

The King is Coming

The Dawning Light (O Dayspring)

Key idea:

Jesus is the Dawning Light, breaking through the darkness in our life to give life, freedom, and joy.

Key text:

Isaiah 9:1–2

Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan — ² The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.

Key points:

1. Isaiah prophesied that a time of great darkness and gloom was coming, but that God would send a great Light to pierce the darkest gloom.
2. Scripture mentions many types or facets of darkness:
 - Emotional gloom and distress
 - Physical or spiritual blindness
 - Confusion and error
 - Captivity (including spiritual captivity to sin)
 - Fear
 - Death and the fear of death
3. Scripture referred to the Coming King and Messiah as a great Light, Who would pierce through the darkness to bring life, freedom, and joy.
4. There is a major emphasis in Scripture on the Messiah as the Dawning Light, the Morning Star and Rising Sun.
5. The title of the Dayspring is meant to nourish hope in dark times and places in my life.

Questions for discussion/application:

1. What part of Sunday's text and teaching stood out most to me? Why?
2. What was the great disaster that Israel was facing? How would I respond to such an impending disaster and darkness?
3. Is it legitimate to refer to the facets of darkness as not only physical but spiritual? When Isaiah spoke of the darkness of blindness, was it only physical blindness or also spiritual blindness? What about captivity? Death? How does the New Testament view these types of darkness?
4. The New Testament quotes Isaiah 9:1-2 in reference to Jesus in Matthew 4:13-16, and it is alluded to by Zechariah in his prayer in Luke 1:76-79, and by John in the prologue to his Gospel in John 1:4-5, 9. How do they see Jesus as a fulfillment of this prophecy?
5. The idea of the Dayspring, the Dawning Light, became a major emphasis in the Messianic texts of the Old Testament (see Isaiah 60:1-3; Malachi 4:1-2). Bret also mentioned that the word used for "rising sun" in Luke 1:78 was used to refer to the Branch coming forth from David in Jeremiah 23:5, Zechariah 3:8, 6:12. Why is the idea of not just light, but Light that is just beginning to rise, so important? What is the difference between the Dayspring and the full blazing sun?
6. How does Malcolm Guite develop the idea of the Dayspring in His poem? How is it related to Light? How is it related to a spring or river of water? Why did he relate to both Light and Water? (See Revelation 22:1-5 for a hint).
7. How is the title of Dayspring related to the Root and Branch of David? How is it related to the Key of David?
8. When I consider the areas of darkness listed above, which one is the Holy Spirit showing me is the greatest area of darkness in my life? How does Jesus as the Dayspring address this need in my life?
9. Look at Isaiah 60:1-3. How is the idea of Light developed in these verses? Is the Light only the Messiah, or are the people of God called to display light as well? How can the Light of God show forth in my life to draw others to Jesus the Dayspring?
10. Whom can I pray for, share what I have learned, and invite to church this week?

Preview of next week: The King of the Nations (O King of the Nations) [Isaiah 2:3-4]