

THREE REASONS WHY YOU CAN LIVE IN HOPE

60 Arise, shine, for your light has dawned; indeed, the glory of Jehovah has risen upon you. ²Look, darkness covers the earth, and thick darkness is over the people; but Jehovah rises upon you, and his glory appears over you. ³Nations will come to your light, and kings will come to the brightness of your dawn. ⁴Lift up your eyes and look around: they all assemble themselves, they come to you—your sons shall come from a distance and your daughters shall be carried in the arms. ⁵Then you will see this and be radiant [with joy], your heart will throb and swell [with happiness]; because the riches [of the earth] will be brought to you over the sea, the wealth of the nations will come to you. ⁶Herds of camels will cover your land, the young camels of Midian and Ephah. All the men of Sheba shall come to you, bringing gold and frankincense, and they shall proclaim the praises of Jehovah. ⁷All the flocks of Kedar will be gathered for you, the rams of Nebaioth will be at your service; they will be accepted as offerings on my altar, and I will glorify my temple with my glory. ⁸Who are these that fly along like a cloud [in the sky], who fly like doves to their nests? ⁹Surely the islands will be at my service; in the lead are the [merchant] ships of Tarshish, bringing your sons from a distant land with their silver and gold; on account of the name of Jehovah your God, the Holy One of Israel, because he has honored you. ¹⁰Foreigners will rebuild your walls, and their kings will serve you; for, although I struck you in my wrath, [now] with my favor I will have mercy on you. ¹¹Your gates will continually stand open, they will not be shut day or night, so that men may bring to you the wealth of the nations—and their kings presented [to you] as captives. ¹²The nation or kingdom that refuses to serve you will perish; indeed, those nations shall be utterly destroyed. ¹³The glory of Lebanon will be given to you—the pine, the fir, the cypress, all of them—to beautify the area around my sanctuary; I will glorify the place where my feet rest. ¹⁴The sons of your oppressors will come bowing before you; all those who despised you will bow down at the soles of your feet. They will call you, The City of Jehovah, Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

¹⁵Whereas [formerly] you had been forsaken and hated, so that no one traveled through your land, I will make you become an eternal splendor, a [sight that inspires] rapture in all generations. ¹⁶You will suck the milk of the nations, you will nurse upon the breasts of kings. Then you will know that I, Jehovah, am your Savior, your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob. ¹⁷Instead of brass I will bring gold, and instead of iron I will bring silver, and instead of wood [I will bring] brass, and instead of stones [I will bring] iron. Furthermore, I will make peace [to be] your governor and righteousness to be your ruler. ¹⁸Violence will no longer be heard of in your land, nor [will there be any reports of] ruin or destruction within your borders. On the contrary, you will name your walls Salvation and your gates [you will call] Praise. ¹⁹The sun shall no longer be your light by day, neither shall the brightness of the moon be your source of light [in the night]; Jehovah will be your everlasting light, and your God shall be your brightness. ²⁰Your sun will never set again, and your moon will no longer wane; for Jehovah will be your everlasting light, and your days of sorrow will end. ²¹Your people will be completely righteous, they will inherit the land as an everlasting possession. [They are] the shoot I have planted, the work produced by my hand, so that I may be glorified. ²²The least [of you] will become a thousand, and the smallest [of you]

will become] a mighty nation. At the [appointed] time, I, Jehovah, will cause it to happen suddenly. (Isa. 60:1-22)

Introduction

A woman who did a lot of research work at home began to have difficulty with her vision, so she went to see an eye doctor. After a thorough exam, he said, “Your eyes are extremely tired. They need a rest.”

“But that is impossible,” replied the woman. “My work requires me to do very much reading.”

After thinking for a moment, the doctor asked, “Do you have any wide views of the countryside from your home?”

“Yes,” answered the woman. “From my front porch I can see the peaks of the Blue Ridge Mountains.”

“The next time your eyes get tired,” instructed the physician, “gaze steadily at the mountains for ten to twenty minutes. The far look will rest your eyes.”

What is true in the physical realm is also true in the spiritual—the eyes of your soul grow tired from focusing on your problems and the sinfulness of this present world. But if you turn your attention to the far horizon of the fulfillment of God’s promises, you gain a new and refreshing perspective. (*Our Daily Bread*, 11/24/92) Because of the great and sure promises of the LORD, we as Christians can live our lives in hope. As we study Isaiah 60, let us consider Three Reasons Why We Can Live in Hope.

I. Live in Hope, Because You Shall Inherit the Blessings of God (Isa. 60:4-9,16)

Verse 4 is describing a great re-gathering of God’s people, a great “homecoming,” a joyful “family reunion.” Jerusalem (as a personification of the nation) is commanded to lift up her eyes, look around, and see what the LORD is doing, “Lift up your eyes and look around: they all assemble themselves, they come to you—your sons shall come from a distance and your daughters shall be carried in the arms.” As Jerusalem responds to God’s command, she sees a great re-gathering of her exiled sons and daughters as they are brought back home to their city and their land. Just as surely as the LORD brought His people out of the Babylonian captivity and back home to Israel, so He will bring all His redeemed into His heavenly home and eternal kingdom:

Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep [in death], or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. ¹⁴We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. ¹⁵According to the Lord’s own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly

not precede those who have fallen asleep—¹⁶for the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸Therefore encourage each other with these words. (1 Thess. 4:13-18)

According to verse 5, Jerusalem shall *“be radiant [with joy], her heart will throb and swell [with happiness]—i.e.;* Jerusalem shall beam with delight when she beholds the wealth of the world being brought to her. The merchant vessels are portrayed as sailing to Judah's ports on the Mediterranean, filled with their cargo (vs. 5b.) As she looks to the east, Jerusalem sees the caravans crossing the desert to bring her their treasures; the camels are loaded down with gold and frankincense (vs. 6a.) All the flocks of Kedar and the rams of Nebaioth are gathered to Jerusalem, where they are offered up as a great and acceptable sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to the LORD (vs. 7a.) As she looks west, out across the Mediterranean Sea, Jerusalem sees the merchant ships of the nations with their white sails—compared to swift moving clouds and white doves flying to their nests—coming to deliver their cargoes to her. The great ships of Tarshish, that traveled the world, are now bringing their silver and gold to Jerusalem (vs. 8.) The LORD has caused all these great merchant ships and caravans to do His bidding (like servants waiting upon their master;) they act *“on account of the name of Jehovah your God, the Holy One of Israel, because he has honored you”* (vs. 9.) That is to say, their action is compelled by the LORD and by the fact that He has chosen to make His people the object of His favor and glory, bestowing upon them the wealth of the world.

What this passage is poetically portraying, using terms familiar to God's Old Testament people Israel, is the abundance of wealth and blessing that the LORD will finally bestow upon His people at the end of this present age; as well as their expression of praise and thanksgiving to the LORD their God, and the acceptance of their person and worship by the LORD, as they finally dwell with Him when heaven and earth are united in the renewed creation. It is the teaching and the promise of Scripture that the LORD shall finally “repossess” the wealth of the world and shall bestow it all upon His people in blessing forever:

... a sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous. (Prov. 13:22b)

Here is the fate God allots to the wicked: ... Though he heaps up silver like dust and clothes like piles of clay, ¹⁷what he lays up the righteous will wear, and the innocent will divide his silver. (Job 27:13,16-17)

To the man who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. (Eccl. 2:26)

When Jerusalem shall be “nourished” with the wealth of the nations, she shall know that the LORD is her Savior and that her Redeemer is the Mighty One of Jacob. The LORD’s people shall finally come to inherit and enjoy a prosperity that is abundant and of the finest quality (vs. 17a,) the peace and tranquility that is the fruit of righteousness (vs.17b), and the security that is provided by the LORD Himself (vs. 18.)

As a Christian, here is the first reason why you can live in hope, namely, the fact that we shall inherit the blessings of God.

II. Live in Hope, Because You Shall Share in the Honor of Christ (Isa. 60:10-15)

Verse 10 contains the promise, *“foreigners will rebuild your walls, and their kings will serve you.”* Here is a complete reversal of the time when foreigners destroyed the city:

Your foes roared in the place where you met with us; they set up their standards as signs. ⁵They behaved like men wielding axes to cut through a thicket of trees. ⁶They smashed all the carved paneling with their axes and hatchets. ⁷They burned your sanctuary to the ground; they defiled the dwelling place of your Name. (Psl. 74:4-7a)

Historically, verse 10 of Isaiah 60 is a reference to Cyrus the Persian king sponsoring the re-building of the temple and the city of Jerusalem:

In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of Jehovah spoken by Jeremiah, Jehovah moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and to put it in writing: ²This is what Cyrus king of Persia says, Jehovah, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. ³Anyone of his people among you—may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem in Judah and build the temple of Jehovah, the God of Israel, the God who is in Jerusalem. ⁴And the people of any place where survivors may now be living are to provide him with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with freewill offerings for the temple of God in Jerusalem. (Ezra 1:1-4)

The final and complete fulfillment of this prophecy will be revealed with the final submission of the nations before the LORD God and His people—acknowledging the LORD to be the true and only God. Note Revelation 2:26-27, to the one who remains faithful to Him the Lord Jesus makes the promise: *“to him will I give authority over the nations: ²⁷and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces; as I also have received [authority] from my Father.”* As verse 10b indicates, this is all due to the LORD’s mercy to His people, it is not due to our own power or goodness: *“for ... [now] with my favor I will have mercy on you.”*

Verse 11 continues the promise that there shall be brought into Jerusalem *“the wealth of the nations—and their kings presented to you as captives.”* Here is a complete reversal of the time when the nations plundered Jerusalem and foreign kings led away the people into captivity:

The Babylonians set fire to the royal palace and the houses of the people and broke down the walls of Jerusalem. ⁹Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard carried into exile to Babylon the people who remained in the city, along with those who had gone over to him, and the rest of the people. (Jer. 39:8-9)

Nebuchadnezzar also took to Babylon articles from the temple of Jehovah and put them in his temple there. (2 Chron. 36:7)

Verse 12 proclaims that the *“nation or kingdom that refuses to serve you will perish.”* Here is a prophecy of the Scriptural promise that the nations of the world shall finally bow before the LORD in subservience to Him, as was previously announced by the prophet Isaiah, *“The arrogance of man shall be brought low, and the pride of man shall be humbled; and Jehovah alone shall be exalted on that day”* (Isa. 2:17.) Furthermore, as those who are the people of God, united by faith to Jesus the Messiah, the redeemed shall share in the dominion of their Lord and Savior. As the Apostle Paul declares, *“Here is a trustworthy saying: If we die with him, we will also live with him; ¹²if we endure, we will also reign with him”* (2 Tim. 2:11-12.)

Verse 14 prophesies, *“all those who despised you will bow down at the soles of your feet.”* The Messiah, on behalf of His people, was *“despised and rejected by men”* (Isa. 53:3.) His Old Testament people shared in His suffering and humiliation, being treated in the same way by the world: *“[formerly] you had been forsaken and hated, so that no one traveled through your land”* (Isa. 60:15.) Likewise, the New Testament believer shares in *“the fellowship of [Christ’s] sufferings”* (Phil. 3:10.) The Lord Jesus informs us as His disciples,

If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before you. ¹⁹If you belonged to the world, the world would love its own; but because you do not belong to the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. (Jn. 15:18-19)

But now Isaiah 60:14 informs us that God’s people, all who have been redeemed by Jesus the Messiah and belong to Him, shall share in the honor and glory and dominion of the LORD. Note the testimony of the Apostle Paul, *“Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory”* (Rom. 8:17.)

As a Christian, here is the second reason why you can live in hope; namely, the fact that we shall share in the honor of Christ:

To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. (Rev. 3:21)

III. Live in Hope, Because You Shall See the Glory of the LORD (Isa. 60:1-3,19-20)

Looking forward to the conclusion of the long seventy year “night” of the Babylonian captivity—and all the way forward to the end of this present age of spiritual darkness—the LORD commands Jerusalem, *“Arise, shine”* (vs. 1.) The city of God, again, as a personification of the people of God, is commanded to become like the morning sun: to arise and shine with a brightness that is seen throughout the world. The city of God is enabled to heed the LORD’s command because *“your light has dawned; indeed, the glory of Jehovah has risen upon you”* (vs. 1b.) Like the morning sun dispelling the darkness of the night, so the LORD Himself shines forth in His glory; He shines upon His people, awakening us by that glory and causing us to participate in it.

Verse 2 describes the state of the world as being comparable to the night—all is enveloped in moral and spiritual darkness. But the LORD shines upon His people like the morning sun, and that divine glory shines forth like a beacon to the dark world. Verse 3 relates the results of the LORD’s shining upon His people. *“Nations will come to your light”*—Gentile peoples are converted to God through the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; note Isaiah 42:6-7, and 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10,

I, Jehovah, have called you by my righteousness, and I will hold your hand. I will watch over you and appoint you to be the covenant [representative] for the people [of Israel] and a light for the Gentiles. 7[I have appointed you] to open the eyes of the blind, to free the captives from prison, and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness. (Isa. 42:6-7;) this is the LORD’s commission to Jesus the Messiah

... you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath. (1 Thess. 1:9-10;) here is the Apostle Paul’s reminder to the Thessalonians as to what they experienced when they put their faith in Jesus the Messiah

Isaiah 60:3 goes on to say, *“kings will come to the brightness of your dawn.”* Ultimately, here is a reference to the powers and the rulers of the world submitting to the Lord and His Christ—and to His people as they are united to their Savior and share in His glory.

What is the overall meaning and significance of this prophecy of Isaiah 60:1-3? The passage’s first level of fulfillment is seen in the LORD’s coming to redeem His people from the “night” of their Babylonian captivity. But it looks beyond that act of Old Testament redemption to His coming in the incarnation to redeem His

people from the bondage of our sins, and it then looks all the way forward to our LORD's final coming in glory to accomplish the full redemption of His people.

The passage explains to us the results of the LORD's coming. At the time when He will reveal a full manifestation of Himself, His glory is revealed. With regard to His coming at the time of His incarnation, the apostle John writes of our Lord Jesus Christ, *"The Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us. We [those to whom the Father revealed His true identify] saw his glory, his glory as the one and only Son who came from the Father, full of grace and truth"* (Jn. 1:14.) But with regard to His final coming at the end of the age, our Lord Jesus Himself testifies, *"then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory"* (Matt. 24:30.)

Furthermore, on the day when He will reveal a full manifestation of Himself, His people shall be caught up into His glory, participating in it and radiating it from our lives. That process (known as sanctification) is even now, although sometimes almost imperceptibly, being carried out by the Holy Spirit as He works in the lives of the redeemed: *"we ... beholding ... the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory"* (2 Cor. 3:18.) When that process is brought to its completion with the day of our Lord's final appearing in glory, we shall be completely transformed and perfectly radiate His divine glory: *"Beloved, now we are children of God, but it is not yet revealed what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be revealed, we shall be like him, for we shall see him even as he is"* (1 Jn. 3:2.)

Finally, on the day when He will reveal a full manifestation of Himself, the nations shall be confronted with the divine glory of the LORD and will be compelled to respond to it. They are made to acknowledge that the LORD is God, that He reigns, and that men must submit to Him—willingly by conversion in this present time, or unwillingly by conquest on the day of His final appearing.

Verses 19-20 go on to promise that the light of the sun and the moon will be replaced by the glory of the LORD:

The sun shall no longer be your light by day, neither shall the brightness of the moon be your source of light [in the night]; Jehovah will be your everlasting light, and your God shall be your brightness. ²⁰Your sun will never set again, and your moon will no longer wane; for Jehovah will be your everlasting light, and your days of sorrow will end. (Isa. 60:19-20)

The presence of the LORD and His glory will illuminate the heavenly city, and that glory shall everlastingly shine upon His people in blessing. The desire of God's people shall finally be realized: we shall see the King in His glory. Moses expressed the desire within the hearts of all of God's people when he requested of the LORD, *"Show me your glory"* (Ex. 33:18.) The people of God living in the new

Jerusalem of the kingdom of God, shall experience the joy and blessing of living in the fullness of God's light and truth, note Revelation 21:23, a passage that pictorially gives a further glimpse in the eschatological manifestation of the kingdom of God: *"The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp."*

As a Christian, here is the third reason why you can live in hope; namely, the fact that we shall see and experience in blessing the glory of the LORD:

Father, I desire that those whom you have given me may also be with me where I am, so that they may see my glory—[the glory] that you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. (Jn. 17:24)

Conclusion

The passage closes with these words: *"At the [appointed] time, I, Jehovah, will cause it to happen suddenly."* The point being made is that there is an appointed day for the fulfillment of all these things, and the LORD will see to it that nothing prevents the coming of that day. When that appointed day has come, the LORD will act swiftly, without any further delay, to bring to fulfillment the promises He has made to His people.

This passage has presented to us, as Christians, three great reasons as to why we can and should live in hope: 1) because we shall receive the blessings of God; 2) because we shall share in the honor of Jesus the Messiah; and 3) because we shall see the glory of the LORD.

Indeed, added to those reasons there is this further reason: the fact that the LORD is guiding history to the appointed day of the fulfillment of these promises—and He guarantees that nothing can prevent the coming of that great day.