

**Read: Isaiah 60:1-6**

## The Savior Will Be a Light to All Nations

### **Isaiah 60:1**

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Mom flings open the curtains to let the morning light stream in. “Rise and shine!” she proclaims. This is a common morning greeting to rouse sleepy heads out of bed. But do you know the origin of the phrase? It’s our Bible verse for today: “Arise, shine, for your light has come!”

Isaiah spoke these words to God’s people long before Jesus was born. The words were meant to tell God’s people that he would deliver them from the foreign king who had taken them captive. God wanted this small group of his children to know that when they turned away from sin and toward him, they would be rescued. Better days were to come!

Those were welcome words for the small nation of people living in captivity. But God had something even bigger in mind when he spoke these words through Isaiah. In the first portion of the Bible, the Old Testament, we find many prophecies like this—promises that God would deliver his people in a big way. Our reading today is one of those predictions. “Darkness covers the earth” is a reference to sin in the world, a “thick darkness” that covers all people. Sin is in us and all around us. We are captive to it. None of us can escape that darkness on our own. So God planned a rescue, and he used prophets like Isaiah to prepare his people.

How do we know that this is a prediction about Jesus? Bible scholars tell us that whenever the words “the glory of the Lord” are used, it’s a reference to God’s wonderful grace and his presence among us. God’s people were led by “the glory of the Lord” when they wandered in the desert (Exodus 16). The “glory of the Lord” shined brightly on the night Jesus was born (Luke 2:9). Here, “the glory of the Lord” rising upon the people predicts the coming of Jesus.

Jesus is like the morning light streaming into our room, delivering us from the night’s darkness of sin. Isaiah tells us something even more wonderful about Jesus: “Nations will come to your light.” Although Jesus was born into God’s special nation of people whom he had prepared and protected for centuries, He was to be a Savior for all nations. Jesus himself said this during his ministry: “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12).

Do you know someone who is sitting alone in darkness? The Christmas message can brighten that person’s world. You can speak the words of God from Isaiah, “Arise, shine, for your light has come!”

*The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.*

### **Questions for the Younger Children**

- Have you ever been afraid of the dark? How did you feel when someone finally turned a light on for you?
- What does the Bible mean when it calls Jesus “a light” for the whole world?

### **Questions for Elementary Age Children**

- Why do you think the Bible talks about sin as darkness and Jesus as light?
- Isaiah says, “arise” and also “shine.” What did he mean by that? What are some ways you can “shine” as you go about your day?

### **Questions for Middle School and Above**

- Explain how the captivity experience of God’s people before Jesus time parallels the spiritual captivity of all people. How does God’s rescue of his Old Testament people parallel our rescue? (cf. Colossians 1:13-14)
- What does Isaiah call all people to do when God’s rescue comes? What effect does your “shine” have on those around you? (cf. Matthew 5:16)

### **Closing Prayer:**

Dear Jesus, you are the light of the world. Thank you for rescuing us out of spiritual darkness. Give us the strength to rise each day in gratitude for what you have done for us. Help us shine with the light you give us, so others might see your light in us. In your name we pray. Amen.

### **Hymn: CW 81:1,3 – Arise and Shine in Splendor**

Arise and shine in splendor;  
Let night to day surrender.  
Your light is drawing near.  
Above, the day is beaming,  
In matchless beauty gleaming;  
The glory of the Lord is here.

Lift up your eyes in wonder –  
See, nations gather yonder  
From sin to be set free.  
The world has heard your story;  
Your sons come to your glory,  
And daughters haste your light to see.