**“Let Us Go Up”**

Isaiah 2:1-5

Romans 13:11-14

Matthew 21:1-11

 Advent 1

From the prophet Isaiah: “’Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us His ways and that we may walk in His paths.’ For out of Zion shall go the law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall …”, and the rest is **history** and **reason** **for all that we enjoy and further anticipate**.

Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Bridge**

This **transition** each year reminds me of the story of the **new pastor** just starting out his ministry at a congregation. On the way out of the **first service**, people commented to him on his good sermon. He preached the **exact same sermon** the second weekend, and while people **somewhat picked up on that**, still they commented on the good sermon (thinking that they might not be **accurately** picking up on the **complete** **sameness** of the message). The **third** weekend, still the pastor preached the **exact** **same sermon** and, this time, people noticed-that-fact so asked him about it. His answer was “**well,** **once we all get this sermon down, then we’ll move on to a second one**”.

**Text**

The “**broken record**” **of the message** in this **transition** is the **Advent call** both in November and also December. It’s “**Let Us Go Up**” as, **AGAIN**, the plea to (as Romans puts it) “**WAKE FROM SLEEP**” because “the hour **has come**” **to** **do so** with “salvation **nearer to us now than when we first believed**. The **night** is **far gone**; the **day** is **at hand**.” The Epistle then goes on to **give us a day’s course-of-action because of the Advent “at hand”**.

“Wake from sleep” is the **law** “**going out of Zion**”, and that “**law**” (just as much as is the **Gospel**) is the “**He**” of Jesus (the **One who** “stirred up the city of Jerusalem” He’d come to). “**This is** the **prophet** Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee” … and people knew it … but what they didn’t know was the **extent of that**. From last week’s Epistle we heard that **this One** coming to the city of Jerusalem is “the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, for by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything He might be preeminent. For in Him the fullness of God was pleased to dwell” (in other words, He’s God **embodied**, and **fully God**), “and **through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross**.” He is, then, the entire “**law** from out of Zion” as well as “the **Word of the Lord** from Jerusalem” entering it to “reconcile the world to Himself” and “make peace with His creation”, riding-in (to do so) on the back of a donkey’s colt.

**In that**, He calls people to “**WAKE from sleep**” **because of it**: to **be ourselves** “**STIRRED UP where He’s come**”. And **history accounts** that “He” **came first to Jerusalem**, making **that mountain** a holy and precious place because **there** He shed **His blood demanded for sin**. His blooddripped **there** onto the hillside of Zion barely outside of the city walls, so it’s **there that we have a focus**. **There He came first** (the “**law out of Zion**” and the “**Word of the Lord** **from Jerusalem**”), and both the **Law-of-that** and the **Gospel-of-that** **(the cross and His coming to do that)** is what everyone (every place and of every time and situation) must **“wake up” and contend with**. And then He **promised to come further and with regularity through Word and the Means of Sacraments like Baptism and the Holy Supper**. And He will **soon finally come**. So to everyone (every place and of now and whatever time is left, no matter what our situation), **“wake up” and contend with the Lord’s coming**.

“Wake from sleep” and “be stirred up in the city where Jesus has come”. That’s the “**law**” of command within the Advent call. There’s no room for **complacency and lack of concern with that demand from the Lord**. Fathers must **rouse** children but first themselves, friends, friends and neighbors, neighbors, no one must mentally or emotionally or physically and spiritually **“sleep” through the fact of Christ’s coming that’s “at hand”** because **“judgment” as well as your “salvation”** is nearer now (and nearer to you) than it was yesterday. The Lord comes **sooner** **now** than was planned 5 or 10 years ago, so “walk properly as in the daytime, not as in the darkness of orgies and drunkenness or in sexual immorality and sensuality or in quarreling and jealousy. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and **make no provision** for the flesh, to gratify its desires.” If we **SAW** His coming (eyeballs to His face), then why would we ever make “provision in the meanwhile” for any “darkness”? Why, then, would we **not** come to the light of the “daytime” of Jesus’ coming, so **SEE** **His coming** as **history** and **a certain regular and near promise**.

History makes it **fact as** (for **our SEEING**) Jesus **has come**. Promise says that He **still does** and **will soon without being veiled requiring faith, obvious and SOON it will be!** Advent Season gives the **evidence of history** after the promises of the Old Testament time periods, that history **fulfilled** through **a birth in Bethlehem** and **suffering in Jerusalem**. Those promises **made good in history** makes **certain then** the promises that Jesus’ Himself gave about His comings **now** and His probable **soon future coming**. His lifeblood and resurrected flesh **comes here**  in wine and bread, and His wisdom and strength (truth and the knowledge of Him) **comes also here** as Words from Jerusalem are heard. His **coming soon** here is anticipated as we look the direction of the eastern sunrise that these front windows show us. **One way or other (and, actually, every way by Jesus’ promises**), “**nearer to each one of us He (with His judgment or salvation) is to us now** than when any of us first believed”.

**Application**

There is only **one coming** **that’s un-determined**. Advent’s the **call not just to remember His comings, but also to gather all of the people who should be God’s to the Godly ACTIVITIES of a HOPEFUL LIFE**. **Just as** Christmas and the Passion of the cross through, then, to Easter and the Lord’s Ascension is **for all people**, **so** the Holy Supper **is as well** as the together-heard Word **holding believers close** to the “**SALVATION** that’s **at hand**”, so **show** friends and family members (maybe too far away from it) the **Gospel of God’s history in Bethlehem and Jerusalem**. Draw them close to the **Word Who comes now** and **will soon and obviously in the** **near future**. **The Lord** coming is what’s **GIVEN … it’s fact**; **our coming to Him (with this world also with us)**,that’sthe only **UNSURITY**. “**Come and LET US go** **up** to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob”, which Isaiah is saying now to **US** in middle Tennessee and the United States as well as to every resident of this globe in any house or home or apartment or town or city or farm. Isaiah says: “**Come and let us go** **up** to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob”, and that to any **stranger** also a **fellow citizen of this world** **destined-yet (and hopefully) for a world far-exceeding this one**. If “**sleep**” (any or us), “**awaken**”! **“Salvation” (Jesus with all His gifts and promises** abundant for all**)** is “at hand” and “nearer today than when we first believed”.

Starting **where you’re at**, **be** “**STIRRED UP where Jesus comes**”. “**COME** and **Let Us Go Up** to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that **THERE** He may **teach each one of us His way**s so that **we may walk in His paths**. Come, O house of Jacob, and **let al of us, INDEED, walk in the light of the Lord**.” In +Jesus’ name. Amen.