

“Rise and Shine!”—Isaiah 60:1-6

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, “Rise and Shine!”, is Isaiah 60:1-6 → *Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and His glory will be seen upon you. And nations 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 carried on the hip. Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and exult, because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall bring good news, the praises of the LORD.* This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

Don't you just love to be greeted by those three words in the morning: “Rise and shine!” For many people, whether it's the sound of those words or an alarm clock, they may react with a grunt and say, “I may rise

but I refuse to shine!” It becomes even more annoying when it is accompanied by a bright light!

So . . . how would you deal with being in the presence of *the glory of the LORD*? Considering the events connected with the birth of Jesus one may immediately call to mind the shepherds who were *out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. When an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear.* (cf. Luke 2:8-9) One may consider Peter, James and John who experienced God’s glory when Jesus was transfigured before them and they heard the voice of God speak from a cloud on the mountain. Matthew 17:6 says: *When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified.* Instead of rising and shining they fell and shook in their sandals with fear.

About half a century before giving the prophecy in our text, the prophet Isaiah experienced *the glory of the LORD* in a vision. His response? He said: *“Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!”* (cf. Isaiah 6:5) He immediately became intensely aware of his sinfulness and mortality in the presence of the holy God, unworthy to even be in His presence.

Notice, however, his command to Yahweh’s people in verse 1 of our text: *Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has*

*risen upon you.* The picture in this prophecy is not one of intense awareness of sin, fear and being humbled in the presence of Yahweh. Rather, His people are told to *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 carried on the hip. Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and exult* (verse 4-5). It is a picture of joy and celebration for all who experience *the glory of the LORD* which *has risen upon* them!

You have gathered on this festive Christmas day with joy and gladness because *the glory of the LORD has risen upon you* in the birth of a Savior, *Who is Christ the Lord* (cf. Luke 2:11). This prophecy actually describes actions which specifically apply to the events connected with Jesus' birth. Verse 3 speaks about *nations coming to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising*. It brings to mind those Gentile wise men who followed a special star which the LORD provided to guide them to Jesus. They asked King Herod in Matthew 2:2 → *Where is He Who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw His star **when it rose** and have come to worship Him.*

Even the other details of this prophecy speak forth in the actions of the wise men at Jesus' birth. Our text speaks about *the abundance of the sea and the wealth of the nations . . . gold and frankincense* being brought on camels. It says that those bringing these treasures *shall bring*

*good news, the praises of the LORD. Matthew 2:10-11 says the wise men saw the star and rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the Child with Mary His mother, and **they fell down and worshiped Him**. Then, opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. This partial fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy is so specific that throughout the centuries the wise men were thought to be kings coming on a multitude of camels from Midian and Ephah and from Sheba (verse 6).*

Notice the promise of this prophecy in verse 2 of our text: *For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and His glory will be seen upon you.* This *thick darkness* is a reference to a world lost in the darkness of its sin. People do not just need to be "woke up" from their sleep in the darkness of night but rather, they need to be brought out of the *thick darkness* which covers them because of their sin. When Jesus was born Yahweh came smack dab into the middle of a sin-darkened world which does all it can to write God out of the picture of life and live in its own sinful rebellion to His Law. God came in the Person & Work of Jesus *to seek and to save those lost* in the *thick darkness* of sin.

John 1:14 says of Jesus: *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. 2 Corinthians 4:6 says: For God, Who*

*said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. When you see by faith Jesus as your Savior from sin, death and the devil, Who is Christ the Lord, this is cause for you to be radiant, for your heart to thrill and exult and proclaim the praises of the LORD!*

While the context of Isaiah's prophecy in our text was the return of God's people from their exile and is a promise of the coming of Jesus at His birth, it is also the promise of greater things to come! It also looks forward to the Last Day when experiencing the glory of God in heaven eternally will be ours as we trust in Jesus, our Savior from sin. The vision given John in Revelation 21:23-24 describes living in the presence of God's glory in the new heavenly Jerusalem: *And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.*

The fulfillment of this prophecy affects how you live today as well. God has called you to respond to His glorious work of bringing you out of your darkness in sin by "waking you up" and giving you the power of the Holy Spirit to "shine" for Him. Many reflect the affects of the darkness of sin even as we sit here rejoicing in it's victory. John 1:4-5 says of Jesus: *In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.* God calls you to

rise and shine in this darkness by bringing the *good news of great joy to all . . . people* (cf. Luke 2:10). If we Christians do not bring that message of deliverance from sin into the celebration of Jesus' birth, who will? Certainly not a sin-darkened world.

Jesus has *overcome . . . the darkness* and calls us to “shine” for Him by sharing the Good News of salvation through faith in Him. Jesus says, *let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father Who is in heaven* (cf. Matthew 5:16). People watch our lives. What do they see? Christians living in despair and gloom or people who have been “woken up” by *the glory of the LORD* experienced in the Person & Work of Jesus? *Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. Amen.*

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