

The Book of Isaiah

Lesson 24: Arise, Shine; the New Heavens and New Earth -- Isaiah 60:1-66:24

We have come to the end of a long and glorious road. For twenty-three lessons we have walked beside Isaiah through thrones and seraphim, through the holy, holy, holy of chapter 6, through the child whose name is Immanuel, through the Suffering Servant pierced for our transgressions, through the invitation to come to the waters without price. And now, in these final chapters, the prophet lifts his eyes and ours to the dawn. "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you." After all the darkness we have seen, after exile and idolatry and the wall of iniquity, the command is simply to get up and shine, because the light has already come. The night is over. The sun is up. It is morning in the city of God.

These chapters paint the future of God's people in colors so bright they almost hurt the eyes. Nations stream to the light. Kings come to the brightness of the rising. The gates stand open day and night. And in the middle of it all stands a figure anointed by the Spirit of the Lord GOD, sent to bring good news to the poor, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives. We know this figure, because one Sabbath in Nazareth Jesus stood up, read these very words from Isaiah 61, rolled up the scroll, and said, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." The light that Isaiah saw rising over Zion was the face of Christ.

And then comes the breathtaking promise that crowns the book: "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered." God is not merely patching the old world; He is making everything new. No more weeping, no more infant mortality, no more building houses for others to live in, no more labor in vain. The wolf and the lamb feed together. It is a vision of a renewed creation that begins now in the people God is forming in Christ, unfolds through the whole gospel age, and finds its final, eternal home in the new heavens and new earth that Peter and John also saw (2 Peter 3:13, Revelation 21).

This is the climax of the whole study, so we will let it lift our hearts. But Isaiah is too honest to end with only sweetness. The book closes with God looking, not to the impressive, but to the one "who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word," and with a final sober note about those who rebel against Him. The same dawn that gladdens the redeemed exposes those who turn away. So we end where Isaiah began, before the holy God, invited to arise and shine in His light, summoned to tremble at His word, and given a hope that nothing in heaven or earth can finally take away. Let us gaze on the risen light one more time, and let it send us out changed.

Group Discussion: Isaiah 60:1-3 commands, "Arise, shine, for your light has come," and pictures nations and kings streaming to that light. Jesus said His followers are "the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14). As a group, discuss what it means that God's people are meant to shine with a borrowed light in a dark world. Where is our congregation shining brightly, and where have we let the light grow dim?

Personal Reflection: As we close this entire journey through Isaiah, look back over the whole book. Name one passage or theme from these twenty-four lessons that has most changed the way you see God, yourself, or the world, and one way you are different now than when you began.

Read Isaiah 60:1–66:24

Study Questions

1. In Isaiah 60:1–3, the glory of the LORD rises on Zion and nations come to its light. In the New Testament, this light has dawned in Christ, and His people shine with His light to the world (John 8:12, Matthew 5:14–16). What does it mean that the church's light is borrowed rather than self-generated, and how does that guard us from both pride and despair about our witness?
2. Isaiah 60:1 simply commands, "Arise, shine." Where in your own life have you been sitting in darkness that Christ has already dispelled, waiting to feel different before you get up and walk in the light He has given?
3. Isaiah 61:1–2 says, "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me... to bring good news to the poor... to proclaim liberty to the captives." Jesus read this in the synagogue and declared it fulfilled in Himself (Luke 4:16–21). How does Jesus' use of this text show us that Isaiah's promises of restoration are fulfilled in His ministry and the gospel age, rather than in a future earthly political program?
4. Isaiah 61:3 says God gives "a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit." What ashes, mourning, or faintness are you carrying that you have not yet handed to the God who delights to exchange them for beauty and praise?

5. Isaiah 61:10 rejoices that God “has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness.” How does the picture of being clothed in a righteousness we did not earn shape a right understanding of how we are saved, and how does this differ from trying to dress ourselves in our own goodness?
6. Isaiah 62:2–4 promises God’s people a new name; no longer Forsaken and Desolate, but “My Delight Is in Her” and “Married.” Revelation 2:17 promises the faithful a new name as well. What old name or label do you still answer to that God wants to replace, and what would it mean to live as someone in whom God delights?
7. Isaiah 63:1–6 pictures a lone figure coming from Edom with garments stained red, treading the winepress of God’s judgment alone. How does this sobering image of God’s righteous judgment keep the bright promises of these chapters from becoming sentimental, and why must the gospel of grace always be set against the reality of judgment?
8. Isaiah 64:6 confesses, “We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.” When you are tempted to lean on your own righteous deeds before God, how does this honest confession redirect you to depend wholly on His mercy?
9. Isaiah 65:17 and 66:22 promise, “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth,” with no more weeping, no more labor in vain, and even the wolf and the lamb feeding together (65:25). The New Testament shows this fulfilled in the people God forms in Christ and the gospel age, and finally in the eternal new heavens and new earth (2 Peter 3:13, Revelation 21), with the true Zion being the heavenly Jerusalem, the church of the living God (Hebrews 12:22–23, Galatians 4:26), not a future earthly millennial reign or rebuilt temple with restored sacrifices. Trace how this promise begins now in Christ and is consummated in

eternity, and why it matters that we read it this way rather than as an earthly political kingdom centered on the present city of Jerusalem.

10. As we close the whole study, Isaiah 66:2 says God looks to the one “who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.” Gazing back on the risen light of these chapters and the whole journey through Isaiah, name one specific way Christ has been forming you through the message of the prophet, and one step of humble, trembling obedience you will take because of it.

Digging Deeper

Reflect on these passages: Luke 4:16–21, Jesus reads Isaiah 61 and declares it fulfilled in Himself; Hebrews 12:22–24, we have come to Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the church of the firstborn; 2 Peter 3:10–13, we await new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells

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