Isaiah – Chapter 61

April 26, 2020 · PM · https://letgodbetrue.com/sermons/2020/isaiah-chapter-61/

Theme: The Messiah Jesus would declare peace to captives, and the Jewish church would be glorified.

Outline:

1-3 God's Messiah By the Spirit Preaches Peace

4-6 Restoration of Judah To Include the Gentiles

7-9 Restoration of Judah To Include Prosperity

10-11 Messiah's Gospel Reign Worthy of All Joy

Preparatory Reading: Isaiah chapters 2, 11, 25, 35, 40, 42, 50, 54, 55; Malachi chapters 3-4.

Related Links:

1. Exposition of Isaiah 2 *(Messiah Reign)*.
2. Exposition of Isaiah 9 *(Messiah Light)*.
3. Exposition of Isaiah 11 *(Messiah Reign)*.
4. Exposition of Isaiah 25 *(Messiah Reign)*.
5. Exposition of Isaiah 35 *(Messiah Reign)*.
6. Exposition of Isaiah 40 *(Messiah Come)*.
7. Exposition of Isaiah 42 *(Messiah Light)*.
8. Exposition of Isaiah 50 *(God's Servant)*.
9. Exposition of Isaiah 54 *(Gentile Beauty)*.
10. Exposition of Isaiah 55 *(Messiah Reign)*.
11. Exposition of Malachi 3 *(Messiah)*.
12. Exposition of Malachi 4 *(Messiah)*.
13. Mystery of Godliness *(ppt)*.
14. Mystery of Godliness *(details)*
15. Gospel Millennium *(not at all Jewish)*.
16. Total Depravity *(Human Gross Darkness)*.
17. Unsearchable Riches of Christ *(glory)*.
18. *Exposition of* Hebrews *(Jesus' Preeminence)*.
19. Understanding the Scriptures.

Introduction:

A. This chapter and two around it are glorious, for they describe the future glory of the Jewish church.

1. It is key to understand these three chapters as exalting the Jewish church for spiritual blessings.
2. The Jewish church, from Zacharias and Elizabeth and Mary to Peter and Paul and John, was great.
3. Gentiles, as part of the great mystery of godliness, would love these Jews and convert to Jehovah.
4. The kingdom of God started by John exploded at Pentecost as the Jewish church greatly multiplied.
5. From Jerusalem, the Jews took the gospel to the world, and the Gentile elect loved it and the Jews.
6. From disgrace, obscurity, and oppression for the nation, the Jewish church was exalted in the earth.
7. We have preached against Jewish fables so hard we have neglected the glory of the Jewish church.
8. In God's grand scheme of things, we Gentiles were grafted into the holy root and fatness of Israel.

B. The last chapter (59) ended with a short but passionate and powerful covenant commitment of Jehovah.
   1. The last chapter declared the perpetual duration of the Spirit and word to all ages and generations.
   2. This chapter declares the wide extent of the benefits and effects of the Spirit and word to Gentiles.
   3. Do not miss the glory, precedence, and importance of the Jewish church by which we are blessed.
   4. Paul gave the axiom – we got their spiritual things; we owe them carnal (Rom 15:27; I Cor 9:11).

C. This chapter begins a glorious description of the reign of Messiah and the prosperity under His reign.
   1. The language and terms used rise to the highest levels of Isaiah to get your attention and affection.
   2. Messiah is no mystery. Messiah = Christ (Jn 1:42; 4:25). He is the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.
   3. His reign is no mystery. He reigns over all things in absolute power but in total love over believers.
   4. The Spirit and the word in the formation and enhancement of gospel churches and lives is glorious.
   5. The great mystery of godliness is a N.T. perspective on the incredible gifts of God's Son and faith.
   6. This glorious description of Jesus and His gospel kingdom will continue through to chapter 62.

D. Isaiah's view of the future should be viewed several ways to fully appreciate what he saw and foretold.
   1. The recovery from Babylon was quite important, and it is seen first with Messiah in the distance.
   2. The Spirit led Isaiah to use the rescue from Babylon as a take-off figure or type for the N.T. era.
   3. The temple had to be built for Messiah to come to it, so the rebuilding of Zion takes on N.T. value.
   4. Some verses may include the return from Babylon, but those 400 years were difficult, not glorious.
   5. His language and terminology were for His direct and immediate audience in Israel about 600 B.C.
   6. Prophetic similitudes abound, as Isaiah used inspired word pictures to show the glory of N.T. era.
   7. You must stay disciplined to grasp the use of O.T. terms of Jerusalem for N.T. spiritual religion.
   8. We read the O.T. through the truth of the N.T. as certainty, so we are not misled by wild fantasies.
   9. The beauty and grandeur of Messiah's kingdom and His churches are exalted as high as anywhere.
   10. There is no reason to apply this to heaven, since that would be a leap the prophet rarely attempts.
   11. We reject all ideas of a Jewish millennial kingdom as Jewish fables; the Bible has no such thing.
   12. We had glorious statements about the N.T. kingdom of Christ before (Is 2,11,25,35,40,42,50,55).
   13. In places applicable to both Israel's return and Christ's kingdom, each verse has its own proportion.
   14. As we saw before, verb tenses are applied less strictly, as illustrated by comparing verses 1 and 2.

15. As we saw before, persons of nouns have value (Is 60:1-7) or may change (Is 61:7,8,10).
16. The several mentions of the Gentiles throughout the passage require an emphasis on the N.T. era.
17. As with parables, the interpretation must emphasize the lesson over each word (Luke 10:25-37).
18. Either extreme – strict literalism or undisciplined spiritualizing – is easier and is more dangerous.
19. The workman earns His Captain's approval by laboriously studying to rightly divide these verses.
20. Understanding Scripture.

God's Messiah By the Spirit Preaches Peace – Verses 1-3

1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;

A. For maximum profit of this chapter's notes, see the more extensive ones for chapter 60.
   1. Isaiah chapters 60-62 compose one lesson of God restoring and exalting His nation.
   2. While the recovery from Babylon is included, the emphasis is on Christ's kingdom.
   3. Learn to see similitudes first (not literalism) and Messiah higher (not Zerubbabel).

B. God's blessing on the Jewish church by Messiah and the gospel would comfort captives.
   1. Several mentions of Gentiles in these three chapters require stressing the N.T. era.
   2. It was through Peter and Paul Jerusalem was built up by Gentiles (Acts 15:13-18).
   3. While aspects may apply to the return from Babylon, those 400 years were difficult.
   4. Cyrus was a king that did indeed release the Jews for Jehovah's sake by his writing.
   5. But the rebuilding of Jerusalem's street and wall were in troublous times (Dan 9:25).
   6. Though Persian kings assisted the work, local enemies hindered it by various ways.
   7. After the Persians came the Greeks and the atrocities of Antiochus IV (Dan 8:8-14).
   8. After the Greeks came Romans with the Edomite Herod the Great (Dan 11:36-45).
   9. The gospels show a stranger Herod as king and Pilate as occupying Roman governor.

C. Therefore, let us overlook Isaiah preaching restoration from Babylon to see only Christ.
   1. Jesus read this very passage in His hometown synagogue and applied it to Himself.
   2. Though He did it as graciously as possible, yet they hated Him for it (Luke 4:16-30).

D. Jesus did indeed fulfill these verses in every respect in addition to claiming them as His.
   1. God Jehovah gave the Holy Ghost to Jesus without measure (John 3:34; Heb 1:8-9).
   2. This promise of the Holy Ghost to Jesus personally we have seen (Isaiah 11:2; 42:1).
   3. God anointed Jesus with the Spirit to preach the gospel (Heb 2:1-4; Acts 10:36-38).
   4. His ministry was to the meek, brokenhearted, captive, bound elect (Matt 11:28-30).
   5. He forgave repentant sinners, comforted the cast down, and relieved the afflicted.
   6. He lifted burdens of all kinds, from guilt of sin to devil possession to bodily diseases.

E. The fact of this verse – part of the great mystery of godliness – is a transcendent event.
    1. There is nothing you can learn in history to match it; all other events combined pale.
    2. God was on earth in the form of His Son and came with healing for all ills (Mal 4:2).

2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;

A. Jesus declared the commencement of the kingdom of God and the time of His salvation.
    1. He preached the prophesied time was fulfilled and men must repent (Mark 1:14-15).
    2. The era had arrived of New Testament gospel salvation (II Cor 6:1-2 cp Is 49:7-9).
    3. Jesus included the first phrase at Nazareth, but not the two following (Luke 4:19).

B. It was a day of vengeance by God against His enemies and the enemies of His people.
    1. Jesus included the first phrase at Nazareth, but not the two following (Luke 4:19).
    2. The day of vengeance connected to His first coming was 70 A.D. (Luke 21:22-24).
    3. The wrath of God was against the Jewish enemies of His church (I Thess 2:14-16).
    4. There was vengeance against Babylon (Jer 51:6), but this is our Lord's vengeance.
    5. There are many, many prophecies fulfilled by the Titus's destruction of Jerusalem.
    6. Witness of 70 A.D. *(detailed)*.

C. A great part of Messiah's ministry was to comfort those spiritually mourning and poor.
    1. He would not break bruised reeds or quench smoking flax (Is 42:1-4; Mat 12:15-21).
    2. Those mourning for sins, He forgave; those burdened, He gave rest for their souls.

3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

A. A great part of Messiah's ministry was to comfort those spiritually mourning and poor.
    1. His purpose and role were so definite, it is said He would appoint blessing to them.
    2. He would not break bruised reeds or quench smoking flax (Is 42:1-4; Mat 12:15-21).
    3. Those mourning for sins, He forgave; those burdened, He gave rest for their souls.

B. The religion of Moses never cleared consciences in comparison to the religion of Jesus.
    1. The elect in Zion mourned for their sins and the corruption of true religion of leaders.
    2. They mourned; they sat in ashes (and sackcloth); they were heavy; He lifted them.
    3. The patriarchs waited 4000 years, the Jews had waited 1500 years, for the Messiah.
    4. Instead of dirty, filthy ashes disfiguring them, He would give them beauty instead.
    5. There was no time to fast and mourn with Him there, as He explained about John.
    6. He anointed them with oil, which was opposite the nature of mourning (Matt 6:17).
    7. Instead of the heavy spirit of the contrite, He gave them praise to wear, not sackcloth.

C. He declared their forgiveness and imputed and accepted righteousness by God's grace.

1. God was glorified by the gracious change He made in lives, like Paul's (Gal 1:24).
2. This language is taken from what went before about righteous citizens (Is 60:21).
3. What is described here is names for the elect to give God all the glory for His grace.
4. Our righteousness is of Him in any way you look (I Cor 1:30; II Cor 5:21; Jas 5:16).

Restoration of Judah To Include the Gentiles – Verses 4-6

4 And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.

A. It is important in the prophecies to look for metaphors, not just literal terms (Hos 12:10).
   1. To see only work of Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah here is to greatly diminish it.
   2. The context is far greater; the N.T. history is far more; look for spiritual fulfillment.

B. The Jews that returned from Babylon realized these prophecies in a real but limited way.
   1. It is true that Judah had been ravaged by war with the Assyrians and then Chaldeans.
   2. It is true that the remnant that returned built the old waste places and desolated cities.
   3. It is true that they repaired wasted parts of the country that had been long neglected.
   4. It is true that the Gentiles assisted in the large and difficult project from Cyrus on.

C. Consider these reasons that we see Jews returning but even more so Gentiles converting.
   1. The first three verses of this chapter are far more applicable to Christ than to Isaiah.
   2. The previous chapter opening this section and lesson is clearly of Christ's kingdom.
   3. The chapter following that closes this section and lesson is also about the N.T. era.
   4. The glory, prosperity, peace, safety of Israel from Babylon to Christ does not match.
   5. Rather than sucking Gentiles kings, Gentiles kings laid taxes and tribute on the Jews.
   6. Rather than Gentiles taking the Jews' religion, Antiochus IV and Herod profaned it.
   7. Judah by Babylon had not lain waste *many generations,* but more or less one or two.
   8. We know of no time when *Gentiles did the menial work of Israel*, but rather opposite.
   9. Gentiles rejoiced in the *religious superiority of the Jews* in the gospel and not earlier.
   10. The whole elect nation would be recognized as *Priests* and *Ministers* by the Gentiles.
   11. It was after and under Christ Jews were a nation of priests (I Peter 2:9; Mal 3:1-4).
   12. The O.T. ends with Malachi's indictment of their sins for God's curse (Mal 4:1-6).

D. What then does this verse mean, since it sounds like the Jews returning from Babylon?
   1. We will not totally exclude the Jews rebuilding Jerusalem after 70 years in captivity.
   2. Nor are we obligated to strictly apply each parallel phrase to a specific Gentile event.
   3. As with parables, the interpretation seeks the lesson, not each item (Luke 10:25-37).
   4. The words describe the rebuilding of the kingdom of God and enhancement thereof.
   5. <u>The apostles applied the terms to Gentile conversions (Acts 15:13-18; Am 9:11-15)</u>.

6. In fact, the prophecy and its application declare Israel prior to Christ to be in decay.
7. In fact, the prophecy has Israel never being pulled up, though they were in 70 A.D.
8. The facts are the kingdom of Israel was in ruins and Gentiles forsaken for 4000 years.
9. Israel's hope was David their king – Jesus, not Zerubbabel, Ezra, Nehemiah (Isaiah 9:6-7; 55:3-5; Jeremiah 30:8-9; Ezekiel 34:23-31; 37:21-28; Hosea 3:4-5).
10. Taking off from the figure and type of the return from Babylon, Isaiah sees Christ.

5 And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers.

A. It is important in the prophecies to look for metaphors, not just literal terms (Hos 12:10).
   1. See the notes for the previous verse where the method of interpretation is explained.
   2. See the notes for the previous verse where the object of the prophecy is identified.

B. These strangers and sons of the alien are Gentiles that would do Israel's menial work.
   1. The Gentiles would happily take any position in the Jewish church under Messiah.
   2. The Gentiles were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel until Christ (Eph 2:12).

C. Gentiles were happy to be the Jews' slaves – whom they called Priests and Ministers!

6 But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.

A. It is important in the prophecies to look for metaphors, not just literal terms (Hos 12:10).
   1. See notes for verse 4 above where the method of interpretation is briefly explained.
   2. See the notes for verse 4 above where the object of Isaiah's prophecy is identified.

B. The Jews did not claim all were Priests and Ministers, but Gentiles called the Jews such.
   1. Peter called scattered Jews in Paul's Gentile churches a royal priesthood (I Pet 2:9).
   2. Gentile converts loved the Jewish apostles, especially Paul, for His role with God.
   3. Paul was not even from the tribe of Levi (Benjamin), but the Gentiles loved Him.
   4. He was the mighty apostle of the Gentiles greater than any priest or minister before.
   5. Malachi prophesied God would purify His priests by John and Jesus (Mal 3:1-4).
   6. A prudent Gentile did not want to hear the gospel from a Gentile, but rather a Jew.

C. Jews ate the riches of Gentiles several ways (Acts 11:28-30; 28:30; Romans 15:25-27).

D. The Jews justly boasted of Gentile conversions by God's grace (Acts 11:18; 14:27; 15:6-21; 21:19; Romans 11:11-13; 15:17-19; I Corinthians 3:5-10; II Cor 9:12-14).

Restoration of Judah To Include Prosperity – Verses 7-9

7 For your shame ye shall have double; and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them.

A. No alarm or confusion – the second person is changed to the third for the same persons.

1. This is not at all unusual in the book of Isaiah, though we do not list examples here.
2. This is not at all unusual in the poetic writings of David in the Psalms. It is common.
3. Note: second person (verse 7a), third person (verse 7b-9), and first person (verse 10).
4. Why? For a transition from the Babylonian generation to the generation of Messiah.

B. Job got double what he originally had, but the Jews were given far more than double.
1. Precise math is not Bible study but missing the easy lesson for a childish distraction.
2. The Bible uses all kinds of similar comparisons (Lev 26:18; Ps 12:6; 119:164; etc.).
3. The blessings of the New Testament are far more than double the Old (Hag 2:6-9).

C. The Jews were a stiff-necked and rebellious people that God had punished many times.
1. Due to sins, God in wrath pounded the Jews often (Ps 78:29-33,59-64; Isaiah 57:17).
2. Their greatest sins under Manasseh moved Him to disgrace them before the heathen.
3. They became an object of mocking and hissing (I Kgs 9:8; Jer 19:8; Lam 2:15-16).
4. They had no land, no capital, no temple; their God, known well, had deserted them.

D. God blessed the Jewish church by Christ that more than made up for past chastening.
1. This cannot be Zerubbabel's fine work in troublous times and then Antiochus IV.
2. The Jewish church received multiplied blessings in Messiah making up for the past.
3. For the shame they had as a nation, they would have double that in perceived glory.
4. The Gentiles, instead of hissing at them, would be shocked by their glory in Christ.
5. The generation that received the promised Son rejoiced against any prior confusion.
6. Read the testimonies of Zacharias, Elizabeth, Mary, Simeon, and Anna about Him.
7. There was everlasting joy among the elect tenth of the nation rejoicing in Messiah.
8. Simeon was ready to die for he had seen all he needed to see – the infant Son of God.

8 For I the LORD love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

A. The coordinating conjunction *for* fits here with God's rebuke as part of double blessing.
1. The double blessing is clearly stated in the previous verse to bring everlasting joy.
2. The holy One of Israel loves judgment, so He had punished Israel for their robbery.
3. In order to properly reward them, He needed a change in their character and conduct.
4. He would bring this to pass as part of His covenant with them – a change in nature.
5. He would direct and guide them more carefully than ever before without hypocrisy.
6. We know, from a New Testament perspective, this was by the power of the Spirit.

B. The holy GOD Jehovah loves judgment – equity, fairness, uprightness, truth, wisdom.
1. Judgment in this sense was stated (Isaiah 1:17,21; 5:7; 10:2; 16:5; 56:1; 59:14-15).
2. His Son would sit on the throne of the kingdom with judgment (Isaiah 9:7; 11:1-5).
3. He hated the lack of judgment and justice among the Jews (Is 59:4,8-9,11,14-15).

4. He hated compromise with sin and hypocrisy covering sin by ceremonies like here.

C. He hated corrupt character and conduct, no matter any cover made for it by religion.
   1. Isaiah began in the first chapter blasting their ceremonial religion (Isaiah 1:10-15).
   2. Isaiah had recently done the same thing about their hypocrisy in fasting (Is 58:1-7).
   3. Jeremiah likewise warned Israel for putting trust in the temple to cover (Jer 7:1-11).
   4. Samuel told Saul his stubborn rebellion was as witchcraft and idolatry (I Sam 15:23).
   5. Jesus blasted Jews covering greed and hatred of parents by Corban (Mark 7:1-13).

D. Therefore, God would renovate their character and conduct by His Spirit and His word.
   1. Beyond the glorious legal salvation in Christ, we also need vital and practical grace.
   2. For Gentiles to glorify Jews, they would need new national character and conduct.

E. This covenant He would make with the Jews was not the one He had made with them.
   1. There is no reference here to the covenants made with Abraham or Moses at Sinai.
   2. This is the new covenant Paul explained from Jeremiah (Heb 8:6-13; Jer31:31-34).

F. Try to see the blessing of exaltation (Is 61:7) and the blessing of reformation (Is 61:8).

9 And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the LORD hath blessed.

A. A future generation of the Jews would have world renown for obvious divine blessings.
   1. There was no other generation of Jews like the one of our Lord and His apostles.
   2. For forty years they were the drivers of the time of reformation from Moses to Jesus.

B. This prophecy of a grand reputation in the future follows two definite divine blessings.
   1. They would receive double glory and honor for past shame and confusion (Is 61:7).
   2. They would be changed in character and conduct to be godly and righteous servants.
   3. Both of these actions by God were part of His covenant commitment to the Jews.

C. The reputation of these elect Jews in the world was enhanced by blessings and character.
   1. This did not last long, it does not exist today, and it will likely never be great again.
   2. The gospel of salvation and righteous character of the church enhanced the gospel.
   3. Even unbelieving Jews favored this early church of Jewish Christians (Acts 2:47).

Messiah's Gospel Reign Worthy of All Joy – Verses 10-11

10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.

A. The Jewish church now takes on the first person through the inspired Isaiah's prophecy.
   1. He began the section with the church in the second person in the first clause (Is 61:7).
   2. Between there and here, Isaiah then addressed the Jewish church in the third person.

B. Here are two similes chosen by the Holy Spirit by *as* to indicate the direct comparison.
    1. The comparison is a bridegroom decking himself with fine ornaments for a wedding.
    2. The comparison is a bride adorning herself with jewels to be as beautiful as possible.
    3. God did the decking and adorning here – He saved in righteousness and declared it.
    4. The events of the gospel (Christ died and rose again) and the news of it are glorious.
    5. God did these wonderful things for the elect Jewish remnant, therefore they rejoiced.

C. The Jewish church declares its joy for God giving beauty of salvation and righteousness.
    1. Every Christian should have a response like the joy twice via Philip (Acts 8:8,39).
    2. God beautified the Jewish church by giving them first the glorious gospel of peace.
    3. The gospel of peace declares the unsearchable riches of Christ reconciling us to God.
    4. The gospel of peace declares the justifying work of God's to make sinners righteous.
    5. They had complete confidence for the first time in 1500 years of full, free salvation.
    6. Their O.T. religion of law works by Moses could not give joy (Heb 9:8-10; 10:1-4).
    7. The gospel brought a better hope, giving a good conscience (Heb 7:19; I Pet 3:21).

D. The Jews were charged to be joyful earlier in this chapter (Is 61:3); here are the reasons.
    1. These blessings are spiritual, much more than the rubble removal of Zerubbabel.
    2. Arise! Shine! Rejoice! Praise! Sing! Awake! We have these precious verbs in Isaiah.
    3. It is not only legal righteousness in heaven's court, but all aspects of righteousness.
    4. Consider that the context includes vital and practical righteousness as well (Is 61:8).

E. Praise for the spiritual blessings began with Zacharias, Elizabeth, Mary, Simeon, Anna.

11 For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.

A. Spring and planting results in things springing forth – exploding in growth and beauty.

B. Here are two similes (*as*) drawn out by the Spirit using the *as … so* grammatical form.
    1. The comparative example is the explosion of growth in spring by the earth budding.
    2. The comparative example is gardens exploding with growth of seeds planted there.
    3. In the same way God would bless the Jewish church with righteousness and praise.
    4. Righteousness exploding was the gospel news; the praise was the joyful response.

C. All the nations of the earth would be able to witness these aspects of the Jewish church.
    1. Righteousness and praise began with Zacharias, Elizabeth, Mary, Simeon, Anna, etc.
    2. The earth witnessed a gospel of righteousness and unprecedented righteous conduct.
    3. They would have reason by example and influence to praise the great God of Israel.
    4. The Jewish church would show earth the incredible combination of righteous praise.
    5. Character and conduct of the Jerusalem church after Pentecost is a perfect example.
    6. Apostles carried the glorious gospel of righteousness and praise to God to the world.

7. What did Gentiles do after hearing a Jew in Antioch? They glorified God (Ac 13:48).
8. What should spring forth from Gentile churches today – righteousness and praise.