

“Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord”

Chapters 61-62 bring to a climax the wondrous vision of God's redemptive rule. Chapter 60 pictures the incredible transformation of Jerusalem, a city filled with glory, light, joy, and excitement. Chapter 61 describes the *spiritual* restoration offered to those who put their faith in the Lord, the Everlasting Light. Here we catch a glimpse of the day toward which history is moving. When we reach that goal, we will see and share His glory, and all life's mysteries will find final resolution in joy!

Invitation to pray: Father as we open your precious word, continue to open our eyes to the glorious *heritage* that comes with being your loved ones.

1. Think of a time when you felt like an outcast. Who or what brought you comfort?

Read all of chapter 61, then focus on the first few verses for your personal meditation.

Jesus inaugurated His public ministry in Nazareth by reading **Isaiah 61:1-2**. Compare this passage with **Luke 4:16-21**.

2. From these two sections and the following cross-references (Isaiah 11:2, 42:1, 48:16, 42:7, 49:8-9 and 50:4), who do you think the speaker is in Isaiah 61:1-2? Explain.
3. Why do you suppose Jesus stopped quoting Isaiah in the middle of verse 2?
4. Notice the revolutionary implications of the Servant's mission in 61:1-3. What kinds of people does the Lord's Servant liberate?
5. Comment on how Jesus has fulfilled 61:1-3 for you. How could you carry on Jesus' work of 61:1-3?

Note: The reference to “liberty” and “opening of the prison” allude to the Year of Jubilee, during which all debts and obligations were erased and the terms of slavery were cancelled (Leviticus 25: 8-9, 39-41).

6. Verses 4-9 speak of Zion's transformed circumstances during the millennial reign of Christ. What does Isaiah predict will happen among Israel and the nations?

7. In 61:10-11, the prophet speaks on behalf of the remnant who are praising God. Why are the two metaphors in this outburst of song appropriate?

To Isaiah's audience it may have seemed that the promises in chapter 60 could hardly come to pass since the Babylonian exile was still ahead of them. In chapter 62, the Lord assures them that He would surely fulfill these promises.

Read Isaiah 62:1-2. What do we learn about God's intent for His people from these verses?

8. How could the restoration of God's covenant people draw the Gentiles to Himself (62:2)?

Finish reading chapter 62, then pause and dwell on Zion's new names (vv. 3-5). Hephzibah, means "My delight is in her," and Beulah, means "married."

9. a. What does each new name indicate about God's new relationship with His people?
 - b. How do you respond to these names as expressions of God's feelings toward you as one of His people?

10. What is the purpose of a watchman in the New Jerusalem (v. 6-7)? (Normally, watchmen were guards who kept a lookout for enemies approaching the city.)

11. What is promised in verses 8-9?

Finally, in words derived from earlier passages (40:3, 49:22) the prophet calls upon his people to enter the Holy City (vv. 10-12). Earlier the call was to return from exile; now it is to enter the New Jerusalem.

12. Describe the moment that Isaiah foresees in 62:10-12.

13. Look at verses 11-12 from the perspective of Isaiah's main topics and themes. What do you see that is significant in these verses?

This section of Isaiah is rounded off with a vivid and awe-inspiring picture of the Messiah coming at His Second Advent to vindicate His people (63:1-6). **Read 63:1-6 in several translations.** Observe the vocabulary: *garments, righteousness, salvation, redemption, anger, and wrath, and vengeance.*

A Closer Look

Vengeance in the Old Testament is not to be understood as God's desire for self-gratification in exacting punishment, but an expression of displeasure over all unrighteousness, with the intent of restoring the original balance (Joel 3:19-21). Vengeance, in other words, anticipates redemption. It demonstrates God's righteousness and justice in compensating the wrong with right. In the Old Testament, the relative seeking revenge was called the *ga'al haddam* (Numbers 35:19). This example provides the necessary background for understanding Christ's death as satisfying God's vengeance to provide redemption. Forgiveness rather than vengeance is the basis for Christian morality. In the New Testament, vengeance is reserved for Christ's enemies who unbelievably reject the resolution in Christ's death.

When the Lord returns to set up His kingdom, His purifying judgments will precede the days of blessing.

14. Here and in Revelation 14:19-20 God's wrath is pictured as being like a winepress. Consider these two passages and give your explanation of the metaphor.

15. What do you observe about the solitary *Avenger* when He comes in power and great glory (vv.1-6)?

Note: Edom is named here as a representative of the nations that have oppressed the Jews. Bozrah was one of its main cities, and its name means "grape gathering." This is significant since the image here is that of the winepress.

The glories of chapters 60–62 and the vision of the decisive action in 63:1-6, stir the prophet to one of the most eloquent intercessions of the Bible. Prayerfully read **Isaiah 63:7-64:12** before answering the questions.

16. What do we learn from the way Isaiah begins His prayer in verse 7?

17.
 - a. What do vv. 7-10 express about God's relationship to Israel?

 - b. What do the chastened people remember about God's wonderful deeds (vv. 11-14)?

 - c. What phrase in Isaiah's prayer gives it a special intensity (63:16, 64:8)? Why?

18. What do you learn about Isaiah's emotional state from his passionate prayer?

19. Where in your life do you wish God would do something? How does this affect your prayers?

Isaiah's prayer of intercession—the passionate entering into the need of those for whom we are praying—serves as a model for us as well.

20. How can following this example of prayer enrich and deepen your own prayer life?

Note: Chapters 65-66 give the Lord's response to this impassioned prayer for Israel.

In summary: The closing chapters of Isaiah contain a mingling of the condemnation and glory to which we have become accustomed. The great panorama of the second part of the book sweeps before us in its portrayal of deliverance from Babylon as a foretaste of an even greater deliverance through the Messiah, the Servant of the Lord.

21. What new insights has God given you in your study of chapters 61-64?