

1st Sunday in Advent 11/29/15  
St. Luke 19:28-40 C

“BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!”

Where is God? Have you ever wondered that? Or maybe the lies of the great accuser have played on the weakness of your mortal nature, so that you’ve even asked, “Is there a God? Does He really exist?” And if there is a God, maybe you’ve found yourself asking, “Does He know I exist? Does He care about me?”

For those who still live under the cross this day, our Gospel has Good News for us. “Advent” means “coming”. On this 1<sup>st</sup> season in Advent, our Gospel lesson is the account of our Lord’s triumphant entrance into Jerusalem. Yes, it seems this lesson may be more appropriate at the beginning of Holy Week. But, as we begin a new Church year this Sunday, our Gospel reminds us that Jesus is our coming Savior, God-in-the-flesh who comes to us.

I. The first time Jesus came to us it was as the infant Son of Virgin Mother. Jesus humbled Himself to be born of a virgin, to take on human flesh, to endure poverty and suffering on this earth, to be betrayed and die on the cross so that we would have eternal life. The first time He came, it was to be our Savior.

In the Garden immediately after the fall, God gave to Adam and Eve the first promise of a Savior: *"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel (Gen. 3:15)."* God comforted and assured Adam and Eve in the midst of the anguish of sin that He would send a Savior who would bring them forgiveness and restore to them the everlasting life they had just

lost in the fall. And, God promised the devil that the Savior would crush His head.

Our Children's Christmas program will be Christmas Eve. Once again, we will hear the children recite the Old Testament promises of a Savior who was to come. God kept His promises and the Savior came. The celebration of Christmas is the celebration of the Savior coming to us. God took on human flesh and dwelt among us.

The Savior came to this earth for one reason -- He came to die. Jesus did not come to give us a healthy economy, so that we can all have plenty of material possessions. Jesus did not come to give us some fleeting emotion of happiness, nor self worth. Jesus did not come to set up an earthly kingdom, to give us food each day of our lives.

In order to welcome Him aright, we must understand why He came and why we have the season of Advent.

Our sin was the reason Jesus came into this world. Our sin held us captive; we were bound for the grave and hell. We could do nothing to save ourselves. If we were to be free from sin and the curse of death, it was up to God to save us. So, God sent His only begotten Son Jesus Christ to save us.

Our Lord's entire earthly life was lived on a journey to Jerusalem. At His circumcision, His blood was shed for us, as He willingly placed Himself under the Law so that He could live a perfect life, perfectly keeping the Law for us. At His baptism, He took on our sin and was condemned to death for those sins. He rode to Calvary, to the death our sin demanded.

Jesus came to this earth for one reason -- to die for our sin. It was said so eloquently by one pastor: "The cross of Calvary was made from the wood of the manger of Bethlehem."

The first time Jesus came to this earth, it was to be our Savior, to save us from sin, death, and hell.

II. As Jesus came once, He will come again a second time. At His second coming, Jesus will come to judge the living and the dead. Jesus will come to separate the sheep from the goats, the wheat from the tares, the good fish from the bad fish. A judgment of God is nothing more than a separation of Christians from unbelievers. At the final judgment when Jesus comes again, we will be forever separated from the curse of sin.

Because of the fall into sin, we live in a world cursed by sin. At the judgment, the curse of sin will be forever removed from our lives. No more blizzards, crime, disease, death. No more worry, fears. No more hearing the word "Alzheimer's" from your doctor, no more standing at the grave side, saying good-bye to a loved one.

This Second Coming of Christ is very Good News for us. We have no reason to fear. After Jesus comes again, our lives will no longer be cursed with sin. We will live in a perfect home for eternity, just as God wanted us to do when He created Eden for us.

Jesus came once to be our Savior. He will come again to be our Judge.

III. As we live between our Lord's Two Comings, Jesus our Coming Savior, comes to us through His Means of Grace -- His Word and His Sacraments.

When we are lost in sin, He comes to us through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. This morning, Jesus came to Orion to give him new birth through water and the Word, just as He did for us in our baptism. Baptized into Jesus, all of our sin is forgiven, we are rescued from death and the devil, and given eternal salvation. Every day in the Christian life, we return

to our baptism. There, we claim the victory over sin, death, and hell God has given us. And, we put to death the desires and will of the flesh that the new creations we are in Christ may rise to serve God as did Christ with all our thoughts, words, and deeds.

Christ comes to us through Holy Absolution. After our Lord's crucifixion and death, the disciples were huddled behind locked doors, in fear that those who had put Jesus to death would soon come for them. Suddenly, the risen Jesus appeared in the midst of them and gave to them the Office of Keys, the power to unlock heaven's door by forgiving sorrowful sinners their sins, but withholding forgiveness from those who are not sorrow for their sins, as long as they are not repentant: *Jesus breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."*

"Jesus breathed on them." In the creation account of Genesis, we are told God breathed life into man, giving mankind the image of God. In the fall, that image was lost. But, through the forgiveness of sins, Jesus breathes new life, His life, into us, forgiving us of our sins and giving us power and strength to do God's will.

Christ comes to us through Holy Communion. As we eat food for our physical health and strength, Christ has given us the food of His Body and Blood to eat and drink that our faith may be strong.

With the faith gives us in Holy Baptism and with faith strengthened through Holy Absolution and Holy Communion, we are prepared at all times to meet our Lord. Through these gifts, Christ ministers to us in our need.

Jesus is our coming Savior. He came the first time to be our Savior. He will come again to be our Judge. As we live in the time between His First and Final Comings, He continues to come to us to preserve and keep

us in the Christian faith, as we eagerly and joyfully await His second coming.

We pray, "Thy Kingdom come," because we confess Christ to be our King. Where the King is, there is His Kingdom. Whenever we pray, "Thy Kingdom come," we confess the King's first coming, faithfully welcome Him as He comes to us through His Means of Grace today in His Church, and eagerly await His Final glorious coming.

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