

Come and Worship the King (Isaiah 60)

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At Christmas we celebrate God's light come into the world. And on Christmas Eve this year we looked at how Isaiah 60 both predicts and expands our understanding of God's glorious light. In the fullness of time, we see how the Magi in Matthew 2 fulfill Isaiah's promise of the nations coming to worship the Lord. This teaches us that coming to Zion is not simply a future reality; it is something we also experience through Jesus Christ.

As Hebrews 12:22 tells us, when we worship the Lord we have come to Mount Zion and join in the worship that is ever present in glory. Truly, this way of thinking stretches our imagination, but it is the way Scripture leads us to think—which a firm grasp of finding our position in Christ *in the heavenly places* (cf. Eph 2:5).

At Christmas, we ponder both the coming of God from heaven to earth. But we should also consider what that means, and how Christ's Incarnation leads us to heaven—just as Isaiah 60 envisions.

With that in mind, you may find the following discussion questions and additional resources helpful. You can also listen to the sermon [online](#). I pray these resources are an encouragement to you as you celebrate the birth of our Lord.

Isaiah 60

These verses are organized by the chiastic structure outlined in a [previous blogpost](#).

Light Breaking In. ¹ Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. ² 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. ³ And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. ⁴ Lift up your eyes all around, and see; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be carried on the hip. ⁵ Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and exult, because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

The Nations Gathering. A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall bring good news, the praises of the Lord. ⁷ All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered to you; the rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you; they shall come up with acceptance on my altar, and I will beautify my beautiful house. ⁸ Who are these that fly like a cloud, and like doves to their windows? ⁹ For the coastlands shall hope for me, the ships of Tarshish first, to bring your children from afar, their silver and gold with them, for the name of the Lord your God, and for the Holy One of Israel, because he has made you beautiful.

Worship in Zion. Foreigners shall build up your walls, and their kings shall minister to you; for in my wrath I struck you, but in my favor I have had mercy on you. ¹¹ Your gates shall be open continually; day and night they shall not be shut, that people may bring to you the wealth of the nations, with their kings led in procession. ¹² For the nation and kingdom that will not serve you shall perish; those nations shall be utterly laid waste. ¹³ The glory of Lebanon shall come to you, the cypress, the plane, and the pine, to beautify the place of my sanctuary, and I will make the place of my feet glorious. ¹⁴ The sons of those who afflicted you shall come bending low to you, and all who despised you shall bow down at your feet; they shall call you the City of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

The Nations Gathering. Whereas you have been forsaken and hated, with no one passing through, I will make you majestic forever, a joy from age to age. ¹⁶ You shall suck the milk of nations; you shall nurse at the breast of kings; and you shall know that I, the Lord, am your Savior and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob. ¹⁷ Instead of bronze I will bring gold, and instead of iron I will bring silver; instead of wood, bronze, instead of stones, iron. I will make your overseers peace and your taskmasters righteousness. ¹⁸ 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.

Light Breaking In. 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. ²⁰ 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. ²¹ 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. ²² The least one shall become a clan, and the smallest one a mighty nation; I am the Lord; in its time I will hasten it.

Discussion Questions

1. What are your favorite promises and/or parts of Jesus' birth story? Why? What is something new you have learned in reading Matthew 2 and Isaiah 60 together?
2. What is [Zion](#)? How does understanding the place of Zion help us read Isaiah 60? Why is it such good news that God is restoring Zion?
3. What are the main points of Isaiah 60? Does the proposed structure (Light — Gathering — Worship in Zion — Gathering — Light) help organize the chapter? How so? What questions remain?
4. In reading biblical prophecy, what do we mean by the terms [already / not yet](#) mean? Why does that matter for Isaiah 60? How does the New Testament help us discern the already and not yet?
5. In what ways do we see Isaiah 60 fulfilled in Christ's birth? In what ways is the fulfillment of Isaiah 60 still awaiting the future? Compare and contrast the already aspect of Zion (see Matthew 2 and Hebrews 12:18–29) with the not yet Revelation 21–22.
6. What is the application of Isaiah 60—in Christ? in the cross (note the addition of myrrh to gold and frankincense)? in the Church? in worship? in giving? in evangelism?

Additional Resources

On Isaiah

- [Isaiah Christmas](#) by Tony Reinke
- [Two Rivers Run Through It: Tracing Zion and Zera' \(Seed\) through the Book of Isaiah](#)

- [Singing the Four 'Spirit' Songs in Isaiah 56–66](#)

On Christmas

- [Why Christ's Birth Was an Act of War](#)
- [9 Things You Should Know About Christmas Traditions](#) by Joe Carter
- [3 Things Mary Knew About Her Baby Boy](#) by Jonathan J. Routley

Merry Christmas!