

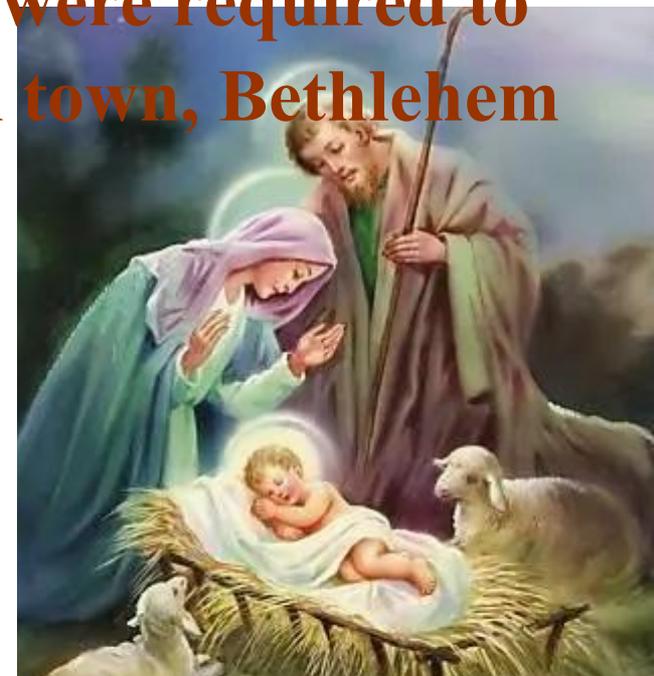
# Jesus — the Light of the world

A close-up photograph of a person's hand, wearing a white shirt cuff, resting on a dark brown leather-bound Bible. The Bible is lying flat on a wooden surface. The word 'BIBLE' is embossed in gold on the spine and the front cover. The background is a warm, brown gradient with a circular light effect.

Rev Ian Arnold  
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It is remarkable that whilst Jesus was the long promised Messiah, and the fulfillment of many Old Testament prophecies, **only a small handful of people knew of His actual birth**, in Bethlehem, just over 2000 years ago.

Because of a census ordered by the then Roman Emperor, Augustus, the late-stage pregnant Mary and Joseph were required to return to Joseph's ancestral town, Bethlehem (Luke 2:4). And there in basic, make-shift accommodation, Mary gave birth and placed the new-born Jesus in what was a feeding trough for



**And who came to celebrate His birth? Or to pay homage to Him? Not the rich and powerful! But it was a small group of simple and uneducated shepherds, guarding their sheep overnight and in the hills outside Bethlehem, to whom the news of His birth was given. And on hearing it, “Let us”, they said, “now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us. And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.” (Luke 2:15 &16)**

**Here, then, was the most momentous event in history. And just about no one knew about it except for these few shepherds. Concerning this, Swedenborg wrote:-**

**“If it has pleased the Lord, He might have been born in the most splendid palace, and been laid in a bed adorned with precious stones, but this would have**



**Did you notice that there are two reasons given here to explain why Jesus was born in such humble, unpretentious, circumstances?**

● **The first is that, if there been trumpets and fanfare, the wrong kind of people would have come and surrounded the baby Jesus. And they would have used His Coming for their own devilish purposes, maybe raising Him to be a king of this world and the leader of a rebellion to drive out the hated Romans. It would have been a matter of their agenda and, in the process, suffocating the real purpose for which Jesus had been born into the world.**

● **The second of the reasons given is that had Jesus been born under different circumstances “there would have been no heavenly representation”, highlighting the fact that everything about His birth was full of symbolisms – or “correspondences”- such as would be understood in heaven and give the angels joy. In the Writings of Swedenborg we are taught how it was that the angels held on to hope for the**



**This is amazing. We know for sure that the spiritual state of the people who belonged to the Jewish Church was at its worst two thousand years ago. We read, “Those who before the Lord’s Coming belonged to the Church and led an evil life were steeped in falsity, the like of which had not existed before then, nor ever will afterwards.”(See “Secrets of Heaven” 7686). **And had this been allowed to continue the connection of heaven and earth would have been broken and all here would have perished.** A reading of Isaiah Chapter 59 is a “window” into how dreadful things were:-**

**“No one calls for justice”, we read there, “nor does any plead for truth. They trust in empty words and speak lies: they conceive evil and bring**



**So, here in this world there was all the danger of the human race perishing and in the spiritual world there was chaos and disorder, even affecting the first two heavens, the lower – natural – heaven and the spiritual heaven. (See True Christianity” paragraph 121)**

**We ask the question, “What had happened to bring this about?”**

耶稣又对众人说：

**我是世界的光。**



And the answer given by the Lord in Swedenborg's Writings is that over many centuries darkness, covering the minds of people had grown denser and denser. And this itself **was the result of people passing into the spiritual world who, while on earth, had chosen sin and evil while yet practising the rituals of the Church.** And their presence in the spiritual world – more especially the world of spirits which is between heaven and hell - **formed a barrier increasingly preventing light from the Lord reaching people on earth.** And good people here on earth were aware of this blockage but didn't know what to do about it. To help them keep in hope of change, promises were made through the prophets such as in Isaiah Chapter 60: "Arise, shine; for Your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you. For, behold, the



**Now we have the key to understanding the whole purpose of the Lord's Advent unto the world.**

**Jesus was (and is) the Light of the world. He successfully overcame the hold that evil from hell (the devil) had over people, both here in this world and people in the world of spirits. As the result of His temptation battles in this world - in every one of which He was successful - He opened up the way, again, so that divine light could once more shine forth through the heavens, through the world of spirits and onwards into this world. "I am", Jesus said, "the light of the world. He who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." (John 8:12)**

**We need to turn now to what this means to us at a practical, daily life, level.**

**As was happening in those centuries before the**



**When you have no light you have darkness. And in darkness – mental and spiritual darkness – we become unable to see the distinction between good and evil and between truth and falsity. But, following the Lord’s victories over the power of the devil, light is shining brightly again and we CAN see that distinction and CAN make choices accordingly.**

**Jehovah God, Himself, **incarnated**, or “broke through” **into this world and into the very external level at which we live our lives here.** And it is at the most external level that the evil spirits are most active. God could never have overcome the power of evil unless He met it and dealt with it face to face. He had to come into this world, with all its rawness, and full of sinful fantasies and**



**Human minds were set free from the grip which evil from hell had. He broke the gates and cut the bars of iron in two. (Psal m107:16). And we can, now, see the distinction between good and evil and between truth and falsity at every level of our being, and then make choices, either to affirm evil and falsity or commit ourselves to truth and goodness.**

**Over the years I have been a Pastor, and from time to time, people have asked me, 'Well, what is the difference between the world as we see it, now, and the spiritual state of humankind two thousand years ago? After all, they have said to me, 'we still hear of terrible, corrupt, behaviour and very dark things happening, people doing terrible things to each other, and the world is not as peaceful as it once was.'**



But there is this difference. Two thousand years ago people could not see the darkness for what it was! But following on from what God accomplished while on earth, we - today - can now **see darkness for what it is**. And this is what is the difference between now and then. **We who were once slaves are now freed**. As in the Gospel of John, Chapter 8, verse 36, “Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be freed indeed.”

As the result of His work on earth, successfully completed by Him, we are blessed by the Lord more than we can ever fully understand. Through His victory in His temptation combats He overcame the old natural, self-promoting life He inherited



From that time, and as the result of the Lord's work on earth, successfully carried out, **we humans can-**

- Walk into a Supermarket and choose to smile or frown and be unpleasant

- After being hurt by someone; someone saying bad and untruthful things about us; we can choose to either be resentful or forgiving.

- In bringing up our children we can choose either to encourage them to be their own person or try to dominate and control who they become.

- When we go to work each day we can choose either to be disinterested and lazy or we can apply ourselves with interest and vigour to the work we are called on to do.

- When driving our cars we can choose to be patient and gracious about other drivers or we can choose anger and bad behaviour towards them.



● If we receive an unwanted phone call we can choose either to be rude or gracious about it

● When someone we know catches a plane to go on an expensive holiday we can choose either to be envious or happy for them.

And we can only make such choices because **the Lord renewed the strength of His Light amongst us.** This is the Light that shines in the darkness, and **the** **is not now -able**

**Amen**



# **Readings :**

**Isaiah Chapter 60: verses 19 & 20**

**John Chapter 1: verses 1 to 13**

**“Secrets of Heaven” paragraph 3195:  
sub-section 3**



THE END

