the Jerusalem of Isaiah’s day. Not since the days of Solomon have the nations come to Zion, and those who came were only a fraction of what Isaiah foresees. Here we see “nations” and “kings” coming to the city. We see the “abundance of the sea” coming to Zion. We see the wealth of the nations. We see peoples coming with praises to the Lord on their lips. All who come will be accepted on the basis of Zion’s altar. The coastlands shall come to Zion’s glory, bringing their silver and gold with them. I must ask, “*Why are they coming?*” They are coming because something is drawing them there. There is a compelling attraction for the peoples of the earth to come. God is doing something . . . DIVINE . . . in Zion that is attractive. I immediately think of v. 9 which says, God “*has made you beautiful.*”

Ladies, do you remember the days when makeovers were popular? You pay someone an exorbitant amount of money for a makeover that takes hours. And then they take pictures of you all made up and beautiful? I know some of you have done this, for I’ve seen the pictures. (lovely.) Well, what if God were the one doing the makeover? Well, this is the case with Zion. And it is the most beautiful! And this beauty is COMPELLING!

Husbands, do you remember when you first laid eyes on your wife. I certainly do! It was in the airport in Mexico City. There she was. I didn’t know at the time she would be my wife. But, I do remember the attraction. Physically, she was the prettiest thing I ever saw (still is). Her beauty compelled me to find out more. Then, I found out she was also beautiful in many other ways. And even today, I am more attracted than ever before. You might even say, “*All of her beauty*

compelled me!” In the same kind of way, peoples from all over the world are attracted to this city. So, what makes this city so beautiful. Let me mention a few reasons from the text.

It is a city FULL of light. The peoples are coming because of the light. The word picture here is enormous! I remember living just outside Mexico City and on the weekends my friends and I would go up on a mountain and sit on the roof to see this great city of lights. Oh, how beautiful it was! The word “light” is used 6 times in this chapter. V. 1: **“Arise, your light has come.”** V. 3: **“Nations shall come to your light.”** When I think of light, I think of truth. It is a city of truth. It is the place where God has revealed himself TRULY, and ONLY in Zion can anyone find such truth.

It is a city of ever-increasing beauty, unlike any other city on this earth. V. 10: **“Foreigners shall build up your walls, and their kings shall minister to you.”** V. 11: **“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 . . .”** V. 13: **“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.”** V. 15b: **“I will make you majestic forever, a joy from age to age.”** V. 17: **“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.”** V. 18: **“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.”** Oh how beautiful this city, always increasing in its beauty!

It is an eternal city. Look at vv. 19-22: **“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. 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. 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 least one shall become a clan and the smallest one a mighty nation; I am the Lord; in its time I will hasten it.**

Now, with these truths before us in Isaiah, how do we understand the glory of Zion today? *“How far forward does Isaiah look?”* You know the answer! The fulfillment of Is. 60 is found in the Gospel of Christ. ALREADY, fulfillment has come. Do you remember when Jesus entered Jerusalem before he was crucified? Jesus and his disciples came to the Mount of Olives and Jesus sent two disciples to fetch the donkey and the colt. And Matthew recalls both Zechariah and Isaiah saying: **“Say to the daughter of Zion, Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey . . .”** (Matt. 21:5). And as he entered the city, the people were shouting, **“Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest! And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up saying, “Who is this?”** (Matt. 21:11). Today, Jesus has come to his city! And we know where he came from and who He is! For, **“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in**

everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell . . .” (Col. 1:15-19). And we know what He came to do. **“For the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and give his life a ransom for many.”** Isaiah says the same in cp 53:5. **“But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.”** Therefore, **“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. 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. And nations shall come to your light and kings to the brightness of your rising.”** This is why if you are in Christ, ALREADY, you are a citizen of the city of Zion. The writer of Hebrews says to us: **“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel . . .”** (Heb. 12:22-24). THE CITY IS DIVINE. The Lord is the everlasting light. He is the sun. He is the glory of His city!

And what attracts you to this city. It is the beauty of Christ. Over and over we see that God will make his city beautiful. This is why I say to myself and to you, *“Oh may Christ be beautiful to you!”* And to those with faith, HE IS. And his attraction is compelling! Why did you come to Christ? It was his truth. It was his ever-increasing beauty. It was his eternality (and a million other reasons). There is NO ONE you would rather call “LORD” than the King, the Messiah, the anointed One of whom Isaiah speaks! If you are in Christ, you have come to the living God who inhabits Zion. And ALREADY, you are a citizen of that city. And that’s not all. His Spirit lives WITHIN you. And now, you are the light of the world. You are his ambassador of truth You have been given the ministry of reconciliation. You are being sanctified (becoming more and more beautiful). You will live for eternity. Therefore, we live in this world as citizens NOW.

But, we still wait for the full establishment of this city. Already, but not yet. We still wait. Let me finish this morning with words from John in Rev. 21. Vv. 1-4: **“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. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”** Then again in vv. 10-27: **“And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed—on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width. And he measured**

the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia. Its length and width and height are equal. He also measured its wall, 144 cubits by human measurement, which is also an angel's measurement. The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, like clear glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. 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. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life."