

There are two words for glory used in this chapter:

kabod (verses 1, 2, 13, 13) – “the glory of the LORD” – “his glory” –
“the glory of Lebanon”;

“I will make the place of my feet glorious”

Kabod has to do with weight and importance.

The other word is:

pa'er (7, 9, 13, 19, 21) – “I will beautify my house”; “he has made you beautiful”;
“to beautify the place of my sanctuary”; “your God will be your glory”;

“that I might be glorified”

Kavod is the glory that impresses

while “*pa'er*” is the glory that attracts.

Both are important!

What is beauty without substance?

You can manufacture a facsimile of glory –

but it’s just a cheap imitation!

But also – what is glory without attraction?

You can have an immense display of wealth and splendor –

that’s ugly – that has nothing that draws us in!

Isaiah 53 had told us that there was no comeliness in the Suffering Servant.

It uses a different word – but the point that Isaiah makes,

is that there will be no outward pomp and show.

If you just go by what we expect in glory and beauty –

you won’t see it in Jesus!

And yet the disciples will say on the Emaus Road –

“did not our hearts burn within us as he opened to us the scriptures?!”

There is a glory and a beauty in Jesus –

there is the weightiness – that which impresses;

and there is a beauty – that which attracts.

Isaiah 60 contains two imperatives—both of which come at the beginning of the chapter:

Arise (v1)

and lift up your eyes (v4)

Stand up and see what God is going to do!

These two imperatives structure the first part of the chapter,

followed by a series of contrasts at the end of the chapter (verses 15-22)

In chapter 59 we have heard of God's promise to bring salvation for his people

A redeemer will come to Zion.

But as Isaiah has been suggesting all throughout,

the coming of the Redeemer to Zion signals the spread of the Kingdom of God.

The Gentiles will be brought into the people of God.

There are three points in our text.

I accidentally left them out of the bulletin –

But here they are:

1. Arise, Shine, for the Glory of Yahweh Has Come. (60:1-3)

2. Lift Up Your Eyes, and See the Glory of the Gentiles Beautifying the Temple (60:4-14)

3. Forsaken No More: Zion Is Made Beautiful (60:15-22)

All that God has promised has come to pass.

There are some who say that Isaiah 40-66 could not possibly be written by Isaiah,
because they speak of future events that Isaiah could not possibly have witnessed.

In that case, Isaiah 60 could not have been written until after Jesus came!

And yet we have Hebrew manuscripts from before the birth of Christ.

Isaiah has seen that the Exile will not bring about any fundamental change in Israel.

The Restoration will not alter the character of the people of God.

Quite frankly, you didn't need to be a prophet to figure that one out!

After all, from the days of Moses (for more than 600 years)

Israel had not significantly changed.

The only way that salvation will come to Israel

is if God himself does something new.

And that is the message of Isaiah 56-59.

The first seven words from Yahweh in chapters 56-58

made it clear that the Sabbath pointed beyond itself to another day.

And the eighth word in chapter 59 promised that God himself would arise,

put on his holy armor, and bring justice to the earth.

A new day will dawn when the Redeemer comes to Zion,

to those in Jacob who turn from transgression.

He will bring righteousness;

but he will also bring truth.

His words and Spirit will be put in the mouths of his Redeemer,

and in the mouth of his Redeemers offspring.

Thus Hebrews says of Jesus: "Here am I and the children you have given me."

And so now Isaiah turns from the second person singular *masculine*

(My words that I have put in *your* mouth)

to the second person singular *feminine* and declares:

1. Arise, Shine, for the Glory of Yahweh Has Come. (60:1-3)

*Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.*

The Redeemer has come to Zion,
and Zion – the Bride – is now called to arise and shine.

Notice the order.

You are not called to arise and *bring light* –
You are called to arise, *because light* has dawned.
The glory of the LORD has risen upon you:
therefore, Arise! Shine!

Just a few verses ago, Isaiah was lamenting:

“We hope for light, and behold, darkness,
and for brightness, but we walk in gloom.”
“Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands afar off;
for truth has stumbled in the public squares,
and uprightness cannot enter.”

But now the Righteous Redeemer has come!

The glory of the LORD has dawned in the resurrection of Jesus Christ,
and as he is seated in glory at the right hand of the Father,
so also we have been united to him,
and so we too are seated in the heavenlies in Christ!

And so Arise! Shine!

The light of the glory of God shines in the face of Jesus Christ–
for the “God who said, “Let light shine out of darkness”
has shone in our hearts to give the light
of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor 4:6)
And we beheld his glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.

And Isaiah says:

² *For behold, darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the LORD will arise upon you,*

This is not the word “Arise” at the beginning of the chapter.

This is the word used at the end of verse one–
“the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.”

The nations will remain in darkness,
but the light will dawn upon you.
and that glory will be seen upon you.

Remember Egypt?

One of the plagues was the plague of darkness.
Only the Israelites had light.
The plague of darkness remains upon the nations.

and his glory will be seen upon you.
³ *And nations shall come to your light,*
and kings to the brightness of your rising.

But the glory of the LORD will be seen upon you.
The nations will see that there is light in Israel.
And so the nations will flock to the light.
Kings will come to the brightness of your rising.

How many pagan kings converted to Yahweh in the OT?
The Pharaoh who “knew” Joseph received the blessing of Jacob.
Hiram of Tyre served David and Solomon.
Perhaps the king of Ninevah truly repented.

But how many of these nations remained faithful to God for more than a few years?

None.

Isaiah foresees a day when nations will come to the light of Israel—
a day when kings will be attracted to the glory of God revealed in his people.

Verses 1-2 speak of the glory of Yahweh—
his “*cavod*”—which is connected to the idea of weight or importance—
though it is especially used here to refer to a visible light or splendor.

And this is where the glory that impresses – and the glory that attracts –
begin to come together!

Glory and beauty go together!

The glory of God upon his people will be so magnificent and impressive,
that all the glory of the Gentiles will be used to beautify God’s dwelling.

2. Lift Up Your Eyes, and See the Glory of the Gentiles Beautifying the Temple (60:4-14)

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,^[a]
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.*

The imperative of verse 4, “lift up your eyes all around and see”
 drives the whole section.

What are you supposed to see?

You see three things:

1) your sons and daughters returned from exile (Zion inhabited–v4, 9)

By now we should be familiar with the theme of Restoration from Exile!

God promises that when Israel is finally restored from its spiritual exile,
 Zion will be inhabited.

The nations will take good care of Israel’s children.

Zion will rejoice because her children are restored.

(Remember the image of Zion’s sons passed out in the streets?)

Well, now your sons shall come from afar – you shall see and be radiant!
 So you see your children restored!

2nd) You also see the wealth of the nations pouring into Zion (Zion enriched–v5-6, 9, 11)

The sea which once had brought destruction will now bring bounty.

Isaiah has often used the sea as an image of the nations –

in the early chapters of Isaiah, it was the Assyrian army as an ocean tide.

Now Zion becomes the economic center of the universe.

Camels come from Midian and Ephah

Midian is in the far south of Arabia;
Midian especially was hated and dreaded for its camel raids;
but now will be a worshiper of Yahweh
Ephah was to the east of the Persian Gulf;
Sheba was in Africa;
Kedar and Nebaioth were to the east
in the northern part of the Arabian desert
Tarshish in v9 is in the west (possibly Spain)
In other words, the four corners of the earth join together at Zion.
And they come in order to “beautify my beautiful house.”
The glory of the LORD has arisen upon Zion,
that glory that belongs to Yahweh alone.
But God desires for his house to be revealed
in the full splendor and beauty of his creation.

And there is a glory in creation.
The glory of Lebanon is in its trees—
the cypress, the plane, and the pine.
The glory of Kedar is its flocks.
But whether it be camels, or gold, or lumber or ships,
the glory of all the nations will be brought to Zion,
to be used in the beautification of God’s house.
As the nations (Tyre and Sidon) came to Solomon
to aid in the construction of the first temple, so the nations will help again,
as God’s temple is restored in greater glory and beauty than before.
Indeed, the coming of the nations will be so vast and thorough
that the gates of Zion will be open continually! (11)

*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.*

But also note that the people bring the wealth of the nations,
with their kings led in procession.
This could be a picture of the kings being brought in captivity,
but it at least conveys the idea of subjection.
The kings of the nations have come because they must submit to God or perish.
(Read v12)

*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.*

The nations now discover what Israel has known for some time!
To enter God's house is to be blessed; to stand aloof is to perish...
And the reason is because Zion alone is the place
where divine wrath has become divine compassion.
If you would live, flee to Zion and humble yourself to become Yahweh's vassal.

And so finally – there is a third thing that you will see:

3) the sacrifices of the nations to the LORD (Zion the center of worship, v7, 14)
Zion, after all, is the city of God,
the place where his name dwells.
This is not a reference to some secular triumph of Jerusalem,
but the spiritual conquest of the nations.

In other words, Isaiah is speaking of the church of our Lord Jesus Christ.
The nations will bring their sacrifices to God's altar.

Think of verses 7:

Gentile sacrifices will “come up with acceptance on my altar.”
According to Moses, Gentiles weren't allowed anywhere near the altar!
And yet, Isaiah says that the nations will bring their sacrifices,
and God will welcome them into his covenant people.

The imperative “Arise” in verses 1-3 concluded with the statement that nations and kings
would come to the light of the glory of God in Zion.

Now in verse 14 concludes the second imperative (Lift up your eyes) with the same tone:
(Read v14)

*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.*

So pay attention – watch! – Lift up your eyes and see!

3. Forsaken No More: Zion Is Made Beautiful (60:15-22)

The third section of Isaiah 60 is full of contrasts.

Verses 15-16 open with a “whereas”

And verse 17 consists of four “whereas’s” (or insteads—same word)

And verses 18, 19 and 20 each set forth a “no more”

indicating a contrast to what used to be.

In other words, Isaiah is setting us up for what Paul will tell us over and over again:

you are no longer who you used to be!

When the glory of God arises upon his people,

and the glory of the nations comes flooding into Zion,

then—and only then—will the hearts of the people of God

be fundamentally changed.

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.

The first Instead/Whereas (15)--

You once were forsaken and hated, with no one passing through,

but I will make you majestic forever, a joy from age to age.

And instead of your former desolation (v16):

¹⁶ You shall suck the milk of nations; (the Gentiles as nurses)

you shall nurse at the breast of kings; (great image!)

and you shall know that I, the LORD, am your Savior

and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.

And what has happened since our Lord Jesus came?

The nations have flooded into the church.

Kings and rulers have been nursing fathers to the church,

providing for the people of God.

No, not every king.

But far more often than in Isaiah’s day!

And even those rulers who seek to destroy the church

very often find their curses coming back on their own heads.

Verse 17 then consists of four “instead/whereas’s”)

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.

God will upgrade the building material of Zion,
so that his house might indeed be gloriously constructed.
And in the building task,
as his people labor to build this glorious temple,
“I will make your overseers peace and your taskmasters righteousness.”
The LXX here translates “episcopous”—bishops.

The overseers of Christ’s house are given for peace and righteousness.
My task is to labor in the construction of that house,
not by lording it over you,
not by spiritually beating you and lashing you,
but by bringing peace and righteousness to MCPC.

And the result is the three “no mores” of verses 18-20.

*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.*

1) Violence shall no more be heard in your land. (18)
The old order was characterized by devastation and destruction,
but the new order will see peace.
The gates of hell will never prevail against Christ’s church.
The walls of salvation and the gates of praise will endure forever.

*¹⁹ The sun shall be no more
your light by day,
nor for brightness shall the moon
give you light;^[b]
but the LORD will be your everlasting light,
and your God will be your glory.^[c]*

2) “The sun shall be no more your light by day,”
But the LORD will be your everlasting light,
and your God will be your glory.”
John picks up on this in Rev. 21-22.
In the new order established by the Redeemer,
there is no need for sun or moon,
because your God will be your beauty
(This is not cavod, but pa’er)

Your God will be your beauty!
The glory of God is not merely the glory that impresses!
The beauty of God is also a beauty that attracts!

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.*

3) “Your sun shall no more go down, nor you moon withdraw itself.”
This explains the problem with the sun and moon.
They always leave.
The sun and moon are as regular as clockwork,
... and even so is Israel!

Violence and deceit are as much rooted in the character of the people of God,
as day and night.

We are no better than anyone else!

And yet Isaiah says:

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.^[d]*

But the coming of the Redeemer is going to change all that.
As surely as day and night will be done away with—
those unfailing markers of the old order—
so surely will God change the character of his people.
“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 (or beautified).”

I think that sometimes we have imagined the glory of God merely in terms of its splendor.
It is impressive – it is weighty – it is majestic!!

But do we see the *beauty* of God?
Do we see that he is attractive?!

And how is God attractive?
He is beautiful because he continues to beautify his beautiful house

with all the glory of the nations.

I think of the stories I have heard of young people attracted to the old cathedrals –
seeing the weightiness of these magnificent buildings,
and saying, “Wow – these people must have believed in something!”
And so they start to learn about “old-fashioned” Christianity!

But there are also the stories of the slums of Nairobi in Kenya –
where they meet in a ramshackle hut –
where the beauty of God is seen simply in the righteous community
that God is building in their midst!

In this new creation, righteousness will prevail.
The community that orders itself in the ways of the LORD will find peace.

In this new order the old is over and gone; the new has come.

(Read 22)

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.*

In this new creation, God will raise up mighty nations for his praise.
And what else has happened since Pentecost?
The least and smallest—the feeble and the few—
have become a mighty nation.
The church of Jesus Christ now spreads far and wide across the nations.

Just within our own tradition,
there are more Presbyterians in Africa than there are in the United States.
The Presbyterian Church in Brazil has over 600,000 members.
In South Korea there are between nine and ten million Presbyterians
(about 20% of the South Korean population).

Korean missionaries often outnumber American missionaries in many parts of the world!

“I am the LORD; in its time I will hasten it”
the verb sounds the same as “to enjoy”
the double meaning is particularly apt!

Indeed, God delights in the spread of his gospel to the ends of the earth.