

The Capital Of The World

Standing on the Walls of New Jerusalem

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We all probably have our “Things I never thought I'd be doing” list and it grows and of course it changes as we go on in life. Things like, for instance when I was studying violin in college, I never thought that I would eventually be working a roustabout on an oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico, but things like that happen though, do they not?

Well, the most recent entry on my own list was about a year ago, I never thought I would be pushing a baby stroller through Manhattan's Central Park. A business associate of mine hosted a trip to New York in May. We spent several days there and in planning the trip, I said “why don't you bring your wife and your children along.” Well, we did the touristy things that one does in New York. We climbed the Empire State Building, we emigrated to Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty, and we took in a few Broadway plays, and we ate in restaurants that were frankly the top ten in the nation, and we pushed children, it seemed like, through every corner of Central Park's 831 acres.

Now of course I had misgivings, not wanting to become more flawed than I already am. I had some real misgivings about going to Gotham City, as it is called, or the capitol of the world, that is another name for New York City.

I was enthusiastic about seeing Spiderman: The Play, and other plays, and I wanted to see the libraries, the museums, the art galleries, and the music halls. There are plenty of those kinds of things in Manhattan, yet is not New York a bad place? The borough of Manhattan, the epitome of Babylon, with its United Nations building, it is Wall Street, it is Rockefeller Center, the home of NBC. Does it not stand for everything that is glitzy and everything that is empty in our materialistic world and our materialistic culture?

Well, Isaiah 62 was on my mind as I prepared for the trip, and brethren I can honestly tell you it stayed with me through every step I took through Central Park.

Isaiah 62:6-7 I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the LORD, do not keep silent, and give Him no rest till He establishes and till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

Now brethren this passage speaks of change. It is not merely a change of power structure. It does not say that the people are going to come to fear Jerusalem, but rather it says that they are going to praise Jerusalem. They are not doing that now, they are not praising Jerusalem. They see it as a flash point; they see it as a trouble spot. Many world leaders would probably wish it would just go away. We know that Satan will eventually lead the nations to destroy Jerusalem. So, God is talking about affecting a major, major attitude change concerning Jerusalem.

What is it going to take to make Jerusalem the praise of the earth? What does Jerusalem's prophesied ascendance bode for Moscow, London, Brussels, Beijing, Cairo, Paris—these other cities around the world to which people flow for jobs, for entertainment, for what passes as culture in this world? Brethren, perhaps most importantly are we, on Jerusalem's walls today, giving God no rest until He makes Jerusalem the praise of the earth? Or are we too busy in New York City?

I do need to define the term "city", Ronny talked about it earlier. Augustine and his book, *The City Of God*, makes it clear that he is not speaking about a municipality. He is not speaking about a rather confined area where there are a lot of people all crammed into one space. To him a city is a way of thinking; it is there for a way of life of the people living in an area, whether it is large or small. It is their culture, it is whatever binds them together, it is their way of thinking. You could say that a city is a people's controlling or dominate zeitgeist. For instance, we often associate San Francisco with certain cultural elements or Las Vegas with other elements.

Augustine was saying that the city of man was faltering. After all, brethren, it had been just a few years before that the Visigoths had destroyed the city of Rome, and that was called “The Eternal City.” And Augustine, when he said he averred that the “City of God”, which he erroneously saw in heaven of course, would ultimately prevail.

Years afterward Harvey Cox, a professor of theology at Harvard Divinity School, wrote another book about cities. He called his 1965 book, *The Secular City*. He used the noun “city” in a similar way. City means the spirit of the times and in this case, the way of life as it is characterized by secularism. So we can call America, “secular city”, or we could call Iraq, “revenge city”, and this is not far from the colloquial way that we use city, almost the slang way. We can refer to a boring movie as “dull city”, and we are saying that the movie is slow paced or mentally numbing.

Please turn to Revelation 11. We will see a couple of spiritual uses of the word “city.” In this particular one it is a reference to the two witnesses.

Revelation 11:8 And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our LORD WAS crucified.

Clearly brethren this is a reference to Jerusalem, but God calls it Sodom and Egypt symbolically. Now by this time, the city of Sodom had been long gone for millennia. The city was gone and the people long gone, but the people of Jerusalem have adopted the immoral ways of the people of that city as well as the idolatry that characterized Egypt. So, it is not geography that is important or location. That is not the focus here; the focus is on the way of life that has come to characterize the city and the people in Jerusalem.

Now turn to Revelation 14:8 and we will see the same kind of thing again.

Revelation 14:8 And another angel followed, saying, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”

The city of Babylon is located in Iraq and it has fallen long, long ago. This passage as we all know, speaks of another Babylon characterized here as “Babylon the Great.” This great city is associated with sexual immorality, with a way of life that foisted up all nations. So this is clearly not a reference to one city and a rather confined spot on the planet, but rather it refers to a way of life, and we know that it is an international way of life. We know from other scriptures that it will come to be backed up by vast economic and military powers.

Now on a more positive note we could turn to Hebrews 11. Paul tells us here that Abraham, the father of the faithful, also saw the city.

Hebrews 11:8-10 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would afterward receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents[notice not in a city, he lived 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.

Please turn to Isaiah 2. Here God provides an outline of His plans for Jerusalem in the future. We know that God's end time works are going to be two-pronged. First of course we know that God is going to tear down this present evil world. We see that He is going to humble mankind. Second, we know that God is going to build up; He is going to restore the waste places, as it says. Martin Collins I think it was, talked yesterday about renewal. God is going to renew.

Now Isaiah 2 outlines how this is going to take place.

Isaiah 2:2-5 Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, [and please understand, Isaiah is not

prophesying here that the law is going to go away; that it is done away with. He says that the law will go forth from Zion] and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. O house of Jacob come let us walk in the light of the LORD.

Hold on to that word light brethren because we are going to be coming back to it. Now what is wrong and what is God going to do while the rest of the passage talks about a number of things that God is going to do to fix the situation? Beginning in verse 6:

Isaiah 2:6 For you have forsaken Your people, the house of Jacob, because [this is the first thing wrong] they are filled with eastern ways; they are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they are pleased with the children of foreigners.

Remember, brethren, the east is where people go to get away from God. In Genesis 4:16 we read that Cain, after he murdered his brother, traveled east. As a second witness consider Genesis 11:2. The people, moving away from the Ark, traveled east towards Shinar.

So now let's continue on in verse 7 and see what else is wrong.

Isaiah 2:7 Their land is also full of silver and gold, and there is no end to their treasures; their land is also full of horses, and there is no end to their chariots.

You know chariots, brethren, there are more cars than people in America. That is a statistical fact. Businessmen and governments in Israel strike many bargains with nations of the east, and we are under the economic and the financial influence of China and Japan. Also, Israel has become extremely rich and extremely materialistic, but there is more. There are other things that are wrong. Let us take a look at verse 8:

Isaiah 2:8-11 their land is also full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made. People bow down, and each man humbles himself; therefore do not forgive them. [Hold on to that. These people had not yet repented, they had been humbled, but God is not forgiving them yet, they have not truly repented.] Enter into the rock and hide in the dust from the terror of the LORD and the glory of His majesty. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day. [This is a reference to the day of the Lord.]

Stated generally, brethren, God's approach to fixing the materialistic and the idolatrous world is to humble mankind, to basically destroy what he has built under the leadership of prideful Satan. Verse 17-21 tells us more about this.

Isaiah 2:17-20 The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be brought low; the LORD alone will be exalted in that day, but the idols He shall utterly abolish. They shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, from the terror of the LORD and the glory of His majesty, when He arises to shake the earth mightily. In that day a man will cast away his idols of silver and his idols of gold, which they made, each for himself to worship, to the moles and bats, [People will abandon their idols; they will abandon their materialism. If you stop to think about it, if everyone goes into a cave it is going to hard for them the drive their cars there. There are caves big enough, by the way, that you can drive your cars into, but not for everybody. Continuing in verse 21] to go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the crags of the rugged rocks, from the terror of the LORD and the glory of His majesty, when He arises to shake the earth mightily.

Now, please turn to Revelation 6 which I think provides interesting commentary on the passage in Isaiah. He talks about these, I call them, post-historic cave dwellers, living as they do in caves, not in cities, in these end times.

Revelation 6:15-16 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks and of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, “fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”

Now brethren, the concept of hiding under the ground is as old as the hills (forgive the play on words). Military establishments often construct command and control facilities underground hardened against attack. I think there is a place in Virginia, that is obviously not well advertised, but I am told that it is there. It is a subterranean facility for the members of Congress and their families should it be needed in a military attack. There are other venues, like in Springfield, Missouri near where I live, there is a number of caves, some of which are quite large.

When the sky is falling, when the world is coming to an end, no matter how you happen to look at it, it is pretty much of a no-brainer to hide under a mountain. Well, let us take a look at Revelation 6 in a little more detail. We will not read it in context, but if you were to do so you would see that it takes place during the sixth seal.

I want you to notice the quotation marks here. God is telling us what these people are saying and therefore what they are thinking; what is on their mind. I want to read this quotation again, but I am going to read from Philips paraphrase.

Revelation 6:16 (Philips translation) And they said to the mountains and to the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand against it?”

First, I want you to notice what the end time cave dwellers do not say. First, they do not blame all these problems on nature. That is what people today would do; the secularists and atheists. They would say something like, “we have a bad weather situation here. It’s just a cycle however. Nature is going

to clean up the air after a while and everything will be okay.” No, they do not speak with a secularist’s voice at all brethren. I think that is important.

Secondly, brethren, they do not blame their condition on the trinity. They do not blame it on the Father, the Son, and a Holy Spirit. Now trinitarianism is big. If you know anything of how big it is you would be amazed. You would be amazed at how many letters the church gets about the trinity. Our minister just has to write something in the Berean and bring up the word trinity, and we will get twenty letters about it. Most of them are condemning the idea that we do not believe in the trinity. It is a very important doctrine out there. But in these bad days, these people focus on the Father and the Son, as if the Holy Spirit did not exist; was not in their thinking; was not in their mind at all. It is almost as if they had abandoned their trinitarian thought. I think that it is very important why it is not there.

Now let us see what these end time cave dwellers do think. First, notice that they recognize the power and sovereignty of God. They ask, “Who can stand against the power of God?” In realizing the futility of fighting God, that is probably what is driving them into these caves in the first place, what drove them underground.

Third, brethren, they understand that Christ is the Lamb. And fourth, they understand that they are facing the great day of God's wrath. They understand that their situation is special, that these are not normal times. They understand, at least in concept, the idea of the Day of the Lord.

How many individuals, that we would classify today as the kings of the earth, nobles, military commanders, rich and powerful? How many of this ilk today know that Christ is the Lamb? And how many of them brethren, know anything about the Day of the Lord?

There are comparatively few numbers of people out there who do. Bible belt people, of course know that, but in the world at large not a lot of people out there know that, and those who do, those who know that Christ is the Lamb and know about the Day of the Lord, also fervently believe in the trinity. They believe in that and yet brethren, from what we see in the Revelation 6 passage it is something that those people there do not focus on at all.

Well, I suggest to you, brethren that these cave dwellers are people who have listened to the preaching of the Two Witnesses. Now that probably began about the time of the fifth seal. I think these people have listened to the preaching of the Two Witnesses. I want to make sure you understand that not everyone was listening. We will read that in Revelation 9. It makes it plain that a whole lot of people have not listened to them.

Revelation 9:20-21 (Phillips translation) The rest of mankind, who did not die in this fearful destruction, neither repented of the works of their own hands nor ceased to worship evil powers and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, or wood, which can neither see nor hear nor move. Neither did they repent of their murders, their sorceries, their sexual sins, nor of their thieving.

But the Revelation 6 passage about the sixth seal, indicates that some people had listened and had some measure of understanding. Please do not misunderstand me brethren. I am not saying that these people have repented. Remember what we read in Isaiah, that these people were humbled, but God said “do not forgive them.” There is not the godly sorrow that Martin was talking about. That is not talked about here. I do not think these people repented and are certainly not converted.

But if these people are the same people who were mentioned in Isaiah 2 where it says they threw their idols to the moles and the bats in order to move into the caves, abandoning their cities, then they may be very well on the road to repentance. God may be preparing them for a role that is coming very soon. This may be an indication that the ministry of the Two Witnesses has been at least somewhat effective and the preaching of God's Word will not return to Him void.

Now since all people are going to see Christ (Richard made that very plain on Trumpets) when He returns, it is pretty clear that these earthquakes in the end are going to open up these caves. Maybe there will be some other things, maybe they will be filled with gas and force the people out, but whatever happens to drive them out, they will come to see the light. I guess we can put it that way.

Notice that Revelation 6 says that slaves will be in the caves as well as all these VIPs, these military commanders and all this. Now chattel slavery is not a legalized institution in Western civilization at this time, not in Israelitish society, but apparently will become so, and I feel I could probably say under Muslim influence. The Muslims have always been slavers. That is how they are thought of historically.

Slaves are expropriated and they are disenfranchised individuals, having lost personal and property rights. Slavery will probably become instituted as part of religious persecution; a pogrom, in part by the secularists, but also in part by the Islamists.

So God may arrange to protect some of us underground, brethren. As slaves, we will be taken there perhaps, not all of us but some of us, to serve. There we will be examples to others and I think more than that we will be able to help put what is happening on the outside into the proper perspective for these people. We will tell them that the Lamb will soon establish His government in Jerusalem, and that they should go to Jerusalem as soon as they can and tell them we will meet them there.

Because it very well could be that when the change comes and the first resurrection comes, some of us in these caves will literally rise and the people in the caves will see that happen. So these people in the caves will have every motivation and they will have the knowledge to go to Jerusalem when they can and things begin to calm down a little bit.

Once Christ establishes His rule in Jerusalem, survivors near and far, probably these cave dwellers, will take our advice and make their way to the new capitol of the world. They will go to Jerusalem. And once there, they will hear the preaching of God's Word and His law taught by Christ Himself and in some cases by us—Christ's priests.

This is going to be a time when many will roam about and knowledge will increase. We read about that in Daniel 12:4. I am thinking of tying it to this time, because so many people will begin moving to Jerusalem and begin to learn about God and His Kingdom and about His government and this will be the time when the renewal begins in earnest.

Well, how long will it take for these significant changes in attitudes to take place? I want to shift gears if I can and finish up by addressing that question. How long is it going to take before people turn their faces to Jerusalem abandoning their old ways of life, their old cities? Please turn to Isaiah 58 as we address the question. My point here is not to discuss fasting, but the theme of restoration which is brought up here.

In verse 3 it talks about the people telling God that they are fasting, but then they say, “You have not noticed.” “God isn't paying any attention to us.” Well, God is very quick to answer their complaint and He tells the people they are not fasting correctly. He says they continue to oppress their workers. In verse 6 God teaches us how to fast correctly; to set the oppressed free; to tear off the yolk.

Will these people recover only a little bit or very slowly when they begin living the right way? Will recovery take years and years; are they going to have to fast for years and years before things turn around?

Isaiah 58:8 Then your light shall break forth like the morning, your healing shall spring forth speedily, and your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

How long does dawning take? Well, from the time the top edge of the sun begins to appear over the eastern horizon until the entire body becomes visible, is not a long process. It does not take long. A sunrise can happen rather quickly. So recovery can come quite quickly.

Richard Ritenbaugh, speaking earlier this summer about Paul's conversion for instance on the Damascus road recorded in Acts 9, pointed out how quickly, almost instantaneously God can change a person's attitude. Now a change in attitude will change behavior and as people begin to sow good they will soon begin to reap good.

I think it is going to take a while for these new attitudes and this new way of thinking to grab ahold. After all it is a big a planet. It is going to take some time, there are going to be problems before it all happens, but I do not think we are talking about centuries. I do not even think we are talking about

decades; maybe a generation or two, as God works powerfully to establish His new city worldwide.

Now some restoration of the planet may take longer, but God will work to change attitudes quickly and the fruits of those right attitudes will very quickly appear. Notice please Isaiah 60:22 and this is the last passage that I will be looking at in any detail. We will play like we are reading Hebrews and drop down to the bottom of the chapter.

Isaiah 60:22 A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation. I, the LORD, will hasten in its time.

We are not going to be able to bring it about brethren. God will do it and He will do it in His time, according to His time table. Then it says He will do it quickly. What is He going to accomplish quickly? Before we trot through Isaiah 60, let us stop in verse 14 and take a look at the audience of the chapter. To whom or to what God speaking?

Isaiah 60:14 Also the sons of those who afflicted you shall come bowing to you, and those who despised you shall fall prostrate at the soles of your feet; and they shall call you the City of the LORD, Zion of the Holy One of Israel

Now some versions had this chapter as the glory of Jerusalem in the last days, or words to that affect. God is obviously addressing people here. We all understand that He is not talking to stones, rocks, or buildings, streets, or anything like that. But He is counting His words as if He was speaking to Jerusalem, to the city, which by that time, you see, is the new capitol of the world.

So let us go up to verse 1 and take a look at what God says He is gong to do with Jerusalem. I promised you that we would come back to the subject of light and here we are. You know, New York may be simply a glitter like a thousand Disneyland's and I believe Manhattan is a thousand Disneyland's, but brethren, it will not hold a candle compared to the new Jerusalem. And in case you have not noticed it, but I think you do, New York's candle is flickering, is it not?

Isaiah 60:1-2 Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the LORD will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you.

The prophet begins by establishing the setting, it is the end of this present evil world. Then out of darkness (it is there twice), the physical darkness refers to the darkness that is covering the whole earth and it is also a reference to spiritual darkness over-spreading the people worldwide. God is going to dispel all that darkness.

Isaiah 60:3 The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.

Isaiah 60:6 The multitude of camels shall cover your land, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come; they shall bring gold and incense and they shall proclaim the praises of the LORD.

Brethren, that is why they are coming there. They are coming there to praise God, to proclaim His praises. Like the wise men of old they are bringing treasures, they are bearing gifts to worship the Great King.

Isaiah 60:15-18 “Whereas you have been forsaken and hated, so that no one went through you, I will make you an eternal excellence, a joy of many generations. You shall drink dry the milk of the Gentiles, and milk the breast of kings; you shall know that I, the LORD, am your Savior and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob. Instead of bronze I will bring gold, instead of iron I will bring silver, instead of wood, bronze, and instead of stones, iron. I will also make your officers peace and your magistrates righteousness. Violence shall no longer be heard in your land, neither wasting nor destruction within your borders; but you shall call your walls Salvation and your gates Praise.

Stylistically Isaiah is writing in what I call the “prophetic mode”, Richard Ritenbaugh used the word “tense” in a sermon a while back referring to the

“prophetic tense.” It is a mode of writing that compresses time; it bends time around the past, present, and the future, and it puts God's plan in the proper perspective.

So as you read further in Isaiah 60 brethren, it becomes clear that time is passing quickly and soon Isaiah stops talking about camels and stops talking about caravans and he slides seamlessly into a discussion about Jerusalem.

Notice what he says in these verses about the sun and the moon. He is presaging John's comments here about the sun and the moon in Revelation 21:22-24. Now I am not going to turn there, but you may just jot it down. You know there that John is speaking about the sun and the moon in the New Jerusalem.

Well, I am going to close with verses 19-22.

Isaiah 60:19-22 “The sun shall no longer be your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you; but the LORD will be to you an everlasting light, and your God your glory. Your sun shall no longer go down, nor shall your moon withdraw itself; for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and the days of your mourning shall be ended. Also your people shall all be righteous; they shall inherit the land forever, the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, that I may be glorified. A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation. I, the LORD, will hasten it in its time.”

Brethren, God is going to work powerfully. He is going to work vigorously to institute this city, the city our forefather Abraham sought and the city that we seek—the Jerusalem from above, the capitol of the world.

Are we, as appointed watchmen of its gates (you can read about that in Ezekiel 33), as appointed watchmen on its walls, never silent day or night (we read about that in Isaiah 62)? Do we give God no rest until He establishes and makes Jerusalem the praise of the earth?

Brethren, responsibility attends the many privileges that we have with God's people and one of those responsibilities is to pray without ceasing (I

Thessalonians 5:17). We can pray, “ thy kingdom come”, and doing so is one way of showing God that we have choose His way of life rather than the deceptively glitzy and futureless ways of this world. Brethren the choice between glitz and glory is ours. Will we choose New York or New Jerusalem?