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Sermon Notes

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The Glory of Zion

Isaiah 60:1-22

In November of 1510, an Augustinian monk named Martin Luther was sent with another monk on an epic pilgrimage from Nuremberg, Germany to Rome... a journey of almost 700 miles; the two of them travelled by foot for weeks through southern Germany and Switzerland to the forbidding, snow-covered Alps... Finally, the road took him to a hill overlooking Rome and he glimpsed what he called the Holy City for the first time. Exhausted and overwhelmed with religious zeal, he fell prostrate to the ground in reverence and cried out, "Hail, O holy Rome, truly sanctified because it is still wet with the blood of the martyrs."

Just one view of this city filled Luther with an overwhelming surge of religious passion. But soon, this passion was deeply disappointed. He found the city to be utterly repulsive, a cesspool of human wickedness, stinking of human filth and rife with all the worst corruptions of the sins of the flesh. Even worse, he found the religion of the place to be machine-like and empty. The Italian priests obviously had no reverence at all for Christ, and mocked the mass as they were performing it. After such a vision of the Holy City, he returned disillusioned to the monastery in Germany, desperate to find some hope.

Luther's experience at Rome is a common occurrence on earth... everyone is somewhat on a pilgrimage to find a home, a city that will satisfy all their longings... but so many people, when they reach their destinations are deeply, bitterly disappointed.

Scripture points us to the true city, the eternal city, the heavenly one... called the "New Jerusalem" or the "heavenly Zion"

Hebrews 11:10 he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

Hebrews 11:16 they were longing for a better country-- a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

In Isaiah 60, we have the chance to view that spiritual city from afar by listening to and believing in God's Word...

Main Idea: The stunning glory of Zion, the City of God, is revealed in words that soar beyond any earthly fulfillment in the physical city of Jerusalem. Here is displayed what the people of God, the church of Jesus Christ, will be when eternally glorified in the New Heaven and New Earth. And here is displayed the stunning diversity of glories with which the peoples of every nation on earth will beautify heaven with their unique worship to God their Savior.

In this amazing chapter, Almighty God is speaking directly to "Zion," the city where God dwells with his people in direct fellowship. The word "Zion" is first used in the Bible to describe the literal city of Jerusalem when David conquered it from the Jebusites... 2 Samuel 7

And throughout the Psalms and Prophets, the word "Zion" refers immediately to the physical city of Jerusalem, called the "City of David," where God put his name and his dwelling, his glory cloud was there... it was the place of God and man dwelling together in close fellowship.

However, Zion came to take on a more spiritual meaning as time went on, and Jerusalem itself became a defiled city, polluted by sin, a sewer of wickedness in which God could no longer dwell with his glory cloud. The glory of the Lord departed from the Temple in the vision of Ezekiel right before the Babylonians destroyed it. The Jews were EXILED TO BABYLON, and the remnant of Jews lived there, pining for the day when they could return and rebuild the city. Isaiah 60 seems to speak of that day...

BUT in the prophetic vision of Isaiah, the word Zion seems to soar above the physical rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem. Jerusalem itself is but a TYPE and a SHADOW of a true, heavenly reality. The heavenly Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the eternal city of the living God, is prefigured in the events of the earthly city of Jerusalem.

Paul speaks of the Jerusalem that is ABOVE as our true home, the heavenly city, and contrasts it with the physical city:

Galatians 4:25-26 the present city of Jerusalem... is in slavery with her children. ²⁶ But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother.

The restoration of the Jews back to the rubble-filled streets of Jerusalem under Ezra and Nehemiah is merely a reestablishment of the physical TYPE or SHADOW of the heavenly reality. The rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem showed that the perfect glory of Jerusalem has not yet come, for

the Gentile nations that surrounded the rubble-filled streets of that physical city were still possible enemies that hated the Jews and wanted to kill them and take their land.

The prophetic vision of Isaiah 60 is of a radiant, glorious, majestic, perfect city in which the wealth of nations will stream into the city, and its gates are constantly open; perfect prosperity, no threat at all; peace and prosperity... but especially the city where God and man dwell together in sweet fellowship.

Zion is mentioned plainly in verse 14:

Isaiah 60:14 The sons of your oppressors will come bowing before you; all who despise you will bow down at your feet and will call you the City of the LORD, Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

In this verse, we see the themes of military victory over enemies, peace with all former enemies, and the ownership of the Lord over the city of Zion... it is called the "City of the Lord"

Isaiah 60 speaks of the future glory of Zion as the capitol city of God's world-wide empire... an empire of redeemed sinners from every nation on earth who continually serve the God of Abraham with offerings they make themselves. This is a picture of the eternal state, of the New Heaven and the New Earth, and the New Jerusalem. As we shall see, it is no accident that the Apostle John speaks of the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21-22 in language almost exactly like Isaiah 60.

The physical restoration of Jerusalem under Ezra and Nehemiah was small and shabby, disappointing to the Jews of that day; but it was essential to God's salvation plan, for there, in that physical city, Jesus would die for the sins of mankind; and there the Holy Spirit would be poured out; and from there the church would pour forth from the upper room to begin the work of worldwide gospel advance... of missions in the name of Jesus... thus the images of sacrificial offerings from every tribe and language and people and nation would be at last fulfilled, NOT WITH ANIMALS but with hearts of worship. The glory that will come along the way, in the twenty centuries of gospel advance, where former enemies of the Jews become sons and daughters of Abraham by faith in Christ and begin to offer spiritual sacrifices to God are also in view in this chapter.

Let's unwrap this glorious chapter like a gift, line by line.

I. Zion Commanded to Arise and Be Glorious (vs. 1-2)

A. Zion Commanded to Arise and Shine (vs. 1)

Isaiah 60:1 Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.

1. God speaks with resurrection power to Zion, the city of his glory
2. The physical city of Jerusalem is the immediate context, for the Babylonians would destroy it under Nebuchadnezzar; Isaiah clearly predicted that destruction, but also here its restoration
3. This destruction was total... the temple was chopped like firewood by Babylonian soldiers with axes and a rage that soared to the skies; they stripped the gold and burned the wood
4. So also the rest of the city of Jerusalem would be razed; the walls pulled down, the city burned with fire
5. The people would mostly die by the sword, famine, and plague; a small percentage would survive with their lives, but as exiles, slaves, in chains, going to Babylon
6. The city would be desolate for seventy years, overgrown with weeds, overrun by wild animals, forsaken, but not forgotten
7. But here, Isaiah predicts the sovereign power of God in reestablishing the city of Zion... **ARISE** up out of your destruction, up out of the ashes of your destruction... for your most glorious days are yet ahead of you!!
8. So yes, the 42,000 Jews that would return under Ezra at the command of Cyrus, the Great of Persia, are in view here... but the language is far greater than anything that rebuilding effort would achieve
9. The **REAL GLORY** of Zion is in the saving work that Jesus Christ would achieve on the cross and at the empty tomb there in that city of Jerusalem... and the **REAL GLORY** of Zion would come when the elect from Jews and Gentiles alike would find salvation in Christ
10. And the **FINAL** glory of Zion will very much consist in bodily resurrection of the sons and daughters of Zion from every nation on earth. The commands **ARISE** and **SHINE** very much points to that!!

John 5:28-29 "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out-- those who have done good will rise to live

Matthew 13:43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

1 Corinthians 15:42-44 So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; ⁴³ it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; ⁴⁴ it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.

SO... ARISE and SHINE, for your glory has come and the glory of the Lord will shine forever upon you!!

B. Zion's Glory a Contrast to the Darkness of the Nations (vs. 2)

Isaiah 60:2 For behold, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you.

1. There is a clear contrast between the glory of the risen Zion and the darkness of the nations of the earth
2. The outsiders are in darkness; Zion is in glory
3. This worldwide darkness is the present darkness of Satan's kingdom; AND the future darkness of hell

Ephesians 6:12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Matthew 8:12 But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth

4. The present darkness very much consists in serving Satan and sin and idols... the present glory of Zion very much consists in serving Christ and drinking in truth from his word
5. The future darkness of the outsiders will very much consist in God's condemnation and the absence of God's light; the future glory of Zion will very much consist in God's loving glorious presence

Application: the present glory of Christ and the gospel is seen in the church on earth; it is our task to let our light in Christ shine before people

Matthew 5:14-16 "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

The more we live clearly holy, joyful, Christian lives, the more the future glory of Zion will be seen in us and people will be attracted to the light and out of Satan's present darkness

II. The Nations Drawn to the Glory of Zion, and Glorify it More (vs. 3-9)

A. The Magnetic Attraction of Zion's Glory (vs. 3)

Isaiah 60:3 And nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

1. This is the very point we were just making; as Zion shines with supernatural glory, nations are attracted to that light
2. So, the rebuilding of Jerusalem under Ezra and Nehemiah would have been clear evidence that God was at work among the Jews... when Nehemiah and the people finished rebuilding the wall in an amazing 52 days, everyone knew it was done only with the help of God
3. But the glory of the rebuilt Zion at that time was hardly what Isaiah was talking about ultimately
4. The LIGHT of ZION is Jesus Christ; and the amazing work of Christ in atoning for sins in a single day, and then his powerful resurrection from the dead is the glory of Zion... the proclamation of that message to the ends of the earth is ATTRACTIVE to elect from every nation on earth

B. Zion's Sons and Daughters Carried Home (vs. 4, 9)

Isaiah 60:4 "Lift 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 arm.

Isaiah 60:9 Surely the islands look to me; in the lead are the ships of Tarshish, bringing your sons from afar, with their silver and gold, to the honor of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendor.

1. Isaiah predicts the streaming of Jewish exiles back to the Promised Land after the exile... yes, that's true... they even came in ships from over the sea
2. But the grandeur of these verses soars far above that
3. God is speaking to Zion, the City, and saying that her sons and daughters are being carried to Zion from distant lands, from Islands, from Tarshish (Gibraltar in Spain)... these words speak of the success of the gospel, from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth
4. Jesus is gathering Zions sons and daughters from every nation on earth

John 11:51-52 Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, ⁵² and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one.

5. These verses predict the gathering of the elect from every nation on earth, and with their unique personalities and gifts they will beautify the eternal house of God

C. The Diverse Glories of the Nations Beautify God's House (vs. 5-9)

Isaiah 60:5-9 Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy; the wealth on the seas will be brought to you, to you the riches of the nations will come. ⁶ Herds of camels will cover your land, young camels of Midian and Ephah. And all from Sheba will come, bearing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the LORD. ⁷ All 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 adorn my glorious temple. ⁸ "Who are these that fly along like clouds, like doves to their nests? ⁹ Surely the islands look to me; in the lead are the ships of Tarshish, bringing your sons from afar, with their silver and gold, to the honor of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendor.

1. God is speaking to Zion here of her radiance and glory
2. Again, though we could find a small fulfillment in the restoration of Jerusalem by the treasuries of pagan kings like Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes:

Ezra 6:3-4 In the first year of King Cyrus, the king issued a decree concerning the temple of God in Jerusalem: Let the temple be rebuilt as a place to present sacrifices, and let its foundations be laid. It is to be ninety feet high and ninety feet wide, ⁴ with three courses of large stones and one of timbers. The costs are to be paid by the royal treasury.

3. Yet again, these words are so much greater than that small, unimpressive temple of Haggai... so small that the old Jews who saw it wept at how simple and small it was compared to Solomon's
4. No... the true building here is spiritual... the true sacrifices are spiritual... this is the building of the church of Jesus Christ out of living stones from every nation on earth, to offer spiritual sacrifices to God

1 Peter 2:5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

5. So these verses in Isaiah predict the amazing success of the gospel of Jesus Christ in winning a multitude from every nation on earth, even the most distant

6. The streaming of wealth carried by caravans of camels from Midian, Ephah, and Sheba refers to tribute paid to the Lord from Gentile nations... though physical wealth may be in view for a literal king sitting on a Jewish throne, yet the same language could be used to speak of the spiritual wealth of faith and love and service rendered by Christians in every Gentile nation on earth
7. Amazingly, Isaiah singles out Nebaioth and Kedar as bringing lambs for sacrifice to the God of the Jews
 - a. According to Genesis 25:13, Nebaioth was Ishmael's firstborn, and Kedar his second-born
 - b. This refers to an outcast tribe, the Ishmaelites, the sons of the slave woman Hagar, who were not to be included in the inheritance of Abraham with the true born son of Sarah, Isaac; they became the desert-dwelling ARAB peoples
 - c. But God has plans for some descendants of Ishmael... some modern-day Arabs who live in the Arabian peninsula and the horn of Africa
 - d. These are now Muslims, some of the fiercest opponents of the gospel on the earth
 - e. But God has elect in EVERY NATION, and his sovereign power will win them to Christ! And they will worship Christ for the same salvation we will enjoy in heaven!!

Application: Let us pray for the spread of the gospel among the fiercest opponents on earth... among Arab nations who follow the moon-god Allah rather than the true God who created heaven and earth. God has elect from among the Arabs and they are coming to Christ even now!

I was reading an account from a YWAM (Youth with a Mission) director who told of an ISIS jihadist who had been beheading Christians approaching one of their field workers last June

He told this YWAM leader that he had begun having dreams of this man in white who came to him and said, 'You are killing my people.' And this Muslim warrior started to feel really sick and uneasy about what he was doing. The fighter said just before he killed one Christian, the man said, 'I know you will kill me, but I want to give to you my Bible before I die.' The Christian was killed, but this ISIS fighter actually took the Bible and began to read it. In another dream Jesus commanded this man to follow him as his disciple. So he sought out the YWAM worker and is now being discipled as a follower of Christ!

Isaiah 60:7 All 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 adorn my glorious temple.

III. Zion More and More Beautiful as the Riches of the Nations Stream In (vs. 10-18)

The glory of Zion keeps increasing as the chapter unfolds. Foreigners will take an active role in the rebuilding of this eternal city, and kings will humble themselves to serve her.

As we've said, a foreshadowing of that occurred in the provision made from the coffers of the Persian kings to help Ezra rebuild the temple (Ezra 6-7) and Nehemiah to rebuild the walls (Nehemiah 2:8). But the full image here of gates constantly standing open day and night to receive the streaming of wealth from the nations far exceeds any assistance Cyrus or Artaxerxes gave to the Jews. The gates standing open continually is a picture of security at least, since the gates would be shut at night for protection from an enemy attack. But the real image here is one of overwhelming prosperity, "the wealth of nations" being brought into Zion, even with their kings led in processions. (vs. 11) The sovereign power of God makes Zion completely secure from her enemies.

More than that, since the real fulfillment of these words is in the success of the gospel in every nation on earth, it is only by the converting power of the Holy Spirit that the varied and magnificent gifts of worship will come to the spiritual altar of God through faith in Christ. The continual success of the gospel will make Zion more and more prosperous, more and more glorious. God promises that the "glory of Lebanon" will come to beautify the place of God's sanctuary. In Solomon's day, Hiram King of Tyre had his skillful woodsmen hew down the cedars of Lebanon and float them to port cities in Israel for the building of God's house (1 Kings 5:8-10). Now, God is interested in human beings – Lebanese souls, won to Christ by courageous witnesses. This will eternally beautify the heavenly Zion.

A. Nations and Kings Will Rebuild Zion (vs. 10)

Isaiah 60:10 Foreigners will rebuild your walls, and their kings will serve you.

1. So, here FIRST is the prediction of the rebuilding of the physical walls of Zion under Nehemiah; but there are spiritual walls in Christ's church built by the spread of the gospel
2. Evangelists and missionaries are building the heavenly Zion right now all over the world

B. God's Wrath Atoned For (vs. 10)

Isaiah 60:10 Though in anger I struck you, in favor I will show you compassion.

1. This worldwide building project is done by sinners saved from God's wrath
2. The Jewish nation and the City of Jerusalem was not accidentally destroyed by the Babylonians; God struck that nation and city as a direct act of his just wrath against them for their sins
3. But God then turns and shows the Jews compassion by allowing them to return and rebuild
4. So also, the nations on earth who are involved in building Christ's church are themselves sinners saved by grace
5. And the atonement for their sins was worked by Christ... in our place he took God's blows of wrath and atoned for our sins

C. Zion's Gates Eternally Open: Security and Prosperity (vs. 11, 17-18)

Isaiah 60:11 Your 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.

Isaiah 60:17-18 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. I will make peace your governor and righteousness your ruler. ¹⁸ No longer will violence be heard in your land, nor ruin or destruction within your borders, but you will call your walls Salvation and your gates Praise.

1. Here we have the clear prediction of PEACE and PROSPERITY... the gates will NEVER BE SHUT day or night
2. Honestly, this is the clearest indication we have that Isaiah 60 cannot be speaking of the post-exilic city under Ezra and Nehemiah; **Nehemiah's men built the wall with a sword in one hand and a trowel in the other...** their enemies were all around
3. That's why they needed to rebuild the **WALL!!**
4. And Nehemiah ordered the gates shut at night and guarded them!
5. And there is no time we can point to in Jewish history where they were so at peace with all nations and so prosperous that the gates could stand open continually and the wealth of all nations will stream in

6. This MUST refer to the continual success of the gospel NOW worldwide spiritually AND ALSO the future peace and prosperity of the New Jerusalem as Revelation predicts

Revelation 21:23-27 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. ²⁴ The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. ²⁵ On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. ²⁶ The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. ²⁷ Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life

7. The text also speaks of the highest quality of building materials...instead of wood, bronze; instead of stones, iron

In the end, Zion will be infinitely better than anything this earth has ever seen. Solomon's Jerusalem was stunningly beautiful, adorned with the best materials money could buy. He made golden shields to hang in the royal palace. But when his foolish son, Rehoboam, took his place, God raised up a Gentile enemy, Shishak from Egypt, who attacked Jerusalem and carried off all the treasures of the city, including the golden shields. So Rehoboam made bronze ones to replace them. (1 Kings 14:25-27) But in Isaiah 60:17, the process is infinitely and eternally reversed. Everything will be immeasurably improved in the New Jerusalem: gold instead of bronze, silver instead of iron, bronze instead of wood, iron instead of stones. In other words, words can't describe how glorious the eternal city will be. It will be characterized with perfect righteousness and peace forever – gifts of the Savior, bought with his blood. (vs. 17) And the sounds of violence and warfare will be gone forever. Instead, the walls of the city will be named "salvation," and her gates will be called "praise." (vs. 18)

D. A Warning to All Nations Who Refuse to Serve Zion (vs. 12)

Isaiah 60:12 For the nation or kingdom that will not serve you will perish; it will be utterly ruined.

1. Actually, this chapter speaks a terrifying warning to any person or nation that will not serve Zion... that will not serve Christ
2. This is very similar to the warning of Psalm 2:

Psalm 2:7-12 I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father. ⁸ Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. ⁹ You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery." ¹⁰ Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth. ¹¹ Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling. ¹² Kiss the Son, lest he be

angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

E. Zion Beloved and Served, No Longer Hated (vs. 13-16)

Isaiah 60:13-16 "The glory of Lebanon will come to you, the pine, the fir and the cypress together, to adorn the place of my sanctuary; and I will glorify the place of my feet. ¹⁴ The sons of your oppressors will come bowing before you; all who despise you will bow down at your feet and will call you the City of the LORD, Zion of the Holy One of Israel. ¹⁵ "Although you have been forsaken and hated, with no one traveling through, I will make you the everlasting pride and the joy of all generations. ¹⁶ You will drink the milk of nations and be nursed at royal breasts. Then you will know that I, the LORD, am your Savior, your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.

1. It is remarkable for Isaiah to speak of the glory of Lebanon here... for it was Hiram, King of Tyre, that floated cedars of Lebanon by rafts to the port by which they would build Solomon's temple
2. Now God is not interested in the actual trees of Lebanon, but in the Lebanese people themselves
3. The glory of Lebanon are PEOPLE who are REDEEMED by faith in Christ and who bow down in their hearts to honor Jesus
4. Former oppressors of the Jews and of Zion (God's city) will be converted and will delight in Zion's glory
5. These verses speak again of the spread of the gospel to every nation on earth, and of the eternal glory to Christ that people of various nations will bring to heaven

IV. The Eternal Glory of Zion (vs. 19-22)

A. Sun and Moon Replaced by the Glory of God (vs. 19-20)

Isaiah 60:19-20 The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you, for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. ²⁰ Your sun will never set again, and your moon will wane no more; the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of sorrow will end.

1. This is clear language of the glory of the New Jerusalem... not anything earthly that has ever been seen
2. The light of the sun and of the moon become obsolete

3. God will no longer delegate his light to created things like sun, moon, stars, and lamps

4. God's glory will directly radiate through the New Jerusalem, as we already saw

Revelation 21:23-27 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. ²⁴ The nations will walk by its light...

5. Isaiah specifically predicts the ending of all sorrow and pain...

the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of sorrow will end.

6. this is well-known to be fulfilled only in heaven, in the New Jerusalem, that Isaiah predicts here

Revelation 21:2, 4 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.... There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

B. The People of God Eternally Righteous, to the Glory of God (vs. 21-22)

Isaiah 60:21-22 Then will all your people be righteous and they will possess the land forever. They are the shoot I have planted, the work of my hands, for the display of my splendor. ²² The least of you will become a thousand, the smallest a mighty nation. I am the LORD; in its time I will do this swiftly.

V. Applications

A. Renew your HOPE by consistent visions of the HEAVENLY ZION

God means for his suffering people to renew their hope every single day with a full meditation on the present and coming glory of Zion. We should read Isaiah 60 and Revelation 21-22 again and again, and remind ourselves of how magnificent that city is now (in the heavenly realms) and will be (in the future). Only faith can see either glory, so we must be regularly in the Word, drinking in the promises of God.

B. Let your LIGHT OF HOPE shine to HOPELESS PEOPLE

As we are radiant in hope, we will be magnetically attractive to lost people who are walking in Satanic darkness (vs. 2), and who are without hope and without God in the world. (Ephesians 2:12)

C. Especially SHINE HOPE during times of SUFFERING

If we shine with hope while suffering afflictions (like disease) or persecutions or deprivations, unbelievers will be strongly motivated to ask us to give a

reason for the hope that is in us. (1 Peter 3:15) But if we grow weak in faith through neglect of the Word, we will live much the same as they do.

D. See and embrace the MISSIONARY THRUST of this chapter

We should also embrace the missionary thrust of this chapter. The wealth of the nations streaming through the gates of Zion represents the astonishing diversity of cultures worshipping Christ by faith. We should delight in that and pray and give and go for the sake of unreached people groups. We should meditate on the significance of Ishmael's sons (Kedar and Nebaioth) giving offerings acceptable to God. We should expect God to save many Arab Muslims, despite the overwhelming obstacles.

To those of you NOT YET CONVERTED, I plead with you to trust in Christ... to find the forgiveness of your sins through faith in Christ.

E. A VAST ARRAY of patterns of WORSHIP

God delights in far more forms of worship that you or I do. We should look forward to the diversity of cultures and nations and tribes worshipping in the New Jerusalem. And thank God that you, a sinner, will be there too!