**“Save Us”**

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Isaiah 64:1-9

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Mark 11:1-10

1st Sunday in Advent

“Those who went before and those who followed were shouting, ‘Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!

Hosanna in the highest!’

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

Bridge

“Then **stepped forth the Lord of all** from His pure and kingly hall; God of God, yet (then also) fully man, **His heroic (saving) course began**.”

When in seminary … my first class of Early Church History (taking it as a solo class before even thinking about finishing a whole program and becoming, maybe, ordainable) … **this hymn** was a memorization project. The professor (Dr. William Weinrich / a brilliant man) apparently considered this both his favorite hymn and (more importantly) the summary of all of Scripture and God’s will to buy back from a fall all that would then damn humans if that Gospel truth (and God’s work in Christ) was not made available to be received by faith. We’re are going to get to sing verse 6 during Holy Communion in a bit (and I hope you all get to sing it or at least pay attention to its words that verse sum up all of it): “For You” (this Christmas baby, Jesus the Savior who road then as a man into Jerusalem on a colt to offer Himself up for bloodshed and death / sacrifice for all sinfulness that He’d been Himself baptized into, **did that** as the hymn sings **“in flesh”** … **it happened as it was planned and promised to**. “By Your mighty power, Lord God, **make whole (with that Gospel) all our ills of flesh and soul**”, which is **what we join sinners from all time in begging for …** then **enjoying it / the watching of it anew in its recounting and remembering** **and wanting still … and all the more**.

**Text**

The crowd cried out toward Jesus **“Hosanna”**, which is the **petition of Isaiah 64**. It **means “save us, please, we beseech Thee”** **/ “we beg of You” to do what we know that only You alone can do for us sinners**. We beg, literally, knowing that salvation’s necessary … not a **betterment**, but **SALVATION**. We **“beseech”** the Lord for it: that according to our need and His God Promise to make that available, He (God) can **SAVE US** **from our sins and eternal dilemma by His own sacrifice**.

**Isaiah 64 pleads (“beseeches”) God to “rend the heavens and come down”, and that’s what Advent anticipates / prepares for / celebrates both the anticipation of and will of God with His** **DOING OF THAT** (birthed in Bethlehem, living a divine made human perfection upon this earth for 33 years (tempted in every way yet not sinning), then setting His own stage to deliver Himself to a crucifixion site, dictating the entrance to the city where that death would happen within days, riding into there as the worthy and sufficient sacrificial Lamb / God’s Lamb to **die for the “wages of** **ALL** **sinfulness**”).

And **here’s why Christmas (and it all), even personally happened for you and I,** **(from Isaiah 64):** “from of old, **no one** has heard or perceived by the ear” anything like You, Lord God, yet **WE HAVE made you angry, sinning (and of the propensity toward that even to this day)**. “**In our sins WE have been for a long time** … so **SHALL WE BE SAVED is a question that’s appropriate for our asking**!” “We have **ALL**”, it continues to remind **US** needing **SALVATION**, “become (over time / born into it, yet committing tons more yet still) “**like one who is unclean**, and even **all our seemingly righteous deeds are like a polluted garment**. **We all fade like a leaf” (can’t, even, keep our physical selves alive indefinitely because of sin)**. “**Our iniquities, like the wind, take us away**. There is **no one who calls upon Your name”, God**, “who **rouses himself to take hold of you**; **You have” (where sin is concerned) “hidden Your face from us** and have **made us melt in the hand of our iniquities**”. Yet **NOW**, O Lord, You **are our Father**; we are **the clay, and You are our potter**; we **are all the work of Your hand**. **Be not** terribly angry, O Lord, and **remember not** iniquity forever. Behold (please look), we **are all** Your people”.

God **DID REMEMBER**. He **ALWAYS WILL REMEMBER** … and do **THE SAVING REMEMBERING PERFECTLY**. “God desires that all be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth”, “God loved the world, giving His only Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life”, “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death. We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. If we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His”.

Advent must **remind us** **to remember** all of that. “Blessed is He (Jesus) who actually does **COME** in the name of the Lord!” **Beginnings** and **accomplishment with new then beginnings for us and new destinies for is** what’s given as Advent’s start leads us to **acknowledge ALL OF IT** and **rejoice in ALL OF IT BECAUSE CHRIST JESUS COMES AND DOES FOR US**. We pour sinners confess to God our **iniquities** and our **need to be saved** … its all we have to bring: our **DESPARATION AND PLEA: “PLEASE, LORD, BEHOLD US AS YOUR PEOPLE … WE BESEECH THEE”**. “Hosanna” is not just an Advent cry of **some years ago in history**, but also in us, regularly / daily and wrung through us noticeably in each week’s Preparation of the Divine Service, and yet that just as **reminder of daily repentance with then the absolution of Promise based on the Gospel that we again begin see happen at this and every Advent of our Lord’s coming**. The Blessed **One did come in the Divine Name as Son conceived of the Holy Spirit by the Father’s will and design** … **His kingdom (of the descendant of Israel’s father, David) comes to even this modern world through the sacrifice accomplished and our baptism into it accepting its Promise by faith**.

**Application**

“**SALVATION** unto us has come, by God’s free grace and favor”, another hymn reminds us. The Season kicks off not of trivial things: Santa and secular festivities, decorations and shopping and moments (or a month) of lights and tinsel, dreams of snowfall and Rudolph, of even the sentiments of candlelight and a “Silent Night” that, likely, wasn’t really so silent. It’s about an accurate desperation and hope (then fulfilled) of deliverance / rescue, and Hallelujah from then onward with different futures because of it and perspective beyond eyesight and feeling, just **Promise**, and **that Promise secured except for, yet, His last return**.

Jesus (the Bethlehem baby) will come again here in this building. He’s already delivered through His Word preached by all of us in the collective liturgy but will be given by a piece of bread and sip of wine and sustains us until the obvious coming, those ways hidden yet not (by any means) absent or distant, but **present and close**.

I remember standing next to the place where Israel thinks Jesus was born into our world, a star on a floor marking where (in a cave) they think His first breath was taken, then a few feet away a potential manger spot. I remember looking up, maybe, Golgatha and stepping into an empty grave and on a seashore where the risen Jesus may have stood. I have to remind myself (because **it’s true**) that proximity is no different there than at our Communion rail and I live by those Promises true and blessed and **for us now** during December of 2023 and every opportunity until the Last Day arrives.

May this Season **start** (a new one that will be a Church Year) be reminder of nothing less than it represents: **SALVATION**. May we sing, then, with much more than words, how our day’s hymn ends (and don’t forget to stand for this wonderful last verse): “Glory to the Father sing, glory to the Son, **OUR** King, glory to the Spirit be now and through eternity.” In +Jesus’ name. Amen.