

## The Planting of the Lord (Isaiah 61:1–21)

By Pastor Jeff Alexander (6/30/2019)

### Introduction

1. Isaiah 60 through 62 speaks of future glory (Isaiah 60:1–3).

This is a *new* thing (Isaiah 42:9).

2. In Isaiah 61, Jesus, the Second Adam, was anointed by the Holy Spirit as the Messiah/Savior to make this future glory a certainty (Isaiah 61:1, 2; 42:6–8).

This saving work of the Messiah/Savior will result in the glorification (or beautification) of His people (61:3). The people of the new true Israel consist of (1) a holy remnant of the nation of Israel, (2) a host of Gentiles grafted into the olive tree (Romans 11), and (3) a host of Jews when the fulness of the Gentiles is accomplished (Romans 11:25–27; Isaiah 59:20, 21).

3. This redeemed and beautified-with-holiness people are called here “*oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified*” (Isaiah 61:3b).

In the previous chapter, the Lord promised, “*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. The least one shall become a clan, and the smallest one a mighty nation; I am the LORD*” (60:21, 22). When He says, “*I am the Lord,*” He means we have both power and authority to accomplish this.

The passage we examine today shows *what* He intends to accomplish.

### I. Restored Culture (v. 4)

1. The restoration of biblical culture was an anticipated hope for godly Israelites based on the promises of God through the prophets (Acts 1:6–8; Psalm 80:1, 14, 15).
2. This restoration, however, is not limited to national Israel but is intended for God’s greater purpose (noted above) that in Abraham “*shall all the families of the earth be blessed*” (Genesis 12:3).
3. Zion (Jerusalem) is, with respect to its citizens, to be a *city of righteousness* and, with respect to the Lord, *the faithful city* through the *labor* of God’s people as enabled by the Lord.

In His sovereign purpose, God promised: “*I will restore your judges [rulers] as at the first, and your counselors [guides] as at the beginning. Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city. Zion shall be redeemed by justice, and those in her who repent, by righteousness*” (Isaiah 21:26, 27).

All the problems of our culture can be found in failure to obey and promote the Bible principle of *personal responsibility* and the biblical ethic of *working hard*. That is a biblical mandate. These are needed if one is to achieve success in the will of God (1 Thessalonians 4:9–12; 2 Thessalonians 3:10–12).

The restoration involves the *hard work* of His people (note verse 4 and Isaiah 53:23), which God promises will be accomplished.

## II. Restored Dominion (vv. 5, 6)

1. *Divine order* in society will also be fully restored.

What does it mean that “*Strangers shall stand and tend your flocks; foreigners shall be your plowmen and vinedressers*” (v. 5)? Are the Gentiles to be relegated to perpetual servitude under the Jews, as many teach based on Isaiah 14:1, 2?

Restoration will include the importance of recognizing proper levels of divinely appointed authority. *Egalitarianism* (meaning that everything and everyone is equal, which underlies the theory of communism) seems to be the rule of the day. None are equal in everything. This principle is set forth in the fifth commandment. Children are to honor their parents. Underlings are to respect their overseers. God established these levels of authority that His people are to respect (Ephesians 6:1–9).

2. Living, succeeding, and prospering in the kingdom as true priest/kings

Those employing the farm laborers will be righteous priest/kings (1 Peter 2:5, 9) who submissively and obediently follow their own Master in heaven, who shows no partiality.

As they do this, those employed by them will properly and fully respect them, speaking of them as “*servants of our God.*” Further, it is promised that “*You shall eat the wealth of the nations, and in their glory you shall boast.*”

3. Restore Respect (v. 7)

Verse 7 follows up on verse 6. The people of God, having long suffered dishonor and shame at the hands of the wicked for doing right and following the will of God. Believers will, in that day of future glory, receive the *double-portion*. The double portion was a show of high honor, the right of the firstborn (Deuteronomy 21:17). Being honored in this way will bring about great rejoicing with everlasting joy.

### What Can We Take Away?

1. The oaks of righteousness of the Lord’s planting are to be working *now* and laboring with the aim of restoring the “*former devastations of many generations.*” We were redeemed for and equipped by the Spirit of God to do this work for the glory of God.
2. We must guard against despair and warn those around us that the enemy would love to trick us into believing that we cannot succeed in these spiritual labors in these dark days. It is a lie from Satan that the best we can do is hunker down and wait for Jesus to return and take us out of here.
3. The principles of the sacred work ethic, divinely ordered echelons of authority, and duty to honor those to whom honor is due are sadly rare in our day. Therefore, we as believers must be diligent to exemplify these principles earnestly and selflessly as a witness to Christ in the world.