

The New Jerusalem – Isaiah 60:10-22

Introduction – God continues to reveal through Isaiah His intentions for the nations by means of the victorious reign of Jesus over all the earth. How can we see this in this chapter? Before the days of the New Testament, we could only see this in types and shadows (Heb 8:5). And then Jesus came declaring that in His ministry, these things were being fulfilled (Isaiah 61:1-2, Luke 4:16-21). Having shown us the judgment upon the Jews and all mankind and the promise of the Gospel going forth to all nations, Isaiah paints a vision of a New Jerusalem which will be picked up by John in his Apocalypse.

Real Urban Renewal - Jerusalem was going to be decimated, Isaiah was declaring and God was promising. The prophecies of return from exile were only partially fulfilled in the release of the Jews from Babylon. Something much greater was still to come. As people streamed from east and west (vv6-9) a new city was being built, or rather, a city was being renewed. God's light had reached the kings and kingdoms of other nations who now came to build the walls and minister in the city of God (v10). The gates are left open always because the stream of converts bringing their wealth doesn't cease (v11). None are excluded but those who exclude themselves (v12). Even His footstool would be a place of glorious beauty and worship, and "*those who despised you shall fall prostrate*" (v13-14, Psalm 132:7). Having been forsaken and hated for generations, the city now will be the joy of many generations (v15) deriving the care and nurture of former enemies who are saved (v16). Her condition is only improved and the evils of her former state are done away, the government of men disciplined by this new Lord (vv16-17).

The final verses are a flurry of victorious promises. The light/glory of God is so immediate in this city that there is no need for mediated light, and because of this everlasting light, "*the days of mourning shall be ended*" (vv19-20, Psalm 30:6). All inhabitants shall be righteous and they inherit the land forever; God does this so that He might be glorified (v21, Matt 5:5). This little seed becomes a great nation (v22, Matt 13:31-32), and the LORD "*will hasten it in its time*" (v22, Gal 4:4).

The Revelation of John – An "*apocalypse*" is an unveiling or revealing of that which was hidden. John's first century readers, steeped in the OT scriptures, receive this revelation as an inspired commentary on the prophecies given to them. The revelation was of "*things which must shortly take place*" (1:1, 3, 22:6-7). John is writing during the time of the Great Tribulation (Rev 1:9) which Jesus promised would take place in that generation (Matt 24:34). Then, in Rev 21, John sees a vision of the final consummation, all things made new, all death and sorrow removed (vv1-5), and the final rebellion all sent to the second death (vv6-8). The bride/New Jerusalem is described in all her splendor and expanse (with lots of depictions from the Old Testament including Isaiah). But while the fullness of the New Jerusalem is future, she already existed from Pentecost forward (Heb 12:22, Gal 4:26). And so John describes the construction and use of the church in time and space, using the language of Isaiah 60 especially throughout vv22-27 (i.e. – v23, Isaiah 60:19; v24, Isaiah 60:3, 10, 13; v25, Isaiah 60:11; v26, Isaiah 60:5, v27, Isaiah 60:21).

The Revelation of the Church of Jesus Christ and the Age of the Gospel – A Preterist view locates the first 20 chapters of the Book of Unveiling as describing the final judgment upon the Harlot, unbelieving Old Covenant Israel, as taking place in the first century AD. The eternal state of the New Creation is described at the beginning of Chapter 21 and the second half describes how this is going to take place, especially vv22-27. There, we do not have a static picture of the eternal state; we have a vision of nations being converted and coming into the City – the church. With Jesus ruling at the right hand of God, the church is the instrument of God to bring salvation to the nations. Both Isaiah and here in Revelation, the passages are speaking, albeit in apocalyptic/symbol terms, of the realities of this Gospel age. The coming of the Gentiles into the church and the submission of kings and kingdoms to Christ has been in progress for nearly two thousand years – and apparently has only just begun.

Where the New Creation Comes From – "*For in my wrath I struck you, But in My favor I have had mercy on you*" (Isaiah 60:10b). This is of course true for Israel in Isaiah's day. She would be struck in judgment but would return by His mercy. But this would be true as well for Israel in the Day of the Lord, in the judgment poured out upon Jerusalem who crucified her Savior (with Jew and Gentile rulers representing the world). But this would really come from the death of Jesus Himself. God would strike Him as He bore the sins and shamefulness of His people; God poured out His wrath upon His Son, and upon us in His Son. But then He would raise Him from the dead for our justification, revealing His act of mercy towards us in Christ.

We are that New Creation in Christ. The New Creation came forth from the grave where "*the first heaven and the first earth passed away*." The New Creation is coming forth, pulled inside out from the grave where the guilt and power of your sin is now dead. And the glorious splendor of the church, the redeemed of God, grows as the nations are converted and brought to Christ, becoming His bride, building His Sanctuary-City with precious, living stones.

Church: You are not only the evidence of God's present, saving work. You are the means by which He promises future and far more abundant saving works.