

Isaiah 60:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron: I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness.

Analysis

God promises comprehensive upgrade: "For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for brass bronze, and for stones iron." Each element is replaced with something superior. This escalation emphasizes dramatic improvement—what was adequate (brass, iron) becomes excellent (gold, silver). The pattern continues: "I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness." Leaders (peqidut—officers/overseers) will embody shalom (peace/wholeness). Tax collectors (noges—exactors/oppressors) will exemplify tsedaqah (righteousness/justice). This transformation of corrupt systems into just ones reflects kingdom reality. From a Reformed perspective, this illustrates sanctification—God replacing our base materials with precious ones, transforming our character progressively. It also pictures the consummated kingdom where all leadership perfectly reflects God's character (Revelation 21:18-21 describes the New Jerusalem's precious materials). The emphasis on peace and righteousness echoes messianic prophecies (Isaiah 9:6-7, 11:1-5)—Christ the Prince of Peace who rules in righteousness, transforming His people to reflect His character.

Historical Context

Solomon's temple used fine materials, but subsequent periods saw degradation and impoverishment. The second temple was inferior architecturally (Ezra 3:12). More significantly, Judah's leadership was often corrupt—officers oppressive, tax collectors exploitative (Isaiah 1:23, 3:14-15, Jeremiah 22:13-17). The prophecy

promised not just better materials but transformed leadership characterized by peace and righteousness. This began fulfillment in Christ's inauguration of the kingdom and continues as the gospel transforms leaders to serve rather than exploit (Matthew 20:25-28, 1 Peter 5:2-3).

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does God's progressive sanctification replace the 'brass' in our lives with 'gold'?
2. What does leadership characterized by peace and righteousness look like in the church?
3. How do the precious materials of the New Jerusalem reflect the completed transformation of God's people?

