



A day of victory for the church of Christ is on its way

A day of victory for the church of the Lord Jesus Christ is on its way. 'In its time I will do this swiftly', says God^{60:1}. Isaiah saw it in his own way thousands of years ago.

60:22

12'For the nation or kingdom that will not serve you will perish; the nations will be utterly ruined.'

• Not everyone will be saved – the enemies of God's people will attract God's anger

It is not a case that everyone will be saved. God's people will still have enemies. But enmity towards God's Zion will bring the disaster of God's anger upon them.

13'The glory of Lebanon will come to you, the pine, the fir and the cypress together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will glorify the place of my feet.

God's 'new Jerusalem' will be very attractive

14The sons of those who humiliated you will come bowing before you; all who despise you will bow down at your feet and will call you the City of Yahweh, Zion of the Holy One of Israel.'

Those who once despised God's people now come with great humility

Isaiah is using picture language. Just as the best wood went into the building of Solomon's temple, so God's 'new Jerusalem' will have great attractiveness and beauty. Those who once despised God's people now come to the 'new Jerusalem' with great humility.

Zion will be an influential and much-admired people

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15'Instead of your being forsaken and hated, with no one travelling through, I will make you the everlasting pride and the joy of all generations.'

• There will come a day when people will be proud to be associated with God's Israel

Isaiah puts the matter in territorial language. There was a time – he says – when no one would want to visit God's people^{60:1}, but the day will come when people will be proud to be associated with God's Israel. Kings will want to be like mothers breast-feeding the people of God.

60:15

16'You will drink the milk of nations and be nursed at royal breasts. Then you will know that I, Yahweh, am your Saviour, your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.'

• The city of God will be built with valued and luxurious materials

The city of God will not be built with poor materials but with valued and luxurious materials.

17'Instead of bronze I will bring you gold, and silver in place of iron. Instead of wood I will bring you bronze, and iron in place of stones.'

• Peace and righteousness will rule among nations

Peace and righteousness will rule among the nations.

'I will make peace your government and righteousness your ruler.'

*¹⁸No longer will violence be heard in your land,
nor ruin or destruction within your borders.'*

Where do spiritual power and influence come from?

• City walls – salvation

• Gates – praise

• God illuminates

• No sorrow

• All are righteous and have a piece of land

• God has acted to establish the city – grown from a seed that He planted

• His people will be exalted

The next paragraph tells us where spiritual power and influence come from. The people of God become influential as a by-product of their salvation. Isaiah again pictures God's people as a great city.

'You will call your walls Salvation and your gates Praise.

*¹⁹The sun will no more be your light by day,
nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you,
for Yahweh will be your everlasting light,
and your God will be your beauty.*

*²⁰Your sun will never set again,
and your moon will wane no more;
For Yahweh will be your everlasting joy,
and your days of sorrow will end.*

*²¹Then will all your people be righteous
and they will possess the land for ever.
They are the shoot of my planting,
the work of my hands,
in order to display my beauty.*

*²²The least of you will become a thousand,
the smallest a mighty nation.
I am Yahweh;
in its time I will do this swiftly.'*

☞¹ 1 60:18
60:18
☞² 60:19
☞³ 60:20
☞⁴ 60:21a

The walls of the city are salvation. Its gates are praise^{☞1}. Its everlasting illumination is God himself^{☞2}. It is a city where there is no sorrow^{☞3}, where everyone is righteous, where all have a piece of land^{☞4}. Verse 21b explains how such a city has come into being. God himself has acted to establish the city. It has grown from a seed that he planted. He plans to display his workmanship in his people. The people will be so exalted that the most undistinguished will become like a small army of people.

When and how will the fulfilment of all this take place?

• Prophecy is panoramic – large-scale view of God's plan

• Timing is not for us to know

• A day of greater success coming

• We are meant to start seeking the vision's fulfilment, even now!

Note

The question we shall want to ask at this point is: when and how will the fulfilment of all this take place? When and how will this great success for God's Israel be fully realized? We need to realize again that prophecy is often 'panoramic'. That is, very often prophecies give great, sweeping descriptions of a large-scale plan of God without breaking the vision down into the stages of its fulfilment. The vision often surveys a vast panorama without epochs of time being marked. 'It is not for you to know times or seasons', said Jesus^{☞1}. The disciples had some idea of the blessing that should come upon God's Jerusalem-based people. Was it about to happen? Jesus answered, 'It is not for you to know'. Something similar might be said about Isaiah chapter 60. It seems it is fulfilled in stages. The Day of Pentecost was a great beginning. The light was shining brightly on the church on that day. Then it seems there is a great fulfilling of the vision yet to come. If Jesus must reign until all enemies are put beneath his feet, then there is a day of success coming greater than anything God's Israel has yet seen. Finally the new heavens and new earth that will come when Jesus appears will be the greatest possible way in which all God's people will be righteous, and will possess the land for ever.

☞¹ Acts 1:7

The vision is 'panoramic'. It stretches out into the future and its fulfilment will be understood more as it unfolds. We are meant to start seeking its fulfilment even now! This is what the people of God are destined to be. It may be slow in coming but when the church – God's Israel – reaches such a point it will get there speedily. 'I am Yahweh', God says. 'In its time I will do this swiftly.'

a. See chs. 20, 45, 48; Zephaniah–Haggai (forthcoming), ch. 1; Zechariah (forth-coming), chs. 24, 33; 35; and frequently elsewhere in my writings.

Dr Michael Eaton (1942-2017) was highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. Born in the UK, he lived for many years in Kenya where he became a citizen. He was one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship in Nairobi. His Preaching through the Bible books are highly popular worldwide, written in a clear and down-to-earth style but underpinned by rigorous scholarship. Some of these books have been reformatted as individual sheets for personal and group study and preaching. The New Testament volumes have been re-edited and combined in the Branch Commentary. The Old Testament, including previously unpublished material will follow. More details: www.slices.org.uk.