

# CHAPTER 62

The business of prophets was both to preach and pray. In this chapter,

- I.** The prophet determines to apply closely and constantly to this business (v. 1).
- II.** God appoints him and others of his prophets to continue to do so, for the encouragement of his people during the delays of their deliverance (v. 6, 7).
- III.** The promises are here repeated and ratified of the great things God would do for his church, for the Jews after their return out of captivity and for the Christian church when it shall be set up in the world.
  - 1.** The church shall be made honourable in the eyes of the world (v. 2).
  - 2.** It shall appear to be very dear to God, precious and honourable in his sight (v. 3-5).
  - 3.** It shall enjoy great plenty (v. 8, 9).
  - 4.** It shall be released out of captivity and grow up again into a considerable nation, particularly owned and favoured by heaven (v. 10-12).

## ISAIAH 62:1-5

### THE PROSPERITY OF THE CHURCH

The prophet here tells us,

- I.** What he will do for the church. A prophet, as he is a seer, so he is a spokesman. This prophet resolves to perform that office faithfully, v. 1. *He will not hold his peace; he will not rest; he will mind his business, will take pains, and never desire to take his ease; and herein he was a type of Christ, who was indefatigable in executing the office of a prophet and made it his meat and drink till he had finished his work. Observe here,*
  - 1.** What the prophet's resolution is: *He will not hold his peace.* He will continue instant in preaching, will not only faithfully deliver, but

frequently repeat, the messages he has *received from the Lord*. If people receive not the precepts and promises at first, he will inculcate them and give them line upon line. And he will continue instant in prayer; he will never hold his peace at the throne of grace till he has prevailed with God for the mercies promised; he will *give himself to prayer and to the ministry of the word*, as Christ's ministers must (~~416~~Acts 6:4), who must labour frequently in both and never be weary of this well-doing. The business of ministers is to speak from God to his people and to God for his people; and in neither of these must they be silent.

**2.** What is the principle of this resolution — *for Zion's sake, and for Jerusalem's*, not for the sake of any private interest of his own, but for the church's sake, because he has an affection and concern for Zion, and it lies near his heart. Whatever becomes of his own house and family, he desires to *see the good of Jerusalem* and resolves to seek it all the days of his life, ~~417~~Psalm 122:8, 9; 118:5. It is God's Zion and his Jerusalem, and it is *therefore* dear to him, because it is so to God and because God's glory is interested in its prosperity.

**3.** How long he resolves to continue this importunity — till the promise of the church's righteousness and salvation, given in the foregoing chapter, be accomplished. Isaiah will not himself live to see the release of the captives out of Babylon, much less the bringing in of the gospel, in which *grace reigns through righteousness unto life* and salvation; yet he will *not hold his peace till* these be accomplished, even the utmost of them, because his prophecies will continue speaking of these things, and there shall in every age be a remnant that shall continue to pray for them, as successors to him, till the promises be performed, and so the prayers answered that were grounded upon them. Then the church's *righteousness* and *salvation* will *go forth as brightness*, and *as a lamp that burns*, so plainly that it will carry its own evidence along with it. It will bring honour and comfort to the church, which will hereupon both look pleasant and appear illustrious; and it will bring instruction and direction to the world, a light not only to the eyes but to the feet, and to *the paths* of those who before *sat in darkness and in the shadow of death*.

**II.** What God will do for the church. The prophet can but pray and preach, but God will confirm the word and answer the prayers.

**1.** The church shall be greatly admired. When that righteousness which is her salvation, her praise, and her glory, shall be *brought forth*, the *Gentiles shall see* it. The tidings of it shall be carried to the Gentiles, and a tender of it made to them; they may so see this righteousness as to share in it if it be not their own fault. “Even kings shall see and be in love with the *glory of thy righteousness*” (v. 2), shall overlook the glory of their own courts and kingdoms, and look at, and look after, the spiritual glory of the church as that which excels.

**2.** She shall be truly admirable. Great names make men considerable in the world, and great respect is paid them thereupon; now it is agreed that *honor est in honorante* — *honour derives its value from the dignity of him who confers it*. God is the fountain of honour and from him the church's honour comes: “*Thou shalt be called by a new name*, a pleasant name, such as thou wast never called by before, no, not in the day of thy greatest prosperity, and the reverse of that which thou wast called by in the day of thy affliction; thou shalt have a new character, be advanced to a new dignity, and those about thee shall have new thoughts of thee.” This seems to be alluded to in that promise (~~667~~ Revelation 2:17) of the *white stone and in the stone a new name*, and that (~~662~~ Revelation 3:12) of the *name of the city of my God and my new name*. It is a name *which the mouth of the Lord shall name*, who, we are sure, miscalls nothing, and who will oblige others to call her by the name he has given her; for his judgment is according to truth and all shall concur with it sooner or later. Two names God shall give her: —

**(1.)** He shall call her his crown (v. 3): *Thou shalt be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord*, not on his head (as adding any real honour or power to him, as crowns do to those that are crowned with them), but in his hand. He is pleased to account them, and show them forth, as a glory and beauty to him. When he took them to be his people it was that they might be *unto him for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory* (~~2431~~ Jeremiah 13:11): “*Thou shalt be a crown of glory and a royal diadem, through the hand, the good hand, of thy God upon thee; he shall make thee so, for he shall be to thee a crown of glory,* ~~2305~~ Isaiah 28:5. *Thou shalt be so in his hand*, that is, under his protection; he that shall put glory upon thee shall *create a defence upon all that glory*, so that the flowers of thy crown shall never wither nor shall its jewels be lost.”

(2.) He shall call her his spouse, v. 4, 5. This is a yet greater honour, especially considering what a forlorn condition she had been in.

[1.] Her case had been very melancholy. She was called *forsaken* and her land *desolate* during the captivity, like a woman reproachfully divorced or left a disconsolate widow. Such as the state of religion in the world before the preaching of the gospel — it was in a manner forsaken and desolate, a thing that no man looked after nor had any real concern for.

[2.] It should now be very pleasant, for God would return in mercy to her. Instead of those two names of reproach, she shall be called by two honourable names. *First*, She shall be called *Hephzi-bah*, which signifies, *My delight is in her*; it was the name of Hezekiah's queen, Manasseh's mother (<sup><121></sup>2 Kings 21:1), a proper name for a wife, who ought to be her husband's delight, <sup><1059></sup>Proverbs 5:19. And here it is the church's Maker that is her husband: *The Lord delights in thee*. God by his grace has wrought that in his church which makes her his delight, she being refined, and reformed, and brought home to him; and then by his providence he does that for her which makes it appear that she is his delight and that he delights to do her good. *Secondly*, She shall be called *Beulah*, which signifies *married*, whereas she had been desolate, a condition opposed to that of the *married wife*, <sup><251></sup>Isaiah 54:1. “*Thy land shall be married*, that is, it shall become fruitful again, and be replenished.” Though she has long been barren, she shall again be peopled, shall again be made to keep house and to be a joyful mother of children, <sup><113></sup>Psalms 113:9. *She shall be married*, for,

1. Her sons shall heartily espouse the land of their nativity and its interests, which they had for a long time neglected, as despairing ever to have any comfortable enjoyment of it: *Thy sons shall marry thee*, that is, they shall live with thee and take delight in thee. When they were in Babylon, they seemed to have espoused that land, for they were appointed to settle, and to seek the peace of it, <sup><295></sup>Jeremiah 29:5-7. But now they shall again marry their own land, *as a young man marries a virgin* that he takes great delight in, is extremely fond of, and is likely to have many children by. It bodes well to a land when its own natives and inhabitants are pleased with it, prefer it before other lands, when its princes marry their country and resolve to take their lot with it.

2. *Her God* (which is much better) shall *betroth her to himself in righteousness*, <sup><319></sup>Hosea 2:19, 20. He will take pleasure in his church: As

*the bridegroom rejoices over the bride*, is pleased with his relation to her and her affection to him, *so shall thy God rejoice over thee*: he shall rest in his love to thee (<sup>367</sup>Zephaniah 3:17); *he shall take pleasure in thee* (<sup>471</sup>Psalms 147:11), and shall *delight to do thee good with his whole heart and his whole soul*, (<sup>484</sup>Jeremiah 32:41). This is very applicable to the love Christ has for his church and the complacency he takes in it, which appears so brightly in Solomon's Song, and which will be complete in heaven.

## <sup>266</sup>ISAIAH 62:6-9

### THE PROSPERITY OF THE CHURCH

Two things are here promised to Jerusalem: —

**I.** Plenty of the means of grace — abundance of good preaching and good praying (v. 6, 7), and this shows the method God takes when he designs mercy for a people; he first brings them to their duty and pours out a spirit of prayer upon them, and then brings salvation to them. Provision is made,

**1.** That ministers may do their duty as watchmen. It is here spoken of as a token for good, as a step towards further mercy and an earnest of it, that, in order to what he designed for them, he would set *watchmen on their walls who should never hold their peace*. Note,

**(1.)** Ministers are watchmen on the church's walls, for it is as a city besieged, whose concern it is to have sentinels on the walls, to take notice and give notice of the motions of the enemy. It is necessary that, as watchmen, they be wakeful, and faithful, and willing to endure hardness.

**(2.)** They are concerned to stand upon their guard day and night; they must never be off their watch as long as those for whose souls they watch are not out of danger.

**(3.)** They must never hold their peace; they must take all opportunities to give warning to sinners, in season, out of season, and must never betray the cause of Christ by a treacherous or cowardly silence. They must never hold their peace at the throne of grace; they must *pray, and not faint*, as Moses lifted up his hands and kept them steady, till Israel had obtained the victory over Amalek, (<sup>477</sup>Exodus 17:10, 12).

2. That people may do their duty. As those that make mention of the Lord, let not them keep silence neither, let not them think it enough that their watchmen pray for them, but let them pray for themselves; all will be little enough to meet the approaching mercy with due solemnity. Note,

(1.) It is the character of God's professing people that they make mention of the Lord, and continue to do so even in bad times, when the land is termed *forsaken* and *desolate*. They are *the Lord's remembrancers* (so the margin reads it); they remember the Lord themselves and put one another in mind of him.

(2.) God's professing people must be a praying people, must be public-spirited in prayer, must wrestle with God in prayer, and continue to do so: "*Keep not silence; never grow remiss in the duty nor weary of it.*" *Give him no rest* — alluding to an importunate beggar, to the widow that with her continual coming wearied the judge into a compliance. God said to *Moses, Let me alone* (<sup><120></sup>Exodus 32:10), and Jacob to Christ, *I will not let thee go except thou bless me*, <sup><125></sup>Genesis 32:26.

(3.) God is so far from being displeased with our pressing importunity, as men commonly are, that he invites and encourages it; he bids us to cry after him; he is not like those disciples who discouraged a petitioner, <sup><153></sup>Matthew 15:23. He bids us make pressing applications at the throne of grace, and *give him no rest*, <sup><115></sup>Luke 11:5, 8. He suffers himself not only to be reasoned with, but to be wrestled with.

(4.) The public welfare or prosperity of God's Jerusalem is that which we should be most importunate for at the throne of grace; we should pray for the good of the church.

[1.] That it may be safe, that he would *establish* it, that the interests of the church may be firm, may be settled for the present and secured to posterity.

[2.] That it may be great, may be *a praise in the earth*, that it may be praised, and God may be praised for it. When gospel truths are cleared and vindicated, when gospel ordinances are duly administered in their purity and power, when the church becomes eminent for holiness and love, then Jerusalem is a praise in the earth, then it is in reputation.

(5.) We must persevere in our prayers for mercy to the church till the mercy come; we must do as the prophet's servant did, go yet seven times, till the promising cloud appear, <sup><1184></sup>1 Kings 18:44.

(6.) It is a good sign that God is coming towards a people in ways of mercy when he pours out a spirit of prayer upon them and stirs them up to be fervent and constant in their intercessions.

**II.** Plenty of all other good things, v. 8. This follows upon the former; when the people praise God, when *all the people praise him, then shall the earth yield her increase* (<sup><1975></sup>Psalm 67:5, 6), and outward prosperity, crowning its piety, shall help to make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. Observe,

**1.** The great distress they had been in, and the losses they had sustained. Their corn had been meat for their enemies, which they hoped would be meat for themselves and their families. Here was a double grievance, that they themselves wanted that which was necessary to the support of life and were in danger of perishing for want of it, and that their enemies were strengthened by it, had their camp victualled with it, and so were the better able to do them a mischief. God is said to give their corn to their enemies, because he not only permitted it, but ordered it, to be the just punishment both of their abuse of plenty and of their symbolizing with strangers, <sup><2007></sup>Isaiah 1:7. The wine which they had laboured for, and which in their affliction they needed for the relief of those among them that were of a heavy heart, strangers drank it, to gratify their lusts with; this sore judgment was threatened for their sins, <sup><0336></sup>Leviticus 26:16; <sup><6583></sup>Deuteronomy 28:33. See how uncertain our creature-comforts are, and how much it is our wisdom to labour for that meat which we can never be robbed of.

**2.** The great fulness and satisfaction they should now be restored to (v. 9): *Those that have gathered it shall eat it, and praise the Lord.* See here,

(1.) God's mercy in giving plenty, and peace to enjoy it, — that the earth yields her increase, that there are hands to be employed in gathering it in, and that they are not taken off by plague and sickness, or otherwise employed in war, — that strangers and enemies do not come and gather it for themselves, or take it from us when we have gathered it, — that we eat the labour of our hands and the bread is not eaten out of our mouths, — and especially that we have opportunity and a heart to honour God with it,

and that his courts are open to us and we are not restrained from attending on him in them.

**(2.)** Our duty in the enjoyment of this mercy. We must gather what God gives, with care and industry; we must eat it freely and cheerfully, not bury the gifts of God's bounty, but make use of them. We must, when we have eaten and are full, *bless the Lord*, and give him thanks for his bounty to us; and we must serve him with our abundance, use it in works of piety and charity, eat it and *drink it in the courts of his holiness*, where the altar, the priest, and the poor must all have their share. The greatest comfort that a good man has in his meat and drink is that it furnishes him with a meat-offering and a drink-offering for the Lord his God (<sup><2014></sup>Joel 2:14); the greatest comfort that he has in an estate is that it gives him an opportunity of honouring God and doing good. This wine is to be *drunk in the courts of God's holiness*, and therefore moderately and with sobriety, as before the Lord.

**3.** The solemn ratification of this promise: *The Lord has sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength*, that he will do this for his people. God confirms it by an oath, that his people, who trust in him and his word, may have *strong consolation*, <sup><367></sup>Hebrews 6:17, 18. And, since he can swear by no greater, he swears by himself, sometimes by his being (*As I live*, <sup><531></sup>Ezekiel 33:11), sometimes by his holiness (<sup><395></sup>Psalm 89:35), here by his power, his right hand (which was lifted up in swearing, <sup><520></sup>Deuteronomy 32:40), and his arm of power; for it is a great satisfaction to those who build their hopes on God's promise to be sure that *what he has promised he is able to perform*, <sup><302></sup>Romans 4:21. To assure us of this he has sworn by his strength, pawning the reputation of his omnipotence upon it; if he do not do it, let it be said, *It was because he could not*, which the Egyptians shall never say (<sup><046></sup>Numbers 14:16) nor any other. It is the comfort of God's people that his power is engaged for them, his right hand, where the Mediator sits.

## <sup><220></sup>ISAIAH 62:10-12

### THE ADVENT OF THE MESSIAH

This, as many like passages before, refers to the deliverance of the Jews out of Babylon, and, under the type and figure of that, to the great



redemption wrought out by Jesus Christ, and the proclaiming of gospel grace and liberty through him.

**1.** Way shall be made for this salvation; all difficulties shall be removed, and whatever might obstruct it shall be taken out of the way, v. 10. The gates of Babylon shall be thrown open, that they may with freedom go through them; the way from Babylon to the land of Israel shall be prepared; causeways shall be made and cast up through wet and miry places, and the stones gathered out from places rough and rocky; in the convenient places appointed for their rendezvous standards shall be set up for their direction and encouragement, that they may embody for their greater safety. Thus John Baptist was sent to *prepare the way of the Lord*, <sup><ARB></sup>Matthew 3:3. And, before Christ by his graces and comforts comes to any for salvation, preparation is made for him by repentance, which is called the *preparation of the gospel of peace*, <sup><ARB></sup>Ephesians 6:15. Here the way is levelled by it, there the feet are shod with it, which comes all to one, for both are in order to a journey.

**2.** Notice shall be given of this salvation, v. 11, 12. It shall be proclaimed to the captives that they are set at liberty and may go if they please; it shall be proclaimed to their neighbours, to all about them, *to the end of the world*, that God has pleaded Zion's just, injured, and despised cause. Let it be said to Zion, for her comfort, *Behold, thy salvation comes* (that is, thy Saviour, who brings salvation); he will bring such a work, such a reward, in this salvation, as shall be admired by all, a reward of comfort and peace with him; but a work of humiliation and reformation before him, to prepare his people for that recompence of their sufferings; and then, with reference to each, it follows, they shall be called, *The holy people*, and the *redeemed of the Lord*. *The work before him*, which shall be wrought in them and upon them, shall denominate them a holy people, cured of their inclination to idolatry and consecrated to God only; and the *reward with him*, the deliverance wrought for them, shall denominate them the *redeemed of the Lord*, so redeemed as none but God could redeem them, and redeemed to be his, their bonds loosed, that they might be his servants. Jerusalem shall then be called, *Sought out, a city not forsaken*. She had been forsaken for many years; there were neither traders nor worshippers that enquired the way to Jerusalem as formerly, when it was frequented by both. But now God will again make her considerable. She shall be sought out, visited, resorted to, and court made to her, as much as ever. When Jerusalem is called a *holy city*, then it is called *sought out*; for holiness

puts an honour and beauty upon any place or person, which draws respect, and makes them to be admired, beloved, and enquired after. But this being proclaimed to the end of the world must have a reference to the gospel of Christ, which was to be preached to every creature; and it intimates,

(1.) The glory of Christ. It is published immediately to the church, but is thence echoed to every nation: *Behold, thy salvation cometh*. Christ is not only the Saviour, but the salvation itself; for the happiness of believers is not only from him, but in him, <sup>200</sup> Isaiah 12:2. His salvation consists both in the work and in the reward which he brings with him; for those that are his shall neither be idle nor lose their labour.

(2.) The beauty of the church. Christians shall be called *saints* (<sup>400</sup>1 Corinthians 1:2), *the holy people*, for they are chosen and called *to salvation through sanctification*. They shall be called *the redeemed of the Lord*; to him they owe their liberty, and therefore to him they owe their service, and they shall not be ashamed to own both. None are to be called *the redeemed of the Lord* but those that are the *holy people*; the people of God's purchase are a holy nation. And they shall be called, *Sought out*. God shall seek them out, and find them, wherever they are dispersed, eclipsed, or lost in a crowd; men shall seek them out, that they may join themselves to them, and not forsake them. It is good to associate with *the holy people*, that we may learn their ways, and with *the redeemed of the Lord*, that we may share in the blessings of the redemption.