

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

The First Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ was His coming in Prophecy. Men moved by the Holy Spirit recorded God's foretelling of the One who would redeem mankind. Countless generations of the faithful lived by the Promise God made through the Prophets. His coming in prophecy was a real coming, and efficacious coming. For by that Word of Promise, the Holy Spirit worked to create faith in sinners, and by their conversion through that Word fallen men were sundered from the dying world and added to the Kingdom of God.

The First Promise of the Savior was not given through a Prophet. It was given by God Himself. In the midst of the most horrible condemnation of all time and eternity, as God declared the serpent of Eden condemned, even as that terrible judgment was declared, in mercy God included a Promise. He promised the Seed of a woman, a Seed who would suffer enmity from the devil's seed, a Seed who would crush the serpent's head, a Seed who would restore man to a right relationship with God. From that moment forward men awaited the Advent of the Savior.

After that First Promise, God made many other promises through Moses and His Prophets of the same Savior and His Advent. He showed forth the Coming One by shadow and type, by pattern and theme. The warp and weft of the Old Testament is Christ. Millennia after the First Promise God spoke through the Prophet Isaiah promising the same Savior, the Messiah, the Anointed One, the Christ.

First, the Prophet promised that the people of God would be made righteous, and that God Himself would make them righteous. It would not be a righteousness of works done by men, rather it would be a righteousness alien to fallen men, an imputed righteousness from One who is truly Righteous, the source of all righteousness.

And that Righteous One alone could say "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor..." The Coming One would have the Spirit of the Lord in a way no other man had ever had. The Spirit would be upon Him, even as He is One with the Spirit. And the sign of the One who had the Spirit in that way would be His Anointing. The Spirit would be poured out upon Him. The result of that outpouring is that the Coming One would preach the Gospel, He would usher in the redemption of all mankind.

But that Divine Message would not be reserved for kings and princes and rich and powerful men. The Gospel of salvation would be preached to those who could not afford it, to those who could not attain it, to the unworthy, the soiled, the undeserving. When men saw that taking place, when men saw One who was anointed by the Holy Spirit preaching the Gospel to the poor, they were to know that the long-awaited Advent of the Promised Savior was at hand.

But in mercy, in His boundless grace, God gave more signs of the Advent of the Messiah through Isaiah. He would bring healing to the brokenhearted. He would proclaim liberty to the captives. He would bring recovery of sight to the blind. He would set at liberty the oppressed. And He would proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, the time of His Advent.

For seven centuries more men would cling to those promises, that description of the Coming One, in which to put their trust. Their prayer of faith was "Savior of the nations, come!"

Then, seven centuries after Isaiah prophesied, countless millennia after the First Promise, “Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region.” In the synagogue in Nazareth, on the Sabbath Day, He stood up to read. He read the ancient Promise that pointed to Himself. He read the Signs of the Coming of the Savior, His Advent. He taught them “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

But there were other signs of the Promised One given through the Prophet Isaiah that had yet to be fulfilled. “Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”

According to His Promise, the Savior came. He was anointed with the Holy Spirit at the hands of John the Baptizer. He preached the Gospel to the poor. By His Coming in the Flesh He brought healing to those heart-broken over their sins and the death they bring. He proclaimed liberty to those captive to transgression and its evil author.

He gave sight to the blind. And He brought recovery to those blinded by sin, that they see the Promised Savior. He set at liberty those oppressed by their breaking of God’s Commands, those oppressed by the Accuser. And He proclaimed the acceptable year of the Lord, the time of His Advent, with these Words: “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

And then He fulfilled all the Words of Isaiah the Prophet as He went to the cross. There He did for you what God had long promised. For you were, as the Prophet taught, like sheep going astray. By His stripes, by His cross and empty tomb, the Coming One won the forgiveness of your sins. He brings to you the healing only God can give. He won your liberty from sin, death and the devil. He gives to you the sight of faith, the sight that sees Him as the fulfilment of all prophecy, the eyes of faith that see Him as your Savior.

He sets you at liberty by His Gospel in all its forms, the Means in which the Coming One who came comes to you today/tonight. By Gods’ grace, through faith worked by the Holy Spirit, you believe that He came as promised in that acceptable year, and that He comes as promised today, to redeem you, to sunder you from the fallen world and its evil prince and bring you into the Kingdom of God. For the Coming One has come, and He comes to you now, even this day/night, in His Holy Gifts.

Redeemed by Christ, forgiven your sins, reconciled to God, you live in His Kingdom now, in His acceptable time. And in a Divine Mystery, it is you who now sing “Savior of the Nations Come!” For you prepare now for His Final Advent. You wait in repentant faith. You hope for His Coming. And while you wait, the Coming One comes to you.

He feeds you with His Body and Blood. He multiplies your hope by His Word and Spirit. He forgives your sins. You hear the Gospel of which He is the center and substance and Promise. So in a very real way, today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.

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