

Isaiah 60:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?

Analysis

The prophet asks: "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?" The imagery is beautiful—multitudes arriving like clouds or doves returning to dovecotes. Clouds suggest vast numbers moving together; doves suggest homing instinct and peace. This pictures the returning dispersed and the incoming Gentiles—drawn irresistibly to Zion like doves to their roost. The question format emphasizes the wonder of this sight—so many coming, so quickly, so eagerly. From a Reformed perspective, this illustrates effectual calling and irresistible grace. The elect don't merely consider coming; they are drawn powerfully by the Holy Spirit (John 6:37, 44, 65). Like doves returning home, believers find their true home in God's presence. The cloud imagery also suggests the Shekinah glory cloud that led Israel (Exodus 13:21-22) and filled the temple (1 Kings 8:10-11)—God's glorious presence attracting His people. The certainty and speed of the gathering demonstrates God's sovereign power to accomplish His purposes.

Historical Context

This addresses the post-exilic community experiencing a trickle of returning exiles when God had promised flood. The partial returns under Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah were disappointing compared to the prophetic vision. However, the prophecy looked beyond immediate return to the Messianic age when the Spirit would be poured out (Acts 2) and massive ingathering would occur. The book of Acts records the rapid growth of the church—3,000 at Pentecost (Acts 2:41), 5,000

shortly after (Acts 4:4), multitudes continually (Acts 5:14, 6:7). This continues throughout church history as the elect are gathered.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What does the imagery of doves returning to their windows teach about the believer's homing instinct for God?
2. How does the cloud-like multitude reflect the comprehensiveness of God's redemptive work?
3. In what ways does the Holy Spirit draw people irresistibly to Christ and His church?

Interlinear Text

מִי	אֵלָּה	כַּעַב	תְּעוֹפֵי יֹנָה	וְכִיּוֹנִים	אֶל
H4310	H428	as a cloud	Who are these that fly	and as the doves	H413
		H5645	H5774	H3123	
אֶרְבִּיתֵיהֶם:					
to their windows					
H699					

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 7:9 (Parallel theme): After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues,

stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

Luke 13:29 (Parallel theme): And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.

Hebrews 12:1 (Parallel theme): Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

Isaiah 60:4 (Parallel theme): Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side.

Isaiah 49:21 (Parallel theme): Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where had they been?