

The First Sunday in Advent

Hymns: 69, 58, 70, 75

The INTROIT

(Ps. 25:1-3a,4)

P: Unto Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul;

C: O my God, I trust in Thee.

P: Let me not be ashamed;

C: let not mine enemies triumph over me.

P: Yea, let none that wait on Thee; be ashamed.

C: Show me Thy ways, O Lord; teach me Thy paths.

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

The COLLECT

Stir up, we beseech Thee, Thy power, O Lord, and come, that by Thy protection we may be rescued from the threatening perils of our sins and saved by Thy mighty deliverance; who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.

The FIRST LESSON

Jeremiah 33:14-18

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah.

In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this *is the name* wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness.

For thus saith the LORD; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel; Neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before me to offer burnt offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice continually.

The GRADUAL

(Ps.25:3-4;85:7)

P: All they that wait on Thee shall not be ashamed, O Lord.

C: Show me Thy ways, O Lord; teach me Thy paths. Alleluia! Alleluia!

P: Show us Thy mercy, O Lord,

C: and grant us Thy salvation. Alleluia!

The EPISTLE

Romans 13:11-14

And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep: for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in

the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfil* the lusts *thereof*.

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. Matthew 21:1-9

And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose *them*, and bring *them* unto me. And if any *man* say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,

Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.

And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set *him* thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed *them* in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.

Matthew 21:1-9 — “Behold, Thy King Cometh unto Thee”

INTRODUCTION

I. BEHOLD, THY KING COMETH UNTO THEE

II. MEEK, AND SITTING UPON AN ASS

III. HOSANNA

CONCLUSION

The First Sunday in Advent

Hymns: 69, 58, 70, 75

Matthew 21:1-9 — “Behold, Thy King Cometh unto Thee”

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

Today is the First Sunday in Advent and the Gospel reading appointed for this day is
Matthew 21:1-9:

And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose *them*, and bring *them* unto me. And if any *man* say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,

Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.

And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set *him* thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed *them* in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.

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

INTRODUCTION

Today we begin the Church Year anew, passing from the season of Trinity and the End Times into the season of Advent. Advent is a season of expectant waiting for the coming of the Christ, the Savior from sin, death, and the power of the devil. He is our King. For the people of Israel this expectation was often mixed with confusion and misunderstanding, not unlike today. Many of the things for which people were looking were in many ways like the things that we see and hear in the world and even in the churches today as Christmas advertizing goes forth and Christmas lights twinkle and flash and Christmas songs ring out over the airwaves. But the King for whom Advent teaches us to await and expect and seek is a king like no other. He comes with a clear and defined purpose. He comes in an unexpected way. But He does come and He does fulfill what He has promised. Therefore we have appointed for this First Sunday in Advent a text that directs us to the purpose for which He comes and the manner of His coming.

I. BEHOLD, THY KING COMETH UNTO THEE

And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find

an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose *them*, and bring *them* unto me. And if any *man* say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,

Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.

This quotation appears to be a conflation of two prophecies from the Old Testament prophets Isaiah and Zechariah:

Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken. (Isaiah 62:11-12)

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. (Zechariah 9:9)

In observing how the Holy Spirit moved Matthew to bring these two prophecies together it seems that part of what we are meant to hear is the declaration of how this announcement has gone forth into all the earth. It is interesting that Isaiah actually does not say that the LORD has proclaimed this unto the end of the world but that the LORD has caused this to be heard unto the end of the earth. This is because the prophets were in the land of Israel and the actual proclamations of the prophets were limited to this locale and this people. Nevertheless, the prophecies did go forth through those who visited Israel and through the proclamations that the kings of Babylon and Persia sent forth because of what the LORD worked through Daniel and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Because of these men of faith, the Word of the LORD was sent forth into the far reaches of the kingdoms, and from there into all the world. This is why even the Magi knew of the appointed time so that they were seeking the sign in the stars for the one to be born King of the Jews.

This glorious message was for Zion, the holy city of God, where His temple was built and the sacrifices were offered on behalf of God's people. To this city the long awaited King would come. At the appointed time this King did come to Jerusalem to fulfill all that was promised.

But this was not the first time that He came to the royal city. He had been there many times. In fact, He had been there continually, working forgiveness and grace throughout the centuries. But now He was coming to bring all these things to the fulfillment of their ordained purpose. Now He was coming to offer the final sacrifice that would redeem all of sinful mankind and accomplish the reconciliation of God and Man. Everlasting peace would be established.

II. MEEK, AND SITTING UPON AN ASS

Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.

The King of Zion was coming in a peculiar way. He is a peculiar King. He is a meek King. In the Hebrew the word means poor, lowly. Matthew uses the Greek word from the

Septuagint, which means mild, gentle. And both are true of the King born of Mary. He was born to a humble family with no worldly wealth or power. Humble, lowly, poor, and gentle people. His was carried to Zion, to the temple, for His purification as a baby. He was brought to Zion for the gathering for the various feast days and other sacrifices. Finally, on the day of our text, He came in preparation to surrender Himself to be sacrificed for the sin of the world.

What demands did this King make? None whatsoever. He came to give. He came to give Himself. He came preaching repentance unto salvation. He came preaching forgiveness unto life. He came preaching peace from on high. He came healing the sick, feeding the hungry, restoring sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf, even raising the dead. As the people heard of Him they came flocking to Him, seeking these many gifts from Him, offering Him nothing but their neediness.

On the day of our text, He came to them to fulfill all of the sacrifices that kept them until the fulfilment of God's own sacrifice for His people. They greeted Him as the Saving Son of David. **"Hosanna to the Son of David!"** they shouted.

Did they understand what this meant? Apparently not. Five days later they shouted, **"Crucify! Crucify! We have no king but Caesar!"** This meek King from heaven was not at all what they sought for themselves. When He did not do as they expected, they turned angrily away and damned Him.

We sometimes look upon these angry fools with contempt. But are we really any different? Do we really look to Jesus as the King whom He declares Himself to be? Do we truly rejoice in His meekness? Are we glad for the way to which He calls us? Do we really seek Him through the means that He has ordained?

III. HOSANNA

Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.

And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set *him* thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed *them* in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.

Hosanna means "save now" or "save us." Do we really mean this? Do we really believe that we need to be saved from ourselves and our actions and even our best efforts? Do we really count ourselves as poor miserable sinners who need to be saved? Do we really count ourselves as those who have gone astray and need to be rescued? As we prepare for the celebration of Christmas, is this really the focus of our preparations?

When we think of Christmas and we make preparations for Christmas, what is our primary occupation? What occupies our time and our thoughts regarding the countdown to Christmas?

From what is easily observed, from what fills the airwaves and from what is on display wherever one looks it seems that cheery lights and festivity and gathering with family and

friends for festive activities is the focus. From what people chant in the advertisements and from what people scurry about doing, it seems that purchasing trinkets and toys and jewelry and electronic gizmos and bicycles and scooters and new clothing and endless lists of desired items is what is meant by preparing for Christmas. The Salvation Army and Goodwill Industries and Foodbanks and Lutheran World Relief and the United Way and nearly every charitable organization in the world all are asking for donations to make Christmas a joyous time and to make it possible for everyone to have Christmas.

Even in the requests for donations for the mission activities of the various church bodies, where exactly is the expectation of the coming of the promised King? Do we really expect Him to come to us today? Do we really even believe that we NEED for Him to come to us today?

Additionally, do we believe that He comes to us as the meek and lowly King who comes to save us through His sacrifice on our behalf? Do we really look for Him to come from on High to save us in our current circumstances?

Just who is this Savior King, really? How does He say that He comes to save us?

Water, bread, and wine are the means that He has ordained. Do we really believe that He comes to us through these? When He rode into Jerusalem, the animals were not even His own, but were borrowed from someone else. This Savior, this King, told His disciples, “**And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.**”

Today He says that He comes to us through the water from our faucets and through the bread that we bring and the wine that we provide. His words are spoken through men whom we have called to serve us in His name.

Can this be real? Can this really be how He comes to us to save us? Can such mighty works really be effected through these meek and lowly ways?

He says so! He says that Baptism is for the forgiveness of our sins and for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and for regenerating us into the Kingdom of God. He says that Baptism saves us through the guarantee of the resurrection. He says that the bread that we break and consecrate is His body and that the cup that be bless is His blood and that this is for the remission of our sins.

So the question is: Is He the really the King? Is He really the Savior? Is He really God? Is He really the one to trust and believe? Is His Word really true?

These are really ridiculous questions, are they not? He created the cosmos by merely calling it into being. By merely calling for them, all of the planets and stars and creatures came into being. Yet with us, with Man, He paused and came down to the earth and dirtied His hands, making us from the soil, making us in His own image and breathing into us the breath of life. When Adam sinned, He came calling for Him and confronted Him face to face, proclaiming the salvation that was planned even from the foundation of the earth. The promise was a Savior to be born of woman. A flesh and blood man would crush the serpent's head. Throughout the generations the promise was revealed more and more fully. Finally He was born into the world and saved the world.

Today He continues to come through the ordained means of preaching, washing, and communion, all in connection with the Word made flesh. Today He continues to bring us into His kingdom wherein the salvation that He purchased for us resides. With water He seals us with the Holy Spirit into this kingdom. With bread he unites us in the communion of His body. With wine He refreshes us with the forgiveness of His blood. Things that by outward appearances seem meek and ineffectual are used to accomplish the impossible. Hearts are converted from self-reliance to true faith. Sins are washed away producing consciences scrubbed clean and purified to come to God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Sinners are declared righteous and united in one holy communion of saints in the body of Jesus to partake of His Holy Communion forevermore.

Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee.

And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.

CONCLUSION

What a glorious proclamation we hear on this the First Sunday in Advent! Yes, this is a time of humble preparation in anticipation of the holy festival of the promise of the one born King of the Jews and the world's Savior. While His birth was about two thousand years ago, the proclamation that was fulfilled is still promised to you and to me. This very day our King comes to us through meek and lowly means to give Himself to us and for us to satisfy our deepest and greatest needs. Today we eat and drink forgiveness and salvation and everlasting life. Today we receive our King into our own bodies and into our hearts and souls. Today we are joined again with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven in the endless praises to our God who makes Himself to be our Savior King. 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.