**“When Christ Came”**

Micah 5:2-5a

Hebrews 10:5-10

Luke 1:(26-38) 39-45

Advent 4, Dec. 18/19, 2021

A reading from Luke 1:26-38: “In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin’s name was Mary. And he came to her and said, ‘Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!’ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.’ And Mary said to the angel, ‘How will this be, since I am a virgin?’ And the angel answered her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.’ And Mary said, ‘Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.’ And the angel departed her.”

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

**Bridge**

“According to **this Word**” it was done. “**WHEN CHRIST CAME**” was at this “Annunciation” (or announcement) that **overshadowed** Mary with the Holy Spirit of God. Of our main account for today (Mary’s, then, **visitation of Elizabeth**), half of America would call it the visitation, or visit, of **(only) two people** (both women). Those, though, receiving the text of Scripture would know this for **what it was: the visitation, or visiting, of four people (two are those women, but with two very distinct and present other people, each addressing the others, some while still in the wombs of the two women)**.

**Text**

We have been noticing (for three weeks now) the **last word** of today’s Sermon’s title: “**CAME**” is the “**COMING**” of an Advent’s “**hope**” and then “**preparation because of that hope**” then “**joy**” as the “**COMING**” draws near and we recognize that. “**PEACE**” is the fourth of the Advent Candle reminders. The “**PEACE OF GOD**” has arrived (Christians know) upon the **arrival of God with flesh / Jesus** and **the moment the “fulness of the Godhead bodily” being conceived into the womb of a young girl named Mary …** “**WHEN**” **Christ Came** **answered that way**. Shepherds were **encountered by Him** in Bethlehem, John and Elizabeth **at their home near Jerusalem**, Mary **in Nazareth**, but **God had arrived**, and “**PEACE**” **upon this earth** had **arrived in HIM**. What had been promised in a **rendered-availability for an again “PEACE” between God and man was “incarnate”: the baby in Mary’s womb to be born, celebrated at Christmas**. “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” then begs of, more, His coming **again** for us, **arrival by conception** already having occurred 9 months before His **presentation by birth in Bethlehem. Both were parts of the process of Emmanuel’s presence among humanity**.

And we know **Who** was “conceived”, with “**incarnate**” a unique and only way to describe that **here in womb and manger was the** “**CHRIST**” **(the anointed One and unique-One-from-Heaven within humanity: the Lord-of-all baby … “Christ” not being His last name, but designation as that Unique One)**. “**Who He is / was**” **contradicted since then** by pagan enemies of God, trying hard to make of Him **only a man** (with, then, no semblance of peace other than the **idea of it as best as humanity can define that**). Scripture, however, recorded prophets and angels for 4,000 years, then witnesses to all **He’d do that no just-man could do**. **Those saved are so by acknowledging Him and knowing the facts: that “PEACE” is “PEACE”-from God, and He’d arrived (God also child-in-Him simultaneously). Who He was and is and what He came to do is celebrated among us as FOR US (IT “PEACE” gifted to us)**. **Incarnate was God Who became also child to be both at-one-and-the-same-time from His conception within Mary’s womb**. And **Elizabeth acknowledged that and praised it when she said:** “**Blessed IS the fruit of your womb!**”.

## Application

The **application of this** is **faith**. It’s faith by **acknowledging all of it in words**, but **those words are never simple acknowledgements, but create great joy and wonder and an awe that can’t be quieted**. Believers **celebrate** then (we **literally** **celebrate**) doing-so with others because we must and want to (as in it’s **inescapable to not share joy together**). And Christ is not, just, **Who He is**, but also the loving expression of the whole Godhead by **what He did as if only one of us were upon this planet needing Him to do so and Him still doing it: living to die to save, sacrificing His body as He did upon a cross eventually in order that we can have a potential** **where we wouldn’t have that if He’d not**. **That potential received as FOR US gives appropriate confidence and joy enjoyed**.

I said it’s “**potential where we wouldn’t have it without it**” because **that’s the fact** **of Christmas with the “incarnation of God” before it 9 months prior through the “annunciation”**. There are many (far too many if anyone) feeling **self-secure (without the Christmas fact)**. They lie to themselves and make of Christmas something else: “if we **say that we have no sin** we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us” and “**all** have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (with **perfection** being the expectation of God for us and all humans since **that’s how He intended us**, **US** deciding upon something besides that with the sin of our forefathers then our own participation in arrogance and **self**-sufficiency …

… and I should clarify that like the book of Hebrews does: **everyone on their own** offers “**sacrifices and offerings that God does not desire**”, and all but the just-plain-ignorant **offer to** Himsome homage (mostly decency and morality and their own efforts in things (athletics or art accomplishments, business success or parenting). But the Christ **(Jesus) offered FOR US (as we, believing, appreciate that) the only thing acceptable to the situation: His Divine flesh and blood for the sins of the entire world**.

Our faith **offers THAT:** that **it was “for us” (to “save us”) that He did**: “if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just **will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness**” (that **plague we’d had of “sin” un-atoned for and “unrighteousness” inescapable without grace**), **we** **OFFER TO THAT HIS SACRIFICE FOR US**. ….

And there was an eye-witness to every ounce of these saving events, and **SHE** responded to them this way: “**My soul magnifies the Lord** and **my spirit rejoices in God my Savior**, **FOR HE HAS** looked on the humble estate of His servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed” (blessed as anyone by His blessing recounted here); “for He who is mighty **has done great things** **FOR ME**, and **holy IS HIS NAME**. And His mercy **IS FOR** those who fear Him **from generation to generation**. He **has shown** strength with His arm; He **has scattered the proud** in the thoughts of **their hearts**; He **has brought down the mighty from their thrones** and **EXALTED** those of humble estate; He has **FILLED** the hungry with good things, and the rich **He has** sent away empty. He has **HELPED** His servant Israel, **in remembrance of His mercy, as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring** **forever**” …

… and the Lord God **still speaks** “**PEACE**” **to the offspring of Abraham (to believers)**, so may **OUR** souls “magnify the Lord” because of all of this. May **WE** “rejoice” in God our Savior.” In +Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.