

GLORY TO COME

Saturday, August 15

Reading: Isaiah 59-61

Isaiah 61:1 *The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, 2 to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, 3 and provide for those who grieve in Zion--to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.*

Isaiah concludes his prophecies (Isaiah 59-66) by looking forward to that final day when Messiah will return and restore His people. He waits for “the Redeemer to come to Zion” (59:20) and for God to “rend the heavens and come down” (64:1). But as we wait for that day, Isaiah reminds us that we must deal with sin in our lives on a daily basis, for it separates us from God (59:1-2). He then describes the terrible condition of our sin-spoiled world (59:3-15). But there is hope, for God Himself will intervene to bring salvation (59:16-21). When Messiah comes to reign, darkness will be turned to light and God’s now oppressed people will be honored by all nations (Isaiah 60).

Isaiah 61:1-2 was read by Jesus to the synagogue crowd in Nazareth. On that day He proclaimed that these words were fulfilled in their hearing (Luke 4:16-21). Jesus stopped after the words “to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” because His first coming did not include “the day of vengeance.” He had come to sacrifice Himself for our sins. The day of vengeance on those who reject Him will occur when He returns in power and glory (described in Isaiah 63 and Revelation 19:11-16). It was a day that Isaiah looked forward to with joy and gladness. And so should we!

POINTS TO PONDER:

1. Before the glories of the Kingdom, Isaiah makes sure we understand our tragic spiritual condition (Isaiah 59). We are alienated from God! Paul quotes part of this passage when describing our total depravity (Romans 3). When you read these verses, how do they compare with what we see in society around us? What hope do they give us for our world?
2. Isaiah 61:1-3 describe what Christ’s first and second coming will do for those who believe in Him. As “the body of Christ” we should be following our Savior’s example. What are we doing to preach the good news, to bind up the broken-hearted, to help those who grieve, and provide a garment of praise for those in despair?
3. While the details of Christ’s Second Coming include judgment and gloom, this should not be the response of the faithful. The Bible encourages us to look forward to that day because it will mean the restoration of God’s creation and our salvation through the blood of Christ. Can you echo these words of the prophet Isaiah?

Isaiah 61:10 I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For He has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.