

"Your sun will no longer set, nor will your moon wane; for you will have the Lord for an everlasting light, and the days of your mourning will be over!" (Isaiah 60:20)

Last week's lesson on Isaiah 59 began (in verse 1) with a great reminder for Israel that their God was totally able to deliver them from their most adverse and desperate circumstances in life, including their captivity at that time in Babylon--if only they would call upon Him and repent of their sin, and choose to follow Him! This same great truth applies just as well to us as believers today! And here's the great truth that Isaiah gave to them--a verse for all of us to remember, and take to heart: "Behold, the Lord's hand is not so short that it cannot save; nor is His ear so dull that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear!"

Isaiah went on, in the verses to follow, you'll remember, to describe the depth of Israel's sin! And it's not a pretty picture! Best summed up perhaps in verses 7-8--"Their feet run to evil, and they hasten to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity. Devastation and destruction are in their highways. They do not know the way of peace, and there is no justice in their tracks; they have made their paths crooked, (and) whoever treads on them does not know peace"!

Then Isaiah, beginning in verse 9, recognizing the dilemma of the people seeking unsuccessfully to escape their depraved condition in their own strength, takes it upon himself (with great humility!) to speak for the nation and the people (in a kind of model prayer), by acknowledging, and confessing their sin (and his too!) before God! The Passion version notes Isaiah declaring (in prayer-like language!) that, "For this reason, justice is far from us and righteousness doesn't reach us! We hope for light but, sadly, there is only darkness! We are like the blind groping along a wall; we stumble around in broad daylight like it was night, like the walking dead...For our many rebellious deeds are stacked high before You! We are aware of our sins...and our evil deeds all too well...We have rebelled and forsaken God ...Justice is driven away and righteousness stands on the sidelines, for truth has stumbled in the public square(!), and those who turn from evil become the next victim!" (And we could only respond with a "Wow!")

The good news we heard from Isaiah was that the Lord saw their hopeless estate, and heard Isaiah's prayer! Isaiah records, you'll recall (in verses 16-18) that "when the Lord saw Israel's tragic (and hopeless!) condition and the absence of anyone to intervene on their behalf...He was greatly appalled, and armed Himself (figuratively speaking!) for their deliverance, and for taking vengeance upon His adversaries" (MacArthur notes Him "executing decisive judgment against all the rebellious nations, as well as the wicked Israelites")! Then "taking it upon Himself to change Israel's condition, through the intervention of His Suffering Servant"!

Then we saw how Isaiah closed Isaiah 59 with the prophetic words that "the nations will (in a day to come!) fear the name of the Lord...and His glory from the rising of the sun, for He will come like a rushing stream which the wind of the Lord drives...and a Redeemer will come to Zion, and to those who turn from transgression to Jacob"!

Followed by the Lord's covenant promise that "His Spirit would come upon Israel, and His words which He would put in their mouth would not depart from their mouth, or the mouth of their offspring, nor from the mouths of their offspring's offspring...from now and forever" (words which would become the basis for Paul's assurance, in Romans 11:26-27, of the future salvation of Israel)!

And that set the scene for our lesson last night on Isaiah 60--which begins with the promise of "a new day to come"! A day, Isaiah prophesies, when in the midst of a "deep darkness that will cover the earth... the glory of the Lord would appear upon Israel"! A light signaling the dawn of a new day--believed to be the time of the millennial kingdom (Wiersbe notes, "when Israel's Messiah returns to reign")--and when the glory of the Lord will shine" on Israel!

And so, "arise and shine," Isaiah says to Israel, for "the glory of the Lord will appear upon you" (and beginning in verse 3) that "nations will come to their light, and kings to the brightness of their rising"! And Israel will rejoice and receive the abundance of material possessions, "the wealth of the nations"! And it will be a day, Isaiah prophesies, when "your sons will come from afar, and your daughters will be carried in the arms...bearing good news of the praises of the Lord...when God will glorify His glorious house...and when foreigners will rebuild the walls of Jerusalem...and their gates will be open continually...so that men may bring the wealth of the nations"! When God will "make the place of His feet glorious...and the sons of those who afflicted them will bow themselves before them," and call Jerusalem "the city of the Lord, the Zion of Holy One of Israel"! Then Isaiah says that "you (Israel) will know that I, the Lord, am your Savior and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob"!

But there's more! Isaiah prophesies, beginning in verse 18, that "violence will not be heard again" in the land, and "no longer will they have the sun for light by day, or the moon for brightness at night, for they will "have the Lord for an everlasting light, and the days of their mourning will be over...Then all your people will be righteous; and they will possess the land forever"! (Habakkuk 2:14 notes that on that day, with the establishment of God's millennial kingdom, "the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea"!)

Wow! What a day that will be!

Lord, we pray (as we live in the increasingly darkened world today): "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done!"

Rise and shine, fellow MOBsters!

Lowell