



The society envisaged by Isaiah 60-62

The prophecy in Isaiah 60-62 utilizes figurative and poetic language, related to Israel's history as a nation, to envision postexilic life in a restored and magnified Zion. As the ideal theocratic society, it is the place of God's visible glory in his people: righteousness, justice, prosperity, and unceasing peace and joy, causing the influx of the nations to serve Zion. Exploring the significance of this society envisaged by Isaiah this essay will survey the theological importance of the themes in Isaiah 60-62 that are drawn from throughout the Isaianic corpus, and their relation to the wider body of prophetic literature. Finally, the kind of society envisaged by these themes will be interpreted through the lens of the New Testament in order to grasp how such a society is established.

On the basis that revelation and predictive prophecy are reasonable,¹ then what the book of Isaiah suggests about its origins is true (1:1); Isaiah did predict the Babylonian exile and beyond. Crucially then, if the prophecy concerning the exile (40-55) is of pre-exilic origin, and not a product of the exilic or post-exilic community, scholarship has recognised that there is also no difficulty in the so-called third Isaiah (56-66) also being of pre-exilic Isaianic origin.² Accordingly, as the entire work of Isaiah the prophet, the vision does "not merely engage in utopian speculation ... [Isaiah] is looking into the future under the guidance of God's Spirit".³ Therefore, the climactic vision in 60-62 utilizes figurative and poetic language, in particular the metaphor of the city and temple, to communicate God's destiny for his people following their release from exile. The theme of Zion as the city of God is rooted in the Davidic monarchy as "the place the Lord chose" to dwell and to reign in righteousness (2 Sam 7:10-11; Ps 132:13; 68:16; 87:2-3). While Zion was the geographical location of David's reign, throughout scripture it is used to refer to God's covenant people as his dwelling place (Ps. 78:68). Isaiah also reflects this referring to Zion as "the Holy People, the Redeemed of the Lord" (62:12), having walls of salvation and gates of praise, with God's glory reflected in all its inhabitants having been made righteous (60:21).

Therefore, the righteous character of the inhabitants results in the reign of peace and everlasting joy. It is a society where justice reigns; there is no violence, ruin or destruction. Rather there is security – there is no need for protection (60:11) – as the nations come to serve Zion, bringing wealth and re-gathering exiles with them (60:4, 6-7, 9, 13). It is therefore, the promise of the reversal of their exile; rather than foreigners

¹ Beneath the many varied and nuanced interpretations of Isaiah's society there are two underlying presuppositions. The first works upon the presupposition of *supernaturalism*. It therefore operates within the framework that God is the basis for truth and has revealed himself understandably throughout history. Accordingly, human reason submits to his revelation as authoritative for determining truth, because as Isaiah declares God's "thoughts are not our thoughts" (55:8-9). It therefore assumes that scripture and prophecy are what they claim to be – divinely inspired – being grounded in particular historical contexts and situations, and sovereignly preserved throughout the generations, to reveal the way of truth. The second interpretative approach works upon the presupposition of *naturalism*. It therefore operates within the framework that human reason is ultimate in determining truth. Accordingly, the scriptures are viewed as humanly inspired and culturally bound, being driven and altered by the needs of changing socio-political situations, thus assuming that prophecy and scripture do not reveal a divine agenda but a human one. These two assumptions concerning the nature of reality, scripture and prophecy will result in different conceptions of the society that is envisaged in Isaiah.

² Alec. J Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1993), p. 26; John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), p. 25; James D. Smart, *History and Theology in Second Isaiah: A Commentary on Isaiah 35, 40-66* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: The Westminster Press, 1965), p. 236.

³ Richard J. Mouw, *When the Kings Come Marching in: Isaiah and the New Jerusalem* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), p. 9.

destroying the city walls, they rebuild them; kings rather than enslaving Zion's people, come to serve (60:10, 14). However, rather than reflecting a temporal kingdom, Isaiah employs the language of re-creation, indicating the end of the seasonal patterns established in the creation edict (Gen 1:14-18; Jer 31:35), promising a new creation where the inhabitants of the city are no longer governed by the sun and moon, but God is their light and everlasting governor (60:19-20). This language of re-creation consistently represents salvation throughout scripture as a return to the original paradisiacal condition where God dwelt with humanity. It conveys the divine eschatological purpose to reestablish the constancy and permanency of peace: "Shalom is the end product of God's creative activity, implies fullness, wholeness, completion ... and the harmonious functioning of all aspects of the natural world".⁴ Therefore, Isaiah's society envisions the completed purposes of God to restore Israel's desolation and destruction into a land of delight and fertility (62:8-9), reflecting the permanence, abundance and joy in the "new heavens and earth" (Isa 65:17-25).⁵

Moreover, this magnified city is humanly unattainable. Isaiah 60-62 is the centre point of a larger literary unit (56-66) bracketed by discourse concerning the reality of human inability to live righteously (56:9-59:15; 63:7-66:17). This is a theme throughout the entire Isaianic corpus with chapter 1 establishing Israel's unrighteousness as "the sinful nation" full of corruption and persistent in rebellion (1:2-6). Their state is contrasted by the theme of God's holiness (30:15; 43:3), which "helps one understand what Isaiah thinks went wrong in Israel".⁶ As God's covenant people from among the nations, Israel was expected to do right by their covenant relation to God (1:21, 26; 5:7, 16; 26:7; 28:17; 33:5, 15). However, their inability to do so is highlighted in chapters 7-39 by Israel's trust in the nations and their idols instead of God, resulting in incremental covenantal consequences that culminate in their exile (Deut 28:15-68). Nevertheless, Isaiah frames judgement within its restorative purpose, evident in the promise of judgement in chapter 1 being immediately followed by the unveiling of Zion's certain destiny as the universal destination of instruction and peace (2:1-5), thus explicating Isaiah's message is one of salvation. Nevertheless, the question remains as to how God's destiny for a righteous people is achieved—how can the Israel described in the opening chapter ever become the Israel of 2:1-5 and 60-62, the desired destination of the nations?⁷

Isaiah answers this through his countervailing theme of divine grace. Following the prediction of exile, as a result of Judah's inability to live righteously, chapters 40-55 shifts gear to provide the only solution to human unrighteousness: the divine grace to deliver his people according to his own righteousness. Thus even though Israel is stubborn and unrepentant (Jer 6:15; 13:23) God's grace promises a new covenant that will give them a new heart and a new spirit to cause them to walk in his statutes (Jer 24:7; 31:31; Ezk 11:19; 36:24; Isa 59:21). Therefore following the prophecy of Israel's deliverance from Babylon (48) Isaiah reveals their true need is deliverance from sin through his suffering servant (52-54).⁸ Reflecting this, the chiasmic

⁴ George A. F. Knight, *Isaiah 56-66: The New Israel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), p. 44.

⁵ Carol J. Dempsy, "From Desolation to Delight: The Transformative Vision of Isaiah 60-62". In *The Desert Will Bloom: Poetic Visions in Isaiah*, Eds. A. Joseph Everson & Hyun Chul Paul Kim, (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), p. 228.

⁶ David L. Peterson, *The Prophetic Literature: An Introduction* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), p. 90.

⁷ Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah*, p. 61.

⁸ Mark J. Boda, *A Severe Mercy: Sin and its Remedy in the Old Testament* (Wiona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2009), p. 221.

structure of chapters 56-66 forms a “reprise” of the book⁹, centering the restored Zion (60-62) within the reality of human unrighteousness (56:9-59:15; 63:7-66:17), which calls forth the divine warrior to defeat sin (59:15-21; 63:1-6) in order to realise the promises of 60-62. Thus after describing the glory of the city in Isaiah 60, Isaiah 61 turns to the Servant of the Lord as the key for what is promised to Israel in 60-62, drawing together the themes of the Servant (Isa. 9, 11, 42, 49), anointed by the “Spirit of the Lord” to “bring forth justice in the nations” (42:1) through the forgiveness of sins (53).¹⁰

Consequently, the anointed Servant is the pinnacle of Isaiah’s vision, moving beyond the deliverance from their Babylonian captivity to address the root of Israel’s geographical exile as the result of their spiritual exile from the presence of God in captivity to sin: “your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you” (59:2). Thus Isaiah’s choice of the word ‘to heal’ (61:1), describing the ministry of the Servant, is the same used in chapter 1:6 referring to Israel’s open wounds caused by sin.¹¹ The Servant therefore announces the good news of deliverance from slavery to sin—a year of jubilee that restores and resettles all debts (Lev 25:10; Jer 34:8). In the ancient near east “amnesty was proclaimed when prisoners were released in the inauguration of a new kings’ reign.”¹² Thus Isaiah establishes that eschatological deliverance from sin rests on the basis of God having “installed [his] King on Zion, [his] holy hill” (Ps 2:6). Furthermore, Isaiah envisions not only deliverance *from* sin but also deliverance *into* a new condition; beauty instead of ashes, joy instead of mourning and praise instead of despair (61:3). This new condition is evidenced in a change in name (Gen 17:5; 32:28); they are “no longer” called deserted or their land desolate but they are named married and my delight (62:2, 4),¹³ and a new everlasting covenant as the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant (59:21; 61:8; 62:8) to end their estrangement from God, represented by Isaiah’s marriage imagery (61:10; 62:4-5).¹⁴ Crucially, God vindicates Israel *so that* his glory would be known among the nations (Deut 32:27; Isa 43:25; 48:9; Ezk 36:22; Isa 60:1-3; 62:1-2).¹⁵

This is the thrust of Isaiah to communicate God’s overarching purpose to bless all nations (5:19; 25:1; 28:29; 30:1; 44:26; 46:11; Gen 12:3; 27:29).¹⁶ Accordingly Isaiah’s climactic vision in 60-62 is set within a universal framework for salvation (56:1-8; 66:18-24),¹⁷ establishing Israel’s destiny as God’s instrument for fulfilling this purpose. Thus Isaiah’s prophecy moves beyond the issues raised by the exile to address the ultimate concerns of the book: “the significance of Israel’s experience with God for all of human history. If God is the one true God what does this mean for Israel in relation to God and to the world?”¹⁸ From as early as Isaiah 2:1-5 Israel is charged with walking in the light of God’s ways so that they may be “a light for the Gentiles that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth” (49:6). Therefore, God’s light sovereignly dawns on Zion precisely because “thick darkness is over the peoples” (60:1). Zion’s light is for the salvation

⁹ Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah*, p. 11.

¹⁰ Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, p. 318.

¹¹ Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah*, p. 565.

¹² Knight, *Isaiah 56-66*, p. 5.

¹³ Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, p. 509.

¹⁴ Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, p. 506.

¹⁵ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: Holy Spirit, Church and New Creation, Volume 4*. Ed. John Bolt. Trans. John Vriend. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2003), p. 649.

¹⁶ Peterson, *The Prophetic Literature*, p. 91.

¹⁷ Boda, *A Severe Mercy*, p. 212.

¹⁸ Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah*, p. 535.

of the nations—resulting in Isaiah envisioning the nations streaming to Zion’s brightness to share in its blessings. However, there is also the portentous promise that “the nation or kingdom that will not serve you will perish; it will be utterly ruined.” This Motyer fittingly describes as “the dark pivot of the poem”, indicating Zion’s centrality to international destinies.¹⁹

However, it raises the question as to what it means for the nations to ‘serve’ Zion, and whether it is “the expression of a narrowly ethnic and nationalistic mentality?”²⁰ In context, Zion is not referring to ethnic Israel but to the faithful who keep the covenant of Yahweh, which included foreigners (56:3-8).

Additionally, far from indicating a nationalistic mentality, Israel is just like the nations looking “for light, but all is darkness; for brightness, but we walk in deep shadows” (Isa 59:9). The only difference is God’s gracious salvific initiative for those who repent. Therefore, Zion’s role, as a faithful remnant, in determining the destinies of nations is “the end-point of a consistent and world-changing theological vision. There is no saviour in the religion which takes this world to be God, as witnessed to the life and experience of his servant Israel ... it is God who saves” (43:11).²¹ Thus as the “the Holy People, the Redeemed of the Lord” (62:12) Zion is the sign of Yahweh’s reign and authority: “a crown of splendor in the Lord’s hand; a royal diadem in the hand of your God” (62:3). Therefore, to reject Zion – the servant of the Lord – is to reject the one true God, while to serve Zion is to the serve its King.²²

Consequently, it is not surprising that tributes of great wealth accompany the surge of the nations into Zion. Isaiah’s phrase the “wealth of nations comes to you” (60:5) represents the tribute or gifts that one imperial power presents to a greater one,²³ which was for so long paid by Israel to the surrounding nations. With this now occurring in reverse it signifies the universal recognition of Zion’s King.²⁴ Crucially, Isaiah’s theocratic society contrasts the “humanly-centred city” and its glory in its own might (Isa. 24:10; 25:2-3, 6-10; 26:1-6).²⁵ Therefore, the detailed description of the wealth that is brought; timber, camels, rams, flocks, gold and frankincense – signs of the nations cultural, political, commercial and technological power – represent the symbols of human glory being transformed as they are brought into Zion for the specific purpose to proclaim the name and glory of the LORD (60:6, 9); to minister to the LORD as sacrifices (60:7); and to beautify the LORD’s house (60:13).²⁶ Thus while Isaiah had previously prophesied judgement against the idolatrous function of wealth (2:11); the cutting down of the majestic trees (10:34) and the breaking of the ships of Tarshish (23:14),²⁷ now these symbols of human pride come to serve Zion, representing the bowing of human pride in recognition of the one true living God. Therefore, while God brings judgement against man’s idolatrous trust in wealth, Isaiah explicates the ultimate restoration of creation, for “the earth is the Lords and everything in it” (Ps 24:1). Accordingly, as human pride submits to God as King it will bring healing to the

¹⁹ Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, p. 497.

²⁰ Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah*, p. 541.

²¹ Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah*, p. 538.

²² Dempsey, “From Desolation to Delight”, p. 223.

²³ Gary Stansell, “The Nations’ Journey to Zion: Pilgrimage and Tribute as Metaphor in the Book of Isaiah”. In *The Desert Will Bloom: Poetic Visions in Isaiah*, Eds. A. Joseph Everson & Hyun Chul Paul Kim (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), p. 236.

²⁴ Walter Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40-66* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), p. 32.

²⁵ Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, p. 17.

²⁶ Mouw, *When the Kings Come Marching in*, p. 22.

²⁷ The ships of Tarshish were the best and largest ocean going vessels used—a symbol of human pride (Isa 2:16; Ps 48:8; Ezk 27:25). D. R. Jones, *Isaiah 56-66 and Joel* (London: SCM Press, 1964), p. 69.

wealth of the nations and the restoration of earth's resources, releasing them from their idolatrous function to be set toward their proper use in glorying God.²⁸ Thus while these entities come to serve 'Zion', it is not the inhabitants that are exalted, but the glory of the LORD.

Furthermore, these nations that come to serve Zion not only bring wealth, but exhibit a complete transformation in their previous posture toward Israel; those who destroyed their city come to rebuild their walls, those who oppressed them turn to serve them (60:10) and come bowing before them (60:14). There is also a distinction between the labour of the foreigners in Zion (62:5) and the priestly role of Israel (62:6). This has raised the question of whether Isaiah is envisioning a hierarchical society between the 'chosen' and foreigners. Brett contends:

We must acknowledge that the relatively inclusive ethos of chs 61-62 represents an unequal ecumenism ... Isaiah 61:5-6 establishes a clear hierarchy of the chosen, who are given to *sacred* labour, over and against the foreigners, who are given to *profane* labour in the land.²⁹

Goldingay critiques this, reasoning that it is "not self-evident that the work of the Gentiles on the farm is inferior to the work of Israelites in the temple or that Isa 60-62 thus implies a hierarchy in which Israel is above the Gentiles", suggesting that it is inclusive of them in the life of the eleven tribes, distinct from the Levites.³⁰ However, even this does not fully grasp the radical transformation Isaiah envisions. The verb used for foreigners *servicing* is the same used for the role of Levitical priesthood offering sacrifices on the altar (56:6; 66:21).³¹ Thus in contrast to Deuteronomy (23:1-6) excluding foreigners from worship, Isaiah envisions the time of Israel's restoration giving foreigners a Levitical role,³² implying that *all* in Zion will have a priestly role despite different functions. Zechariah's prophecy also envisions the universal gathering of the nations to Zion and the transformation of even the most menial tasks into a holy labour (14:21). Thus the prophets indicate that in the restored society there is no distinction between profane and holy labour—all is holy unto the LORD.

Nevertheless, Isaiah's distinction of functions between Israel's priestly role and the foreigners in Zion, highlighted by Brett, does serve to underscore that Israel is *not* to rule over the nations like their oppressors ruled over them, rather they are to serve them as priests. Jesus reiterates this principle when he teaches his disciples that the way the Gentiles exercise authority over one another is not the way of the kingdom, rather his people are to serve one another (Matt 20:25; Mark 10:42). Therefore, rather than Isaiah's distinction of Israel's priestly role conveying a hierarchy of power, it conveys a position of humility and servanthood (Ex 19:6; Num 8:5; Deut 33:10)—the reversal of a worldly kingdom. Accordingly, it is essential to keep in mind

²⁸ Mouw, *When the Kings Come Marching in*, p. 30.

²⁹ Mark G. Brett, "Postcolonial Interpretation: Unequal Terms: A Postcolonial Approach to Isaiah 61". In *Biblical Interpretation and Method: Essays in Honour of John Barton*, Eds Katharine J. Dell & Paul M. Joyce (Oxford: Oxford University, 2013), p. 249.

³⁰ John Goldingay, "Four Reflections on Isaiah and Imperial Context." In *Isaiah and Imperial Context: The Book of Isaiah in the Times of Empire*, Eds Andrew T. Abernethy, Mark G. Brett, Tim Bulkeley & Tim Meadowcroft, (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2013), p. 206.

³¹ Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, p. 497.

³² Greg. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2011), p. 660.

the character of Zion that is envisioned; its overseers are peace-makers and its taskmasters are righteous (60:17). Thus as Motyer stresses:

In order to disabuse our minds of all thoughts of triumphalism on the one side and of enslavement on the other, we need to remember that in this verse, as in similar verses, Isaiah is stating the truth within the political terms dictated by the metaphor the city ... those who seek citizenship must come humbly and if their previous behaviour requires it, with submissiveness.³³

Therefore, “if the words rebuild and serve suggest menial status we are missing the point”.³⁴ Rather than picturing an unjust, second-class citizenship, Isaiah’s society communicates the necessary conditions of humility and servanthood to dwell in God’s city (57:15; 66:2). He proclaims the harmonious functioning and glad cooperation of the inhabitants, unified in one purpose to glorify God. Thus as Smart contends, “We must not be misled by the material images—kings becoming servants of God’s people, the wealth of the nations being poured out at their feet ... these features are meant only to represent ... all things will be transformed”.³⁵

Therefore, while Israel experienced a partial fulfilment of Isaiah’s prophecy in their deliverance from Babylonian exile, the magnitude and permanency of the transformation that is envisaged is finally fulfilled in Christ’s advent. Central to Isaiah’s prophecy being realised is the ministry of the anointed Servant proclaiming deliverance from sin. Jesus applies this prophecy to the beginning of his ministry saying, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:21). Through Jesus’ death, resurrection and ascension he commenced his reign as “the ruler of the kings on earth” (Rev 1:5), releasing captives from sin and pouring out the promised Holy Spirit (Acts 2:33-35). This inbreaking of the Spirit, as the mark of the eschatological new age, signaled the inauguration of the new creation – “a new heaven and a new earth” – when God achieved his eschatological purpose to dwell with humanity, when “they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” (Rev 21:1-4; cf. 2 Cor 5:17; Isa 43; 65-66).

Consequently, through the new covenant Isaiah’s promise of a new condition—a society of peace, righteousness and joy is established by the indwelling of God’s Spirit (Rom 14:17). Thus the metaphor of the city and temple used by Isaiah and the prophets finds its eschatological fulfillment in God’s covenant people forming a “holy temple in the Lord ... being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit” as “Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (Eph 2:22, Heb 12:). This indwelling of the Spirit, as envisioned by Isaiah, establishes “a kingdom of priests” where all different functions have a priestly role in serving Christ (Rev 1:6; 1 Pet 2:9; 1 Cor 12:12-26; Col 3:17). Furthermore, the Spirit accomplishes the

³³ Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, p. 497.

³⁴ Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, p. 502.

³⁵ Smart, *History and Theology in Second Isaiah*, p. 256-7.

radical transformation between the nations where the “dividing wall of hostility” is broken down, so that those who were strangers to the covenant of Israel have been brought near, and “there is no longer Jew nor Gentile, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28; Eph 2:11-22). Therefore, no matter ones race, social status or gender all are united by one Spirit, as God’s Holy people, with one purpose to glorify God.

Nevertheless, if Isaiah’s ideal theocratic society was inaugurated through the new covenant, the question remains as to how its reign of justice and peace is established—politically or otherwise? If the *ecclesia* is the “New Jerusalem” are they to rule over the nations? Importantly, Jesus said, “my kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36)—referring to the source of the kingdom. Essentially, the kingdom breaks in ‘from above’ through the reign of the Spirit, answering the prophetic cry in Amos that “justice [would] roll down like water” (5:24). Without this indwelling of the Spirit (Ezk 36:26; Jer 31:33; Isa 59:21), Israel’s experience explicates that humanity cannot know justice; we innately “call evil good and good evil” (Isa 5:20). Therefore the kingdom is established “not by might nor by power but by the Spirit” (Zech 4:6; Rom 14:17; Isa 61:11). Even so, while the kingdom reigns through the Spirit transforming hearts, it does not mean that it is not concerned with this world—rather Isaiah envisions a complete transformation of the whole created order bringing heaven to earth. Therefore, as a society experiences personal regeneration – the deliverance from sin into righteousness in order to restore humanity to God, each other and to the earth – cultural transformation and true justice will occur. Accordingly, the role of Zion – the *ecclesia* – as the light of the world, is to establish the kingdom of God on earth through the proclamation of the good news (Isa 61); teaching and discipling all nations the ways of God (Matt 28:18-20; Isa 2:2-5), extending the manifold wisdom of God concerning art, politics, economics, ecology, morality and spirituality to transform every culture and nation. Thus as the leaven of the kingdom permeates the world (Matt 13), increasingly throughout history (Isa 9:7), it will bring to fruition the consummation of God’s intention, envisioned in Isaiah 60-62, to restore the whole of creation to it paradisiacal condition—filling the whole earth with his glory (Hab 2:14; Isa 66:18-23; Matt 19:28).

In conclusion, Isaiah poetically envisions the ideal theocratic society—the kingdom of God on earth. The imagery, related to Israel’s history and nation, conveys a reversal of Israel’s fortunes; being sought out rather than forsaken, freedom instead of bondage, abundance instead of desolation, security instead of war, and most profoundly righteousness instead of unrighteousness. However, the eschatological nature of the promises concerning the deliverance from sin and a new condition and covenant proclaim an entire new creation—the restoration of the created order; between God and his people, between all humanity, and between humanity and the earth, resulting in the permanency and constancy of the reign of peace—God dwelling with humanity. This society, while inaugurated in Christ, advances increasingly in the earth through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit causing a redeemed people to manifest God’s holiness, righteousness and justice, enacting the transformation of culture and creation. Nevertheless, while Isaiah declared the certainty of its fulfilment, with every promise guaranteed by the declaration that it is God who will accomplish it

because of who he is,³⁶ he exhorted Israel to enter into the promise by faith, to “go through the gates; prepare the way for the people; build up, build up the highway; clear it of stones; lift up a signal over the peoples” (Isa 62:10). So also the *ecclesia* must enter by faith into the promise of the cosmos’s ultimate renewal at the consummation of history when “the last enemy to be destroyed is death” and “all things will be made new” (1 Cor 15:26; Rev 21:5; cf. Ps 110:1).

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³⁶ Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah*, p. 561.

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