

¹ Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you. ² 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. ³ The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. ⁴ Lift up your eyes all around, and see: they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be nursed at your side. ⁵ Then you shall see and become radiant, and your heart shall swell with joy; because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you. 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.

Text: Isaiah 60:1-6 A 1/9/22 Ephesians 3:1-12 Matthew 2:1-12 Psalm 27 Resp. Ps.: 36
Hymns: 8, 130, 775, 761

OUR LIGHT HAS COME!

- 1. into our darkness**
- 2. causing us to arise and shine**
- 3. drawing people from all nations**

Dear fellow believers in Christ,

The Bible says, *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep”* (Gen. 1:1-2). With no created light yet, that was pitch black darkness. What a gloomy existence we would have without light! *“Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light”* (Gen. 1:3). Later, *“God said, ‘Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens ... to give light on the earth’; and it was so”* (Gen. 1:14f). Praise God for light!

1

“Behold” (“See”) our Lord tells us, *“the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people”* (my emphasis). The “darkness” the Lord is referring to in our text is the “darkness” of our sinful human condition. To outward appearances, it seems that most people are basically good. But in the third chapter of Romans the perfect, holy God tells us how we all by nature look in His eyes: *“... all are under sin. As it is written: ‘There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one. ... There is no fear of God before their eyes’”* (vv. 9-12, 18). The Bible says, *“Men loved darkness rather than light”* (Jn. 3:19). By nature we love the darkness of sin and unbelief, rather than the light of God’s salvation. The Bible says, *“You were ... without Christ, ... having no hope and without God in the world”* (Eph. 2:1, 12).

Without Jesus, we’re completely sinful in God’s eyes, completely incapable of doing anything good in God’s eyes. That is harsh condemnation, but that is what God says in His Word. Directly or indirectly, sin is at the root of the problems in the world, and of our own problems. God

declares in His Word, *“The soul who sins shall die”* eternally in hell (Ezek. 18:4). Without Jesus, we sinners are eternally, helplessly lost.

2

“But” we’re told, *“the LORD will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you.”* *“For your light has come!”* Amazingly, God loves us! In His love, God sent us a Savior. John tells us about this in the first chapter of his Gospel: *“The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”* *“In Him was life, and that life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness...”* (vv. 14, 4-5a). Into the *“deep darkness”* of our sinful human condition, God caused the brilliant light of His salvation to shine. God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into our world to save us from our sins! Jesus says, *“I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life”* (Jn. 8:12).

Paul tells us, *“God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ”* (2 Cor. 4:6). God shined His saving light into our sin-darkened hearts. God brought us from unbelief to faith in Jesus, who died for our sins on the cross and rose again, and saved us.

We’re told, *“Arise, shine, for your light has come!”* These words were first spoken by Isaiah to his fellow Jews, most of whom had turned away from God. The Lord had said earlier through Isaiah: *“These people ... honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me”* (29:13). Many of the Jews were going through the outward motions of worshiping and following God, but their hearts had turned cold toward Him. They had become all caught up in this life, and didn’t treasure the Lord and His salvation and a home in heaven. When the Lord told them, *“Arise, shine, for your light has come,”* He was warning them to wake up from their spiritual sleep that was leading them to eternal death, to turn their hearts’ devotion away from this life and treasure eternal life in the coming Savior, to stop living just for themselves, to believe in God, and start living for God.

“Arise, shine, for your light has come!” *Arise, shine!* Praise God for your salvation in His Son. Understand the treasure God has given us in Jesus. Give God your heart’s devotion. Live your life for Him. Let Christ’s light shine through you! Paul reminds us, *“You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light”* (Eph. 5:8). Jesus says, *“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven”* (Mt. 5:14-16). Peter tells us, *“You are ... [God’s] own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light”* (1 Pet. 2:9). People are lost in the darkness and confusion of their unbelief. Tell them about Jesus, who brings them into the light of eternal life!

3

Reading through the book of Isaiah gives us a picture of the nations of the world back then lost in spiritual darkness, with the majority of Isaiah’s fellow Jews lost with them. How discouraging and difficult that had to be for Isaiah and for the rest of God’s people who still believed in Him.

God gave them hope by pointing them ahead to the time the Messiah would come and bring not only Jews, but also many gentiles to believe in Him! *“The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. Lift up your eyes all around, and see: they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be nursed at your side. ...the wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you. The multitude of camels shall cover your land, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah”* ridden by all those coming to join God’s people. *“And all those from Sheba shall come; they shall bring gold and incense, and they shall proclaim the praises of the LORD.”* (*“Proclaim the praises of the LORD”* in the original specifically refers to them praising God for His salvation.) By the time Jesus came, about seven hundred years after Isaiah, many of the Jews had been scattered all around the Roman world. But with the coming of the gentile wise men to worship the child Jesus and bring Him their offerings, and especially when Pentecost came and afterwards, God brought many Jews along with many gentiles to believe in Jesus as their Savior. The book of Acts tells us that *“the Word of God grew and multiplied”* (12:24), and *“the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily”* (16:5).

It’s very sad that most of the people in the world don’t believe in Jesus. It’s discouraging to see all the spiritual darkness around us in the world. It’s discouraging to pray for people who don’t believe in Jesus and try to witness to them, but not see them come to faith. Our Lord tells us, *“Lift up your eyes all around, and see.” “The Gentiles shall come to your light.”* Look up! Look to the Lord, place your trust in Him, and see what He is doing. I have these words from the fifty-fifth chapter of Isaiah in the pulpit so that I see them every time I’m up here: *“My Word ... will ... achieve the purpose for which I sent it”* (v. 11). Spread God’s Word. Pray for God’s people around the world who are spreading His Word to others. God is continually reaching out with His Gospel all over the world and bringing more and more people to believe in Jesus and be saved.

“Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy.” It gives us joy whenever someone comes to believe in Jesus! Through our witness and the witness of others God is saving people, people we’ll see in heaven one day! Paul says, *“What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For you are our glory and joy”* (1 Thess. 2:19-20).

“Behold, ... darkness [covers] the earth, and deep darkness the people.” That’s pitch black darkness! *“But the LORD will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you.”* Praise God for sending us Jesus, in whose light we have eternal life! Amen.