

Give Him No Rest (Isaiah 62: 1–12)

By Pastor Jeff Alexander (7/14/2019)

Introduction

1. Last week, we investigated Zion's time of salvation as Jesus proclaimed "*the year of the Lord's favor*" (61:2). When Jesus read this text in the synagogue at Nazareth to introduce His ministry (Luke 4:19), He left off the last phrase of the verse, "*the day of vengeance of our God.*" Jesus would fulfill that part of His anointing when He "*treads*" them in His anger and "*tramples*" them in His wrath, for as He will say, "*the day of vengeance was in my heart*" (63:3, 4).
2. As chapter 61 begins with salvation coming to the people of God, it closes with a glorious promise in 61:11, pertaining to Zion (61:3). Zion is the whole people of God in this gospel age, the *church* of the Living God. Churches are being established (sprouting up) in all the nations and are adorned in garments of praise. The result is that the churches are called "*oaks of righteousness*" and "*the planting of the Lord.*"
3. The prophet Isaiah's response to these astounding promises must be weighed in light of the charges against the nation that introduces the book (1:4, 9, 21–23). Notice also the references to the intention of the Lord to redeem and restore the *remnant*, as we have previously observed (1:27, 28; 37:31, 32).

I. Zion and the Prophet's Burden

1. For Zion's sake—the body of Christ, the church. Let us note some additional facts.
 - a. Zion's identity (v. 1)—not the *nation* of Israel that is to be redeemed, but the *people of God* within the nation (the godly remnant) and called Zion (Malachi 3:16–18; Ephesians 2:15).

Zion is no longer identified with national Israel as the people of God with Gentile believers being a wholly separate entity. Zion is now composed of all Christ's redeemed people of faith among whom God dwells (2 Corinthians 6:16). The church is not Israel, nor does she now replace Israel. (Romans 9:8). Zion is now wholly free of any national, racial, or cultural identity since it includes all people of faith called in Jesus Christ (Revelation 5:9)
 - b. Zion's new name—new reputation (v. 2)
 - 1) Zion's new name as promised by the Lord—Isaiah turns to address Zion and, in the face of the Lord's rebuke of the nation, relates the promises that the Lord also makes (Isaiah 2:2). Why does this mountain become so attractive to the nations that they *flow* to it? It is because "*the nations shall see your righteousness, and all the kings your glory.*"
 - 2) Zion's new name as witnessed in church history—fruitfulness is promised, but, sadly, barrenness is seen as the typical reality. Isaiah's burden related to the apparent *forsaken* condition of the nation in his time and his determination to plead with the Lord to fulfill His promises to Zion: "*I will not keep silent . . . I will not be quiet, until her righteousness goes forth as bright-ness.*"
2. Zion's glorious nature and privilege (vv. 4, 5)

- a. Zion *not forsaken* by the Lord (Isaiah 49:14, 15)—as the Lord changed Jacob name to Israel, trans-forming his character to establish a new direction for his life, the nations will see this of the church.
- b. New-Covenant Zion suffering rejection (1 Peter 4:12–19)—note three things about Peter’s exhortation:
 - 1) The current opposition the church endures is to *test* them—to reveal the genuineness of their faith in order to assure them so that they may rejoice when Christ’s glory is revealed.
 - 2) The trial relates to the believers’ *identification* with Christ, being insulted for the sake of His name (reputation).
 - 3) the *day* is coming when Christ’s glory will be *revealed* (Romans 8:19). What the Lord is working behind the scenes may appear to the world as nothing worth noting (1 Corinthians 1:26–29). Let us not be mistaken. God *is* working now to fulfill all He has promised; however, it is not taking place in a way that we might expect. He is changing His people through trial and suffering to make them like Jesus (1 Corinthians 2:7–9; Psalm 16:1–3, 5–7).

II. Zion’s Preparations for Glory Revealed

The Lord’s purpose to restore Zion to the glory God promised would require her people to take responsibility through His power (61:4). This would require us to understand three things: *watchmen* whom the Lord would choose, Yahweh’s *swearing* loyalty to His covenant, and His *time* for Zion to enter the glorious gates of salvation.

1. Who are the watchmen (vv. 6, 7)? These are the God-called guardians of Zion, whose duty is unceasing vigilance to protect Zion against the enemy and to prevail for her with importunate intercession until her salvation comes, like the importunate widow (Luke 18:1–8). Prayer, earnest and importunate prayer, is God’s means to move His work on earth. Oh, let us heed the admonition, “*Take no rest, and give him no rest until he establishes Jerusalem and makes it a praise in the earth*” (see Luke 18:7, 8).
2. What is it for the Lord to *swear* by His right hand and mighty arm (vv. 8, 9)? When one swears, he affirms commitment to a covenant obligation by appealing to the witness of one greater than himself (Hebrews 6:13).
3. When will Zion’s glory appear (vv. 10–12)? What is recorded here is the call for preparation for Christ’s coming (40:3; Luke 3:4), in this case, His second coming (note Isaiah 11:12; Matthew 24:30, 31).