



Advent Prophecy

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“...all love to God was lost, so that there remained no longer any will to what was good, the human race was separated from the Divine, for nothing conjoins us with God and Heaven but love, and when there was no love spiritual disjunction took place, the consequence of which is destruction and extinction.

A promise, therefore, was then made concerning the coming of the Lord into the world, who should unite the Human to the Divine, and through this union should effect conjunction of the human race in Himself, by a faith grounded in love and charity.”

-Secrets of Heaven §2034.6¹

The Season of Advent is here, and with it come some of life’s most healing Divine gifts: the palpable feeling of spiritual warmth in the air (which seem to nudge us in the direction of being very kind to strangers), and beautiful stories and prophecies in God’s Word that inspire us to feel HOPE...PEACE...JOY...and LOVE.

The incredible story of God’s Advent (or coming) here among us as the baby Jesus came precisely at the most serious and grim time within the long history of life on Earth—when things were at their darkest, when nearly all hope was lost. This ancient story is true, and it is the prelude to Christmas. It is entirely real, and this is why no matter how difficult or distressing life gets for us these days, I know in my heart, mind and soul that deep down everything is going to be alright.

Why? Because the Lord never has, nor ever will abandon us. Hurricanes, forest fires, earthquakes and madmen come and go. Indeed, humanity tries its best, at times, to thwart and denounce the Lord’s Divine kingship over life, but still God promises to come and redeems us—and restore the balance of Heaven and Hell on Earth, giving us back our spiritual freedom to choose between right and wrong, between love and selfishness, and between believing what is true or rejecting truth in favor of our own false reasonings, denying God’s wisdom and Light found in His Holy Word.

We are reminded of this powerful truth in life in our celebration of Advent: that no matter how stressful and difficult things get, we can count on God to intervene as our Savior.

I know this is true not only by many years of personal experience, but also because of the great stories and verses in Scripture, both in their literal and inner meaning, which we are so blessed to learn about in the Lord’s New Christianity. Yes, there is the literal level of course, and then living inside of the literal words is what we might refer to as the “real Bible code”—symbolic layers of truth waiting like hidden treasure for those willing to seek and search for it!

¹ Swedenborg, Emanuel. *Secrets of Heaven*. West Chester, PA: Swedenborg Foundation, 2010.

What we find in both the literal and inner depths of God's Word are treasures of divine truth giving us a clear understanding way back in the Most Ancient times, not long after humanity freely chose to begin turning away from God (thus, turning away from mercy, goodness, peace and love), the Lord knew that humanity's falling and turning away from God would bring us to the brink of destruction. And then, when our world was living in "deep darkness" just prior to the Lord's incarnation, God would intervene in human history like never before! The Lord understood how humanity's spiritual fall would culminate. He knew that as humanity's falling away progressed, it was going to be harder and harder for people to feel inside that God was real and that God is pure Love and Wisdom in infinite measure---who never comes in wrath and destruction, but comes rather with a new message of hope, peace, joy and love.

Thus, the Lord saw to it that prophecies of His birth would be spoken and written for thousands of years preceding His Advent (His coming and birth into our world as Jesus Christ). These prophecies were then woven into the fabric of time and space through prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah and Micah, echoing the eventual coming of God in person to free the world from enslavement to evil and selfishness. The beautiful and hopeful prophecies then came true, in the fullness of time, as when the angel of the Lord appeared to those lowly shepherds watching their flocks by night, proclaiming: "to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord."² (Luke 2:11)

Emanuel Swedenborg summarized the immense seriousness of how desperately humanity needed a Savior back then when he wrote:

"[When] all love to God was lost, so that there remained no longer any will to what was good, the human race was separated from the Divine, for nothing conjoins us with God and Heaven but love, and when there was no love spiritual disjunction took place, the consequence of which is destruction and extinction. A promise, therefore, was then made concerning the coming of the Lord into the world, who should unite the Human to the Divine, and through this union should effect conjunction of the human race in Himself, by a faith grounded in love and charity."

-Secrets of Heaven §2034.6

The Season of Advent begins by calling us to reconnect with this sobering history of our world—but then, within the deeper-spiritual degree of truth within the story of Advent, each of us is

² *New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.*

called to apply the hope-filled message of Advent to our own, personal journeys when we are feeling like we are caught and trapped in a land of “deep darkness,” when we are feeling tempted to give in to our own feelings of desperation and depression—when we may feel like raising up our proverbial “white flag” and saying, “okay, I give up! I’ve had enough! I’m gonna give up on God and surrender to the surrounding darkness around me, giving up on hopefulness.”

But our moments of severe spiritual temptation, when it feels as if the darkness and shadows of life are going to win, these are times when the living power, the truth and the Light of Hope within the Advent story are designed to speak to our trembling and desperate hearts, allowing us to perceive and know inside that all hope is never lost! That in reality, God never abandons us, and no matter how terrible and desperate life becomes, the Lord always has something powerful, beautiful and transformational up his sleeve, which will save the day!

For indeed, isn’t it very, very true what God’s Word tells us, when Jesus looked at His disciples and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” (Mtt. 19:26) The simple yet profound truth of God’s power and Light always have a special way of proclaiming to us in our desperate times, that new hope will be born into your life!

Like me, though, have you had some very dark, lonely and despairing moments in your life when you seriously needed a word or gesture of hope from someone?

When I was 7 years old, our family dog named Puffin had given birth to a litter of puppies, and out of that wonderful litter of puppies my parents gave me my first pet dog, whom I named “Bernie.” Like many boys or girls my age, I adored my pal, Bernie. We went on many adventures together, he slept on my bed at night, and he was always there for me when I needed a loving, forgiving presence at my side. Several years later, my parents said it was time for Bernie to go before we moved from El Cerrito down to L.A. I was totally crushed and heartbroken! After I said goodbye to my trusted, furry friend Bernie, we moved to our new home in southern California in Los Angeles. Life for me in the L.A. public school system wasn’t easy, and I really missed Bernie a lot.

One Saturday morning, I woke up feeling seriously “out of sorts” inside. I felt angry and upset, but I wasn’t really sure about what it was. Looking back on it all, I’m sure it had to do with my suppressed grief, anger and sadness over missing my dog, Bernie. My family and I sat down for a nice scrambled eggs with toast breakfast that Mom had graciously made, but I was still way out of sorts inside. I shoveled my food angrily into my mouth, not making eye-contact with anyone. My dad began to ask me what was wrong, and then I stood up spewing both eggs and toast out at everyone (as well as some garbled harsh words at my family), and then I stormed off into the bathroom adjacent to my older brother, Rhett’s, bedroom, slamming doors behind me! I stayed in there with the doors locked for what seemed like an eternity, feeling angry and afraid of what my dad might do next. Slowly, I unlocked the bathroom door, and I crept out. And there to my surprise was my dad, quietly

sitting on my older brother, Rhett's, bed. Little did I know, but throughout the 20 or 30 minutes I had locked myself into that bathroom, my dad was very close by, waiting for me to surface. I walked up to him with my tear-soaked face, and he held out his arms, and hugged me. He held me warmly as I wept bitter tears.

Then he said calmly and gently to me, "I know it hurts like crazy, Kit,...but, everything's going to be alright." In my darkest hour, my dad was there for me—a loving presence, willing to stand by me when I needed someone. This experience gave me a young impression of hopefulness grounded in a strong, loving presence who would wait as long as was needed to extend toward me arms of love.

The Lord's promise of being birthed among us in His Advent incarnation during humanity's most desperate hour functions like my experience of my wise Dad's loving support during my desperate moment in Los Angeles that morning. The truly Divine story of Advent stays with us, gluing us inwardly and spiritually to God's Divine love and promise that He will come again, and again and again into our darkest hours of life, right when things are at their worst, our loving Savior shall come again! Like a flickering candle of hope in our hearts, which stays lit deep within us, the promises of Advent are yours forever. And when we choose to not give in to the deep darkness of life, the Light and hope of Advent endures, and even grows!

Thus, part of God's long-term remedy or "spiritual inoculation" for us all during our moments of severe inner darkness was to provide prophecies of hope and expectation that one day, in the "fullness of time," the Lord would come among us Himself as our promised Savior Messiah. And in His Divine-Human presence and work, the rift and gulf between human beings and God would be bridged.

According to our New Church teachings, prophecy is more than predictions about future events. It is also vitaly radiating trumpet blasts of Divine truth pulling us back toward God's truth (see *Secrets of Heaven* §2567:5; 624:4).

Prophecies or predictions of the Lord's Advent birth actually preserved something of His Presence on Earth in ancient times, and they anchor us today in the Lord's saving power when we need it most!

And so we read in Isaiah...

*"The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.
You have multiplied the nation,
you have increased its joy;*

*they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.
For the yoke of their burden,
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.
For all the boots of the tramping warriors
and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.
For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”
-vs. 2-4,6-7*

When you hear these words like me, do you feel the Lord lifting you up inside, speaking gentle messages of new hope, new possibilities---that something good is coming around the bend, something good from God’s own hand?

In conclusion, since our world’s ancient times, humanity works hard to try to destroy ourselves and to keep ourselves spiritually separated from our Divine source of Love and Truth, which is God. Despite our best efforts to disdain and reject God, the Lord works constantly to save and redeem us. His prophecies maintain hope of the Lord’s good mission in life. And so, echoing within our own darkness and doubts, God’s Divine Light shines! That Divine promise that even deeper love for the Lord, others and ourselves will come!

We don’t need to raise our “white flag,” because the Lord’s words continue to reverberate in dark, turbulent times. Our Lord still says today as of old:

“When these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

-Luke 21:28

Amen.

