

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

I. Intro - Night Navigation (USMC & Pilots)

- A. Night navigation at TBS - hard and crazy in the dark!
- B. Pilots - first carrier landing in the dark!
- C. Darkness can be scary and dangerous!
- D. The Coming King will be the Dawning Light to dispel the darkness

II. The Great Problem of Darkness

- A. The people are living in darkness
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. Isaiah 9:2
 - 1. Note the parallelism - same thing described twice
 - 2. People walk/live in darkness/shadow of death
 - 3. In our modern electric world, we forget the problem of darkness - but it was a huge problem for them!
- B. The many facets of darkness in Scripture
 - 1. The darkness of emotional gloom and distress
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. Isaiah 9:1–2

- a. The people were living in gloom and distress
 - b. They were facing the potential danger of an invasion
 - c. But we all know the darkness of emotional distress
 - d. The world seems dark with no hope for the future
2. The darkness of physical or spiritual blindness
- “I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a **light** for the Gentiles, ⁷ **to open eyes that are blind**, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness. Isaiah 42:6–7
- a. Physical blindness is obviously literal darkness
 - b. Milton gave voice to this (When I Consider...)
When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodg'd with me useless...
 - c. Spiritual blindness is also a powerful metaphor
“Woe to you, blind guides! ... ²⁴ You blind guides!
You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel. Matthew 23:16, 24
The god of this age has **blinded the minds of unbelievers**, so that **they cannot see the light of the gospel** of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 2 Corinthians 4:4
 - d. There is nothing darker than spiritual blindness! The Resurrection will heal physical blindness, but spiritual blindness toward God will remain in those who refuse the Gospel!

3. The darkness of confusion and error

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. ² See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you. ³ Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Isaiah 60:1–3

- a. The darkness over the nations was error/confusion
- b. They had no knowledge of the One True God
- c. When we embrace error and confusion it produces great darkness, and we find ourselves stumbling and falling into pits all around

4. The darkness of captivity

I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, ⁷ to open eyes that are blind, **to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.** Isaiah 42:6–7

- a. Release captives... from dungeons in darkness
- b. This included physical captivity, but also spiritual
Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, ²⁶ and that they will **come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.** 2 Timothy 2:25–26
- c. Spiritual captivity in dungeons of error and sin is a deep darkness, robbing us of the freedom for which we were created in the image of God.

5. The darkness of fear

Then they will look toward the earth and **see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom**, and they will be thrust into **utter darkness.** Isaiah 8:22

- a. This is the verse before our text!
- b. The people are trapped in darkness & fearful gloom
- c. There are few things darker than fear, which can dominate our hearts and minds and make our present and future seem dark and gloomy.

6. The darkness of death

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. Isaiah 9:2

- a. Darkness... the land of the shadow of death
- b. There is the darkness of spiritual death, which is the natural state of all humanity.
As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, Ephesians 2:1
- c. Because of sin, the darkness of spiritual death shrouds all humanity.
- d. The land of the shadow of death also refers to the fear of physical death or nearness to physical death
- e. The fear of death is a deep darkness that enslaves many, leading to the fruitless attempt to ignore death and whistle past the graveyard.
Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil — ¹⁵ and **free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.** Hebrews 2:14–15
- f. But we will not escape death! We can not evade it; we must prepare for it!
- g. But those who have seen the Dawning Light need not fear death - for His Light will shine through even the darkness of death itself!

C. The great darkness enveloping the world
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. Isaiah 9:1–2

1. All of these things combined can make the world a gloomy place of distress and darkness!
2. But we were not made for the dark but for the light!

III. Jesus: The Dawning Light

A. The Light that pierces the darkness
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. Isaiah 9:2

1. There is a Light that can pierce the darkness
2. The Messiah was referred to as a Light
“I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. **A star will come out of Jacob**; a scepter will rise out of Israel. He will crush the foreheads of Moab, the skulls of all the sons of Sheth. Numbers 24:17
 - a. A Star was going to come to rescue God’s people from their enemies

I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and **a light** for the Gentiles, ⁷ to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness. Isaiah 42:6–7

- b. The Messiah would be a Light (for Israel and Gentiles) - also see Isaiah 49:6

3. This is why in the NT Jesus is referred to as the Light of the world, the Life that was the Light of men, etc.

B. Dayspring - the Dawning Light
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**. Isaiah 9:2

1. The text refers to the light dawning
2. The idea of a Light dawning or arising became a key theme

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord **rises** upon you. ² See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord **rises** upon you and his glory appears over you. ³ Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your **dawn**. Isaiah 60:1–3

But for you who revere my name, the **sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings**. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall. Malachi 4:2

- a. These texts (and others) give the idea not just of Light, but of the Dawning Light, coming to break through the darkness.
 - b. The Messiah came to be seen as the Dawning Light - the Morning Star (Venus) and the Rising Sun
3. Jesus is the Dawning Light

And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, ⁷⁷ to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, ⁷⁸ because of the tender mercy of our God, by which **the rising sun will come to us from heaven ⁷⁹ to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death**, to guide our feet into the path of peace.” Luke 1:76–79

- a. Note the language from Isaiah (living in darkness, shadow of death) - clearly an allusion to Isaiah 9:1-2
 - b. Jesus is the Rising Sun Who pierces the darkness to free us!
 - c. The word for Rising Sun in Luke 1:79 (ἀνατολή = anatole), which means East, or place where the sun rises, was also used to refer to the Branch of David in Jeremiah 23:5, Zechariah 3:8; 6:12
- I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. **I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.** Revelation 22:16
- d. Jesus is the Root and Branch of David, and He is the bright Morning star. When all seems dead and dark, He is springing forth in Life and Light!

IV. Applying the Word

A. Where is there deep darkness in my life?

1. Spiritual (I don't know Christ)
2. Emotional
3. Confusion or error
4. Captivity (sin or habit)
5. Fear
6. Fear of death
7. What area in my life seems dark, without joy?

B. Receiving the Dawning Light into my darkness

1. Whatever the darkness that seems to threaten to extinguish life, freedom, and joy in your life, Jesus is the Dawning Light to restore hope and joy to you!

2. Malcolm Guite - O Oriens

So every trace of light begins a grace

In me, a beckoning. The smallest gleam
Is somehow a beginning and a calling;
“Sleeper awake, the darkness was a dream

For you will see the Dayspring at your waking,
Beyond your long last line the dawn is breaking”.

- a. Don't despise the small gleam or dawning Light
- b. It is the start of the restoration of life, freedom, joy
- c. The darkness is but a dream, the Dayspring is Reality!

3. The Table of Life, Freedom, and Joy

The Eternal Light (O Dayspring)

Isaiah 9:1-2

December 15, 2019

Communion

Luke 1:75-79 Paraphrase

Teaching keywords: Advent and Christmas, Christology, prophecy (Old Testament), God's Glory; eschatology

May the Dayspring, God's Rising Sun, shine on You and dispel darkness. May He rescue you from the hand of all your enemies, and enable you to serve Him without fear all your days! (Based on Luke 1:75-79)

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.

Isaiah 9:1-2