

The Second Sunday in Advent

Hymns: 66, 65, 61, 64

The INTROIT

(Is.62:11; 30:29,30; Ps.80:1)

P: Daughter of Zion:

C: behold, thy Salvation cometh.

P: The Lord shall cause His glorious voice to be heard:

C: and ye shall have gladness of heart.

P: Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel:

C: Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock.

(The "Gloria in Excelsis" is omitted during the Penitential Season of Advent)

The COLLECT

Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to make ready the way of Thine only-begotten Son, so that by His coming we may be enabled to serve Thee with pure minds; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth, and reigneth, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.

The FIRST LESSON

Micah 4:1-7 (NKJV)

Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the LORD's house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And peoples shall flow to it. Many nations shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion the law shall go forth, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between many peoples, And rebuke strong nations afar off; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war any more. But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, And no one shall make them afraid; For the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.

For all people walk each in the name of his god, But we will walk in the name of the LORD our God Forever and ever.

"In that day," says the LORD, "I will assemble the lame, I will gather the outcast And those whom I have afflicted; I will make the lame a remnant, And the outcast a strong nation; So the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion From now on, even forever.

The GRADUAL

(Ps.50:2-5; Luke 21:26-27)

P: Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined;

C: our God shall come.

P: Gather My saints together unto Me,

C: those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice. Alleluia! Alleluia!

P: The powers of heaven shall be shaken,

C: and then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Alleluia!

The EPISTLE

Romans 15:4-13 (NKJV)

For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God. Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written:

“For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, And sing to Your name.”

And again he says: *“Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!”*

And again: *“Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples!”*

And again, Isaiah says: *“There shall be a root of Jesse; And He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, In Him the Gentiles shall hope.”*

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The SENTENCE for the Season

(Psalm 25:6)

P: Hallelujah! Remember, O Lord, Thy tender mercies:

C: for they have been ever of old. Hallelujah!

The HOLY GOSPEL

St. Luke 21:25-36 (NKJV)

“And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven will be shaken.

“Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

“Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.”

Then He spoke to them a parable: “Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near.

“Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

“But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

Micah 4:1-7 — “The Mountain of the Lord’s House Shall Be Established”

INTRODUCTION

I. THE MOUNTAIN OF THE LORD’S HOUSE SHALL BE ESTABLISHED

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Micah 4:1-7 — “The Mountain of the LORD’s House Shall Be Established”

Grace, mercy, and peace to you all from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Today is the Second Sunday in Advent and the appointed reading of the Old Testament is Micah 4:1-7:

Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the LORD’s house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And peoples shall flow to it. Many nations shall come and say, “Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths.” For out of Zion the law shall go forth, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between many peoples, And rebuke strong nations afar off; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war any more. But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, And no one shall make them afraid; For the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.

For all people walk each in the name of his god, But we will walk in the name of the LORD our God Forever and ever.

“In that day,” says the LORD, “I will assemble the lame, I will gather the outcast And those whom I have afflicted; I will make the lame a remnant, And the outcast a strong nation; So the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion From now on, even forever.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

We live in glorious times. We live in the days of the fulfillment of God’s promises. This is the focus of the season of Advent. It is a penitential season, which means it is a season of repentance. For the Church, the holy communion of saints, those who have been baptized into Christ Jesus and have died to the world and have been made alive unto God in Christ, every day is the season of repentance.

Today’s text explains for us and proclaims to us the reason for repentance. Our text instructs us of that to which we turn in hope and blessedness. It explains to us the cause of repentance, the very power behind repentance. Truly it is a proclamation of glorious times.

I. THE MOUNTAIN OF THE LORD’S HOUSE SHALL BE ESTABLISHED

Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the LORD’s house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And peoples shall flow to it. Many nations shall come

and say, “Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths.”

These are the latter days, the days for which the saints of God have waited in hope ever since Adam and his wife turned away from the LORD and His Word on account of doubting the will of God. Adam and his wife listened to the one who loves to tempt others to doubt God and the goodness of His holy will. They listened to the one who turned from the love of his Creator and tempted a third of the holy angels to doubt that God’s will is truly good. They listened to the one who caused legions of angels to doubt God and to be cut off from His holy communion, to be cut off by turning from His good and gracious Word to their own thoughts and aspirations. Like the holy angels who listened to the tempter, Adam and his wife fell from the pinnacle of creation into the depths of darkness and despair. Like the fallen angels, Adam and his wife turned from the glorious light of God’s Word to an interpretation of His Word. First the tempter challenged what God had actually said, and then the woman supplied her interpretation of what her pastor had faithfully preached to her. Her pastor tolerated this action of interpretation and thereby consigned them both to follow their own hearts and minds rather than the gracious and pure Word of God. They then acted upon their interpretation and found themselves without the pure Word. Their knowledge of God had become corrupted. Their knowledge of His love was forgotten, replaced by this interpretation. Their knowledge of God’s goodness had become blended with the knowledge of good and evil. Their knowledge of His holy communion was polluted by their interpretation of His Word.

The human race has inherited this corruption, this concupiscence for other knowledge. What Adam tolerated and permitted, this contemporizing of the worship of the LORD, this interpretation of what God has given and established, has become the only way known to the sons of Adam. Of their own fallen nature and will they know not and cannot attain the knowledge of God and His good and gracious will. According to their own reason and strength, they are in bondage to their own interpretation of God’s Word. And this interpretation, in every form that it is manifested, is always the knowledge of good and evil rather than the knowledge of purely good. And so mankind imagines that trying to be good is good enough, because mankind knows that being purely good cannot be attained by one’s own reason and strength. So the interpretation of God’s pure Word falls to an impure knowledge of goodness, a vain striving after goodness, a striving that is always corrupted and never truly good. Yet in such vain glory men place their hope. They strive for knowledge by deductive reasoning and discovery rather than trusting the only true source of knowledge. They turn to their own guesstimates rather than what God has clearly declared. God has even provided it in writing, yet men seek knowledge according to their own interpretation.

Nevertheless, the promise is given in today’s text that the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills; and the peoples shall flow to it.

There is a saying about mountain climbers where a mountain climber is asked why he climbed the mountain. His response? Because it was there.

This is a reflection of the fallen nature of man. “Because it was there” is a statement of the fallen nature’s desire to elevate oneself through one’s own achievements. Man, according to his fallen interpretation of self, imagines that he must strive to better himself and to “be all that he can be”. This is nothing more than a corrupted interpretation of what God declares. For God

declares Himself the source of all goodness. God declares that all goodness is found in connection with Him in His holy communion. God declares that the good life is His gift to those who live in true communion with Him by His grace.

This, then, is the point of today's text. God declares that in the latter days, in the end times, the mountain of His house shall be established as the highest or chief of the mountains. And it will no longer be the desire to men to climb the chief of mountains on account of the mountain being there, but rather, on account of what is established at the top of the mountain for all the world to behold. What is at the top of the world on display for all to behold? The house of the LORD is established above all things so that all may see and be drawn to it.

Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the LORD's house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And peoples shall flow to it. Many nations shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths."

Yes. The desire of the nations shall be to come to the house of the God of Jacob to be taught the LORD's ways so that they may walk in His paths. The promise is that in the end times the establishment of the house of the LORD will be the cause of the gathering of the nations. The Church will be so clearly marked by the purity of doctrine and practice that all people will be able to know it as the place of pure knowledge of God's will and the place where the holiness that they cannot find for themselves is administered. The ways of the LORD, that is, the purely administered means of grace, shall be taught so that those who approach may walk in them.

This is the Old Testament promise. Today we live in these days of that promise.

II. OUT OF ZION THE LAW SHALL GO FORTH

Many nations shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion the law shall go forth, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Truly this is what has been established since the day of Pentecost. Many nations came to the sound of the establishment of God's house on the top of the mountains. Many nations heard the sound of the rushing wind as the Holy Spirit rushed from heaven to be poured out upon the members of the house of the GOD OF JACOB. As they gathered in the worship that the Lord Jesus established on the night of His betrayal, the Holy Spirit was poured out from heaven to elevate the house of the LORD in a way that all would know it. From that manifestation the message went out into all the world. Micah foretells this beautifully, saying,

For from Zion shall be caused to go out the Torah, and the Word of Yahweh from Jerusalem.

Most assuredly this prophecy has been fulfilled. The Torah, the book of the promises of God declared through Moses, the words of the redeemed people of God, has been caused by the Holy Spirit to be carried from Mount Zion. And the very Word of Yahweh, that is, Jesus, has gone out from Jerusalem. The house of the LORD, which was established on Mount Zion and in

Jerusalem by the institution of the New Testament in Christ's blood, has been raised up in the body of Jesus upon the cross, and His sacrifice was received by God in the highest heavens, so that the house of the God of Jacob is higher than the highest mountain. There remains no higher place to climb. Jesus has climbed the heights for us and has established His Church above all the lower and corrupted things of the world. He has sent forth the promised Holy Spirit, who has manifested the true Church of the pure Word and Sacraments as the place of true knowledge. The Holy Spirit has manifested the true Church as the gathering place for all who receive the Word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Now the house of the LORD is elevated so highly that all of mankind may approach from afar. There is no place in the world where the Word of the LORD does not reach. Truly the Word of the LORD has been caused to go out from Jerusalem so that the Holy Spirit gathers us to Jesus and we receive from Him the life that can be found through no other source. Jesus is the knowledge of salvation. Jesus is the way unto the good life.

III. SO THE LORD WILL REIGN OVER THEM IN MOUNT ZION

He shall judge between many peoples, And rebuke strong nations afar off; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war any more. But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, And no one shall make them afraid; For the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.

For all people walk each in the name of his god, But we will walk in the name of the LORD our God Forever and ever.

“In that day,” says the LORD, “I will assemble the lame, I will gather the outcast And those whom I have afflicted; I will make the lame a remnant, And the outcast a strong nation; So the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion From now on, even forever.

How wonderful! How amazing! The reign of God through the Word has been restored. Adam tolerated the Word of God to be interpreted and thereby turned away from the reign of God. God no longer ruled over mankind on account of the choices that come from the interpretation of God's Word. But through Jesus, the Word has again been established above all things so that it is known again not through interpretation but through the clear and unmistakable preaching of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. On the cross we see all interpretations crucified in the body of Jesus. All interpretation is eliminated through the suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. Jesus took the disciples atop the mountain and ascended higher than any other man can reach. He alone stands at the throne, ruling on our behalf. He stands above Zion at the right hand of God, reigning over all things, and especially reigning over the house of the LORD.

By His ascension two things have been effected. First the house of the LORD has been elevated above all things so that it cannot be corrupted ever again. The house of the LORD shall forevermore be kept as the gathering place unto the purity of the administration of the means of grace. The house of the LORD has been elevated beyond the grasp and power of the devil to tempt God's children to be victimized by the delusion of interpretation of the Word of God. For all who gather to the pure Gospel and Sacraments will know the purity of the Word and all else will be perceived as foreign and unholy. The true Church has been everlastingly marked by the administration of the pure Gospel and Sacraments. Whenever a gathering has something other

than the pure administration of the Gospel and Sacraments, whenever an interpretation that allows a contemporizing and blending of the pure means of grace with other things occurs, the saints will mark and avoid such a gathering as something unholy and not the true Church. By His ascension Christ has elevated the Church above such contemporizing and blending with worldliness and impurity. His pure doctrine has been clearly taught by His apostles. His true Church does not interpret this doctrine, but rather practices according to it. Thus the LORD reigns over His house forevermore in such a way that no one can be deceived ever again.

Secondly, the ascension of the Lord Jesus levels all obstacles so that even the lame are assembled and the outcast are gathered. While the house of the LORD is elevated to the highest heavens by the ascension of Jesus to the right hand of God, the house of the LORD is also brought to the earth for easy access through the means of grace. Through the preaching of Christ crucified and through Baptism and the Holy Supper, the LORD's house is made accessible even to the newborn baby and the homebound great-grandma in the nursing home. The newborn baby is carried in the arms of the believing father to the fountain of life, where the water of life is poured over the child so that even as the baby is learning to nurse from the mother's breast, so the child is grafted into the holy communion of Christ's body to be a communicant in all the blessings of the LORD's house. Likewise, even the bedridden great-grandparent in the nursing home continues in Christ's holy communion as the body and blood of the Lord is brought by the pastor.

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CONCLUSION

When we consider what the LORD has accomplished, even as was promised long ago as we have heard in today's text, are we not living in glorious times? As we set aside for a season the *Gloria in Excelsis*, do we not sense the long awaited coming of the LORD to fulfill His promises for His holy catholic Church? Do we not long to hear the angelic heralding of the birth of the Savior in the city of David? Do we not find ourselves ready to burst into hymnody with the angels in the celebration of the Christ Mass?

Truly these are glorious days as we gather in the house of the LORD to commune with Him as His body. Truly these are glorious days as we partake of the feast of heaven, given and shed for us to keep us united with Jesus in His body until the great day of His return in glory to judge both the quick and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end. Yes the glory of the LORD has been made manifest to us and we have been set free to be communicants with Him in His glory. For now we see dimly, still needing to flee from our own thoughts, words, and deeds to the safety of the merits of the Lord Jesus. But we anxiously await the day, and even celebrate it today, as we gather to the proclamation of the Lord's death till He comes. Truly the mountain of the LORD's house has been established on the top of the mountains and exalted above the hills so that the peoples are flowing to it and we have been made to be communicants of all the blessings of the house of the LORD from this time forth and even forevermore. In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus forever. Amen.