

The Poor Made Rich

Isa 54:11-13 ¹¹ "O you afflicted one, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay your stones with colorful gems, and lay your foundations with sapphires. ¹² I will make your pinnacles of rubies, your gates of crystal, and all your walls of precious stones. ¹³ All your children shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children.

This is written as a comfort to those who because of the coming captivity in Babylon will know affliction, tempest, and will not know the comforts of Zion. For this message was written to the elect in Isaiah's day to those who would soon be carried into captivity. But they are given certain hope that God would in His time provide relief, safe harbor and eternal comfort. For here He promises that the Church shall be restored to her ancient splendor and that God will adorn her with attire of greater magnificence than she had ever known. Calvin points out that this was expressed by Haggai when he said, "The glory of the latter temple shall be greater than the glory of the former." (Haggai 2:10)

Here he speaks of that temple that shall be established when the coming Messiah, after providing redemption by the sacrifice of Himself upon the cross, will be resurrected from the tomb and ascend to the right hand of the Father on High. Setting there as that Great High Priest He shall ever live to make intercession for His church. This is the picture of the church both of the Old and New Testament that has been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. Thus, as Calvin pointed out in his commentary, "this earnest address is exceedingly well fitted for soothing the grief of believers; for it represents the Church, which was ready to be drowned, as being now rescued by him from shipwreck. Whenever therefore we shall see her violently shaken by tempests and weighed down by a load of distresses, and deprived of all consolation, let us remember that these are the very circumstances which induce God to give assistance". Although this passage spoke comfort to the elect of Isaiah's day just before they would be carried away to Babylon it is important to understand that there is a prophetic message contained herein for the church. For we find here a message that is spoken to us, God's Israel today. Two things I want us to take note of this morning, First, the Church shall be gloriously built even in the midst of conflict; And Secondly, we shall see that special standing the children of Zion have even in conflict.

A. The Church shall be gloriously built even in the midst of conflict - "O you afflicted one, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay your stones with colorful gems, and lay your foundations with sapphires. ¹² I will make your pinnacles of rubies, your gates of crystal, and all your walls of precious stones

1. The church in this present age should expect affliction, tempest and uncomfortable times.
 - a. Health, wealth and prosperity is not a biblical teaching.
 - b. Even having ones "best life now" is not a biblical teaching.
2. Our Lord clearly taught that we could expect tribulation as His people in this present world.

John 16:33 *These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. **In the world you will have tribulation;** but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."*

3. Yet His church is to take courage even in the midst of troubled times. - "be of good cheer"
4. There is a good reason for the church to take courage even in the midst of troubled times because it shall be victorious for our King has "**overcome the world**"
 - a. Our Lord has conquered death

1 Cor 15:55-57 "O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?" *The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who **gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.***

- b. He has defeated Satan

Heb 2:14 *Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,.*

- c. And He will bring Babylon, our persecutor, to an inglorious end

Rev 18:2, 20 ² *And he (A mighty angel) cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "**Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen,** ²⁰ "Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, **for God has avenged you on her!**"*

5. Another good reason for taking comfort is found in this passage for we read that God Himself is the builder of His church - **I will lay your stones** with colorful gems, and lay your foundations with sapphires. ¹² **I will make your pinnacles of rubies,** your gates of crystal, and all your walls of precious stones.
 - a. God here is clearly described as the builder of the city
 - b. This has been the hope of the church even from Abraham's day

Heb 11:9-10 *By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, **whose builder and maker is God.***

- c. We can understand then that we who are trusting in Christ today are this continuing glorious city being built by God even in trying times.

1 Peter 2:5-6 “. . . **you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.**”

6. The description that is given here by Isaiah is figurative and sets forth the beauty of the restored Zion. - *I will make your **pinnacles of rubies, your gates of crystal, and all your walls of precious stones***
 - a. She will not be established in her own beauty for God says, “I will make your . . .”
 - b. Our salvation is all of God’s doing
7. This does not speak of an earthly city, but of the heavenly city as further described for us by the Apostle John in the revelation given to him.

Rev 21:1-2 *Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw **the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.***

8. Sadly some see this new temple spoken of in Old Testament prophesy as an earthly temple rebuilt in an earthly kingdom.
9. That cannot be for the following reasons:
 - a. But Jesus clearly said, “My Kingdom is NOT of this world”.
 - b. The picture of the church here is a picture of sparkling brilliance similar to what we read of the church in her heavenly state. And the New Testament gives us the proper interpretation in the book of Revelation.

Rev 21:9-12 *Then one of the seven angels . . . talked with me, saying, “Come, I will show you the bride, **the Lamb's wife.**” And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and **showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem,** descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. **Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.***

10. Thus the church is this heavenly Zion is built with *stones of delight*

1 Peter 2:5-6 **you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.**

B. The special standing the children of Zion have even in conflict - **All your children shall be taught by the Lord.**

1. Once again this speaks of God’s elect as those who are “*taught by the Lord*”, (lit., *disciples of*) the Lord.
2. We know that this refers to us who are trusting in Christ for none other than our Lord Himself quotes this passage as referring to those who come to Him in faith

John 6:45 *“It is written in the prophets, and they shall all be taught of God. Everyone who has heard from the Father and has learned comes to me.”*

3. The greatness of this blessing is that the source of the teaching is God Himself,
 - a. Not by some secret divine revelation to each believer but through the preaching of the truth.
 - b. For it is Christ Himself who placed teachers in the church

Eph 4:11-13 *And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, **for the equipping of the saints** for the work of ministry, **for the edifying of the body of Christ.***

4. At the same time there is required something more than just the proclamation of the truth as Jesus said, *“Everyone who has **heard from the Father** and has learned **comes to me.**”*
 - a. For the preaching of the Word in itself is not sufficient, for many who hear the truth reject it.
 - b. For in addition to the hearing there must be the internal work of the Spirit.
 - c. Unless the Spirit of God makes one willing and able to believe, he will not believe.
5. Thus we have the promise of the Holy Spirit to instruct us.

1 Cor 2:10,12 ¹⁰ *But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. . . .* ¹² *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.*

1 John 2:20 *But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things.*

As Calvin taught on this passage says; “when the Lord has formed and polished us by his Spirit, and has added to the external preaching of the word the internal efficacy of the Spirit.”

CONCLUSION: Take great comfort dear flock of Christ

Although the city will be built in troubled times it is a glorious city whose builder and maker is God

Thus let us learn not to look upon those things that are temporal but upon those things that are eternal

2 Cor 4:17-18 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. 2 Cor 5:2 For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed; we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.