

Pastor Jacob Hanson
"The King is Coming"
12/02/2018

Opening Prayer

Good morning, welcome to Kasson/Pleasant Corners UMC, it is a blessing to be here with you today. I am Pastor Jacob Hanson, and I am excited that we are finally entering into the Advent Season. Some quick notes about Advent before we get into the meat of our sermon for this morning. The Advent season that we celebrate here in the United Methodist Church is the four weeks proceeding Christmas, and it is also the beginning of the church calendar. So, at least according to the traditional church calendar, today is the beginning of the new year. The word Advent comes from the Latin word "Adventus," which means coming or visit. This is an appropriate name for what this season in the church is really all about... celebrating and remembering Christ's coming to us in human flesh on Christmas Day. The coming of Christ is significant in that it directly leads us to the cross on Easter. As we celebrate and remember the joy that we have regarding our savior's miraculous birth, don't forget that this all directly leads to the cross. With that being said, we are beginning our journey through Advent today with the announcement to Mary from Gabriel that she will bear a child... the Christ. We read today that the King is Coming.

Our first reading comes from 2nd Samuel chapter seven, and it is one we have had before if you were around in the month of August. During that month we were looking at the life of David and the nation of Israel, but what we read then has merit for what we are talking about now. To give you a little context, our reading here comes basically from David's inauguration if you would like to think of it that way. He is established firmly as the new king, he has no challengers, and he is the Lord's anointed ruler of Israel. All is going well, and when David approaches the Lord to build God's temple, the Lord tells him no... but gives him this promise instead. This promise that "When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendent after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his forever." That sounds great, that sounds wonderful... but a few hundred years later we will see that Israel is in bondage in a foreign land with no king at its helm. So how is this promise going to be fulfilled? With no king on the throne and the nation itself in bondage, how can a king come to reign as was prophesied to David? To make the answer simple: Jesus. He will become the coming king, the Savior.

By the time we get into the New Testament the Jews are looking for a Savior. There are many prophecies and scriptures that seem to point towards a coming Messiah, to a descendent of David who will redeem Israel and set things right. To put it succinctly, things have not gone as planned for the Jews between David's reign and our reading in Luke. Here is the quick history

for the Hebrews journey between David and Jesus. After king David's time, there came some crummy kings that didn't rule well, and they eventually led the nation down a bad path. The Jews, God's chosen instrument to reach the whole world for His glory, begin to worship other gods and to forsake God's commandments. In response we read in much of the Old Testament about how as they forsake the Lord, the Lord in turn forsakes them to their own desires. The Hebrews were then captured and exiled from their homeland by the nation Babylon, brought back under guidelines by the Persian empire (after the Persians defeated Babylon), and finally have been ruled over by the Greeks and Romans after those two respectively took over the region. That is an extremely fast overview, but what you need to know is that very little freedom has come the way of the Jews in the centuries leading up to Christ's birth. They have been conquered and reconquered, they are not in control of their own destiny, and they are horrifically abused. In the midst of these difficult times we read about how there is a distinct absence of a true king in Israel, the kind of king that these people have this prophecy about. This coming king who will set things right, that they have read about and heard about... they begin to realize that eventually this king will come.

Without getting too deep into prophecy today, I'll share with you some other prophecies that these folks have about this coming king just so you have an idea about how the Jews came to be looking for a savior in the years before Jesus's birth. These may sound a touch familiar because they deal directly with things we recognize around Christmas. If you are a note taker or a sceptic of scripture, I would encourage you to make note of these verses and look them up on your own during your own time to see about their legitimacy. It is always good to know for yourself what the truth is. You can always ask your Pastor about scriptures like these too... they are a big reason why I am a Christian, they really help to confirm the faith that I cling too.

-Micah 5:2 "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity." (Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Written circa 8th century BC)

-Isaiah 7:14 "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel." (Jesus was born to Mary, a virgin. Written circa 690 BC)

-Jeremiah 23:5 "'Behold the days are coming,' declares the Lord. 'When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; and He will reign as king and act wisely and do justice and righteousness in the land..'" (Jesus was a direct descendent of David, proven in the genealogies provided in Matthew and Luke. Written circa 600BC)

Those are just three quick verses with details about the birth of Jesus. There are several others located in Zechariah, Psalms, Genesis, and many other books of the Old Testament. Over time the Jews would come to recognize that there is a Messiah coming, a Savior, one who will make

things right. By the time we get to the birth of Christ many of the Jews recognize that at some point the king is coming, the big question is when.

Looking into our reading for today from Luke, we see the angel Gabriel coming and revealing Jesus's miraculous birth to Mary. Gabriel is known as one of the two most powerful angels in God's kingdom, in particular he is known as the messenger who brings good news in a couple of different places in scripture... but none as important as this. Gabriel comes and says to Mary, a young engaged woman living in backwater Nazareth, and proclaims "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 name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David." What Gabriel is telling Mary is that the king is coming, and that she will be His mother. We will see then Mary give great praise to the Lord for the gift that He had given her, we will also see several other folks come out of the woodwork throughout the next few chapters of scripture confirming this message to Mary.

This message that the king is coming, that the Messiah is going to arrive, is one that we are going to hear over and over again in the lead up to Christmas and beyond. We have heard it in the past when we looked at John the Baptist, declaring Christ as he comes from the wilderness. We have heard it when we listen to the words of the prophets, like Isaiah declaring that "He will be pierced for our transgressions" in Isaiah 53. We have heard it from Christ's own lips when we hear Him say that He will come again in power and glory. But what does it really mean for us to hear that the king is coming, and what is our right response? What does this have to do with you?

When you were a kid, did you ever had a class where the teacher didn't show up on time or was called out of the room for an emergency? Now I'm not talking a minute or two late, but like a half hour of unsupervised class time? What happened? In the scant times I remember such a situation happening we would have kids shooting spitballs, desks getting flipped over, and not much work being done. Furthermore, there were always a couple of kids who would get picked on in such times because they didn't have the protection of the teacher there. When the teacher would return though there would be a reckoning. The spitballs would stop, the desks would be righted, and work would be accomplished. Those students who had lost their advocate would receive protection again, and those who had behaved poorly would be punished. What does it mean for the king to be coming? It means that God is coming to fix what is wrong, to protect His people, to set things as they should be. That is the joy that is present in the season of Advent, in the season of Jesus's coming. He is coming to set things right. The real reason that the king coming in human flesh is important is because it leads to the cross, to our salvation from our sins. Without our recognition of what Christ accomplishes on our behalf on Easter Sunday, there is no reason to care about the king coming on Christmas morning.

As we begin this season of joyfulness, of hope, of gifts, of family relationships, we should also remember that this marks the coming of our king. He comes to make things right, to fix what ails our world, to save us from our sins. Without the manger there is no cross, and without the cross there is no reason to celebrate. Keep that in mind as you celebrate this great season this year. Many Blessings upon you.

Closing Prayer