

Dear Advent worshippers awaiting for the coming One, Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. Amen.

In the past two weeks we have discussed Christ and his fulfillment as being the prophet and priest. His advent, his coming, is more than a mere promise never to be fulfilled from the Old Testament. His advent, his coming, is more than a mere historical hiccup or story to make people feel better. His advent, his coming, happened in real time in real space. His coming would be to fulfill all that was said by Moses and the Prophets. As we prepare this Advent for the coming of the Christ child, we know that He is the promised One. He is sent by the Father, placed as our High Priest. In Christ's life he perfectly fulfills the Law of God, satisfying every jot and tittle, on our behalf. Hosanna to the Lord, for He fulfills God's Word!

Our Lord comes because we are in need. We live in this world full of sin and death. We ourselves are poor, miserable sinners. Not sure about the severity of that Law or the accuracy of that statement? Ask yourself this, have you idolized anything or anyone, including yourself? Do you joyfully receive his gifts in Word and Sacrament and call upon his name in every trouble, also in prayer and thanksgiving? What of your anger within the heart? Do you help your neighbor to improve and protect his possessions and income, or do you only look out for number 1? Have you honored God's gifts in marriage perfectly, including those unmarried, that is, the gifts he intended for marriage only, are you preserving them, and what of your thoughts as well as your actions? And what about our earthly rulers, including parents, teachers, those in government authority, have we honored them, served and obeyed them, loved and cherished them? It is easy to speak of the various moral problems and issues with society and to broadly say that all people are sinners. It is quite different God's Law is applied to us, and we are exposed for who we are, sinners who deserve nothing but death and hell.

We have a real need. This need is far beyond the needs that involve emotional feelings. Our need is not to feel better about ourselves. Our need is that we need salvation, we need to be rescued from this valley of sorrow and from the wages of sin that we have reaped. This is the need that God promised to deliver, he promised One who would crush Satan's head and deliver us from death. The Lord comes through for his people as he delivered his people who were in bondage in Egypt. He is the one who provided for them a means of sacrifice and appointed priests. He is the one who proclaimed his Word through his prophets. And he is the one who provided and protected his people and appointed for his people kings. And yes, these men too were sinners and needed the very gifts to which God entrusted them to provide. Moses was kept from the promise land for his disobedience. David would be brought to his knees to receive absolution as he confessed his sins of adultery and murder.

Dear Advent worshipers, behold your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he. (Zech. 9:9) He comes being sent by the Father, despite our continuous rejection and questioning of His Word, despite our grumbling and complaining, despite our bondage to sin. He has come to save us and deliver us from this bondage. He doesn't come promising great health and wealth for all people, though he does promise to provide what is needed to support in this body and life. He doesn't come promising an earthly kingdom. In fact he says, "my kingdom is not of this world." (John 18:36) He comes as God in the flesh, Emmanuel, God with us, named Jesus because he will save his people from their sins. He comes as the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets, he comes to make sacrifice, himself. He comes with the promise and delivers to you the true gifts. His becoming flesh is for you. His life, his death, his resurrection cleanse and atone your sins. You are forgiven, you are released from sin, death, and the devil.

Behold your king, righteous and having salvation is he. Pilate questioned, “so you are a king?” Jesus responded, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world.” This is why he became flesh, to take on our sin, to suffer and die for you, to give you life. He comes as one who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, and made us a kingdom. He comes to you and forgives you as he washes you with water and His Word, making you an heir of the kingdom.

Our Lord is not a mystical figure conjured up to make us feel better or provide inner peace. He is the Lord God, the one who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty. He is the maker of the heavens and the earth. He is the one who came and dwelt among his Israelite people, delivering them from slavery and delivering them their earthly kingdom. He is the one who became flesh and dwelt among us, whose blood sets us free. And he has promised that he will come again to judge both the living and the dead.

And lest you have thoughts that he is merely seated at the right hand of the Father, enthroned in heaven above, sitting back and watching and not caring for you, take heart and believe, rejoice that he is the one who provides with all that you need to support this body and life. Take heart and believe, that your king comes to you righteous and having salvation. He comes and delivers to you his gifts, your forgiveness. It is yours. Behold, your king is coming to you. He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. We do not know the day or the hour, but we know that he is coming. We trust His Word as he comes to us and delivers himself to us to forgive our sins. We trust that He will come again and deliver us to himself in his kingdom, which has no end. Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.