

Jesus Shines Light Everywhere Isaiah 60:1-22

Night photos of the earth from space fascinate me. Here is a composite photo from NASA.



Remarkable. I did not grow up with pictures like these so they captivate me simply by the fact that we have them. Furthermore, this picture shows the way electrical power shapes cities and economies.

Where there is light, there is almost always economic strength. Where there is darkness, there is often economic struggle.

As I looked at this image, I began to wonder what a **similar spiritual picture of the world** would look like. What if we could take a picture that **captured the light of God's election instead of the light of physical electricity?**

Where would we see the glow of spiritual light shining in our dark world?
Where would we see the darkness of spiritual ignorance and rebellion?

We know that wherever God chooses to shine His electing love in this world, there is spiritual life. And where there is spiritual darkness, there is spiritual death. **Light is vital to human flourishing.**

“Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”” (John 8:12 [ESV](#))

Main Idea: Without light there is no life. God in love sent His Son to shine light into our dark world. As recipients of God’s light, let us arise and shine!

We open our Bibles to Isaiah 60 to read of God’s plan to shine spiritual light into a world of darkness. Isaiah prophesies around 700 years before Jesus is born in Bethlehem. He foretells both of the Messiah’s first and second coming to bring salvation and restoration to Israel and to the world.

The first 39 chapters are a call for Judah to repent of sin and idolatry. Isaiah 40-66 primarily foretells of future events and blessings that God promises for His people to experience. Some of those blessings are fulfilled in Jesus’ first coming and some of those blessings will be fulfilled in Jesus’ second coming.

Now OT prophecy is hard to understand for many reasons. **Two big challenges to understanding OT prophecy are:**

Challenge #1: The OT prophets did not make clear that the Messiah would come two times to the earth to fulfill all of His ministry. If you read the OT prophesies about the Messiah, a sensible reader would think that the Messiah is coming one time to fulfill His mission. The NT reveals that the Messiah comes first to make sacrifice for sin and comes a second time to rule as King.

So when we read OT prophecies, the fulfillment of those prophecies are often “already/not yet”. That is to say that parts of the same prophecy has already been fulfilled in the Messiah’s first coming and that other parts of the same prophecy are yet to be fulfilled in the future.

Challenge #2: The OT prophets were not given the revelation of the church age. The church . . . the people of God whereby the wall separating Jews and Gentiles is broken down and the Gentiles are included in God’s people is a mystery that is revealed in the NT. Paul speaks about this in Ephesians 3:

When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.” (Ephesians 3:4-6 ESV)

Today, as we look together at Isaiah 60, there is an “already” fulfillment of this passage that gives us joy and motivation to live for the Gospel of Jesus. And there is a “not yet” fulfillment that gives both the Jews and the Gentiles hope for the future.

In the last half of my message this morning, I will focus on the “already” portion of this passage. But the “not yet” is such a focus of Isaiah’s words that I am convinced that to avoid the “not yet” part of this passage would be unjust both to scripture and to you. The outline you have for today is entirely about the “already” portion.

I warn you that the future aspect of this prophecy may not seem as relevant to your life as the present aspect. The future aspect may also be more difficult to follow. Both aspects are nourishing to our soul. **But if you get lost in the future part of this message, hang with me because the last part will be easier to understand and apply. I hope you all will be encouraged!**

Isaiah describes the spiritual condition of the nation of Judah in Isaiah 59. He writes,

Therefore justice is far from us, and righteousness does not overtake us; we hope for light, and behold, darkness, and for brightness, but we walk in gloom. We grope for the wall like the blind; we grope like those who have no eyes; we stumble at noon as in the twilight, among those in full vigor we are like dead men.” (Isaiah 59:9-10 ESV)

Why is Judah walking in gloom and darkness?

For our transgressions are multiplied before you, and our sins testify against us; for our transgressions are with us, and we know our iniquities: transgressing, and denying the LORD, and turning back from following our God,” (Isaiah 59:12-13 ESV)

Israel sins were rising up to a holy God and creating separation between Him and the people. This is a people with whom God had covenanted to bless them. He cannot bless a disobedient people, yet the LORD must be faithful to the covenant He made with Abraham and Abraham’s offspring. How will this problem be resolved?

“And a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression,” declares the LORD. And as for me, this is my covenant with them,” says the LORD: “My Spirit that is upon you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, . . .” says the LORD, “from this time forth and forevermore.”” (Isaiah 59:20-21 [ESV](#))

When Isaiah 60 opens, Isaiah is seeing Israel’s glorious future as though it had already come to pass.

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.” (Isaiah 60:1-3 [ESV](#))

When God has Isaiah write, “Your light has come.”

Who is the “YOU”? The answer is clear. Israel.

What is the “light”? The answer is clear: The Redeemer who comes to Zion.

God is promising Israel that the future Redeemer will shine light on Israel and that they will receive Him as light. In fact, Israel will shine with the light of the Redeemer and the nation of Israel will shine so brightly that nations will come to Israel to receive the light that God gave to Israel.

Question: Has that happened yet? The Light has come. But Israel has not received the Light yet. So the prophecy is already, but NOT YET. Look at more of the NOT YET disclosed about the blessing of God upon Israel.

*Whereas you have been forsaken and hated, with no one passing through, **I will make you majestic forever, a joy from age to age . . . you shall know** that I, the LORD, am **your Savior and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.**” (Isaiah 60:15, 16b [ESV](#))*

*“Violence shall no more be heard in **your land**, devastation or destruction within **your borders**; you shall call **your walls** Salvation, and your gates Praise.” (Isaiah 60:18 [ESV](#))*

*“The sun shall be no more your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give you light; but the LORD will be your everlasting light, and **your God will be your glory.** Your sun shall no more go down, nor your moon withdraw itself; for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended. **Your people shall all be righteous; they shall possess the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I might be glorified. . . . I am the LORD; in its time I will hasten it.**” (Isaiah 60:19-22 [ESV](#))*

God promises Israel a glorious future as a nation. Glorious in practical righteousness. Glorious in material blessing. Glorious in national security. Glorious in peace from war. Glorious in the knowledge of God.

Isaiah speaks of Israel as a nation becoming “majestic” forever and ever. The nation will KNOW that the LORD is their Savior and Redeemer. The nation will experience a spiritual revival that will not fade with time but will endure to the end of time.

Furthermore, Isaiah speaks of Israel’s land, border, walls, and gates.

What does this language mean? Isaiah and his readers rightly understand God to be promising a future in the land that He gave to Abraham by unconditional covenant . . . a completion of the promises made centuries earlier.

Furthermore, God is promising that He will be Israel’s everlasting light and that Israel’s people will be righteous and possess the land forever.

And the LORD ties His glory to this fulfillment! The LORD makes it clear that Israel will not accomplish this, but **the LORD Himself will hasten the fulfillment of this promise in its time.**

Much of what God promises in Isaiah 60 is “not yet”. Israel has not yet been awakened to the light of the Messiah Jesus. She is still walking in darkness to this day. Israel for the past 2000 years has not received the Light that God sent to her in Jesus the Messiah.

Now many have taken the present spiritual darkness in the nation of Israel to be a removal of Israel from the covenant promises God gave to her. **Many today say the church, largely made of Gentiles, has replaced national Israel so that the specific promises God made to her as an ethnic nation are no longer valid.** They assert that the church is the fulfillment of the OT covenants and promises and that Israel as a nation will not receive fulfillment of these promises.

Here is my reply: To say that this chapter (and many others) includes blessings to the Gentiles in Jesus’ church is basic Christianity. To deny that this chapter commits no future national blessing to Israel as God’s chosen people is a reading that defies the meaning of plain language.

Inclusion of Gentiles into the promises God made to Israel is the Gospel! But a dismissal of Jews as a blessed nation is not Gospel to them.

Why does the church have to choose EITHER a fulfillment of the covenant to Israel OR an expansion of the covenant to include Gentile nations?

My difficulty is not primarily with what covenant theology affirms so much as it is with what it denies. What hinders God from BOTH fulfilling His clear

promise to the nation that He set His love upon AND blessing the CHURCH for whom Jesus died.

We may argue that God is just to remove His promises from Israel because of the behavior of the recipients, but we cannot deny that God made those promises.

Some of you may be drifting in your thoughts thinking, “What difference do the promises to Israel make to us?”

Application #1: We can be confident that God means what He says and fulfills every promise He makes. If the LORD changed the meaning of the words He spoke to the people of Israel, He can change the meaning of His words to us. And if words do not carry truth that we can count on, then we have nothing under our feet to stand upon. The LORD ties His faithfulness and His glory to literally fulfilling every promise He makes! The LORD means what He says and says what He means.

Application #2: We can be free from the Satanic deception that hates the Jews and hates the nation of Israel. Follow through the scripture and through human history and you will find that the Jews have been more deeply hated and despised over a longer period of time and from more different peoples than any other nation in the history of the world.

Why is that? Because Satan knows that Israel is the apple of God’s eye . . . His chosen People . . . the nation whom the LORD sets His love upon.

Today, many evangelicals are being deceived by anti-Semitic blogs and anti-Semitic commentators to believe that it is righteous to hate the Jews and/or to hate the nation of Israel. To be clear, the nation of Israel today is not a nation of light. She has not submitted to her Messiah. So we are right to disagree with some of the actions the nation of Israel does. **BUT that is different from holding the nation with disfavor . . . with denying their right to the land and their right to national existence.**

This is the “NOT YET” part of Isaiah 60. Let us pivot now to the “ALREADY” of Isaiah 60. For this I park on 60:1. I find this verse to be the most clear and most complete declaration of the Gospel in all the OT.

*“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.”
(Isaiah 60:1 [ESV](#))*

In this verse the Saving Grace of God is announced: “Your light has come!”
In this verse the Call to Living Faith in the Messiah is made: “Arise, shine!”

Let us first dwell upon the Grace of God announced here:

God's Grace: The Light has come!

When sin entered God's good world, sin turned the lights out on humanity. Spiritual and relational darkness descended upon every heart born into the human race through the union of a man and a woman . . . no exceptions. Every baby is born with darkness inside their mind, their emotions, their will. This personal darkness we experience creates societal darkness. Every family, every community, every tribe, every nation is plagued by darkness.

AND WHAT IS DARKNESS?

Darkness is ignorance. Ignorance of God and His goodness.

Darkness is oppression. Oppression that robs us of true freedom.

Darkness is wickedness. Wickedness bound up in our hearts defies God.

Darkness is ugliness. Ugliness that mars God's beauty in us and around us.

Darkness is conflict. Conflict that keeps us at war with God and each other.

Darkness is brokenness. Brokenness that ruins our lives and value.

Darkness is hopelessness. Hopelessness that brings a despair and sorrow from which we cannot recover.

Darkness is death. A death that hangs over us and ultimately will cast us into hell.

Into this darkness, God declares, "The Light has come!" This is God's grace to man. God is not required to shine light, but He does out of His love for us.

Now the Light had NOT YET come in Isaiah's day. Isaiah is using what Hebrew scholars call the "prophetic perfect" tense. The prophets often spoke about future events as though they had already happened. Why to the Bible prophets do that? Because from the LORD's perspective the events He foretells are going to happen are as certain to happen as the events that HAVE ALREADY happened.

We now know that the LIGHT prophesied to come did come 700 years after the prophecy. The Light is Jesus! John opens introduces his Gospel with this in mind:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God . . . 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." (John 1:1-5 ESV)

Why is light such a gift of grace from God? Two reasons: Light gives life. Light makes us to see everything that is worth seeing.

--By grace, God's light gives life.

"John 8:12 Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

I love springtime in Illinois! I love seeing the fields being planted with corn, beans or other crops. Two weeks ago, I had the opportunity to preach in beautiful Sheridan, WY which is a western town right at the foothills of the Big Horn Mountains. I shared with the church there that Peoria is very similar in beauty to Sheridan. The big difference is that in Peoria we do not have all those mountains obscuring our view.

What elements do farmers know that they need in order for crops to grow in our rich soil? They need rain and they need sunshine. Without light, the seeds that the farmers plant will not spring to life.

So to the soul of man, we need light in order to experience the miracle of God's life in our soul. **Friends, I rejoice to tell you, "THE LIGHT HAS COME!"**

Question: Have you received the light of Jesus and experienced God's life taking root in your soul? I do not ask if you have been baptized, if you serve in church, if you live a moral life, if you sing hymns, if you read your Bibles or if you love your neighbor. All of these are good things, but they will not bring life into your soul.

We need the grace of God to meet us if we are to have real life. And God's grace comes to us in the PERSON of Jesus. Until we give our lives fully to the Messiah Jesus, we will not experience God's life in our soul.

This is what Jesus meant when He said to a religious leader named Nicodemus, *"Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven."* John 3:3.

--By grace, God's light gives life.

--By grace, God's light makes us see.

Without light, we walk around without being able to see what is real. If you wake up in a pitch black bedroom, you may have a memory of what your room looks like, but you can no longer see it. If your spouse put a chair in the path to the bathroom, you will stumble over it. If your kids left a toy on the floor, you are

going to step on it. **Light enables us to see what is real. With complete darkness, we experience complete blindness.**

The greatest reality in the world is God. He is the real thing that was real before anything else was real. He is the OG. The Original God. Everything that does exist, exists from Him and through Him and for Him.

Without light, we cannot see what is real . . . we cannot see God. Without light, we cannot wonder at His beauty or draw near to His Person. Without light, we cannot understand who He really is or if He is even present.

One of my favorite passages in all the Bible is 2 Corinthians 4:

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. 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." (2 Corinthians 4:3-6 [ESV](#))

This week my brother sent me a picture. My brother noted that this is an untouched photo from a week ago in the parking lot of East White Oak Church:



God painted this picture last week for His glory. Now this is a creation of God and not God. **Now just as the artist is greater than any piece of art that**

he/she produces, so God is infinitely more beautiful than any part of His creation.

When are born again by God's grace, our eyes are opened to see the invisible realm. We see God's righteousness. We see God's holiness. We see God's power. We see God's love. We see God's glory. Oh . . . we see through a glass dimly . . . whatever we see now is small in comparison to what we will see when stand face to face with Jesus. But WHAT WE DO SEE . . . makes us sing with joy. What we do see fills us with hope. What we do see causes us to tremble. What we do see changes us from the inside out. What we do see makes us yearn for more.

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." (2 Corinthians 4:6 [ESV](#))

How do I know if I have seen God's light? You will experience the beauty of God's love for you in an overwhelming way. We do not REALLY know that God loves us until His Light shines in our hearts and makes us alive to His love.

God's Grace: The Light has come!

Ok. What is the application? What is the practical relevance? What is the action to which the grace of God in giving Light calls us to?

Live by faith: Arise, shine.

--By faith, we arise from the dead. Eph 5

This is God's call for us to embrace Jesus as our Light . . . as the one who offers us Life and be made new. This is a call to radical conversion . . . to regeneration. We are born "dead in our sins", but God's light as come so **ARISE!**

Keep in mind that we cannot rise from the dead UNTIL the Light of Jesus shines upon our lives. We NEED God's action BEFORE we can act.

It does not work to try to experience Christian life without first experiencing the miracle of the life of Christ. If we wish to experience the life of God in our souls, the answer is not to pray more OR to attend church more OR to read our Bibles more OR to get rid of our sin habits OR to be better people. If we wish to experience the life of God in our souls, we must come to Jesus and cling to Him in faith. We have no power in ourselves to arise!

Jesus is God's Light . . . and He is our only hope for real life. Question: Do you have the life of God in your soul?

Many stories in the Gospels illustrate our need to Arise! One of my favorites is found in Mark 5:

Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, and seeing him, he fell at his feet and implored him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well and live." And he went with him.
(Mark 5:22-24 [ESV](#))

Jairus KNEW that his daughter needed Jesus in order to live.

While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe."" (Mark 5:35-36 [ESV](#))

Do not believe the lie that you are too far gone to experience what you know others experience . . . true life in your soul! Believe that Jesus can perform the same miracle for you that He has for others!

They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. And when he had entered, he said to them, "Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. But he put them all outside and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was. Taking her by the hand he said to her, "Talitha cumi," which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise."" (Mark 5:38-41 [ESV](#))

There is only One Person in all the world who has the power to stand over a little dead girl and say, "Arise".

"And immediately the girl got up and began walking (for she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement." (Mark 5:42 [ESV](#))

The little girl obeyed Jesus command. She did not stay in her bed! She got up and lived the new life that Jesus gave to her. I say to you who have received Jesus' life in your soul, "Arise!" Which leads us to the next application.

--By faith, we arise from sleep.

Many who are given the life of Jesus sleep away their days, weeks, months and years. That is tragic! To be given new life and yet keep it dormant is a great waste!

Many are asleep. I pray for revival often. Revival for my own heart. Revival for our church. Revival for our country.

Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.” (Romans 13:11-12 ESV)

I am not sure what you think about the politics of our country. You may be encouraged by our current direction. May be discouraged. But if you are encouraged, let us make sure that we consider the spiritual condition of our country. Political improvement without spiritual strength is always short lived.

Sexual immorality. Sensuality. Abortion. Divorce. Are these sins on the upswing or on the decline?

Hostility in relationships. Anger. Abuse. Estrangement. Are these increasing or decreasing?

Spiritual zeal for the LORD. Church commitment. Evangelism. Are these ascending or descending?

These matters are thermometers to help us measure the spiritual temperature of our hearts, of our church and of our country. The thermometer tells a story that if not reversed will bring great heartache to us. This issue is not outside in our world, but inside in our churches. **I believe that the church is growing in her lethargy and sleepiness. Spiritually, we are moving backwards.**

Friends, this is your day. This is your battle. This is your time to impact your world . . . your church . . . your family.

To this God says, “Arise and shine. The Light has come!”

But how do I wake myself up from spiritual sleepiness? Make much of God’s love for you. The Light of Jesus shows you God’s love . . . now rejoice every day in His love. This fuels our spiritual passion and life.

I am so glad that our Father in heaven
Tells of His love in the Book He has given;
Wonderful things in the Bible I see,
This is the dearest, that Jesus loves me.

Refrain:

I am so glad that Jesus loves me,
 Jesus loves me, Jesus loves me;
 I am so glad that Jesus loves me,
 Jesus loves even me.

2 Though I forget Him and wander away,
 Kindly He follows wherever I stray;
 Back to His dear loving arms would I flee,
 When I remember that Jesus loves me. [Refrain]

Arise and Shine for the Light has come! And once we arise, how do we shine?

--By faith, we shine with righteousness of life.

Being forgiven of our sins does not make us less concerned for our sin, but more! The Light of Jesus motivates us to walk as children of Light. It makes no sense to have light but morally stumble about as though we are still blind.

"at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret . . . Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." (Ephesians 5:8-14 ESV)

--By faith, we shine with testimony of God.

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 5:14-16 ESV)

God is calling us to make what He places inside of us to shine out through us!

Many who have received the Light of God in Jesus live in silence to His love and grace. Many put the Light under a basket and keep it hidden from others. Some out of fear of reprisal. Some out of love for this world. Some out of distraction by the cares of this life. Some out of sleepiness of spirit.

If God has given you light, He calls you to shine that light to your world!

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.” (Isaiah 60:1 ESV)

Illustration: Over 20 years ago, I was asked to speak at a Good Friday service sponsored by a number of black churches. At one point in the service, the offering was taken and one of the deacons with the offering plate was asked to pray. Instead of praying, he began to sing.

“This little light of mine.” Pause. And then the congregation echoed, “This little light of mine.” “

“I’m gonna let it shine.” Echo.

“I said, this little light of mine.” Echo.

“I’m gonna let it shine.” Echo.

Then all together. “Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.” Did that five or six times. Loved it.

Let us try it once!

WHAT IS LIGHT?

Light is personal knowledge. Knowledge of God and His love.

Light is freedom. Freedom from fear and slavery to sin.

Light is goodness. Goodness bound up in our hearts celebrating God.

Light is beauty. Beauty that fuels joy in us and around us.

Light is shalom. Shalom that brings peace in the place of war.

Light is wholeness. Wholeness that heals everything broken within us.

Light is hope. Hope that makes us eager for the future to arrive.

Light is life. A life that flows through us now and ultimately will bring us to heaven.

Now that we have receive the Light, we are part of God’s work in shining His light in to His world.

