

# ARE WE THERE YET? LIFT UP YOUR EYES ARISE, SHINE!

## BEFORE THE LESSON

Isaiah is considered the greatest of the writing prophets. He lived and wrote in the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C. In this book, Isaiah writes about the eternal nature of God and prophecies about Israel and about the Messiah who is to come. Isaiah writes about Jesus' birth, his ministry, his death and his future reign. We're going to be reading Isaiah 60:1-7 in this study. This passage speaks to a reversal of fortune for Israel. They've been war ravaged, enslaved, and oppressed. And in these verses, their hope is restored, their prestige returns.

## STARTING THE LESSON

We're reading Isaiah 60:1-7 for today's lesson. Isaiah is describing the hope of Israel in these verses. There have been problems. There has been suffering. And here in Isaiah 60, Isaiah reassures the people of Israel that there is hope. They will be restored. There was darkness, but now there is light!

### TIPS TO SHARE WITH LEADERS

Get comfortable with silence.  
Letting people have 30-60 seconds to consider the question before answering is sometimes helpful.  
You don't have to fill every silence.  
Let the Holy Spirit move in silences.

## STARTER QUESTION

- What is something you hope for?
- What is your definition of hope? How is that different from optimism?

## OPENING PRAYER

Holy Spirit, guide our conversation that we might draw close to you. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Isaiah 60:1-7 (NIV)

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

<sup>2</sup>See, darkness covers the earth  
and thick darkness is over the  
peoples,  
but the LORD rises upon you  
and his glory appears over you.

<sup>3</sup>Nations will come to your light,  
and kings to the brightness of  
your dawn.

<sup>4</sup>“Lift up your eyes and look about  
you:  
All assemble and come to you;  
your sons come from afar,  
and your daughters are carried  
on the hip.

<sup>5</sup>Then you will look and be radiant,  
your heart will throb and swell  
with joy;  
the wealth on the seas will be  
brought to you,  
to you the riches of the nations  
will come.

<sup>6</sup>Herds of camels will cover your  
land,  
young camels of Midian and  
Ephah.

And all from Sheba will come,  
bearing gold and incense  
and proclaiming the praise of  
the LORD.

<sup>7</sup>All Kedar’s flocks will be gathered  
to you,  
the rams of Nebaioth will serve  
you;  
they will be accepted as offerings  
on my altar,  
and I will adorn my glorious  
temple.

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QUESTION 1

- Read Isaiah 59:9-10. What is the message of these verses?

*The people of Israel are in darkness. There’s no justice. There’s no righteousness. They are not strong. They “grope along the wall”. This is great imagery about how desperate they are while in the darkness. It’s a bleak picture.*

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QUESTION 2

- Read Isaiah 60:1. This verse is in response to the verses we just read in Isaiah 59. Describe the difference.

*This verse is full of hope. There is light. It’s finally come. The glory of the Lord rises upon the people of Israel.*

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QUESTION 3

- Verse 1 says, “Arise, shine.” What do you think Isaiah means here.

*Answers will vary. You can’t shine without light. A flashlight won’t shine until it’s turned on. When the glory of the Lord arrives, we can shine. We have hope.*

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QUESTION 4

- Read verses 2-3. Isaiah speaks of darkness over the earth and people. What kind of darkness does he speak of? Spiritual or physical?

*Answers will vary. It’s both. If we’re interpreting it to look at our present situation, there is a spiritual darkness over people. But there will be a physical darkness over the earth when Jesus returns.*

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QUESTION 5

- Read verses 2-3. This says that others will come to your

light. Who do you think will be attracted to the light we’re shining forth?

*Answers will vary. Isaiah is writing about the Israelites and he's saying that Gentiles and rulers will be attracted to their brightness because of God. In our circumstances, we hope that others will want to know Jesus because of our light.*

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#### QUESTION 6

- Read verse 4. It speaks of sons and daughters coming from afar. Isaiah is writing about a regathering of Israel. When you think of regathering in terms of the Christian church, what do you think of?

*Answers will vary. Many have been far off and they will draw near. Revival.*

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#### QUESTION 7

- In verse 6, Isaiah writes that herds of camels will come bearing gifts. What kind of gifts are brought? Does this remind you of something?

*The camels bring gold and frankincense. Foretelling the gifts the magi bring to the baby Jesus.*

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#### QUESTION 8

- In verses 6-7, Isaiah writes that Israel will be rewarded with wealth and good things. What lesson can we draw from this?

*We aren't being promised wealth and happiness, but that the Lord will bless us with things we can't imagine. The Israelites have their power restored, but they (and we) are not to use that power for their own advantage. The Lord blesses us and wants us to, in turn, honor him and draw others to him in the process.*

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#### QUESTION 9

- Like the Israelites, we are blessed with things because we are God's children. God calls us to use our blessings and gifts to draw others to him. Can you name 2-3 things that you can do (or you've seen others do) that would draw those in the darkness toward Jesus?

*Answers will vary. Speaking up for the oppressed. Being kind and generous to those who are different from us. Acting with love. Being loyal to God, not a political party or ideology.*

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#### PRAYER MINISTRY

- Read the Great Litany from the Book of Common Prayer together. You can find it here: <https://www.bcponline.org/GreatLitany/Litany.html> You can read it as a responsive reading together as a group. As you go through the prayer, encourage your small group members to say a prayer for individuals that come to mind. (For example, after this stanza:

That it may please thee to illumine all bishops, priests, and deacons, with true knowledge and understanding of thy Word; and that both by their preaching and living, they may set it forth, and show it accordingly,  
*We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.*

You can pray for pastors and leaders by name.)

- Take time to talk about any prayer requests you may have as a group and then pray together.