

From the desk of Fr. Stimpson:

January 2, 2022

Dear Friends,

Today, we celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany. Epiphany means a manifestation of God. Typically, we ponder the appearance of the magi to adore the newborn King and to offer him adoration and gifts symbolizing his kingship, divinity, and death. This is a celebration of Christ as Savior being revealed to the Gentiles. However, this year I thought a reflection on our first reading from Isaiah was fitting. Jesus is the fulfillment of Isaiah's vision that the light and Kingdom of God would come to earth. I include a selection from a commentary on Isaiah chapter 60 from Barry Webb.

"Isaiah must have seen the sunrise over Jerusalem many times, appearing first over the Mount of Olives to the east, and then falling on the city below, driving away the darkness and flooding the whole scene – walls and gates, domes, towers and homes – with its glory. It is a sight tourists still marvel at today. In this chapter (60), however, that familiar scene, breathtaking in its own right, becomes an image of something infinitely greater. In a vision Isaiah sees the LORD himself rising over Zion like the sun, and filling the whole city with his glory, so that it becomes a magnet drawing all nations towards it (1–2, cf. 2:2–4). Although it is focused on Zion, the vision of this magnificent chapter is world-wide in its scope. It begins with thick darkness covering the whole earth, as at the beginning of creation itself. But here it is spiritual darkness, the darkness of moral evil and spiritual blindness. It is the 'shroud' of 25:7 that enfolds all peoples and covers all the nations. But then, as in Genesis, the scene is transformed as light pierces the darkness, and a new world begins to emerge. If the world called into existence in Genesis 1 was 'very good', this one is better by far. It has no need of sun or moon, for the LORD himself is its everlasting light (19–20). The city at its center represents everything that was promised in the original creation, now brought to triumphant and glorious fulfillment. And the heartbeat of the city is worship; how could it be anything else (7, 14b)? In this chapter Zion is not the physical city that was rebuilt after the exile. It is the kingdom of God come down to earth; the new creation. Of course the return from exile contained the seed, but it is the full-grown plant, the final outworking, which Isaiah has directly in view here. If we are to understand his words aright we must see them for what they are – a vision of the end comparable to Ezekiel's vision of the city of God, or to John's vision of the new Jerusalem."

Webb, Barry G., *The Message of Isaiah (The Bible Speaks Today Series)* (pp. 231-232). InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.

Peace,  
Father Stimpson