

Arise, And Shine

This is a chapter full of positive promises and good hope for the church of Jesus Christ. As we have seen in earlier passages there may be occasional references to the return of the exiled Jews from Babylon. However, there is much deeper spiritual depth and meaning to the prophet's words when seen through New Testament eyes. Isaiah speaks of the church's enlargement, victory and ultimate triumph. He provides some beautiful references to our Saviour and Redeemer. He emphasises Christ's success in gathering His church for the glory of Jehovah God.

Light shining in darkness

The opening call to 'arise, shine' may be understood as a call from God the Father to the Lord Jesus Christ to rise up and shine forth in His covenant role. Paul tells us, 'when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law'. The coming of the Lord Jesus into the world is represented by Zacharias as giving 'light to them that sit in darkness'. Here 'gross darkness' is said to cover the whole earth. However, the rising sun of righteousness will reveal God's glory and gather the Gentiles, with the Jews, into the family of God.

The Father of mercies

Isaiah speaks of sons and daughters being drawn to Christ from amongst the nations and of a great influx of both people and wealth into the church. He is using Old Testament language to describe New Testament blessings of grace. All God's elect will be converted and many good and perfect gifts will be given. Camels and dromedaries, flocks and rams speak of the riches of Zion. Silver and gold, spices and incense, cedar, fir, pine and box wood decorated the walls of God's temple. Many precious blessings of grace presently adorn the church of Christ who delights to give good gifts to His children.

Irresistible grace

The picture of Zion's gates remaining continuously open displays Christ's willingness to save to the uttermost all who come to Him, none being turned away who come to Christ for mercy. The kings who serve and succour God's people and the forces, or armies, of the Gentiles who bow with the sons of Zion's former oppressors reveals the impotence of Christ's foes and the power of God's providence in time. No one can thwart God's purpose of grace or restrict the gathering of the redeemed into the kingdom.

Our Everlasting Light

Following the successful gathering of the worldwide church Christ will establish His kingdom with peace and righteousness. The new heaven and new earth is foretold and the walls of New Jerusalem will declare salvation. In the gates of the city praise will be made to God. Violence, wasting and destruction cannot enter that blessed place. There will be no need for sun or moon, the Lord Himself will be our everlasting light and we shall glory in the presence of our King.

Righteousness revealed

There God's elect and Christ's redeemed people shall be all righteous. No more sin, no more sickness, no more sadness will touch us. We shall inherit the land of promise as ordained according to the eternal decrees of God. We are the branch of God's planting, the work of God's hands, to the end He may be worshipped for ever. What was once perceived by the world to be a small and insignificant people will be revealed as the chosen people of God. A numerous and mighty nation redeemed for the glory of the LORD.

Come, Lord Jesus

Let us note Isaiah's final message from this chapter, he tells us, the LORD Himself will hasten Christ's coming but it will be in His time and according to His purpose. Many believers have longed for the early return of the Lord Jesus. He has said, 'Surely I come quickly'. The church replies, 'Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus'. Many have hoped and believed Christ's return would occur in their lifetime, and true it is that for the sake of God's elect our days of waiting will be shortened. Yet the Lord tarries. Let us not be discouraged.

Arise, shine

Isaiah tells us God Himself is hastening Christ's second coming. The Father, Son and Holy Ghost eagerly await its arrival, too! But the time is according to God's purpose and saving decree. That longed for moment will not and cannot come until the last believer is gathered in, the last lost sheep is brought to the fold and the crowning gem is set amongst the jewels of grace. Then the glory of God will be revealed. Then, for the final time, the Father will say to the Son, 'Arise, shine'.

Amen

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