**“The King Is Coming”**

Isaiah 2:1-5

Romans 13:11-14

Matthew 21:1-11

Advent 1

 Nov. 26/27, 2022

“Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.”

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

**Bridge**

Most would prefer (one would think) riding upon a **full-sized animal**; not on the **uncomfortable and humbling infant one**. Yet **here** (to begin the full-fledged **Advent**) the infant (or colt) was promised (or foretold) to be the **vehicle or means of that** … the One approaching by it being less than obvious stayed mostly that way while, yet, being talked about and watchable and known and looked forward to **by what’s called faith**. And that faith was not blind though hidden in a man, it (that faith) embodied within the **Rider** of the colt (the One for Crucifixion) forever also embedded-to-be-believed through the **Words of prophesy and then witnesses** … followed Him then, and even worshiped, by any who would.

The **King** (the **King those who paid attention to, looked for / anticipated**) was **coming**. Then He **came** … and **still comes** … and **is coming again not subtly the next Advent**. But, **in this case** **(described from our Gospel reading)**, He snuck up on Jerusalem a bit, came “humbly” to “the Mountain of the House of the Lord (actually **was that Mountain**) through the midst of an even-subtly-attended parade. Those gathered there were **anticipators of Him** (not too unlike the small groups of people gathered in church services). In this account, He mounted-up just as prophetic Words of promise said that He would. He came where it was foretold that He would. And He always is **fulfilling promises of His coming**. He **always will**.

**Text**

And that King (**your King** to the baptized and anticipating of His Advents), comes and is coming to You … to deliver what He’s got for you in mercy and grace appropriated **sacrificially** and then **sacramentally** … because, even now, that mercy and grace isn’t **graphically displayed** … yet … but for the moment **hidden to be expected and anticipated by, again, faith**.

That “congregation” of our Gospel reading were **themselves hopeful** and, so, **of faith**. Not purely so, of course (as ours never is), yet **gathered and expecting of Him and anticipating and (maybe) just hopeful with whatever Spirit-led amount of confidence (faith) that hope became**. Each (back on that day) had his or her own reason to be outside Jerusalem’s gate and on that roadside where Jesus was coming. Many decisions to be there, then, had **curiosity** as a motive no doubt. His **handiness to them** played some role probably (seeing the One rumored to have raise a man from death in Lazarus’ situation of the previous week). And then there were **the prophesies**. It could have been that David and Solomon’s reign on this earth is being restored by the Rider and freedom from foreign (Roman) rule might be at hand. But a **Messiah (One anointed to save somehow)** many who’d listened to prophecy had heard about … and Jesus could be Him.

And gathering to see Him was, that morning, **handy**. For the festival of the Passover, all the faithful of the nation was gathered in Jerusalem … and many heard that someone to be curious about and, with Him, bearing a hopeful potential, was coming and approaching the city gate. And folks were out **anyway**, so gathered for this curious and hopeful or maybe, just, duty-bound to follow the crowd as a **“congregation” gathered together into a location** where Jesus **came just as He was promised to**.

Yet this coming (this Advent) was **more** **(substantially more) then what it looked like**.

Don’t forget **the week** that this gathering began. It wasn’t **here** a month before Christmas and the night remembered with angels and shepherds and a stable and a manger. It wasn’t (**that time**) **the announcement of Gabriel to Mary that she’d be bearing God’s Son. It wasn’t, then, angels singing in the sky or earthly kings traveling from a long distance to pay their homage. It wasn’t, then, king Herod (the son then) so much worried about a successor.**

**It was just the normal looking man of 33 years of age, nothing comely to look upon (as Isaiah** forecasted of Him). He was One **SUBTLE, yet arrived** … and to be received by faith. Here (as in everywhere He Advents Himself) He was **set up to do what’s PROFOUND**. Jesus, the Christ (looking like nothing obvious) came to (in a cosmic sacrifice of His divinity in humanity by the end of that week) **CHANGE EVERYTHING for the place and people to whom He comes**.

The subtlety and need for faith will change when He (Jesus) comes for the final Advent. He will come mightily (and obviously) to judge the “living and the dead”, like the “Morning Star” He will glow in the sky, angels with Him gathering all (not just the believers and watchers) to receive what’s their due by actions or grace having been received. We gather to look forward to that, but (in the meanwhile) to hear and remember both promises of Him and His actually comings. We **ENJOY** an Old Testament prophesy and a New Testament one for His “being with us always” and delivering Himself with regularity through Word and a Meal of bread and wine that **He says carries Him**. We receive, **by faith expectantly and hopefully, Him subtly here** … but Him **really-here-as-promised**.

**Application**

As Advent starts (in full force but, again, subtly), **imagine yourself** out there at the gateway-entry to Jerusalem for a Sunday morning church service. Maybe you got there because it was handy, or you were curious, or it was duty that brought you following the crowd that’s your family or spouse or just habit that carried you into the efforts of arriving at the event, But the event is the Coming of the King no matter what it might look like, and faith makes us recognize and acknowledge that. And then **here He comes**, riding inconspicuously yet steadily as promised to be where **you’ve gotten to** … and the account of that reminding of it today what was a lot of years ago and yet of the **SAME ADVENT TOPIC**: you don’t notice Him **here** as obviously impressive but you’re told that you **CAN** **recognize Him** **as promised** (or at least **GET HIM** **even if not really recognized**) by **Words listened to** and **a small Meal of bread and wine**. But all of this is just a promise of **more than the HINT**. What He promises through all His comings is **substantially more than just the visual substance of the HINT**. And, for that, **FAITH** **is required as it always had been**. ….

**Our** week ahead (and, more, our Seasons ahead in Advent and, then, Lent) aren’t too much different than the week that was ahead for the “gathered church service” of Palm Sunday. For them, the unfolding of the story was **at hand** (or **handy**). They watched without, like us, our needing to hearing of it through the witnesses. They (though, just like us) had to decide what to do with **what unfolded that week**. Some **stayed close to Jesus**.

**We have the** **same choice**. Will **we, in our days**, watch anew what Jesus did and still does while handy to us and “in town” and “at work”? **The question is** (and it’s the **only question**): what is **our actions relative to His**? Jesus came (sacrificially) and comes-still (sacramentally) and will come, then finally once again. **In faith** we expect and anticipate and enjoy His comings. One day faith will not be necessary … but **faith is required before He comes with** **no subtlety**.

“Your King **is coming to you**” … for only the moment, “humble” and somewhat hidden … to be **received by faith**. In Jesus’ name. Amen.