

SEPTEMBER 30

Isaiah 60-62:5

When I read these verses, I thought what it would be like if Israel today believed this stuff. They would all call on God and say, *blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord*, and the Messiah would come. And He will come someday, and they will call Him; but it will be in the darkness of the Tribulation.

As you read today remember that Israel was chosen to represent God in His plan to redeem the world. As a result, every power of hell rained upon them to stop them. Israel failed and became a visual aid of the sin of man rebelling in the presence of God's help and love. God has shown us how desperately hopeless we are without Christ and a new birth. In the Tribulation, Israel will carry God's Word to a visibly dying world and will pay a high price for that. So, we shouldn't wonder that when the Messiah comes, all nations will understand what Israel has "borne" for the world. Jerusalem will be in ruins and the throne of Jesus will be in the temple. The nations will come, and in gratitude to God and to Israel, they will help rebuild and console this battered servant/nation of God.

Isaiah 60

Vs. 1-3 This sounds like the Tribulation and the coming of the Lord. The Lord will rise upon the Jews at the beginning of the Tribulation and they will become His servant again. At the end of the Tribulation, when Jesus returns visibly and bodily to Jerusalem and ends all the fighting, all eyes will be on His people and His city.

Ironically, as darkness covers the earth, their fearless devotion to Christ will become a light of salvation for many people on the earth.

Vs. 3-7 This looks like the nations coming to Israel to beautify the temple where Jesus will have His throne.

Vs. 8-9 This looks like nations bringing wealth to honor Israel. Notice the last part of v. 9. These are the same words found in Isaiah 55:5. This verse shows the future fulfillment of the promise made in Isaiah 55:5. These will be spectacular days in the future.

Vs. 10-14 Notice that, as in all of Isaiah, the city is still a major focus of God's attention. This is the rebuilding of Jerusalem after the Tribulation. It will become the joy of the nations to rebuild Zion.

Vs. 15-16 What strikes me here is the phrase, *from age to age*. Those thousand years of the Millennium will be a long time, but then comes a new heaven, a new earth and a new Jerusalem.

Vs. 17-22 This is a grand summary of blessing on the city and on the people. Verse 19 is also described in Revelation 22:5.

Isaiah 61

Vs. 1-2 There are words similar to these a few chapters back, but this is the portion that Jesus read in Nazareth in Luke 4:17-21. He told the people as He read these words, that they were being fulfilled in their hearing. And they took offense at Him, meaning, they didn't believe that Jesus the carpenter could be this person. In fact, these people that Jesus grew up with tried to murder Him after He read this.

Jesus only read to the word *favor* in v. 2. *And the day of vengeance of our God* and what follows will be fulfilled at the end of the Tribulation when Jesus returns to rescue and restore Israel. In this one verse you see the gap of time that is now the age of harvest for the church.

It is interesting that it mentions that comfort will come to those who mourn. Choosing to mourn now shows an understanding of the dire situation the world and mankind is in. I wonder if Jesus had these verses in mind in Matthew 5:4 when He said, *Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.*

Vs. 3-9 This is what Jesus will do for His people.

Vs. 10-11 This will be Israel's praise of God.

Isaiah 62:1-5

V. 1 Zion and Jerusalem again. It seems that God is determined to keep preaching this in spite of the darkness of the times and the sin of the people, because this future glory and blessing is coming to Israel.

Vs. 2-5 The unity between Israel and God will be complete.

As disciples working in the harvest, we need to keep the vision of the end clearly before us. God is saying all of this for a reason. It is to give us hope and strength. In spite of what today looks like, we are to keep working in hope and joy because we know what the end will look like. I believe this is what made Paul able to do what He did in following Christ as a disciple in the harvest, making disciples, who make disciples.

Philippians 1:27-2:18

Philippians 1:27-30

Vs. 27-30 So why this call to unity? I think disunity and each man becoming absorbed in his own problems was the effect that the persecution was beginning to have on them. People may have been threatening them and they may have been very frightened. Some people might have wanted to draw back and give in.

Vs. 29-30 These are pretty big verses for a disciple. Staying out of conflict is not a part of our call to follow Christ. In fact, Jesus said that following Him would bring conflict. (Matt. 10:34 and Luke 12:51)

As we have just read in Isaiah, God will bring things to a glorious end. In light of that, the sufferings now are slight and momentary, and worth enduring, so that men and women can reach out to Christ while there is still time.

Philippians 2:1-18

Vs. 1-11 These are great verses. Songs have been written about these. So, I wonder how this call to unity above fits to the call of unity in vs. 1-2 and rolls into this description of Jesus.

It seems to me that the unity of the church is dependent upon a deep connection between members as they serve together. Especially in this stress the church was facing, with all sorts of fears and emotions flying around, it couldn't become "every man for himself;" but rather everyone had to bind together. But that binding had to be around the same mindset, which I think had to do with following Christ in the harvest.

Jesus Himself was the model for the disciples and is the model for all of His followers. In light of our salvation and the need of mankind to be saved, each disciple is called upon to serve one another as we serve in the harvest. *For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.* (Mark 10:45)

Vs. 12-13 This unity would take some work and be a matter of obedience. They needed to remember that God was still working, inspiring them, and using them in the harvest.

Vs. 14-18 At first, the command to *do all things* (everything) *without grumbling and disputing* seems like a general duty; but it is related to their witness in the harvest. Since the grumbling and

questioning do not have a clear object, I think it has to do with each member understanding that what was happening to them (like Job) was from God, for His purpose. Since they could never be outside of God's control, the situations they faced were sanctioned and allowed by God. If they followed Christ in love, those circumstances would put them into situations where they would be lights as they held fast *the word of life*.

Vs. 16-18 I take this to be Paul's hope as a maker of disciples that those for whom he had risked so much and for whom he had worked so hard would follow Christ in this time of stress, bear fruit, and make disciples, who make disciples.

V. 17 Paul seems to have understood that he might not be released but would be put to death. When Paul talks like this again at the end of 2 Timothy, he has no doubt.

Psalm 72

Verse 20 says this is a prayer of David. David was asking God to bless his son. With that in mind, I'm seeing David talking more about Jesus than Solomon. God did bless Solomon. But God really blessed the Son of David, God's own Son. Just for exercise in Bible study, circle each use of *may*. Also, look at what this *king* does. You can't fool me (especially after reading Isaiah), this is the Messiah.

Vs. 1-4 This is a call for God to bless the Son with righteousness and the power to deliver the needy.

Vs. 5-7 As the people fear and follow, He will be to them life and righteousness and peace.

Vs. 8-11 This is asking for God to give the Son of David dominion.

Vs. 12-14 This almost sounds like Isaiah 53:12, *Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.*

Vs. 15-17 His name will *endure forever*. How did David know?

Vs. 18-20 *Amen and Amen!*

Proverbs 24:11-12

Did you get this? This is a very strong warning, but it is nothing a disciple in the harvest needs to fear. That's why we are in the harvest and it is what the love of Christ compels us to do. We who have been saved know the peril of those who do not know Christ. Out of love, we know we have to do something, and that particular "something" is working in the harvest following our Lord. The last thing a disciple should say or feel is, "Who cares?"