

Luke 19:28-40
"The King is Coming"
First Sunday in Advent (C)

December 1, 2024
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, West Salem, Wisc.
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Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Amen! Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

"Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" (Luke 19:38).

Click, clop. Click, clop. Click, clop.

Our Lord Jesus was a walker. Practically everywhere He went during His earthly ministry, He went by foot. I'm sure it would have been before noon each day that He would have achieved His 10,000 daily step count.

But this time, this day, for this trip, for this short journey, Jesus does something different. He rides. This is the only time we know of that He rode instead of walking, or by traveling by boat.

Now, Jesus isn't riding because of the distance. After all, He had already walked thousands of miles on His way to Jerusalem. And this wasn't even the the hardest part of His journey. If it was, Jesus could have, just as well, rented a donkey at Jericho to make the 14-mile steep uphill climb to Jerusalem easier. But He didn't. He walked that steep climb.

No, riding a donkey for this one time was not for comfort, or convenience, or even transportation. So, why did Jesus ride a donkey? Why did Jesus arrange to be mounted and ride these last couple miles when His feet had served Him well enough to get Him to Jerusalem?

Jesus rides – because He is King. Here He comes entering Jerusalem to the click, clop, click, clop. Jesus enters Jerusalem upon a donkey to announce His rule to all who have eyes to see. Jesus rides into Jerusalem because this is His city. Jesus rides into Jerusalem because these are His people. Jesus arrives as the saving and liberating King of Israel. Jesus is coming to accomplish what His Kingly rule is all about. Jesus is coming to die. Jesus is coming to save us from our sins. We know what will happen just days later. But not many people knew that on that Sunday in Jerusalem.

Yes, they knew – *or at least heard of* – the miracles of Jesus. And most recently, the word of Lazarus’ resurrection had certainly spread. They even know enough to call Jesus “King” without really understanding what kind of a King He would be.

Today, we begin the season of Advent, which means “coming.” Your King is coming. Today, we will look at how Christ the King comes.

Firstly, Jesus the King came. He came to earth for us and for our salvation down from heaven. The Second Person of the Trinity became Man by the Holy Spirit and was born of the virgin Mary. He lowered Himself by becoming man to live our life. He, who knew no sin, came to take upon Himself our sins as He lowered Himself to be baptized with a sinner’s baptism by John. He came to preach repentance and the forgiveness of sins. He came to lead all people to Himself. He came for *this* moment, *this* time, as He rode into Jerusalem upon a donkey to die. He came as the sinless Lamb of God to be slaughtered, as the single sacrifice for sins (Hebrews 10:12).

We begin the Advent season as Christ enters Jerusalem. He enters Jerusalem to fulfill why He came in the first place: to suffer and die as the propitiation for yours and my sins. He came to regain yours and my favor with God the Father. For there was no other way. He came to save.

Everything led to this moment. Jesus ***“sent two of the disciples, saying, ‘Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one else ever sat. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you shall say this: ‘The Lord has need of it.’”*** (Luke 19:29b-31).

They brought the donkey colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it and mounted Jesus upon it. As Jesus rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. Picture it this way. As Jesus enters Jerusalem, onlookers spontaneously join in. They spread their cloaks onto the road for Jesus to ride over. And as Jesus walks over the cloaks, the cloaks are picked up in the rear and laid down again in front of Jesus. It’s like that classic cross country run known as an “Indian run” when the runner sprints from the rear to the front of the pack continuously, but this time it is cloaks – and palms!

And the crowd roars! ***“Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”*** (Luke 19:38).

Now, did the crowd understand what they were chanting? Maybe. But most likely not. Most expected the Messiah to liberate Israel from the Romans. Most expected some sort of a temporary earthly king to restore the nation of Israel to its former glory – the glory of King David, when nobody dared mess with them.

However, Jesus did give them a big clue on who He truly is. You see, the whole manner of His coming was to eliminate all political and nationalistic ideas. You see, Jesus didn't come mounted as a military hero upon a warhorse. A way they would expect. Jesus came mounted upon a humble donkey. A way they would *not* expect. He came as the long-expected Messiah-King, who would suffer and die for their sins, so they would be reconciled to God the Father.

From the shouts of “*Hosanna!*” to the shouts of “*Crucify Him!*” Jesus came to reconcile us back to God the Father! On that Friday, the King would be crowned with thorns. He would be mocked. He would be crucified and die. He would be buried. But three days later, the crucified King bodily rose from the dead. He would appear to hundreds. He would bodily ascend into heaven and sit at the right hand of God the Father with all power and glory and dominion.

Now that the King is risen and ascended, He comes to us in a different way. After all, He says, “*Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age*” (Matthew 28:20b).

Secondly, today, Christ the King comes to us in a way we would not expect – through His Means of Grace. Click, clop. Click, clop. Step by step, Jesus draws nearer. The King is coming as He strides on and on over the earth wherever two or three are gathered in His name and His Word is rightly preached and His Sacraments are rightly administered. Step by step, He reveals greater majesty, grace, and glory.

Jesus once came in lowliness mounted upon a donkey. Today, He comes in lowliness and meekness as He wraps Himself and His grace up now in the Word, which we hear, and in the visible elements of the Sacraments.

Through His Means of Grace – *His Word and Sacraments* – He now puts and sows His grace into our hearts. In His Means of Grace, Jesus, the King, is present as true God and true man. As often as we hear His Word and His Sacraments are rightly administered, Jesus makes His appearance. Through these Means, the King comes into the souls of His believers. Even though He enters our hearts concealed through lowly signs: the Bible, His preaching, water, bread and wine, our Holy Spirit-given faith still recognizes Him!

Jesus, our King, comes to hear our pleas for mercy as He graciously forgives yours and my sins. Jesus, our King, comes in the name of the Lord as the One who creates, nourishes, and sustains our faith in Him, so that we may abound in His love.

As much as we appreciate our King's coming through His Means of Grace – *His Word and Sacraments* – Jesus is only coming to us concealed under those Means. For we long for more! We wish to see Jesus in all His splendor and glory! We wish to see His scars and hear His loving voice.

Behold, the King is coming! Click, clop. Click, clop.

Lastly, Jesus tells us: ***“And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory” ... “But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap”*** (Luke 21:25-27, 34).

On the day of His final coming, Christ the King, the One who created the world, who redeemed and restored the world, who forgives our sins and strengthens our faith in His Means of Grace, will return no longer lowly upon a donkey or concealed through Means, but He will come with all power and glory to judge the world as He descends from the clouds.

On that great and glorious day, Jesus will come as our King to set all things right. And we will endure to see that day as we are spiritually fed through His Means of Grace.

As we begin this Advent season, always remember that the King has come as He has defeated the powers of sin, death, and hell for us upon the cross, the King is here concealed in His Means of Grace and the King is coming again in all His glory!

May Christ the King always comfort you, strengthen you, and sanctify you with His grace! Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!

*The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.*

+ SOLI DEO GLORIA +