



## SUNDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> NOVEMBER - 10AM ASCENSION

### Advent – The Divine Conspiracy – Week 1 - Ascension

You're right – it isn't quite Advent yet but let's start preparing ourselves for the way to Christmas. We know that it is all about the coming of Jesus, but in our modern consumerist culture it has become much wider and often disconnected from the underlying connection to His birth and mission. But it doesn't mean that we can't enjoy the wider celebration and many of the traditions that are so linked to it.

Many of these are good and feed togetherness and build a sense of community and for many family connections. Life is meant to have joy and celebration. There is so much in the recollection of stories, of Nativity plays re-enacting the Christmas story. The rehearsal of Carols, and other Christmas music. The over-indulgence in Christmas food. But there is a danger that we can be led away from the truth behind the story of Christmas, behind the underlying strategy of heaven – the Divine Conspiracy – to change people and the world through the intervention into history of Jesus. Not just the baby in the manger as key as that is, but beyond that to the full truth of Jesus – the light of the World breaking into time.

In a time when the world is awash with unfounded conspiracy theories, "The Great Reset, Q'Anon and even flat earthers (yes there are still some people who believe the world is flat!) to name just a few, let us engage in our part of the Divine Conspiracy to change the world.

The starting point is to realise that God is calling us to Arise. To ascend – first and foremost into His presence, into the heavenly realms.

*Is 60:1 "Arise, shine, for your light has come,  
and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.*

It is as we actively arise, seeking his presence, entering into the viewpoint of heaven and to see the world as He does, that

we will be equipped to work with Him to bring about change. It is the Glory of the Lord rising upon us that means that we can shine. The reason we can arise is because our Light, Jesus, has come into this world (The Christmas Conspiracy) but also into our lives as we have chosen to follow Him.

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world." (John 8:12) – and also said "14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.  
Matt 5

We are Light because He is the light and that Light shines on, in, and through us. So, the invitation is to arise, to ascend, to Him, to His presence, to His Light that we can fulfil the call to shine in the thick darkness and see the results.

Isiah 60:1-4

*“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.*

*<sup>2</sup>See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you.*

*<sup>3</sup>Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.*

*<sup>4</sup>“Lift up your eyes and look about you: All assemble and come to you; your sons come from afar, and your daughters are carried on the hip.*

**Monday:** Read through the passage several times (out loud if you can). Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the meaning of it to your heart and mind. Ask Him what His invitation to Arise, to ascend, means for you. Note it down and thank Him for his revelation to you.

**Tuesday:** Spend some time meditating on and pondering on verse 1 again. Pray into it asking Him to show you more of his glory that is rising upon you and then receive that from him.

**Wednesday:** We live in His light, the Lord rising upon us and His glory over us, but within the darkness that covers the earth. Take some time to pray about the places and people that you encounter in your daily life. Pray that God will use you to bring light and glory into these settings. Listen to the Holy Spirit for how you can express this light. It might be through an act of kindness, or compassion, offering to pray for someone, offering an encouraging word or a listening ear, or even something as simple as having a cup of coffee with them. But allow Him to lead you.

**Thursday:** Prayerfully ask God to open up further opportunities for you today and into the future, to *let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven (Matt 5:16)* Then be bold and take some (even just small) steps in doing this. As we arise in faith God will respond.

**Friday:** *Isiah 60:4 “Lift up your eyes....”* Read through the entire passage again and consider God’s promises here as we Arise and Shine. Pray specifically for some people who you know who don’t know Jesus. Maybe especially family members who are “afar”. Ask God to show them His light – maybe through you – and declare the truth in God’s word that they will assemble and come. Then Thank God for all he has spoken to you this week.