

# ISAIAH

## Chapter 60

*The Future Glory of Israel*

**Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. 2 For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. 3 And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. 4 Lift up your eyes all around, and see; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be carried on the hip. 5 Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and exult, because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. 6 A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall bring good news, the praises of the LORD. 7 All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered to you; the rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you; they shall come up with acceptance on my altar, and I will beautify my beautiful house. 8 Who are these that fly like a cloud, and like doves to their windows? 9 For the coastlands shall hope for me, the ships of Tarshish first, to bring your children from afar, their silver and gold with them, for the name of the LORD your God, and for the Holy One of Israel, because he has made you beautiful. 10 Foreigners shall build up your walls, and their kings shall minister to you; for in my wrath I struck you, but in my favor I have had mercy on you. 11 Your gates shall be open continually; day and night they shall not be shut, that people may bring to you the wealth of the nations, with their kings led in procession. 12 For the nation and kingdom that will not serve you shall perish; those nations shall be utterly laid waste. 13 The glory of Lebanon shall come to you, the cypress, the plane, and the pine, to beautify the place of my sanctuary, and I will make the place of my feet glorious. 14 The sons of those who afflicted you shall come bending low to you, and all who despised you shall bow down at your feet; they shall call you the City of the LORD, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel. 15 Whereas you have been forsaken and hated, with no one passing through, I will make you majestic forever, a joy from age to age. 16 You shall suck the milk of nations; you shall nurse at the breast of kings; and you shall know that I, the LORD, am your Savior and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob. 17 Instead of bronze I will bring gold, and instead of iron I will bring silver; instead of wood, bronze, instead of stones, iron. I will make your overseers peace and your taskmasters righteousness. 18 Violence shall no more be heard in your land, devastation or destruction within your borders; you shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise. 19 The sun shall be no more your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give you light; but the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. 20 Your sun shall no more go down, nor your moon withdraw itself; for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended. 21 Your people shall all be righteous; they shall possess the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I might be glorified. 22 The least one shall become a clan, and the smallest one a mighty nation; I am the LORD; in its time I will hasten it.**

**60** The way to glory is the transfiguration of mankind's gloom into the radiance of salvation. In chs 58–59, Isaiah declared “the way of peace” (59:8) barred to all who choose to love wickedness more than they love the Redeemer. In ch 60, the road to blessed communion with the Creator is

bathed in “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2Co 4:6). This highway of lights is to emerge out of Israel’s liberation from Babylonian slavery and the rebuilding of the city of David. (TLSB)

These bright rays that emerge at the end of chapter 59 explode in radiant color in chapter 60. Isaiah had promised that all flesh will see Yahweh’s glory (40:5), and now this incarnational glory (see Jn 1:14) rises upon Zion, who is addressed as a woman throughout chapter 60. She is quite the lady to behold! In the ancient Near East the female metaphor for a city was common, probably because cities were conceptualized as nurturing birth mothers for their inhabitants. Jerusalem was depicted with maternal images earlier in, e.g., 49:17, 20–22; 51:18, 20; 54:1. That imagery is reinforced throughout chapter 60 by Yahweh addressing Zion as a woman, including language such as “your sons” and “your daughters” (60:4); throughout the chapter the pronouns translated as “you” and “your” are feminine singular. The personification of Zion as a female city brings with it great theological and rhetorical power. An early church dictum is that no one can call God “Father” unless the church is his spiritual-birth “mother.” (CC)

Chapter 59 ends with Yahweh’s promise to come in righteousness and with salvation (59:17), judge all people (59:18), arrive in Zion as her Redeemer (59:20), and establish a covenant with his people by means of the Suffering Servant (59:21). These events further unfold in Isaiah 60 as a sunburst of God’s glory expands these beautiful Gospel promises. (CC)

Zion constitutes the Suffering Servant’s “offspring” (53:10; 59:21), so it should not surprise us that this faithful remnant of believers exhibits some of the same characteristics as their Master. For example, just as the Servant is a “light to the nations” (49:6; cf. 42:6) and draws “nations” and “kings” into his reign (49:6–7; 52:15; cf. 42:4), in like manner Zion shines (60:1) and attracts “nations” and “kings” (60:3, 5, 10, 11, 16; cf. 60:12). Zion’s people are “righteous” (60:21), for the “righteous” Servant “will justify” them (53:11; cf. 54:17). The new Zion in chapter 60, then, is composed of a faithful remnant, whose lives are forever bound to the Servant (57:1–2). (CC)

**60:1-6** The metaphors of our Old Testament lesson are startling, considering the context in which Isaiah wrote. Darkness and despair were realities for Isaiah and his people, and images of light, glory, and joy would stand in sharp contrast to the historical circumstances of the people. Isaiah’s words pointed to more than the physical restoration of Jerusalem, for included here is the eschatological redemption effected by God’s Messiah. W. Roehrs states in the *Concordia Self-Study Commentary*: (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

In ch. 60 the road out of estrangement with the Creator to blessed communion with Him is bathed in “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” (2 Co 4:6) . . . This highway of light is to emerge, after a brief detour, out of Israel’s liberation from Babylonian slavery and the rebuilding of the city of David. At the same time these events, real and needed though they were to be, serve Isaiah like a prism in which the rays of divine glory are refracted into the iridescent splendor of the Messianic kingdom to be revealed *in its time*. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

Is 60:1–6 evenly divides into two sections introduced by imperatives: vv 1–3 are introduced by *kumi orie*, “arise, shine,” and vv 4–6 by *swai . . . uraie* “lift up . . . and see.” The first section speaks of the epiphany of God’s glory, and the second of the Israelites and Gentiles coming to see this glory in Jerusalem. Both illuminate the theme “God Shines through His People.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

**60:1-3** Through the Redeemer, the people are brought out of the darkness of their sins (cf 59:9–10) and into the light of God’s salvation. Cf 2:5; 60:5, 10, 12; Lk 1:78–79; 2:32; Jn 1:14; 17:4, 22; Rm 8:17; 1Pt 4:13–14. (TLSB)

**60:1–2** *glory*.† Probably an allusion to the pillar of cloud, but announcing a new manifestation of God’s redeeming glory. (CSB)

**60:1** *arise, shine* – Arise is koom and means to rouse or stand up. Shine is ore and means to cause lamination or be like the break of a day. Both of these call God’s people to attention. They have been enslaved in the darkness that is all around them. God is getting them ready to hear some really great news.

The imagery of light and darkness in the first section of today’s Old Testament lesson is striking. The imperatives “arise” and “shine” presuppose the coming of the light that pierces the thick darkness covering the earth. This is the light of the Christmas gospel: “In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it” (John 1:4–5). John also records Jesus’ saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

The prophet rouses Israel from the dark night of sin and captivity. God’s creative Word enlightens them like a match lighting a candle. (TLSB)

The imperative “shine” (שִׁיר, Is 60:1) constitutes a promise. It “is not a mere admonition, but a word of power which puts new life into her [Zion’s] limbs.” Yahweh’s command is an efficacious Word that accomplishes what it says (Gen 1:3). This analysis is assisted by the field of “pragmatics,”<sup>57</sup> which deals with “the **function** of a discourse as a whole—that finally **a speaker/writer wants actually to accomplish things with words.**” In Is 60:1 the call is not just mere talk *about something*. It *makes something happen*, for the Word empowers what it says (Is 55:10–11). “The command to arise is accompanied by the strength to fulfill the order.” (CC)

The people appear to be lying in the dust and in the darkness. They are by nature like all other people of the earth. They are troubled and despondent. But something spectacular has happened. Their light has come; the glory of the Lord rises upon them. (PBC)

This is a symbol of gloom and sin. – Imagine the whole earth wrapped in total darkness. Imagine Zion, the OT church, also as being overcome by this darkness of hopelessness. Then of a sudden to her, and her only, the glory of the Lord flares up. It is as though the day had dawned with the abrupt rising characteristic of the Oriental sun. This sun is God’s heavenly glory, this glory of which Isaiah speaks so frequently (6:3; 24:23; 40:5; 58:8), this glory which some have called the central theme of the chapter. The vision goes on to show that the rest of the world is still shrouded in darkness. (Leupold)

This is our plague and wretchedness, that we are unable to recognize the exceeding greatness of the treasure because of its lowly appearance. Even though it hears this treasure, our foolish reason judges it on the basis of its lowly appearance. The Gospel, however, is such a treasure that is lowly in appearance and can be perceived only through the Holy Spirit. Reason cannot recognize it but thinks that the prophet speaking of such lofty matters is out of his mind. The Gospel is the Word of life and salvation, and it offers everything. (Luther)

*light*. Here the Lord himself is viewed as the light (see vv. 19–20). (CSB)

Light in the darkness takes us back to Yahweh's ninth plague in Egypt. When Moses stretched out his hand, the darkness became so thick it was palpable (Ex 10:21). The Egyptians "could not see one another, nor could anyone arise from his place for three days" (Ex 10:23a). The miracle was that "all the people of Israel had light where they lived" (Ex 10:23b). This glorious light followed God's people in the wilderness (e.g., Ex 14:19–20) as Yahweh radiated his "glory" (Ex 16:10; 24:16–17), which then flooded the tabernacle (Ex 40:34–35) and later the temple (1 Ki 8:10–11 || 2 Chr 5:13–14). Now that same light will hover over God's city (Is 60:1; cf. 4:5). "Yahweh, I love the habitation of your house and the place of the dwelling of your glory" (Ps 26:8). (CC)

Jesus is the Light of the world, who took on flesh so that he might take you into his arms, heal your hurts, forgive your filth, and destroy your darkness. The Son of God became a human being, not to demonstrate the innocence of infancy, but to live the life we could not and to die our death so we need not. Here is dazzling light, brilliant light, and eternal light. No wonder the Nicene Creed confesses that Jesus is "God of God, Light of Light." (CC)

But would Christ's betrayal on Good Friday, his shed blood, and his hasty burial extinguish this light? Not on your life! "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (Jn 1:5). And there is more light to come! When Christ returns, he promises to take us to the new Jerusalem, where "night will not exist anymore, and they will not have need of the light of lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will shine light upon them" (Rev 22:5; cf. Is 60:19–20). The day is coming when we will fully share in God's glory (Rom 8:17). (CC)

Yet too often we close our eyes to it! Why? "This is the verdict: light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness instead of the light because their works were evil" (Jn 3:19). Far too often we love the darkness of self-centered narcissism, prefer to live in the shadows of lies and half-truths, and long for more of the filth that feeds our flesh. The prince of darkness preys on our feeble discipleship, our failed relationships, and our fatal attractions. (CC)

But divine light still befriends and beckons. It can never be eclipsed! God still delivers his people from the dominion of darkness and transfers us into the kingdom of his beloved Son (Col 1:13). Because the baptized have "the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col 1:12), they radiate God's glory, as did Moses (Ex 34:29; 2 Cor 3:12–18). The church is the light of the world, so we must let this light shine (Mt 5:14, 16). And when our evening comes, the Lord abides with us, so that the night of death will yield to the dawn of an eternal Easter. (CC)

Matthew and Luke tie together today's two themes of light and glory. Matthew quotes Isaiah who says about Galilee of the Gentiles, "the people living in darkness have seen a great light" (Is 9:1–2; Matt 4:15–16). Blessed Simeon declares the baby Jesus in his arms to be "a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel" (Luke 2:32). Isaiah's prophecy of light and glory is illuminated by its New Testament fulfillment, and the preacher's conceptual matrix of light and darkness should include the New Testament to highlight the prophecy and fulfillment motif. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

This light is manifested in the church through the preaching of Christ and his salvation. This brings us to Is 60:4–6, the second section of our lesson. All nations will come to see God's glory in Jerusalem. Since the epiphany of God's light and glory are now manifest in Christ, Jerusalem is invited, "lift up your eyes and look about you" (Is 60:4) to see how this light and glory are a magnet for Israelites and Gentiles who stream into the holy city to see God's salvation in the Christ child. The prophecies from Isaiah 40 quoted by John the Baptist are coming true: "Every

valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low” so that no obstacles remain for “all mankind [to] see God’s salvation” (Luke 3:5–6). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

Light is always associated with God.

*Your light* is the light promised you in Abraham and now set forth. This is the Gospel which sets you free from death and sin. *Your light*. These are very intense words. This light, I say, is not only in your midst but also in the midst of others. With these words it arouses the weak and the believers not to be offended by the persecution of the many and the small number of the believers. In spite of everything, he says that this is a light. This is what Paul labored to do, to urge the Word alone, in order that the people might hold on to it. Thus to the Thessalonians he says that they should hold fast the Word of life as lights in a perverse generation (cf. Phil. 2:16, 15). (Luther)

*glory of the Lord* – *Glory* means the same as *light*. He uses the metaphor of the sun, which rises over the earth. So the brightness of the Gospel and its divine light rise by means of preaching and trumpeting. *Glory* in Hebrew denotes the glorious thing itself, as in Matt. 6:29, “Solomon in all his glory.” So in Proverbs (26:1), “Honor is not fitting for a fool,” that is, things, abilities, riches. Thus here and there in the Scriptures glory is an eternal matter and an incomprehensible treasure. Thus the Gospel and the glow of God are themselves things which are brought by God. Summary: Believe while you have the light, and make use of it in an accepted time. The exhortation is that we diligently learn and study the Word and grow in its understanding, so that we may be filled with the light of this glow. Those who regard this light as a treasure hold all glow of the flesh to be nothing. This is what we see in the martyrs. By comparison with the Word they spurned all things. Therefore he admonishes us not to pass this preaching by in vain, for in it there is announced the opening of heaven, the closing of hell, and the destruction of death. In this way he wants us to hold fast to the Word. (Luther)

Cf 4:5; 9:2; 24:23; 30:26; 40:9–11; 46:13; 49:14–21; 51:3; 52:7–10; 54:11–17 for flashes of its light. (TLSB)

God’s glory comes. Freely, it comes. Apart from anything we do or say, it still comes to us in Jesus Christ! We are called to faithfulness, not so that kingdom glory will come, but because its advent is imminent (cf. Is 56:1). Divine light cannot be humanly generated. We can only arise and shine because our Light has already come (Jn 1:4–9; 1 Jn 2:8) and is coming again (Rev 1:4–7, 14–16). Luke writes: “An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them” (Lk 2:9). Simeon celebrates: “A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel” (Lk 2:32). The Magi marvel: “We have seen his star in the east and have come to worship him” (Mt 2:2). What a light show! Majesty arrived in the midst of the mundane. The most holy God (Is 6:3) appeared in the flesh (1 Tim 3:16) in the presence of cattle manure. Divinity entered the world on the floor of a stable, through the womb of a (teenage) virgin, and in the presence of a lowly carpenter. (CC)

**60:2** *darkness*. A symbol of gloom, oppression and sin (see 8:22; 9:2; 59:9). (CSB)

The prophet expands on Is 60:1 by indicating that the darkness not only shrouds Zion, but the whole earth as well (cf. Is 25:7–8; Rom 3:10–12). “Darkness covers the earth” (Is 60:2) alludes to Gen 1:2. Just as Yahweh said, “Let there be light” (Gen 1:3) in the first creation, so he will do it again to bring about his new creation. Is 60:1–2, then, should be interpreted against the background of Gen 1:1–4. Salvation comes in the form of a new creation (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15)

that is a recapitulation (Eph 1:10) of the first, a point St. Paul picks up. Because God speaks “light” into our hearts we bask “in the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor 4:6). (CC)

By comparison with the evil, the prophet wants to commend to us the inestimable glory which we have, as if to say, “The others who do not believe are simply condemned.” See what kind of people they are. *Darkness* means all the most imposing and impressive laws of Moses, civil laws, statutes, and regulations. However good these are, they do not illumine consciences. The Gospel reproves them all as being unable to bring glow and a good conscience. As the sun brings light and useful function to all things, so the Gospel gives strength to all others. Meanwhile, however, the Gospel appears to be the worst and the most poisonous teaching. To the believer it is life, salvation, and God. To the ungodly it is death and darkness. Meanwhile they have their own idea of the light, but their light will be excrement and a detriment conducive to all evil. (Luther)

*glory* – This isto remind them of when he led them out of Egypt and in the desert by pillars of fire and smoke.

John 17 is also chock-full of “glory” language. The Father and the Son have always shared the same glory, even before the creation of the world (Jn 17:5). Their relationship is one of reciprocal glorification (Jn 17:1). Jesus glorifies the Father by completing the mission assigned to him (Jn 17:4), and the Father in turn glorifies his Son by manifestly restoring to him his eternal glory (Jn 17:1). Jesus is also glorified in his disciples (Jn 17:10), and this is demonstrated by a life of unity (Jn 17:22–23). The goal of his prayer is to bring all of his disciples to be with him and see his glory (Jn 17:24). (CC)

Here he says that it is not only a light, but he calls it the Lord Himself. All verbs must be construed in the indicative. *His glory appears*. He is hinting at the text where the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud and in fire. Here, however, there is another glory and light, since *the Lord arises*. Not Caesar, not Moses, arises, but the Lord Himself. He is Himself your light and your salvation. These are precious words, but they cannot be grasped by the flesh. Who can define and grasp this, that the Lord is a lamp and a light and that His glory, risen upon us, illuminates us and gives us life? (Luther)

**60:3** *Nations shall come*. This theme was first mentioned in 2:2–4. (CSB)

Although God shows judgment through darkness upon the nations, Israel will bask in light that graciously draws the nations. (TLSB)

This verse summarizes the gift of Yahweh’s glorious presence envisioned in 60:1–2. Zion, raised from the ashes, will attract many to Yahweh her God. People will come, bearing their gifts, to the only bright spot on the horizon. Those who once worshiped “the creature rather than the Creator” (Rom 1:25) and were lost in the dark (cf. 1 Thess 5:5) will walk in the light of the new day. Just as Yahweh dispersed the nations in Genesis 11, now he guides them back to Zion. (CC)

Throughout the book of Isaiah, Yahweh’s plan for his people always entails the ingathering of the nations (e.g., 2:1–5). In 19:25 he goes so far as to include Assyria and Egypt alongside Israel as “my people.” Shocking indeed! Though some OT texts describe Israel’s testimony as a magnet for Gentiles (e.g., Deut 4:5–8; Josh 2:10; 2 Ki 5:1–14), more often than not, God’s people fail in their calling. So why do nations come fawningly to Zion in Is 60:3? Certainly not because of

Israel's own righteousness (64:6) or the nation's stellar history with Yahweh (e.g., 57:3–13a). Rather, they come because of the Light, the Lord Yahweh himself (60:19, 20). (CC)

Even kings will make the journey to Zion (60:3; cf. 49:7) and, along with the nations, will embrace the Suffering Servant (52:15; cf. 56:1–8). What the Magi experienced at the birth of Jesus on an individual scale (Mt 2:1–12), Isaiah envisions as a universal truth. Yet Is 60:12 strikes this cautionary note: “for the nation and kingdom that will not serve you will perish, and the nations [that will not serve you] will surely be laid waste.” (CC)

In like manner, Ps 87:4–6 envisions Zion's global attraction; the city is the birth mother, so even converts among the nations will fit the description “this one was born there/in her [Zion].” The psalm does not announce the salvation *of* Zion but the salvation of the nations *through* Zion. The title “mother” is elaborated by Paul in Gal 4:26, where he follows LXX Ps 87:5 (cf. Is 54:1) to announce that Gentile Christians need no circumcision to have an equal standing in the church. Just as Zion in Psalm 87 is the mother of the nations, so the “Jerusalem that is above,” that is, the Christian church, is also the mother of all who believe (Gal 4:26). Through her Word and Sacraments we are born again (e.g., Jn 3:5–8; Titus 3:5–7). And so after hearing Peter relate what God did through him for Cornelius and this Roman's household, the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem “glorified God, saying, ‘Therefore even to the Gentiles God has given repentance unto life’ ” (Acts 11:18; cf. Rom 4:16–17). (CC)

This influx of all nations to Jerusalem causes it to shake and tremble with delight, fear, and awe. What marvelous metaphors Isaiah uses to express the joy of the moment: “Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy” (Is 60:5). It is impossible to fully appreciate the events of Christmas and Epiphany without understanding the prophecies of Isaiah! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

The Gospel and Epistle lessons portray the salvation of the Gentiles. How surprising that the Magi, Gentiles from the East, are the first to worship the Christ child. The verb *proskuneō*, “to worship,” is used three times in Matthew 2:2, 8, and 11. It is a word for worship of the one true God, emphasizing both the deity of Jesus and the faith of the Magi. Matthew had already suggested that Gentiles are part of the kingdom in his record of Christ's genealogy (Ruth and Rahab), and he concludes his gospel with the great commission to all nations. In the Epistle, the Gentile mission is given ardent support by the evangelist to the Gentiles. The mystery is now revealed—all people, Jew and Gentile equally, are declared righteous through the blood of Jesus Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

He simply cannot get away from the light. He is clearly repealing all of Moses and enlarging the church beyond the limit of the synagogue and extending it to the Gentiles, since the light and the glory will be spread and poured out. There will be no law to oppress the people. (Luther)

*light*. The Messiah was born a Jew, but the light of God's grace attracts the attention of all nations. Even kings will come to the brightness of God's grace in the Messiah. The entire chapter draws a vivid picture of the NT church. (PBC)

That light and glow is multiplied for the nations, that is, the Gospel will be a proclamation to illuminate the whole world. This text does not persuade us that we have this light, since it says *the nations shall come*, although it is a light not of the Gentiles but of the Jews. *And kings to the brightness of your rising*, that is, all walk in the very brightness of the Gospel. Light, brightness, rays, these are the greatest names of the Gospel. The first designation of dignity is light. (Luther)

**6:4-9** Not only do the people of the Lord return, but the wealth of nations is also brought to the people of God. (TLSB)

**60:4†** The first two lines are almost identical to the beginning of 49:18, the last two to the end of 49:22 (see note there). The setting there was the return from exile, but it is also the promise of greater things to come. (CSB)

The remnant comes home, perhaps carried by the nations. (TLSB)

*lift up your eyes* - nawsaw – To magnify or move to a higher level.

*All around and see* – rawaw – To look in a discerning and intensive way or even stare.

*afar*. Zion will go from rags to divine riches and then draw both peoples and their wealth to her splendor. The city, depicted as a bereaved wife and mother (e.g., 50:1–2; 54:1–6), thought that her loss was forever. But Yahweh says, “Think again!” The same movement from despair to hope is in Jer 31:15–17. (CC)

Citing Is 49:18a, Isaiah highlights the motif of children returning to Zion. In fact, much of 49:14–26 provides the background for Isaiah 60 as it amplifies Yahweh’s promises and expands them. Neither distance (“from afar”) nor weakness (“nursed”) are obstacles for Yahweh (60:4). (CC)

This pilgrimage movement is a leading feature in the book of Isaiah and takes its key from the programmatic ideas expressed in 2:1–5. The journey follows this order in 60:4–9. First, scattered faithful Israelites come home; then converted Gentile nations such as Midian, Ephah, Sheba, Kedar, Nebaioth, and Tarshish arrive in Zion. These people groups appear either in the Table of Nations (Genesis 10) or in the listing of Abraham’s descendants (Gen 25:1–18) or both. Isaiah envisions, then, the scattering from the tower of Babel being undone (cf. Gen 11:1–9), giving us a preview of Pentecost, when “devout men from every nation under heaven” (Acts 2:5) came to Jerusalem, and those who believed and were baptized embraced salvation in Jesus. (CC)

Yahweh’s pledges to repopulate the promised land are scattered throughout the book of Isaiah (e.g., 11:11; 43:5–7; 45:17; 49:12, 18, 22; 54:7). Like 60:4, 14:1–2 states that Gentiles will assist Israelites in their homecoming to Zion. In a great reversal, the nations who carried off Zion’s children (e.g., 2 Kings 17 and 25) will now bring them home (Is 60:4, 9). Many will come from the east and the west to sit with Abraham at the kingdom’s feast, with Jesus as the host (Mt 8:11). (CC)

First they congregate in groups preparatory for setting out to Zion and its holy hill. Among those that come, some are already discernible that are especially dear to her – “your sons and daughters.” The little ones among her daughters that cannot travel far are being “carried on the arm.” Literally on the hip which was a typical Oriental mode of carrying children. (Leupold)

He teaches how this light is to be promoted. It is not only for Judea, but he says *Lift up your eyes round about*. The whole circuit and all the nations will come to you and walk. It is impossible for all to gather together physically, but the Gospel will be published in the whole earth, and the nations who were the greatest enemies of the Jews and the seed of Abraham will be the best friends. *They all gather together, they come to you. Your sons*. Here he is obviously speaking of



the church as being established within the limits of Jerusalem and Judea. He is not suggesting that only the Jews are sons, but also the Gentiles. (Luther)

**60:5** *be radiant* – God will shine through his people. We are to be a witness to all around us.

This will be your comfort when you see such great progress of the Gospel. *You shall see*, “your eyes will get their fill.” *You shall be radiant*, that is, “you will break forth and be joyful.” Here you know that nothing is more joyful for a Christian than to hear that many will be God’s disciples. So Paul says to the Thessalonians, “You are our glory, crown, and joy” (cf. 1 Thess. 2:19 f.). So, on the contrary, Paul says that his supreme and great sadness is apostasy. Thus the prophet here depicts their joy when they see the multitude coming toward them. (Luther)

*your heart shall thrill and exult* – Her “heart” here the center of emotion, is filled with the awesomeness of the experience and “swells with joy.” (Leupold)

*abundance on the seas.* † Jerusalem will be enriched by the nations (see v. 11; 61:6; 66:12, looking forward to the influx of Gentiles into the church. See Rev 21:26 (the New Jerusalem. (CSB)

A list of resources that Gentiles will bring to Zion is as follows: (1) wealth in terms of “the abundance of the sea” (60:5, הַמַּיִם הַרְבִּיּוֹת), “the wealth of the nations” (60:5, הַגִּזְיִם), “vast numbers of camels” (60:6, אֲשֶׁר עֲלֵי גַמְלִים), and “the milk of the nations” (60:16, חֵלֶב גִּזְיִם); (2) valuable materials such as “gold” (17, 9, 60:6, זָהָב), “silver” (17, 60:9, כֶּסֶף), “bronze” (60:17, נְחָשֶׁת), “iron” (60:17, בַּרְזֶל), “juniper” (60:13, בְּרוֹשׁ), “maple” (60:13, תְּדֵהָר), “cypress” (60:13, תְּאֵשׁוֹר), and “incense” (60:6, לְבוֹנָה); and (3) animals that include “young camels from Midian and Ephah” (60:6, בְּבָרִי מִדְיָן וְעֵיפָה), “the small livestock of Kedar” (60:7, צֹאן קֶדָר), and “the rams of Nebaioth” (60:7, אֵילֵי נְבַיּוֹת). Yet doesn’t this reduce Isaiah’s message to crass materialism? No, because those bearing treasure also declare Yahweh’s praises (60:6), offer sacrifices on his altar (60:7), and use the timbers from Lebanon in Yahweh’s temple (60:13).

The gifts will be transported by all means imaginable, including camels and ships. And though the offerings are varied, as are the people who bring them and their means of delivery, it is clear that everything is intended for one purpose. It is all “for the name of Yahweh your God” (60:9) and portends Jerusalem’s final eschatological glorification (Rev 21:24–26), which brings Zion unspeakable joy (Heb 12:22; 1 Pet 1:8). (CC)

Neighboring nations would bring their wealth to Jerusalem. The Gentiles will enrich the New Jerusalem, the New Testament Church. – This wealth of commerce which goes largely by sea. (Leupold)

That is, of the earth, the islands, the inhabitants along the sea. He is thinking especially of our sea, the Mediterranean, and the people living on the islands and coastlands. *The wealth of the nations*, that is, the power of the Gentiles, the nation’s strength, the power of money. This is the understanding of *abundance* at this place. Here the prophet described the people living toward the sea, the west. Now he turns toward the east. (Luther)

*wealth of the nations* – This includes all the things that the Gentile call precious. They are bringing their best as tribute to Zion. (Leupold)

**60:6** *multitude of camels shall cover you.* † As caravans bringing goods. (CSB)

Isaiah shifts from discussing sea trade from Tyre and Sidon in the northwest (60:5) to the Arabian caravan clientele from the south. These nations bring more than their gifts; having been converted to Yahweh, even their animals join Israel in signaling the good news. And why should this surprise us? Yahweh's first expressed covenant is with Noah and affects all subsequent humanity, even every living thing (Gen 9:8–12). Equally surprising texts include an ass more attuned to Yahweh's Word than the prophet-for-hire Balaam (Num 22:22–33), birds that serve as divine messengers (Gen 8:8–12; 1 Ki 17:6), and lions that obey the heavenly messenger (Daniel 6). Why, even the animals in Nineveh participated in the citywide fast and wearing of sackcloth (Jonah 3:6–9). God's care for his creation is poignantly expressed in the last words of that book: Yahweh asks whether he should not have pity on the city's human population "and [its] many animals" (וַיִּבְרַחֲמָהּ רַבָּהּ) (Jonah 4:11). Ps 36:7 (ET 36:6) makes this abundantly clear: "Yahweh saves mankind and animals" (אֶדְרָם־וַיִּבְרַחֲמָהּ תּוֹלְעֵי־הַתְּהוֹמָה); cf. Pss 136:25; 147:9; Mt 6:26; 10:29; Lk 12:6). (CC)

Zion's attention is drawn to areas that lie to the east of her. That being mostly desert land, caravans have come from there, throngs of them. (Leupold)

Here he listed the names of the nations. *Midian* is near the Red Sea. *Ephah* are the people who were brought by Abraham into Arabia, as Genesis reports. This is what he calls the *multitude of camels*, that is, a vast number like a flood. Not that the camels will come to Jerusalem, but these people will join the church. (Luther)

*Midian*. Abraham's son through Keturah (Ge 25:2). The Midianites roamed the deserts of Transjordan. (CSB)

Previous threat to Israel (Jgs 6:1–6), but now these animals employed in warfare are brought under Israel's domain. (TLSB)

These were camel-Bedouins who had originally loved mostly to the east of the Gulf of Aqaba. (Leupold)

Previous threat to Israel (Judges 6:1-6), but now these animals employed in warfare are brought under Israel's domain. (TLSB)

These nations have ancestral ties with Israel (Gn 25:1–4). (TLSB)

*Ephah*. A son of Midian (Ge 25:4). (CSB)

*Sheba*. A wealthy land in southern Arabia, perhaps roughly equal to modern Yemen (see Ge 25:3; 1Ki 10:1–2). (CSB)

שָׁבָא, written with ש, is Arabia. Seba is a walled town. Because the Gospel is richly and widely published in the world, it is certain that many will be converted. All will have the Gospel, even though not all believe. (Luther)

This land was famous for its gold. (Leupold)

*gold and frankincense*. The queen of Sheba brought gold and spices to Solomon (1Ki 10:2). Jer 6:20 mentions the incense of Sheba. Cf. Ps 72:10; Mt 2:11. (CSB)

Some apply this to the Magi (Matt. 2:11). I am well satisfied with that application. The proper meaning is that these people revere God and the Gospel with the same zeal and wealth with which they do homage to other kings. Now that the Gospel has arisen, they do homage to the Gospel with every kind of wealth. This happens in our case when we receive the glory of the Lord and for its sake are ready to give up body and life, our money, etc. (Luther)

*the praises of the Lord.* Cf. the queen's words in 1Ki 10:9. (CSB)

All of these people who have gathered in this large company and they have all come to know the God of Israel and the knowledge of Him has made them glad. (Leupold)

**60:7** *flocks of Kedar.* This is a metaphor. *Kedar* has an abundance of flocks, as Sheba serves the Gospel with gold, that is, all will believe, and they will also give thanks to God with sacrifices. (Luther)

*rams ... on My altar.* Worship is expressed in terms of sacrifices, required by the Law of Moses but fulfilled in the new covenant. (TLSB)

*Nebaioth.* The firstborn son of Ishmael (Ge 25:13). The name is probably preserved in that of the later Nabatean kingdom. (CSB)

*acceptance on my altar.* That is, "I want to build My house larger than the house of Solomon." This is most scandalous and absurd, that all these sacrifices should be brought to Jerusalem. The city would be too small. Therefore He is speaking of the new Jerusalem. This is the sacrifice, when we are offered as a sweet-smelling sacrifice through the ministry of the Word and of the apostles. The sacrificers are the preachers themselves, who offer and sacrifice us to God. This is the sacrifice of the Gospel. (Luther)

**60:8** *clouds...doves* – Moving majestically toward Zion with rich cargoes of silver and gold, the ships of Tarshish look "like clouds, like doves." Believers bring all these lavish offerings out of gratitude for the deliverance of God's grace. (PBC)

**60:9** *coastlands shall hope for me.* Among the Gentiles there is a thirst and desire for the Gospel. (Luther)

*ships of Tarshish.* We generally take *Tarshish* to refer to the ocean, just as it is now labeled with the general word "standing water." But the great seas are called Tarshish, as the Red Sea, the Sea of Gennesaret, etc. The Mediterranean, however, is called standing water. (Luther)

*silver and gold.* Ships of Tarshish had brought these to Solomon every three years (1Ki 10:22). (CSB)

These huge vessels bring a double cargo – precious metals and a human cargo, scattered "sons" from far countries, children once dragged into captivity by some now unknown foe. (Leupold)

*has made you beautiful.* Zion grows attractive to all. (TLSB)

**60:10–14** More than just rebuilding the walls of the city (Ne 2:8), the city and kingdom will be open in safety (Rv 21:25) to receive the wealth of the nations. (TLSB)

**60:10** *Foreigners ... kings.* See vv. 12, 14; 49:7, 23; 61:5. (CSB)

*shall build up your walls.* † In 445 B.C. King Artaxerxes issued the decree allowing Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (Ne 2:8). It was part of God's plan to build the church through Gentile believers (Ac 15:14–16). (CSB)

*for in my wrath I struck you.* God's anger briefly used the foreign nations as His agents of wrath, but His mercy will employ those nations again to rebuild Israel. (TLSB)

**60:11** *gates be open continually.* As are the gates of the new Jerusalem (Rev 21:25). (CSB)

Demonstration of God's complete protection. Though Jerusalem did not deserve to be rebuilt, God had mercy on the penitent people. At God's direction, foreigners such as Cyrus, the Persian king, contributed to its rehabilitation. These mighty acts of God furnish the prophetic design of a spiritual Jerusalem. Anyone who wants to share in the priceless peace may enter (Is 60:10–18). (TLSB)

This is a new kind of life and government, where there is such security that no one's tyranny is feared. The gate is open so that daily more Gentiles go in and out and are converted and the walls are defended. (Luther)

Revelation 21:25-27, “<sup>25</sup>On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. <sup>26</sup>The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. <sup>27</sup>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.”

*wealth.* See v. 5. (CSB)

That is, the abundance and multitude of the nations, the strength of the people will accrue to it. This is what we are experiencing today, that many princes are consenting to our little Gospel, and even more areas and cities than we would have hoped. (Luther)

**60:12** *nation ... will perish.* † Not to be understood as requiring political subjection to Israel, but a willing spiritual submission to the Savior who would be born of a Jewish maiden. (CSB)

**60:13** *glory of Lebanon.* † Its magnificent cedar trees, which were used in the construction of Solomon's temple, along with pine trees (1Ki 5:10, 18). The glory of Solomon's era exemplifies the splendor and light to cover the earth in the Messianic age. (CSB)

*pine ... plane ... cypress.* Perhaps the trees would be ornamental rather than building material. (CSB)

*place of my feet.* † The temple, and especially the ark of the covenant, God's “footstool.” See Ps 99:5; 132:7. (CSB)

Royal language to declare that the temple is His palace and that He is the true King of Israel. (TLSB)

**60:14** *sons of those who afflicted you ... bending low.* Even the sons of former enemies will know Zion's name and not begrudge calling it the city of the Holy One. God's righteousness and convincing power are both evident. (TLSB)

*the City of the LORD.* Cf. the names for the future Jerusalem in 1:26; 62:4; Eze 48:35; Zec 8:3; Heb 12:22. (CSB)

**60:15–22** These promises build on 43:18, where Israel is called to forget the past. (TLSB)

**60:15** *forsaken and hated.* Here you see the prophet confessing that in the time when he labored in the ministry of the Word the church was called forsaken and hated. Nothing is more hateful and נִסְיָאָה than the name of true Christians. (Luther)

*make you majestic forever, a joy from age to age.* I will put you on such a high place that you shall shine forth forever. You see the church struggling and crushed but not destroyed. By its very humiliation it is prepared for eternal glow, and it rules in the midst of the enemies. This is what this means: “I will make you a triumphal procession and eternal victory.” (Luther)

**60:16** *nurse at the breasts of kings.*† The new spiritual Jerusalem will receive the very best nourishment, the “riches of the nations” (v. 5). (CSB)

The affluence of the nations (Dt 33:19) will nourish and sustain the worshipers in God’s beautiful house (Is 60:6–7). (TLSB)

*the Mighty One of Jacob.* The names here given to the Lord seem to stand in a sort of climax. (TLSB)

**60:17** *gold ... silver.*† As in Solomon’s day precious metals like gold and silver were plentiful (1Ki 10:21, 27), so the future Jerusalem will have the most valuable spiritual blessings. Cf. 9:10. (CSB)

Costly metals will replace lesser ones. (TLSB)

*overseers ... taskmasters.* Peace and righteousness will replace oppression and violence. (TLSB)

*peace ... righteousness.*† Both are present in the rule of the Messianic king in 9:7. (CSB)

**60:18** *violence no more.* Cf. 54:14. (CSB)

*walls Salvation.* That is, in the church there will be nothing else, there will be this sacrifice, there will be the voice of praise, so that we may be secure from ambush and deceit and evil preachers, because the Word of God will keep us from falling into injury and rebellion against God and men. Therefore our walls are salvation, victory, and triumph, and nothing will be heard in the gates of the church but praise. The church will be secure and happy and full of praises. Praise, glow, and thanksgiving in Scripture are nothing else than the preaching of the Word. The Gospel attributes nothing of glory, praise, thanksgiving, and sacrifice to human powers but preaches and extols the divine grace alone. (Luther)

**60:19–20** Cf. Rv 22:5, where the light comes from the Father and the Lamb. In Is, the end of sorrow is a theme concerning the redemption of God’s people (25:8; 35:10; 51:11; 65:19). Jerusalem rebuilt after the Babylonian exile was a significant milestone on God’s way to shed the light of His glory. But even when all earthly cities pass away, He will be the everlasting light in “the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven” (Rv 21:2). Its residents will swell to a multitude, “numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands” (Rv 5:11). (TLSB)

**60:19** *sun ... moon.* According to Rev 21:23; 22:5 their light will no longer be needed in the new Jerusalem, since God and the Lamb will be the “everlasting light.” (CSB)

**60:20** *sun shall no more go down.* There will be no night there (cf. Rev 22:5) but only the light of joy and salvation. (CSB)

Revelation 21:23, “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.”

Revelation 22:5, “There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.”

*mourning shall be ended.* See 25:8; 35:10; 51:11; 65:19; Rev 21:4. (CSB)

Revelation 21:4, “He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

**60:21** *people shall all be righteous.* Only the redeemed will be there (see 4:3; 35:8; Rev 21:27). (CSB)

Luther: “Apart from this Light [of Christ] there is no righteousness before God. These are therefore words of consolation. Just hold tight, even if you are oppressed and persecuted and your thoughts and conscience trouble you. You may know for certain: ‘The Lord is my light’; you may know for certain that all who have this Light are righteous, even though we are sinners. That humility is of no avail. But when we speak of ourselves as baptized and enlightened by the Word, we are not sinners but saints and spotless through Christ, so that we can gratefully boast that we are saints” (AE 17:326–27) (TLSB)

*possess the land forever.* Enter into full blessing. (CSB)

*branch of my planting.* Cf. the vineyard of 5:2, 7 (see also 11:1). (CSB)

Cf Ex 15:17. This image is opposite that of the song of the vineyard in Is 5:1–7. God planted the shoot; this fruitful time reflects His work (cf 27:2–6). (TLSB)

The prophet explains in what way the righteous will endure. It will happen this way: “They will be shoots and a garden which I plant. I am the One who preserves this planting so that the plants will endure continually by sprouting.” He constantly causes new disciples to sprout as successors. What kind of builder and gardener is it? “I am the One who raises up another apostle when one has died.” With such a gardener, who does not die and keeps on planting, the plants should last and not perish. So it was in the time of the martyrs. (Luther)

*work of my hands.* God made them as a potter forms clay. (CSB)

*I might be glorified.* They are the evidence of God’s redemptive work. (CSB)

**60:22** *least ... shall become a clan.* See 51:2; 54:3 and notes. The blessing of Lev 26:8 is similar. (CSB)

Wholesome growth in numbers is also promised, unimportant individuals growing into clans and mighty nations. (Leupold)

*I will hasten it.* Cf. 5:19, where the same Hebrew verb is translated “hasten.” (CSB)

Jesus announces in Lk 4:18–19 that in Him the Year of Jubilee has begun. The world of grasping and owning is rejected, and the world of gifts and trust is affirmed (cf Lk 1:51–55). (TLSB)

**Ch 60** The Redeemer of Israel will bring His penitent people out of the darkness of their sin into His everlasting light. Both spiritual and temporal wealth come to us as gifts from God. We should make it our goal to use this wealth for the blessing of others, rather than selfishly seeking and searching for more. Our Savior Jesus Christ has had mercy on us. He is our light and our life. • O God, continually call us out of the darkness of our sin and into Your marvelous light, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. (TLSB)