



Faith is believing now what everyone will know is true one day

The key to all of God's blessings is for us to have confident faith in God's promises. There are many great promises in the Bible. They come to pass in our lives as we believe them. One aspect to faith is this: **faith is believing now what everyone will know is true one day**. Isaiah speaks here of a day when 'Israel' will be flourishingly successful. It will not, I am sure, come by any kind of worldly success lifting us up in pride. It will come – as do all of God's blessings – by God's amazing grace. But there will come a day when the nations will turn in admiration to the people of God. The question is: can we see now what everyone will see then? Isaiah says:

• 'Israel' will flourish – not worldly success but the blessing of God's grace

¹Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of Yahweh rises upon you.

²For look, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but Yahweh rises upon you and his glory appears over you.

• The nations will turn in admiration to the people of God – can we see now what they will see then?

³Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your sunrise.

⁴Lift up your eyes and look about you:

All assemble and come to you; your sons come from afar, and your daughters are carried on the hip.

⁵Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy; for the abundance on the seas will be turned over to you, to you the riches of the nations will come.'

• The world will cease to be a place of darkness

Generally the world is viewed in the Bible as a place of darkness. Isaiah has already spoken of a people who walk in darkness^{60:1} and refers here to the 'thick darkness' that covers the nations. Yet it will not always be that way! The Saviour comes – says Isaiah 42:7 – 'to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, to bring from the prison those who sit in darkness'.

📖 9:2

• The 'light' – both from outside us and within us

What is this 'light' that is to come? It is purity. It is clarity of mind. It is jubilation, joy in the things of God. We notice that Isaiah pictures it in two ways. It is light from outside shining upon us. And it is light within us shining upon others. The light of God shines upon us, and so we are able to shine upon others. It is salvation in our **status** and salvation in our **character**. One day it will happen in a great way. The nations will turn to the light of salvation as it shines out of God's Israel.

When this light shines from the people of God, all the world is blessed by it

When this light shines from the people of God, all the world is blessed by it. Isaiah pictures it.

⁶Herds of camels will cover your land, young camels of Midian and Ephah. And all from Sheba will come, bearing gold and incense and telling the good news of the praises of Yahweh.

⁷All Kedar's flocks will be gathered to you, the rams of Nebaioth will serve you; they will be accepted as offerings on my altar, and I will beautify my beautiful house.'

• The people from pagan lands come to worship

The places mentioned are pagan lands around Israel. Isaiah pictures them coming to God's people. They come as worshippers (for they bring offerings for worship).

The world's unconscious longings will be fulfilled when they find salvation in the God of the Bible

• The nations will find salvation in the coming Saviour

• God's grace will work changes in them

The world's unconscious longings will be fulfilled when they find salvation in the God of the Bible.

*⁸Who are these that fly along like clouds,
like doves to their nests?*

*⁹For the distant lands wait expectantly for me;
in the lead are the ships of Tarshish,
bringing your sons from afar,
with their silver and gold,
for the name of Yahweh your God,
the Holy One of Israel,
for he has endowed you with beauty.'*

Isaiah sees a vision of people being hurriedly blown along like clouds on a windy day. They are like doves finding safety and security in their nests. He has in mind the nations of the world finding salvation in the coming Saviour. Their hopes and expectations are being fulfilled. In Isaiah's times the nations were in 'thick darkness'⁸ and yet the day will come when they will have new longings (for peace, calmness of conscience, spiritual power and purpose, purity of life). They do not have such longings by nature! But God's grace will work changes in them and their new hopes will find fulfilment in God's Saviour, whose name Isaiah did not know but whom we know to be our Lord Jesus Christ.

8:1 60:2

The world's longings will be fulfilled when they find salvation in the God of the Bible

• The offer of salvation is free and generous

• Can we see God's salvation?

• If we believe it will affect our view of the people of God now

The world's unconscious longings will be fulfilled when they find salvation in the God of the Bible.

*¹⁰Foreigners will rebuild your walls,
and their kings will serve you.
For in my anger I struck you,
and in my favour I have had compassion on you.'*

A day will come when God's people will have great influence; days of chastening will be finished.

*¹¹Your gates will always stand open,
they will never be shut, day or night,
so that men may bring you the wealth of the nations –
their kings led in triumphal procession.'*

The offer of salvation is free and generous. The gates of God's Zion will always be open.

Such is Isaiah's vision. Everyone will see its fulfilment one day. The question is: can we see it now? Can we see God's brightly shining salvation? Is our light shining with purity, clarity, joy? Do we have the outward-looking vision that wishes to reach and expects to reach all nations? Are we expecting the 'thick darkness'⁸ to be taken away and a day of glorious light to appear? The City of Yahweh is going up. One day the sun will shine on it and in it more brightly than ever before. If we believe, it will affect our view of the people of God now. And it will change the ambitions of our lives.

8:1 60:2