

New Life For Zion.

Isaiah 61:4-9.

Sunday evening, January 11, 2009.

I. Who are these rebuilders? Vs. 1-4

They are the ones to whom the Messenger of vss.1-3 was sent.

1. The poor.
2. The broken hearted.
3. The captives.
4. The ones imprisoned.
5. Those who mourn.

II. How did they become rebuilders? Vs. 1-4.

1. By receiving the Messenger.
2. By believing His message.
3. By thinking about His message; understanding it, and resting on it. By faith.
4. By becoming a sheep in the flock of the Messenger. Psalm 23
5. By being grafted into the vine which is the Messenger. John 15:1,2.
6. By humbly asking for, and receiving the work of the Holy Spirit. Luke 11:9-13.

III. What do they rebuild? Vs. 4.

Here there is a parallel with the double honor, and the double blessing of vs. 7.

Also a parallel with the double punishment for all her sins in Ch. 40:1,2

“Comfort, yes comfort My people says your God. Speak comfort to Jerusalem and cry out to her, that her warfare is ended; that her iniquity is pardoned; for she has received from the Lord’s hand double for all her sins.”

A. The judgment the Lord brings is both physical and tangible as well as spiritual.

B. The words of vss. 1-3 ought to be applied in both ways.

1. Spiritual darkness had fallen on the land and the people of Israel.
Many of the covenant people called the darkness light and loved it.
2. Then the Lord brought the material destruction by way of the Babylonians.
3. Do we not see the same in our own land?

C. The rebuilding involves both a material restoration as well as a spiritual restoration. Spiritual restoration always precedes the material restoration.

1. It involves a restoration of God’s word to its rightful place in men’s lives.
2. It involves the restoration of faith in the Lord as the One who has undertaken, and is undertaking in our behalf.
3. It involves a restoration of the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Mediator between God and man; the One through whom we may come to God.
4. It involves a restoration of grace as the source from which all blessing flows.
5. It involves a restoration of the church as the visible expression of the community of the covenant people on earth.

D. Do we not see this played out before our eyes in history as we look into the great

reformation of the church as she came out of the dark ages?

1. A great spiritual awakening and restoration took place.

2. In its wake there followed an age of great material advances as well.

IV. What are some of the differences with “old Zion?” Vs. 5-7

- A. The strangers and sons of the foreigners are included in her ranks as doing the work of rebuilding.
We should in this context not think of the strangers and sons of the foreigners as hired help, or as slave labor, but rather as fellow citizens and fellow heirs of the community of the covenant people of God.
- B. Not, “But you shall be named...” but rather “and you shall be named the priests of the Lord. Vs. 6.
Zion will no longer have a priesthood; she will be that priesthood.
“A chosen generation; a royal priesthood; a holy nation.” 1 Peter 2:9.
- C. You shall eat the riches of the Gentiles.
Because the Gentiles are becoming a part of Zion; they come into Zion with all they have and with all they are.
- D. In their glory you shall boast.
1. The God of Zion has become the glory of the Gentiles.
The rejoicing and boasting of Zion is in the grace of God that has made the Gentiles fellow heirs and members of the household of God.
 2. The wall of separation between Jew and Gentile has been broken down.
Formerly Zion despised the Gentiles; now she boasts in their glory.
- E. A double portion with everlasting joy.
1. Zion enjoyed brief periods of material and spiritual prosperity. They were usually short lived. They were little foretastes of the glory that was to come.
 2. Zion knew little periods of rejoicing; these too were usually short lived, and marred by the effects of sin and decay all around.
 3. Here Zion is seen as firmly in possession of both blessings together with everlasting joy, indicating that the transient nature of the blessing is a thing of the past.

V. On what does the Lord’s work rest? Vs. 8,9.

- A. On the justice of God; “I the Lord love justice.” Vs. 8.
This is why in vs. 2 the acceptable year of the Lord is proclaimed alongside “the vengeance of our God.”
1. The Lord justly brings the gospel blessings of vs. 1-3 to His covenant people notwithstanding their sins and failures, for Christ, the Messiah has earned those blessings for them.
 2. At the same time He brings days of vengeance on those who reject the Messiah.
- B. I hate (not robbery for burnt offerings), but “the spoils of iniquity.” Unjust gain.
1. Robbery for burnt offerings would be an example of that.
 2. Similarly the Lord’s people do not constitute “the spoils of iniquity” to Him, but they are His lawfully purchased people through the finished work of Christ.
 3. All gospel blessing for His people are not the “spoils of iniquity, but lawfully purchased blessings through the finished work of Christ.”
 4. The whole format of the work of redemption rests on the justice of God.