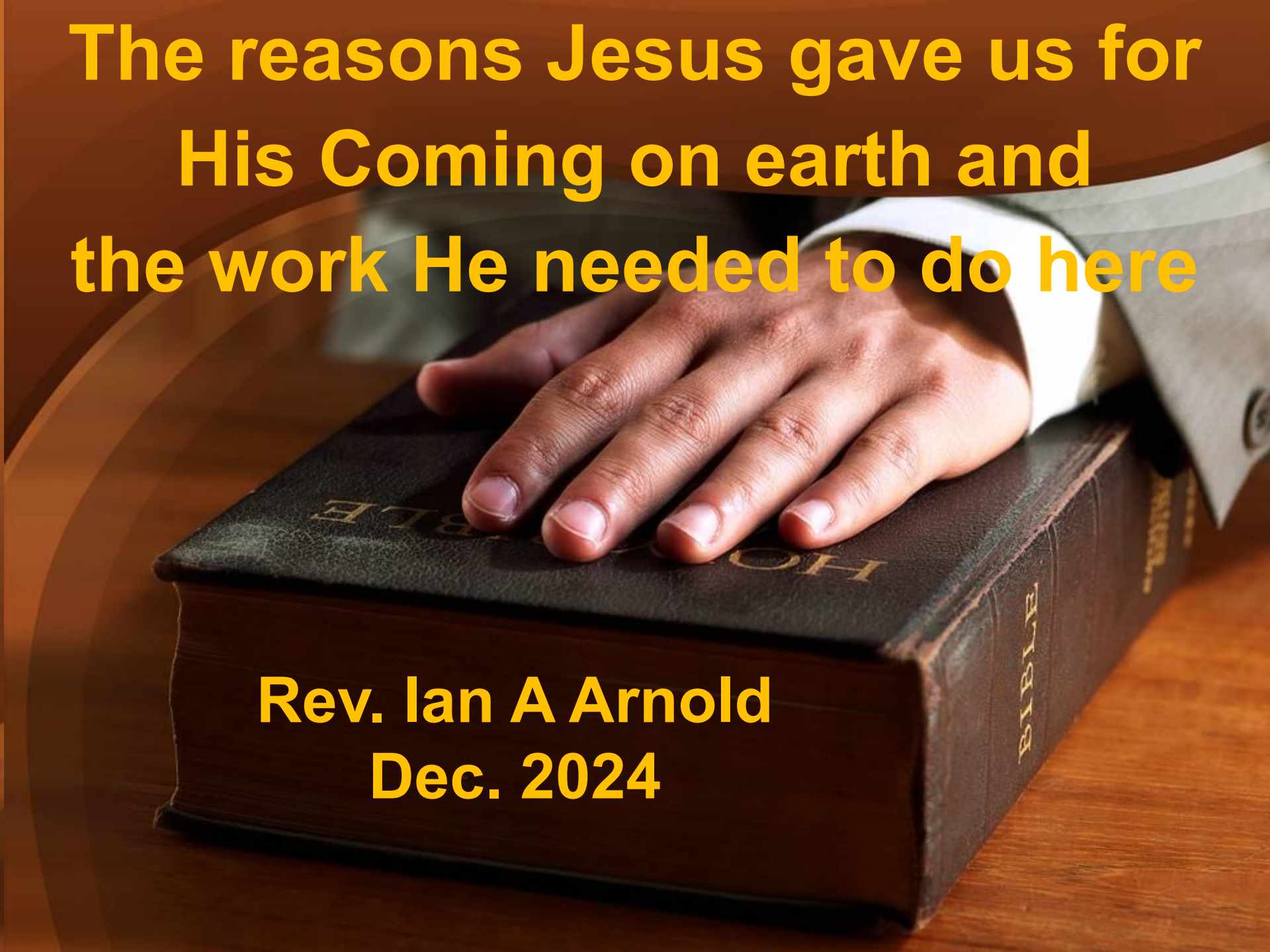
The reasons Jesus gave us for His Coming on earth and the work He needed to do here



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John 1:42-45

“The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, ‘Follow me.’ Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, ‘We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also in the prophets, wrote – Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph’ ”

For centuries, even from the time of the very early Christian Church, Christian believers and scholars have – usually with the best of intentions – offered their understanding, and sometimes their theories – about why Jesus came on earth and what He accomplished while He was here. In the midst of all these different theories one thing which everyone affirms is what is said in Matthew 1:21, words spoken by the angel to Joseph, is that He came "to save to save people from their sins."

And that is fine. But even then there are different interpretations of what this means.

My purpose in this sermon is to highlight, <u>and review with you</u>, the things which Jesus Himself said, were the reasons for His Coming on earth. I have researched widely and believe it to be so, that there were seven statements, in particular which He made,

◆ It is likely that the first such statement Jesus made is one in Mark's Gospel. And if not the actual first, it was almost certainly the first recorded. Speaking to the disciples, and to James and John in particular, Jesus said, "And whoever desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a redemption for many." (Chapter 10:45)

◆ We can never know the exact order in which Jesus spoke about the reasons for His Coming, but In Matthew Chapter 5 we have what is likely to have been the second thing He said is, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfil." (Verse 17)

◆ Moving on from this, and still in Matthew's Gospel, is a third statement Jesus made, troubling as at first it seems to be, "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword." (Chapter 10:34)

◆ Now turning to Luke's Gospel and to a fourth statement about the purpose of His Coming, Jesus said, "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Chapter 19:9)

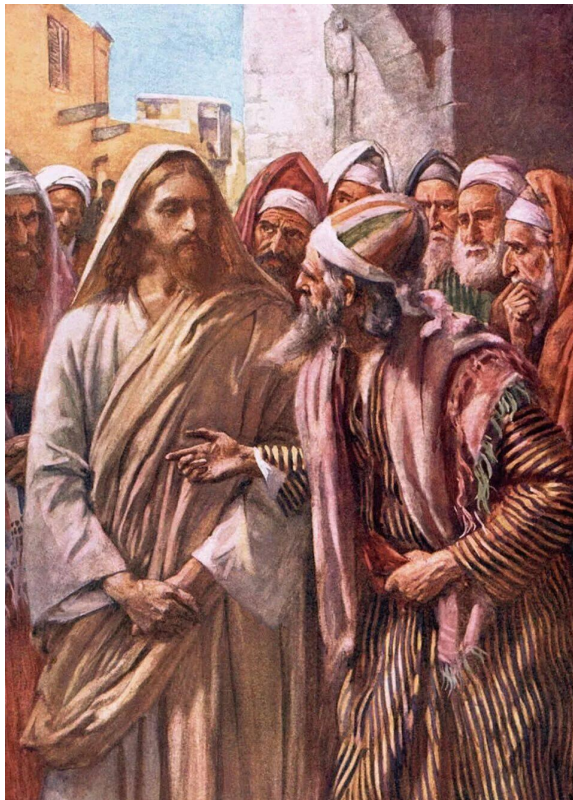
◆ And now we turn to John's Gospel, firstly Chapter 9, for a fifth statement: "And Jesus said, 'For judgement I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind." (Verse 39).

◆ Still in John's Gospel, and to a sixth statement, "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy", Jesus said. "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. " (Chapter 10:10)

◆ Finally, a seventh statement, also in John's Gospel, and at His trial, "Pilate said to Jesus, 'Are you a king then? Jesus answered, 'You say that I am

Whilst not a direct statement He made, yet at the very beginning of His public ministry, “….as His custom was, Jesus went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it is written: “The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He had sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord……And He began to say to them ‘Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.’ ” (Luke 4:16 to 19).

Wonderful as this is, and learn so much from it as we do, Jesus was not Himself making a statement about the reason for His Coming on earth. Instead He was affirming a prophecy from the Old Testament, saying that He was the fulfillment of that prophecy. As soon as they grasped this, so angry did those listening to Him become that they rose up, cast Him out of the city and would have throw Him off a cliff. But, "passing through the midst of them, He went His way." (Verses 30)



Let's now reflect on those seven statements Jesus made with the intention of having a better understanding of what He meant. As was mentioned earlier, some of these statements have been misunderstood, and some falsified.

Firstly, Mark 10:45. "**For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a redemption for many.**"

To redeem means "to set free". Jesus came to set people free.

- He came to set people free from **the work of the devil** (or evil spirits) then gaining such **dominance and control** of their lives.
- He came to set free people from **the meaningless, hollow, repetition of temple rituals**.
- He came to challenge and set people free from the hold that **the love of self** held over people, especially over people in authority, such as the scribes and the Pharisees.
- He came "To bring out prisoners from the prison, those who sit in darkness from the prison house." (Isaiah 42:7) Meaning, here, **spiritual prisons and spiritual darkness**.

Secondly, Matthew 5:17: Jesus said, "Do not think I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets **I did not come to destroy but to fulfil**." Matthew 5:17).

What Jesus was saying here is that everything in the Old Testament is absolutely significant; that **He honored and held to it**; and that since the whole of the Old testament is, within, and often on the surface, about the Coming of the Messiah, **He was the fulfillment of it.**

An example is the call of Abram, Genesis Chapter 12: “Now the LORD had said to Abram: ‘Get out of your country, from your kindred and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great. You will be a blessing and I will make you great.” (verses 1,2).At the highest, celestial level of meaning, this means “the Lord’s first state after He had been born.” (Arcana Caelestia 1414). It was through these words, and this promise, that Jesus, as a young boy, was awakened to the work He had been born into this world to do. “I will make you a great nation” means a kingdom in heaven and on earth.” (Arcana Caelestia 1415)

Thirdly, Matthew 10:34: "Do not think I came to bring peace on earth. **I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.**"

At first this sounds such a complete contradiction. It was prophesied of the Messiah that He would be the "Prince of peace" (Isaiah 9:6). And in what was His farewell discourse with the disciples He blessed them saying, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world gives give I unto you." (John 14:27). But there is no contradiction, after all. Jesus was referring to **the superficial peace of mind** that many people then (and now) claim, or thought they would have, when they have wealth and authority and control over others. However, **Jesus came to disturb that false peace.** The "sword" here is Divine truth cutting through and revealing such peace for what it is. The "sword" is also about people taking up the fight against sin and evil. From neglect and

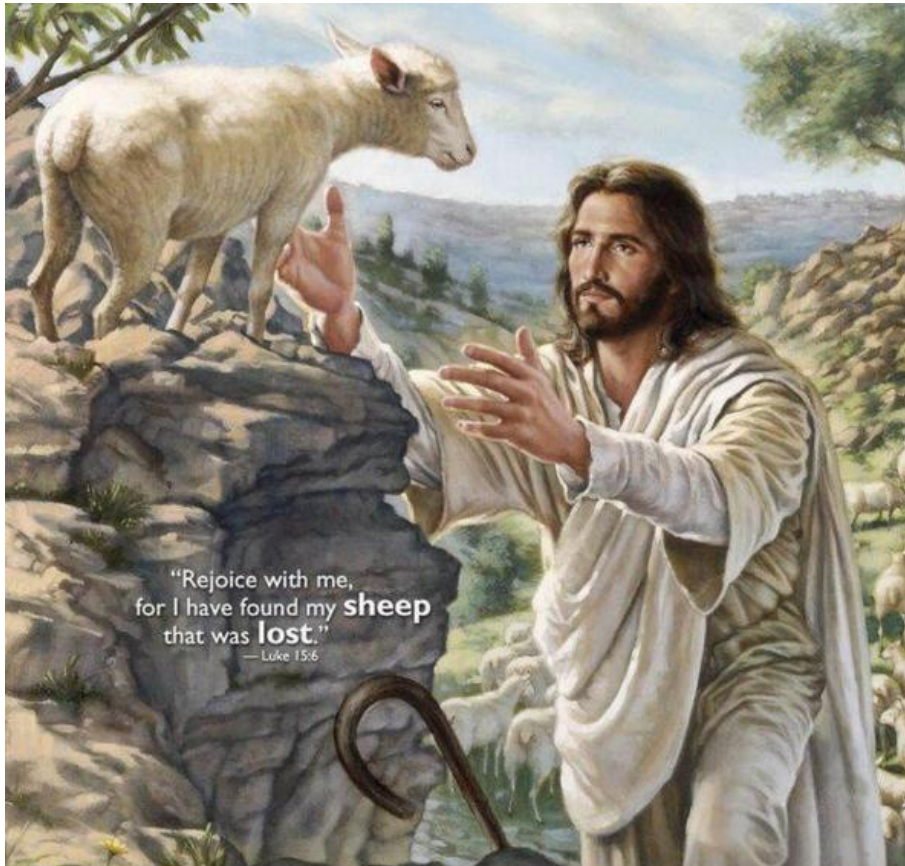
Fourthly, Luke 19:9: "**For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.**"

So, what was lost?

The answer is **a willingness to subordinate self to God and to His commandments**. And another word for this is "innocence". In the Writings, **innocence** is defined as "**the willingness to be led by God**". (Heaven and Hell 280). But for a tiny handful of people, such as Mary and Joseph and Elizabeth and Zacharias and Simeon, innocence had long been lost. God was irrelevant.

One of the most beautiful things said about innocence has come down through the centuries form Old Testament times, and from the prophecy of Micah. Maybe you know these words very well. "He (the LORD) has shown you what is good; and what does the LORD require of you, but to do justly, to

A wonderful promise about the Messiah, that He would rescue “that which was lost”, is found in Ezekiel Chapter 34. In this prophecy God is describing Himself as a Shepherd: and **“innocence”, or the willingness to be led as a sheep**. “For thus says the LORD God: ‘Indeed I myself will search for my sheep and seek them out….I will seek what was lost,” (meaning innocence,and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick.”
(Chapter 34:11,16)



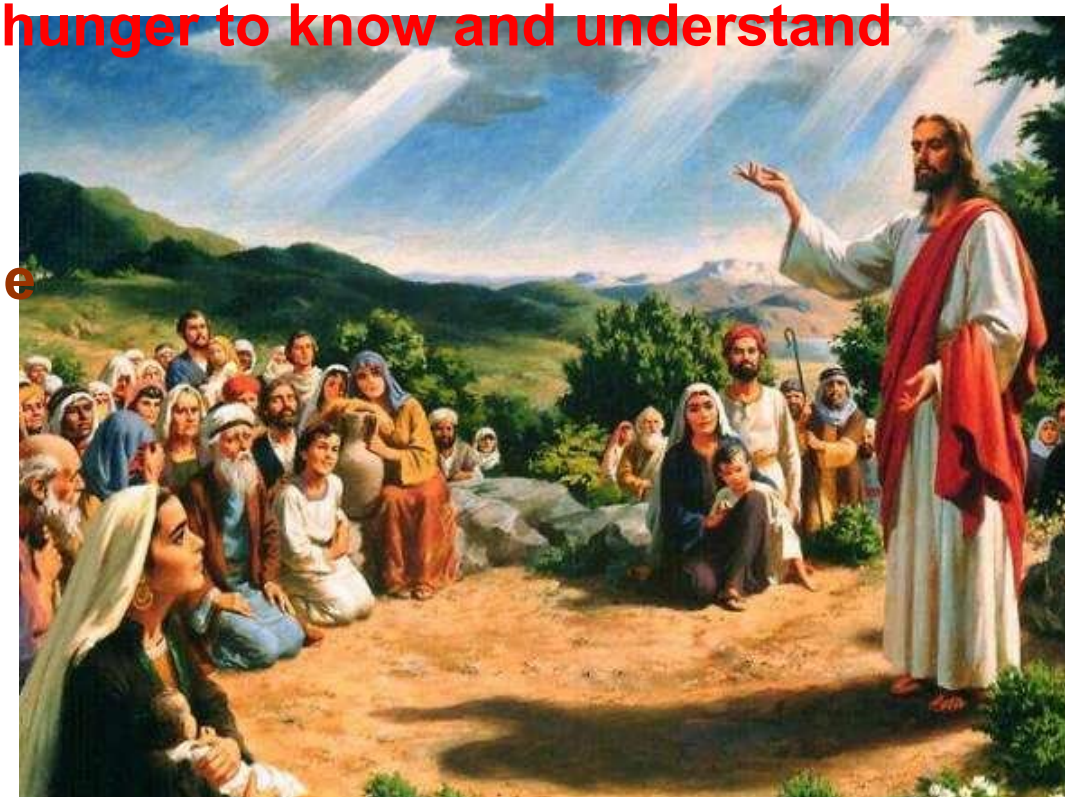
Fifthly, John 9:39: "Jesus said, **'For judgement I have come into this world that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind.'"**

There were so many people in darkness at the time made His Advent into the world. It was foretold it would be so, most especially through the prophet Isaiah: "Arise, shine, for your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the LORD will rise over you, and His glory shall be seen upon you. The Gentiles shall come to your light, and the kings to the brightness of your rising." (Chapter 60:1-3). The Lord knew He needed to confront that darkness. **He was the light shining in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.** (John 1:5)

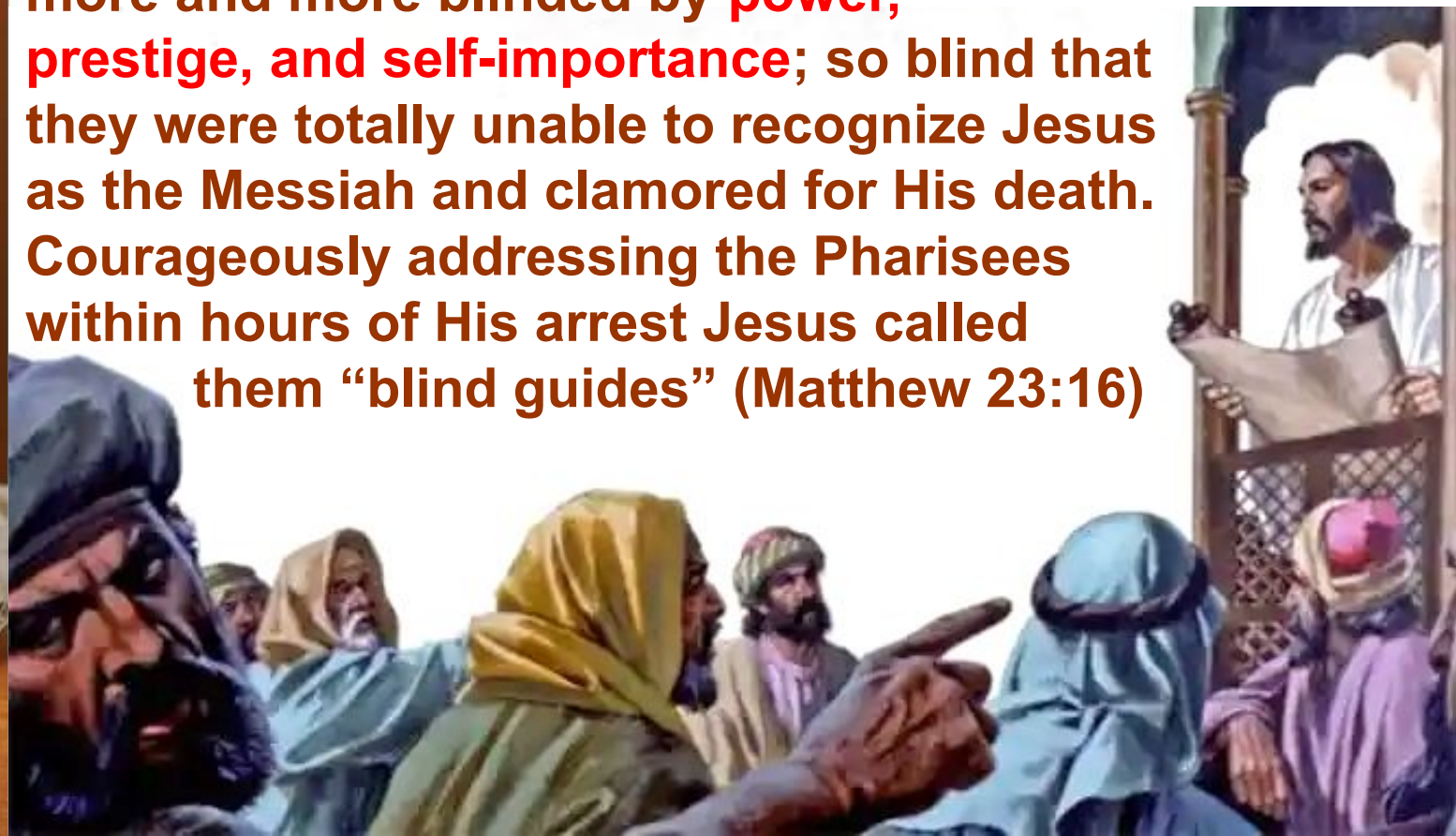
We might ask, How did He do this?

And the answer is by judging between truth and falsity and between good and evil. His teaching and preaching and, indeed, His very presence, caused falsity to be seen for what it is and for evil to be seen for what it is.

The common people, we know, "heard Him gladly." (Mark 6:20). And having up until then been lost in confusion and darkness they now felt a surge of enthusiasm and hunger to know and understand more. These are the people who had not been able to see. Now they could see.



But there were those who thought, and had convinced themselves, that they did see; that they did know and and that they did understand all there was to be known about God; and that they had the correct interpretations of Scripture. In time, some began to wonder if, after all, they had been blind. (John 8:40). But the majority chose to remain blind. They were more and more blinded by power, prestige, and self-importance; so blind that they were totally unable to recognize Jesus as the Messiah and clamored for His death. Courageously addressing the Pharisees within hours of His arrest Jesus called them "blind guides" (Matthew 23:16)



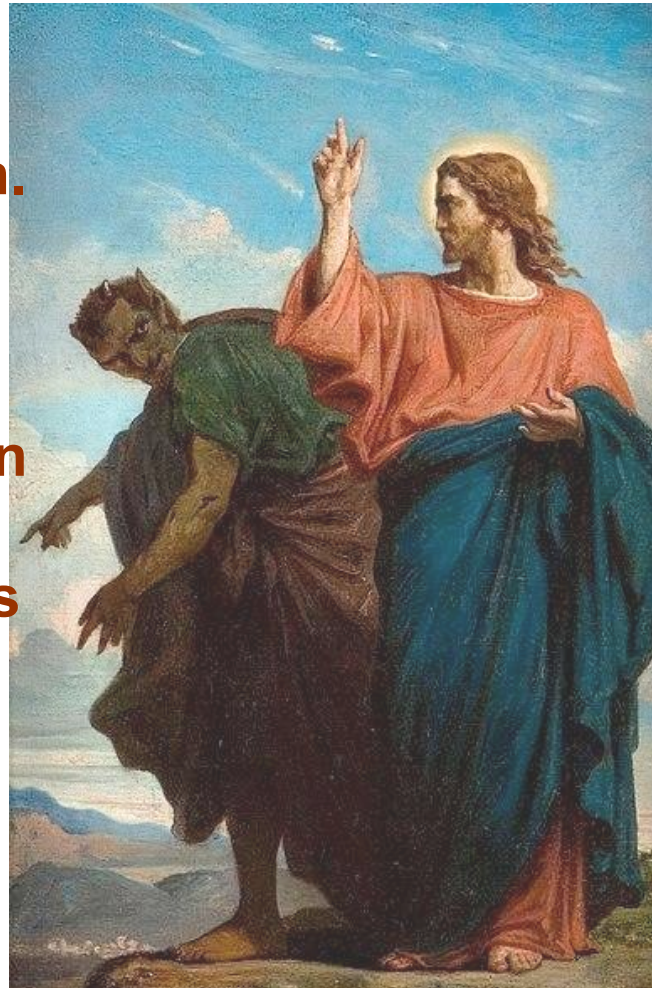
Now we come to the sixth thing Jesus said in which He highlighted another reason for His Coming on earth: “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” (John 10:10)

We can be sure of this that Jesus was not talking here about bodily life! The Greek word, translated as “life”, means “life filled with another kind of energy”; “life that is joyful and uplifting”; life that, now, everyone could have.We know from the Writings that heaven was being restored to order; that the world of spirits was being cleared of an accumulation of false heavens that had blocked influences from heaven reaching people. Now this would change. There would be a new and strengthened inflow of enlightenment and affection for what is good and

Finally, and to the seventh thing Jesus said about His coming on earth: “Pilate said to Jesus, ‘Are you a king then? Jesus answered, ‘You say that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I came into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth.” (John 19:37)

There is an outstanding instance of Jesus doing this, witnessing to the truth, when in the wilderness, and before He actually began His public ministry, He was tempted of the devil. In response to each of the three temptations the devil put to Him He witnessed to the truth.

But throughout His life Jesus "witnessed to the truth". Jesus was the Word made flesh. He was Divine Truth incarnate. He spoke Divine Wisdom in everything He said. Unerringly, He lived Divine Truth. (He was in all points tempted as we are", the apostle Paul wrote, "yet was without sin." (Ephesians 4:15). He re-established the power of Divine Truth. He restored its power to change lives for the better.



And not only was the human race profoundly affected by this, but it was as the result of Jesus witnessing to the truth here on earth that Divine light flowing down through the heavens which had been weakened as it descended and, finally, blocked, was able, once again to dissipate the darkness which had descended over people everywhere.

What took place two thousand years, cosmic event and cosmic, positive, outcomes which it had, is something that can take place within each and everyone of us.

"The Lord's Coming" (at this personal level), "takes place with a person who combines heat with light, that is, combines love with truth" (True Christian Religion 774). And all the benefits and blessings that arose out of that event, so

The Lord will set us free from the wiles and work of the devil. He will cause the Word to come truly alive for us again. He will help us see more clearly, and to cut away with a sword, sin and evil that has been getting in the way.

He will seek out the innocence which has been lost to us. He will give us His life, a new life, of humility, love and care of others. And He will be our witness to the truth in all the different and changing circumstances of our lives.

Amen

Readings:

- Isaiah 25:1-9
- Isaiah 42: 1-4
- Luke 1: 67-75

Arcana Caelestia 121:3

"Jehovah God came down and took upon Himself human form so as to reduce to order everything in heaven, in hell, and in the church. For at that time the power of the devil, that isl of hell, was stronger than the power of heaven, and on earth the power of evil was stronger than the power of good, so that utter damnation stood threateningly at the gate. This impending damnation was removed by Jehovah God by means of His Human, and thus He redeemed angels and men."

Arcana Caelestia 10276:9

"Because the Jewish nation did not acknowledge the presence of any holiness in the Word except the literal sense alone, which they separated completely from its internal sense, they sank into such darkness that they dd not know the Lord when He came on earth…..Unless therefore the Lord had come into the world and disclosed the inner contents of the Word, contact with the heavens through the Word would have been broken; and if it had been broken the human race on this planet would have perished."

THE END