

Psalm 112:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.

Analysis

This verse offers hope in darkness: 'Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness.' 'The upright' refers to those characterized by moral integrity and covenant faithfulness described in verse 1. 'Light' symbolizes deliverance, understanding, guidance, and hope. 'In the darkness' represents trouble, confusion, suffering, or adversity. The promise is that light 'ariseth' - appears, dawns - even in dark circumstances. This doesn't promise absence of darkness but God's intervention within it. The second half describes God's character: 'he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.' 'Gracious' (channun) means showing favor undeserved. 'Full of compassion' (rachum) emphasizes tender mercy and deep feeling. 'Righteous' (tzaddiq) affirms moral perfection and justice. These three attributes form a complete picture: God's righteousness ensures He judges justly, His compassion moves Him to mercy, and His grace provides what we cannot earn. The verse promises that God's character ensures deliverance for His people.

Historical Context

The imagery of light arising in darkness connects to God's creative work ('Let there be light,' Genesis 1:3) and His guidance of Israel by the pillar of fire through darkness (Exodus 13:21). Prophets used light/darkness imagery extensively - Isaiah promised that those in darkness would see great light (Isaiah 9:2, fulfilled in Matthew 4:16). For exilic Jews in darkness of captivity, this verse promised hope. The description of God as 'gracious, full of compassion, and righteous' echoes

God's self-revelation to Moses in Exodus 34:6-7, the foundation of Israel's understanding of God's character. Throughout Israel's history, when judgment fell due to sin (darkness), God's compassion ultimately brought restoration (light). The darkness might be prolonged (70 years of exile) but not permanent. New Testament application sees Jesus as the light of the world (John 8:12) who shines in darkness (John 1:5). For Christians facing persecution or suffering, this promise that light arises in darkness has sustained faith through centuries.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What does it mean that light 'ariseth' in darkness rather than eliminating darkness immediately?
2. How do God's attributes of grace, compassion, and righteousness work together in bringing light to our darkness?
3. Why is the promise of light specifically given to 'the upright' rather than universally?
4. In what ways have you experienced light arising in your own times of darkness?
5. How does this verse relate to Jesus's declaration that He is 'the light of the world'?

Interlinear Text

לִישָׁרְ יְם	אֵרֶךְ	בְּחֵשֶׁךְ	שָׁרֶךְ	וְרַחֲםָה	לְאַלְמָנָה	מִלְּאָמָרָה
there ariseth	in the darkness	light	Unto the upright	he is gracious		
H2224	H2822	H216	H3477	H2587		
וְרַחֲמָה	לְאַלְמָנָה					
and full of compassion	and righteous					
H7349	H6662					

Additional Cross-References

Job 11:17 (Parallel theme): And thine age shall be clearer than the noonday; thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning.

Psalms 97:11 (Righteousness): Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.

Isaiah 58:10 (Resurrection): And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday:

Psalms 106:1 (Grace): Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

1 John 3:7 (Righteousness): Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

1 John 2:29 (Righteousness): If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

Luke 6:36 (Grace): Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

Isaiah 50:10 (Light): Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God.

Psalms 37:6 (Righteousness): And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.

Ephesians 5:9 (Righteousness): (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org