



**I** WILL extol thee, O Lord; for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me. 2 O Lord my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me. 3 O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit. 4 Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness. 5 For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. 6 And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. 7 Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled. 8 I cried to thee, O Lord; and unto the Lord I made supplication. 9 What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth? 10 Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me: Lord, be thou my helper. 11 Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness; 12 To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever. (Psalm 30:1-12)

In the Book of Amos there is what some have termed an ‘arcane’ prophecy: 9 And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord GOD, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day: 10 And I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; and I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head; and I will make it as the mourning of an only son, and the end thereof as a bitter day. 11 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord: 12 And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it. (Amos 8:9-12) What do these various prophecies (there are more than one) mean in relation to the Coming of the Light?

Were it not for the midnight darkness, there could be no sunrise. We have mentioned before the pervasive silence and darkness that extended from the time of the prophet Malachi until the Gospel of St. Matthew. God was silent. The people sat in darkness. The Old Testament gave early revelation that the people would walk in darkness for that long, dark night: *The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.* (Isaiah 9:2) They walked so long in darkness that they made themselves at home there and sat down: *The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.* (Matt 4:16) Though the people may have mourned for a night, they experienced joy in the morning of Mary Magdalene's visit to the Garden Tomb on resurrection morning.

I hope that we can see how well the Old and New Testament Scriptures corroborate each other. *And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord GOD, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day:* How do the words of Amos corroborate the events of the Gospels? Do you remember when the darkness prevailed upon the earth at noonday and persisted until the death of the King of Glory? *Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.* <sup>46</sup> *And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, **Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?** that is to say, **My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*** (Matt 27:45-46) In the Hebrew computation of hours, the sixth hour is precisely noon, and the ninth hour is 3 PM – the exact time of the death of our Lord on the cross.

What kind of day was that Good Friday more than 2,000 years ago? Amos gives us a hint – *I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head; and I will make it as the mourning of an only son, and the end thereof as a bitter day.* Baldness represents deep mourning. Remember the courageous women who remained at the base of the cross with the Apostle John. They mourned with great bitterness. Thousands did so from that moment including the bitter tears of three days of Peter. We still mourn that death in knowing that it was our sins that compelled Christ to the cross (*as the mourning of an only son* – the only Begotten Son of God). But all of this represents the COMING LIGHT. There was darkness in Israel for those four hundred years, and there was extreme mourning for the three days that our Lord lay in the Tomb. *weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.*

A very large part of the world still sits in darkness. That darkness is clearly pervasive in our own nation and even neighborhoods. But His Elect are the reflected Light of the earth just as Christ is the true Light of the world – just as the reflected light of the moon gets its light-source from the Sun. Christ is our Sun of Righteousness (Mal 4:2). But that Divine Light continues to lighten men today who sit in darkness. He is always the COMING Light.

Our Lord was the Coming Light from before the foundation of the world. *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.* (1 Peter 1:18-20) During those dark centuries of four hundred years when men languished in darkness, many sought desperately for the Light, but found it not. The Word of the Lord was so rare that it was sought from sea to sea. Again, as Amos tells us: *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it.* The same is beginning in our own day, too. Can you imagine how difficult it is to find a church in your community which does not use a corrupt modern Bible translation that practically

nullifies the truth of God's Word? I searched far and wide before discovering the Anglican Orthodox Church before I discovered such a church in that fellowship.

Such a famine is painful and disheartening, but for every dark day, there comes a sunny, cloudless sky. The Advent of Christ was foreordained before the worlds were made; and it was reflected in the first deaths on earth – those innocent and beautiful creatures that God had to kill to make hides to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve. Imagine the hurt in God's heart in knowing what those innocent animals represented in that sacrifice which would be made at Calvary Mountain.

Remember the promise being confirmed to Abraham at the ordeal of Mt. Moriah in offering up his only son. The Angel of the Lord restrained him and provided a ram for the sacrifice because God would not require such a sacrifice that only He could merit. The words of Abraham are telling, if you read the correct Bible translation. *And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.* (Gen 22:7-8) Isaac would, indeed, carry the wood for his own sacrifice up Mt. Moriah just as Christ would carry the wood for His own sacrifice up the same mountain, but the similarities end there. Isaac was spared in favor of a Savior.

For the committed Christian, the Light of Christ is coming daily into his life. In fact, our first awakening thoughts should be to thank our Lord for His bountiful benefits.

This is the Advent Season – a time in the Church calendar during which we observe the promises of a coming Savior to the world. Our yearning hearts are satisfied for we know the terms of our salvation have been satisfied in Christ just as expressed by the suffering Job: *For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.* (Job 19:25-27)