

Text: Isaiah 60-66

Introduction:

We come this week to the conclusion of our study of the Book of Isaiah. Isaiah began—back in chapters 1-5—with a description of how broken the world was in the time that he lived. As a general rule, people were selfish, pleasure-seeking, and completely upside-down with respect to morals and righteousness. It was bad enough that God pronounced six “woes” upon them—declaring that if they don’t get things straightened out...that He (God) would bring judgment upon them.

As we have seen throughout the rest of Isaiah—judgment is precisely what came for the people of Israel. Ultimately, God raised up the nation of Babylon to sweep into Jerusalem in 586BC and completely destroy it. The people were taken captive in exile. The city walls were leveled and abandoned. None of this happened as a simple course of human events. God orchestrated it all—showing that even though He (God) has a long fuse...there comes a time when things get so bad that He will step in and bring judgment. It’s a message we do well to listen to in our own day.

But all is far from lost. The tone of the Book of Isaiah completely changes in chapter 40—which begins with the words, “Comfort, comfort my people!” Isaiah is transported by God 150 years into the future...where he is able to look back on the judgment of God with hopeful eyes. He reveals that even though God does, indeed, bring judgment—He also brings renewal and restoration. This hope-filled message comes to a climax in the final seven chapters of the Book of Isaiah.

God reveals to us through Isaiah that there is coming a time when all things will be made right. Even though darkness will cover the earth (in the last days), the Lord will rise upon us and His glory will appear over us (Is. 60:2). There will come a time when our hearts will throb and swell with joy (Is. 60:5). Even though Israel will be a land forsaken and hated (this hatred continues to this very day—it’s called “antisemitism”), God will restore Israel with everlasting pride—and it will become “the joy of all generations” (Is. 60:15).

The Holy Spirit came upon Isaiah to proclaim good news, comfort and joy (chapter 61). There will be beauty for ashes—and the oil of joy instead of mourning. The day is coming when “the Sovereign Lord will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations” (Is. 61:11). The Lord has made a proclamation to the ends of the earth: “Say to Daughter Zion (both Israel and the Church), ‘See, your Savior comes! See, His reward is with Him.’” (Is. 62:12) We will be called “The Holy People—the Redeemed of the Lord”!

But there’s more—so much more. Not only will God redeem and reward all who are His (those who believe in Him and are His children by faith), He will also bring us safely into a new home. Our Heavenly Father will create for us a new heaven and a new earth (Is. 65:17). This world that we now call home will not even be remembered—nor will it come to mind. The sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more. God, in His glory, promises to do this for us!

Examination:

•Read Isaiah 60

- The beginning of this chapter reminds us of Genesis chapter 1. What is the condition of the world in verse 2? How does this compare with the condition of the newly created world in Genesis 1:2? What did God do with respect to this darkness in Genesis chapter 1? What does God do with respect to this darkness here in Isaiah chapter 60?
- What happens with God's "sons and daughters" in verse 4?
- Verses 11 and 12 appear to be describing the city of Jerusalem. What do these verses tell us about this "Jerusalem of the future"?
- What else does this chapter tell us about the future condition of Jerusalem (Zion)?

•Read Isaiah 61:1-3

- Who is this message intended for?
- Are there people in our world today who are brokenhearted? What does God through Isaiah have to say to them? Whose job is it to tell them?
- Verse 3 offers a very dramatic metaphor—the picture of receiving a crown of beauty instead of ashes. Do you believe that God is able to give us beauty for ashes? Have you ever seen God do this in your own life? If so, how?
- Has God ever given you the oil of joy instead of mourning? If so, how?
- Has God ever given you a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair?
- Do you need God to do these things for you today?
- What is the ultimate purpose for God doing this work of restoration in our lives? (end of v. 3)

•Read Isaiah 65:17-25

- Will God simply renovate our existing earth—or will He create an entirely new one?
- What do you think this new earth will be like? What do these verses tell us about what this new earth will be like? What are some things that exist in THIS earth (the one we currently inhabit) that you would to experience in the future earth? What things do you hope are completely done away with?

•Read Isaiah 66:1-2

- Who does God look upon with favor? Why these people? Is this true of you?

Application:

I'll leave the application up to you this week. What do you need to take from these seven chapters—and apply to your life today?