

**Note:** Jewish people read Isaiah 60 in its literal meaning as describing the Israelites' return from Babylonian exile to physically rebuild the Jerusalem temple, and how it will happen. Church Fathers and Christian mystics like to view this chapter symbolically as describing the coming of Christ and the building of his church. Still others see the chapter as describing the populating of the heavenly Jerusalem.

1. *Reflection:* Isaiah claims that the knowledge of the true God is like light in the darkness. (Is 60:1-2) What does living in darkness mean to you?
2. *Challenge:* Read Isaiah 60:1-3 and ask yourself, who is the “you” in these lines.
  - a. What would it mean if the “you” refers to the exiles returning from Babylon?
  - b. What if the “you” refers to the Messiah (or to Christ and His church), how would you interpret it?
  - c. What if the “you” refers to Heavenly Jerusalem at the end of the world?
3. *Reflection:* Isaiah’s vision focuses on all the different nations coming to “you.” (Is 60:4-6)
  - a. What would the passage mean if they were Jews coming from different nations to help rebuild Jerusalem and its Temple after Babylon?
  - b. Would Jews today envision this passage as *diaspora* Jews from all over the world returning to today’s State of Israel (Zion)?
  - c. What would it mean if the passage referred to all people entering the heavenly Jerusalem?
4. List the different help, contributions, and support Isaiah envisions foreign nations bringing to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. (Is 60:6-10)
5. “Your gates will always stand open, they will never be shut, day or night.” (Is 60:11)
  - a. How might ancient Jews interpret this line?
  - b. How might contemporary Jews interpret this line?
  - c. How might Christians apply this line to Christ and His church?
6. If the gates are never closed, who will be Jerusalem’s protector? (Is 60:11; See also Rev 21:25)
7. Isaiah glorifies Israel as a citadel of safety and peace. (Is 60:17-18)
  - a. How does Isaiah describe Israel and Jerusalem becoming a place of non-violence and safety? (Is 60:17-18)
  - b. Is there a Christian interpretation of these verses that makes sense? (Eph 4:4-6; John 17:21-23; Gal 3:28)
8. *Reflection:* In Isaiah 60:18, “salvation” means a complete transformation of Jerusalem from its current sad state of rubble into a new and wonderful fullness with God’s life. For Christians, salvation comes with Baptism into Christ. Explain how the definition of salvation fits in both cases—for Jerusalem and for you.
9. “The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you, for the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory.” (Is 60:19)
  - a. What would be the symbolic meaning of this verse for Jews of Isaiah’s day?
  - b. What do you think would be its symbolic meaning for the Christian today?
10. Do you think Isaiah 60:18-21 refers to a heavenly Jerusalem or a place on earth, or both?