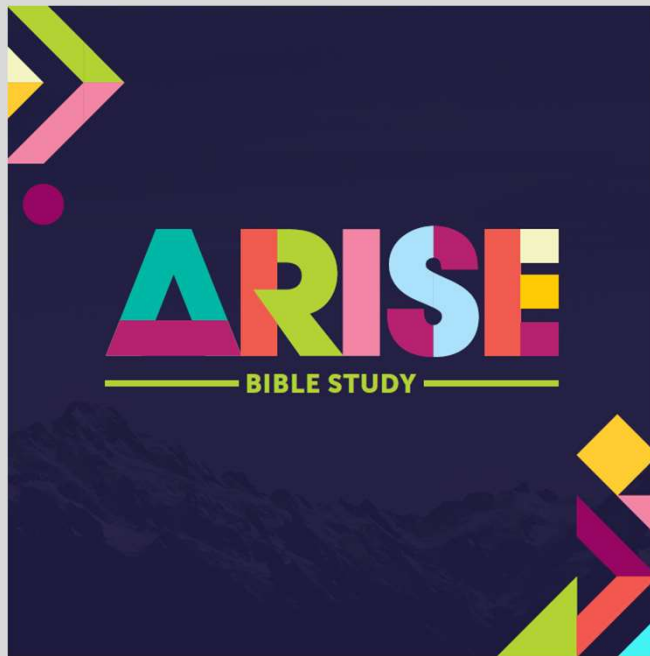


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**YOUR
LIGHT
HAS COME**

SCRIPTURE: GENESIS 1:1-5

¹In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, ²the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. ³ Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. ⁴ And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

SCRIPTURE: PSALM 119:105-112

¹⁰⁵ Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path.

¹⁰⁶ I have sworn an oath and confirmed it,
to observe your righteous ordinances.

¹⁰⁷ I am severely afflicted;
give me life, O Lord, according to your word.

¹⁰⁸ Accept my offerings of praise, O Lord,
and teach me your ordinances.

¹⁰⁹ I hold my life in my hand continually,
but I do not forget your law.

¹¹⁰ The wicked have laid a snare for me,
but I do not stray from your precepts.

¹¹¹ Your decrees are my heritage forever;
they are the joy of my heart.

¹¹² I incline my heart to perform your statutes
forever, to the end.

SCRIPTURE: ISAIAH 51:4; JOHN 3:19-21

Isaiah 51:4

⁴ Listen to me, my people,
and give heed to me, my nation;
for a teaching will go out from me,
and my justice for a light to the peoples.

The Light of Justice



- Speak up, Stand with, Show love
- The Beloved Community – Wed PM
 - cor.org/nextsteps
- Pray on Troost – Fri Juneteenth 7PM
 - www.prayontroost.org
- Austin Channing Brown
 - I'm Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness
- #ShareTheMic on Instagram

1 John 4:12

¹² No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

SCRIPTURE: JOHN 9:5-7

⁵As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” ⁶When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the [blind] man’s eyes, saying to him, ⁷“Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see.

REFLECTION:

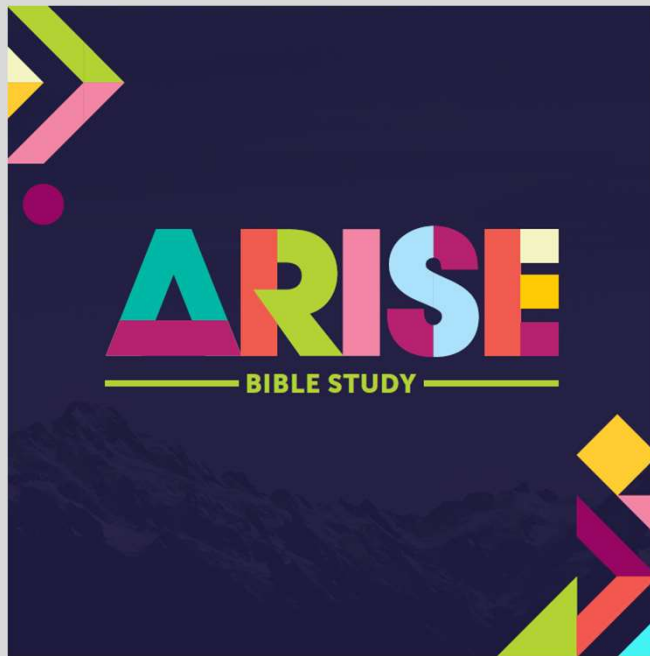
To understand why Jesus was considered the light of the world, it is necessary to explore some historical background. In general, when Jesus was born, there was much darkness, especially for the nation of Israel. Centuries before, the Babylonians had attacked the Israelites, destroyed their temple, and exiled the people from their land. For a people whose religious life depended on the land and the temple, this was devastating. It felt like God had abandoned them. After 70 years, some of the Israelites were allowed to go back to their homeland because a new empire, the Persians, had taken over the Babylonians (even though the Persians still ruled over Israel, they were more gracious to them). Over the next few centuries, the controlling empire of the Israelites switched from the Persians to the Greeks and then from the Greeks to the Romans; thus, Israel had not been an independent or free nation for a very long time when Jesus came on the scene.

The Israelites were at the mercy of the conquering empire, and with all of the shifts in power over the centuries, this led to an unstable, precarious, and frustrating existence. They desperately needed light in their darkness, and this was what Jesus claimed to be in the passage for today.

However, Jesus was not the kind of light many of the Jews had been expecting or hoping for. Like most humans, they wanted God to take away their trials; thus, they wanted the coming Messiah to be a military leader who would lead the Israelites in fighting against the ruling empire and establish the nation's independence once again. Jesus, on the other hand, came in the form of a baby born in an animal feeding trough. Instead of fighting, he taught. Instead of condemning the Romans, Jesus rebuked the legalistic Israelite leaders. Instead of riding a horse, he rode a donkey.

Instead of victoriously conquering other nations, he died on a cross. This leaves us questioning, like many of the Israelites, "How, then, was Jesus the light?" The simple answer comes from the passage for today: Jesus helped and still helps people see things differently by opening eyes to what was invisible before. With this new sight, we recognize God's desire to have a relationship with *all* of humanity, not just with our specific group or "tribe." This relationship is more important than getting our problems solved or receiving "special" treatment from God. We start to notice our lives are interconnected with the lives of others from different groups and we cannot exist without these people. We see humility, joy, peace, generosity, and love as higher goals than wealth or the act of pleasing others, and we perceive hope even in death, even when this world tells us there is no hope. As the light in my life, Jesus has enriched my perspective, showing me there is so much more to life than my immediate worldly or bodily circumstances (not that these don't matter to God because they do). Because of Jesus, I have become part of something bigger, more beautiful, and more significant than I ever could have seen on my own.]

Breakout Discussion



Page 30 – 31 in study book

- Introduce yourself
- Share any highlights you have about:
 - light of creation
 - light of law and scripture
 - light of judgment and justice
 - light of other people and love
 - light of Jesus
- John 1:18 states, “No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father’s heart, who has made him known.” How has the Word in the form of Jesus Christ shined light on your understanding and knowledge of God?
- How is the light of God’s Word illuminating your life right now? In other words, what word is God speaking to you currently, and how is this word affecting your life?
- What are some things you can do to hear God’s word better and allow it to shine more brightly into your life?