

The new creation - celebrating diversity & peace

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[0 : 00] What do you imagine the new creation to be like, I wonder? What's your idea of the new creation?! Will you be eating summer fruit gâteau?

! My mother-in-law says you eat with your eyes, and surely this is a great example. When you taste a French patisserie like the above, what sensations burst into your mouth?

Do you appreciate the light, delicate, moist, airy, but not too sweet sponge on the palate? Or the real dairy cream infusion with fresh, juicy strawberries?

Perhaps you enjoy the grated chocolate, you see that, on the side, or biting into the melted milk chocolate on the top. The fruit gâteau can simply take you into French patisserie heaven, where you don't want to leave.

One tends to groan with sounds of mmm, ooh, or perhaps if you're French, ooh la la. And this happened to me last week as I tasted my son's summer fruit gâteau from his home economics class.

[1 : 30] I was very impressed with Samuel. But I'm sure this is actually inferior to Parisian patisserie over in France.

You see, these taste sensations, brothers and sisters, are quite different from our British, say, spotted dick, eaten mess. Yes.

It's something which has been expertly crafted by the French. It's something quite alien to the British kitchen. So, I want us in this passage to see that we ought to celebrate diversity.

Celebrate diversity. And here, if we look in the passage in chapter 60, in Isaiah's day, Zion had been ravaged and destroyed by war.

And some had been taken into exile. They had experienced much darkness as just punishment due to their sins.

[2 : 40] There had been much injustice and iniquity in Judah. And they were rightly punished. However, we see here in chapter 60, there is hope.

Zion will once more display light in verse 1. Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.

The glory, the weightiness, the kavod of the Lord, which had disappeared from the temple, would return. Zion will once again become a beacon of light to its people and to the ethnos, the other peoples, the Gentiles.

The Jews would return there. We see that in verse 4. Lift your eyes and look about you. All assemble and come afar to you. Your sons come from afar, and your daughters are carried on the hip.

The Gentiles too. Tim Chester states that verses 6 to 16 are an inventory of the world's wealth being brought to God's people.

[4 : 07] It's a lovely picture. It's like homing pigeons returning back home in the sky to their nest. Did you see that in verse 8? Who are these that fly along like clouds, like doves to their nests?

A whole host of people and animals are marching to Zion. It's a picture of beautiful diversity and yet oneness.

All under the banner of one shepherd. We see places like Midian, Ephra, and Kedar. Did you see that in verse 6?

Sheba. Verse 6 and 7. These are modern day Jordan, Yemen, Saudi Arabia.

Places near and far Judah. Bringing in their wealth, their products, their culture, their work, their creativity. We saw ships from Tarshish arriving.

[5 : 21] It's a lovely picture. And we see foreigners rebuilding Zion's walls.

In verse 10. It's a wonderful picture to behold. And it came true in the days of Nehemiah and Ezra when Zion was rebuilt.

It must have given much hope to the exiles in Babylon. And similarly, it gives us hope too as Christians. And my second point is, after celebrate diversity, is celebrate peace.

Let's read verse 11. Your gates will always stand open. They will never be shut day or night. So that people may bring you the wealth of the nations.

Their kings led in triumphal procession. A hallmark of the new Zion is that the gates would remain open, not closed.

[6 : 31] Where there was once conflict, peace will reign. True shalom, like the days of Solomon. There are no more intruders or enemies to contend with.

But why are the gates open? It's there in verse 11. So that people may bring you the wealth of the nations. So that people can bring in their culture.

One can eat summer fruits ghetto. And John uses the same imagery in Revelation 21. Shall we look that up?

A lot of Revelation 21 mirrors Isaiah 60. Isaiah 21.

24 to 26. Page 1250 in the Church Bible. 1250. The nations will walk by its lights.

[7 : 44] And the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut. For there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it.

Brothers and sisters, chapter 60 of Isaiah Isaiah is also describing the new creation. The new Zion. The church universal.

Where there is no need for any sun nor moonlight. As the glory of God shines all about it. There is wonderful diversity.

You can see people playing ping pong over there. Oh, there is someone playing tennis over here. Wow, what a serve. Look at those folk making a Japanese garden.

Oh, Joe is over there teaching English. As we come to the communion table, let's celebrate this diversity in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[8 : 50] The Lamb upon the throne. And a good question for us as a local church is, how do you think we should be putting this into practice in our local church? I think we do it to some degree.

As we are very universal in nature. We have been blessed with this diversity and have for many years. Since I've been in the church anyway. Our church lunches are testament to this, aren't they? We enjoy a plethora of culinary delights. Rosie's sticky toffee pudding. Megan's Malay chicken curry. Daniel's Biscoff bakes.

To name a few. I tell you, in Whitby Evangelical Church, the church lunches are very much different to ours. So let's not hinder the good news of Jesus by imposing our cultural norms on people.

Culture matters. And if all this wonderful culture is brought into heaven, then what we do matters here on earth, doesn't it?

[9 : 59] Our work, our pastimes, whether that be plastering, woodwork, parenting, baking, teaching, you name it. They are all meaningful and will be brought into the new Zion.

So enjoy them and work hard at them. Perhaps a few people would like to respond in prayer and thanksgiving. Thank you.