

Worship Material
Arise, Shine
Material from Roots Bible Study
Sunday 4th January

Begin with an opening prayer

God of light, we look around and we see your brightness shining:
shining in the dark places, shining in the forgotten
places, shining with power, warmth, and grace.
Please shine on us today, and help us be prepared
to shine our light for all people.

Amen.

Read: Isaiah 60:1-6

Bible notes

In the aftermath of the return from exile (around 520 BC), life back in the land of Israel is not great. In chapter 60 the writer articulates what God will do for this people and consequently what his people are called to be in the world. The whole chapter is an amazing portrayal of the nations flocking to the mountain of the Lord bringing the fruits of their industry and culture to lay at the feet of Yahweh.

In context, this chapter is good news to the returned exiles. Their capital city still lies ruined, and they lack the resources to rebuild it. However, God promises not only that more of their own shall return to the city, but also that the nations are coming with the very abundance they lack. This links with Nehemiah's work of persuading the Persians to allow the shipments of the timber and ironwork required to rebuild the broken walls and gates of the city (Nehemiah 2:7-8), and the need of the Judeans to get up and get busy processing the largesse of the nations. Those returning will soon be awash with the resources of the world to re-establish their city and retake their place at the centre of God's plan.

It is a time for joy and celebration. As Judah lifts her eyes to see what God is doing, she breaks into a broad grin and a song of praise that has begun on the lips of those bringing their treasures into the city.

Prayer

God of Light,
we pray for people who are living in thick darkness.
Please shine your beautiful light
into the darkness of their lives.
God of Light, please shine through us
so that others may know your light.

Amen.

A prayer to conclude

May we see God's light
shining in dark places this week.
May we have the confidence and energy
to arise and to shine God's light
to those we see and meet,
so that all people might know Jesus who is the light of the world.

Amen.