

4. December 2020

**The Long Road to Bethlehem, Part 5**  
**“God's light in the prophets: Bethlehem is coming closer”**

God keeps the longing for salvation alive in His people.

The tragedy of the experience of one's own sin, the imperfection of life, the longing for fulfilment, searching for a real life that God has planned for us, to search for God himself, is maintained by the prophets. He will come who redeems Israel and the nations.

*“But you (Bethlehem) Ephrathah, the least of the clans of Judah, from you will come for me a future ruler of Israel whose origins go back to the distant past, to the days of old. He will take his stand and he will shepherd them with the power of Yahweh, with the majesty of the name of his God, and they will be secure, for his greatness will extend henceforth to the most distant parts of the country. He himself will be peace.” (Mic 5:1.3-4a)*

The living Word of God, when it penetrates into man and is cultivated through study and meditation, awakens the heart and mind. It prevents us from getting lost in the transient world and from remembering God and His instructions.

In this way the people of Israel becomes like people of advent. God has spoken to them and has made a covenant with Israel. It is his beloved people and they are being prepared for the coming of the Saviour.

*“The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; on the inhabitants of a country in shadow dark as death light has blazed forth. You have enlarged the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at harvest time, as they exult when they are dividing the spoils. For the yoke that weighed on it, the bar across its shoulders, the rod of its oppressor, these you have broken as on the day of Midian.” (Isa 9:1-3)*

*“On him will rest the spirit of Yahweh, the spirit of wisdom and insight, the spirit of counsel and power, the spirit of knowledge and fear of Yahweh: his inspiration will lie in fearing Yahweh. His judgement will not be by appearances. his verdict not given on hearsay. He will judge the weak with integrity and give fair sentence for the humblest in the land. He will strike the country with the rod of his mouth and with the breath of his lips bring death to the wicked.” (Isa 11:2-4)*

And still more will be proclaimed to the people:

*“The Lord will give you a sign in any case: It is this: the young woman is with child and will give birth to a son whom she will call Immanuel.” (Isa 7:14)*

and:

*“Rejoice heart and soul, daughter of Zion! Shout for joy, daughter of Jerusalem! Look, your king is approaching, he is vindicated and victorious, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” (Zech 9:9)*

God's light in the prophets predicts the coming of the Messiah in many ways. It then needs the light of the Holy Spirit to recognise when he has arrived.

Bethlehem is now very close, the angel has already set out and will soon speak to a true daughter of Israel...