

# ***Isaiah Part 38: “The Spirit of the LORD God is upon me...”***

## **Isaiah 60 and 61**

### ***The future glory of Israel (Isaiah 60 v 1 to 22)***

“Arise, shine, for your light has come” (v 1) – after the darkness described in Isaiah 59 v 9 and 10, this exhortation signals the Redeemer’s glorious rescue. Light has come, and so God tells his people to respond. First we receive God’s light (“your light has come”), and then we are called to service (“arise, shine”). You cannot shine until your light has come, but once it has come, we to ‘shine’ – see Matthew 5 v 14 to 16 (“You are the light of the world...”). “And the glory of the LORD has risen upon you” – this ‘light’ emanates from the glory of God. This is like the light of Jesus in the Transfiguration, when his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light (Matthew 17 v 2).

- These verses build a picture of the glorified Zion. What does this passage say about God, and the place he occupies in Zion?
- Consider the features of beauty and glory attributed to Zion. How are they analogous to the qualities of living in the fulness of the Spirit? See 2 Corinthians 3 v 18; 4 v 6; Ephesians 3 v 14 to 21.

“Nations shall come to your light” (v 3) – when God lifts up his glorious light over Israel, the Gentile nations and their kings will be attracted to the brightness of Israel’s rising. This will be ultimately fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom of Jesus when Israel is lifted up among all nations. “Your sons shall come from afar...” (v 4) – throughout this chapter, one of the great themes is ‘regathering’. In the Millennial Kingdom of Christ, every Jewish person on the earth will be gathered into the land of Israel, from every nation. The present-day regathering of Israel is a wonderful preview of this ultimate and complete regathering.

“The wealth of the nations shall come to you” (v 5) – not only will the people of Israel receive the treasure of their own people, but the Gentile nations will also willingly give them their wealth, much as the Egyptians gave the Israelites riches when they left Egypt (Exodus 12 v 35, 36). “They shall bring gold... silver and their gold with them” (v 6, 9) – why do the nations bestow such riches upon Israel? Firstly, they recognize that they are giving it to God, “for the name of the LORD your God, and for the Holy One of Israel” (v 9); secondly, because they see God’s grace and favour to Israel: “because he has made you beautiful”.

“To beautify the place of my sanctuary, and I will make the place of my feet glorious” (v 13) – a third reason the riches of the nations pour into Zion (Jerusalem) in the Millennial Kingdom of Christ will be to build and support the Millennial Temple (described in detail in Ezekiel chapters 40 to 47), which stands as a place memorializing God’s presence and work in history. There will be priests and sacrifices at the Temple, but not for atonement, because the work of atonement was finished at the Cross. The sacrifices are for worship, consecration, and perhaps historical re-enactment.

“The sons of those who afflicted you shall come bending low to you, and all who despised you shall bow down at your feet” (v 14) – those who previously persecuted Israel will have a different heart and mind in the Millennial Kingdom. Then they will come bowing to Jerusalem; they will recognize it as “the City of the LORD”. “Instead of bronze I will bring gold, and instead of iron I will bring silver” (v 17) – God will take what was old, and perhaps functional, but not full of glory, and replace it with far better things. More of a miracle than turning bronze to gold is turning “taskmasters” to “righteousness”.

“Violence shall no more be heard in your land... you shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise” (v 18) – what a glorious transformation, from the violence and unrestrained bloodshed of Isaiah 59 v 6 to 8, to walls called ‘Salvation’ and gates called ‘Praise’!

***[MORE OVER...]***

“You shall know that...” (v 16) – this verse explains why God works this miraculous transformation. It is not because Israel is so great and has earned this as an achievement through hard work. He does these things so that all may *know* it is his doing, that he is their “Saviour” and their “Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob”.

“The sun shall be no more your light by day... but the LORD will be your everlasting light” (v 19) – this is similar to the light of the New Jerusalem described in Revelation 21 v 23, where God himself is the light. But just as important as having the Lord as your everlasting light is having God “your glory”, and to glory in no one or nothing else. “They shall possess the land forever” (v 21) – when we recall the context of Isaiah’s prophecy, it makes this promise even more precious. The Book of Isaiah was mostly written under the shadow of coming defeat and exile. To those dispossessed people of God, Isaiah pointed them to a day when they shall possess the land forever. This promise would not be fulfilled because the people of God were good. Rather, the God says that it will be seen as the “the work of my hands, that I might be glorified.”

“I am the LORD; in its time I will hasten it” (v 22) – God did not say it would happen ‘soon’, but God would hasten it in its time. There is a similar sense in Revelation 1 v 1, where John introduces his prophetic book as “the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must *soon* take place”, where ‘soon’ is actually a mis-translation: the Greek phrase is *ἐν τάχει*, (*en tachei* = quickly) giving the sense that when the time is right, the things will take place suddenly and without delay.

### ***The year of the Lord’s favour (Isaiah 61 v 1 to 11)***

“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me” (v 1) – in Luke 4 v 16 to 22 Jesus spoke in the synagogue of Nazareth, his hometown. He opened up the scroll to Isaiah chapter 61, perhaps an assigned reading, perhaps chosen by him, and read from the beginning of the chapter through to the first line of verse 2. When he sat down, he simply said “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing”. Jesus is the person described in verses 1 to 3, and he is the one upon whom the Spirit of the Lord GOD rests. “Because the LORD has anointed me” – this identifies the speaker as the Messiah, which means ‘Anointed One.’

- How is the coming salvation of the Messiah proclaimed in these verses? How should God’s people respond? See for example verse 10.

“He has sent me...” – the Messiah announces that he is here to heal the damage that sin brings, and to bring about the great work of redemption. Because sin impoverishes, he will “bring good news to the poor”. Because sin breaks hearts, he will “bind up the broken-hearted”. Because sin enslaves, he will “proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound”. Because sin oppresses, he will “proclaim the year of the LORD’s favour” (v 2). “and the day of vengeance of our God” (v 2) – significantly, Jesus stopped reading before this phrase, because to proclaim “the day of vengeance of our God” is relevant to his Second Coming. This pause in the prophecy has stood for almost 2,000 years, and shows us the nature of Biblical prophecy: it may change timeframes quickly and without warning...

Instead of the ashes of mourning, he gives his people “a beautiful headdress” (v 3, see Exodus 39 v 28; Isaiah 3 v 20), and the “oil of gladness”; instead of “a faint spirit”, he gives his people “the garment of praise”. In mourning, ashes would be cast upon the head (2 Samuel 13 v 19). “You shall be called the priests of the LORD” (v 6) – God’s people, under the anointing of the Spirit and the ministry of the Messiah, have a holy calling: they are priests of the LORD and “ministers of our God”. “Instead of your shame there shall be a double portion” (v 7) – what a change under the anointing of the Spirit and the ministry of the Messiah! No more shame; instead, a double portion. Now they shall rejoice in their portion. Indeed, everlasting joy shall be theirs, a joy that can never be taken away (v 10)...

*Prayer – Lord, we are reminded that you, Jesus, are the Messiah, the one upon whom the Spirit of the Lord GOD rests, anointed and sent to bring good news to the poor, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound, and to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour. Send us, in the power of your Spirit, to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen.*