

Arise, shine, for your light has come,

and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.

² **See, darkness covers the earth**

and thick darkness is over the peoples,

but the LORD rises upon you

and his glory appears over you.

³ **Nations will come to your light,**

and kings to the brightness of your dawn. (NIV 84)

Theme: The Promised Messiah: Light

1. He shines light on our dark hearts.

2. We will see his full glory.

It's a nice warm summer day—the sun is shining, so you are outside getting some work done and enjoying the weather. But suddenly the wind picks up, you look up into the sky and you see a large ominous shelf of a black cloud headed your way. It becomes so dark that the street lights turn on. You know trouble is coming.

That darkness—stemming from a thick cloud of trouble is like the darkness that covers over the world. As Isaiah said, **see, darkness covers the earth**. This is the darkness of unbelief and sin. The world is covered in sin. There is nothing that isn't affected by it. Pain, sorrow, sickness, death—they are all results of sin. All one has to do is to look at the crime going on in the world today, all the strife and discord, the natural disasters, the hatred and disgust for God's word and those that follow it, to know that the darkness of sin covers over the world.

But that's not the only thing that sin darkens. Isaiah continued, **And thick darkness is over the peoples**. It's still the same darkness—the darkness of sin and unbelief. But this darkness is thicker over the people than the world. Why? Because the world is still around, and it will always be around until the Lord comes again. We, on the other hand, live only 70-80 years or so and then we die. But at death our soul is judged and sent to heaven or hell—and our bodies will join our souls on the last day. So the result of sin is much greater for people than the world. The darkness of sin and unbelief is much darker and thicker because the price is much greater.

There is certain kinds of people that come out with darkness covers the earth. Sinners love the night. They think they can get away with more under the cover of darkness. There are fewer people out, you can't see as well so you are able to hide and get away with things more. There is a reason why robbers, drunks, prostitutes, and so on do most of their work at night. That is the way we all are by nature.

And our sinful nature loves that darkness. It loves the way of the world. It doesn't gravitate toward God's Word. It looks first toward itself. It is concerned with satisfying its wants and pleasures. We often join in with the dark deeds of the world. And by nature we are no different than the rest of the world—a thick cloud of darkness envelopes all of us.

But **the Light has come**. And that light is Christ. He is the Light that shines on a world dark with sin, onto souls engulfed in unbelief. He brings the light of forgiveness through the gospel. The light of salvation through faith in him alone. We live in the dark cloud of unbelief and sin by nature. But Christ paid for our sins through the shedding of his blood. On account of him we are declared not guilty by God.

As great as the darkness of our sinful nature is, Christ is greater. He is the answer to the darkness of unbelief and sin that dwells in our hearts by nature. Isaiah says, **the Lord rises upon you**. Like the sun rising in the morning to shine light on the dark world, so is Christ who shines light on this sin-darkened world. He has overcome the darkness of sin for us.

There is another name, besides Light—closely connected to it, which Isaiah gives Christ here. We see it right away in verse 1, **the glory of the Lord rises upon you**. The Glory of the Lord makes numerous appearances in the Bible, especially in the Old Testament. For instance it was the Glory of the Lord that was in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night that led the people in the wilderness when they moving. But when they were camped it dwelled in the tabernacle, which was like their portable temple. It was the Glory of the Lord that dwelled on the top of Mount Sinai when the Lord gave the 10 commandments among other laws to Moses. It is a manifestation of God's glory—giving them a glimpse of his divine

splendor. It was an indication of his love, that he was with his people, and that he was about to act—either for them or against them. God needed to hide himself while showing the people his glory. Because by nature we are so dark with sin and God is so great and glorious that we cannot look upon him and live. You know if you have been in a dark room for a while or sleeping when someone suddenly turns on the light—you can't see and it hurts your eyes until they adjust to the light. Or think of it as looking at the sun. It is so bright and powerful that if you stare at the sun for too long you hurt your eyes. The same thing can be said about the Glory of God—expect at a much grander scale. We are so sinful and God is so great that we can't look at him in his full glory and live. And even when he covers himself, he is too much for us to handle. When Moses came down from Mount Sinai after being with the Glory of the Lord his face was so radiant that he had to cover his own face because it was too bright for the people to look at him. I remember when I was younger and a solar eclipse was going on—we had to look at it through a welders mask so we didn't burn our retinas. Even when the light of the sun was covered, it was still too bright for us to handle. That is the case with the Glory of the Lord.

And that makes it all the more amazing that Christ came down to this earth. And we were able to see him as he looked like any other human being. That is how far the Lord humbled himself. He may not have looked like it, As John says about Christ, **The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

While Christ did hide himself, he did reveal himself at the same time. He gave us glimpses of his glory over and over again. He gives us glimpses of his divine glory as he performed miracle after miracle—breaking the laws of nature and doing things only God can do. By teaching with greater knowledge and authority of any man, and knowing things a man couldn't possibly know Jesus too showed his divine glory. And three disciples, Peter, James, and John were given a special glimpse of the glory of God on the mount of Transfiguration. For just a moment Jesus was so bright that the disciples had to cover their faces since they couldn't handle looking at him in a little bit of his glory. About that day Peter writes, **we were eyewitnesses of his**

majesty. For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory.

This is a glory that we'll see one day. In heaven we'll see Jesus in his full glory. John talks about this in his first letter. **Now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.** In heaven we will see Jesus as he is—in his full divine glory. This is only possible because Christ has paid for all our sins and made us holy. So we don't have to be afraid of standing before and seeing a holy God. We won't die when we see Jesus in his divine glory because he will have made us glorious as well.

And there in heaven there will be no need for the sun because Jesus in his full glory will be our light. As we read in Revelation 21, **The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.** This goes along with what Isaiah writes later on in chapter 60, **The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you, for the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. Your sun will never set again, and your moon will wane no more; the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of sorrow will end.**

You are in the middle of that storm and it is raging about you trying to cause all kinds of harm. You long to see the light of the sun—indicating that the storm is over and you are safe. Christ is our light. Seeing him in his full glory and you know that you are safe—freed from the storm. Safe in heaven with Christ in his full glory. Amen.