

St Paul's Lutheran Church (Latimer, IA)
Advent 1 – December 1, 2024
Matthew 21:1-9 – The King of Glory
Rev Peter Wagner

In the name of Jesus. Amen.

Every Sunday of the church year has its own appointed Propers, features that are unique to the day. These include the readings from the Old Testament, Epistle, and Gospel, as well as the Introit, the Hymn of the Day, and the Collect of the Day.

But there is another Proper, which is often forgotten. The appointed Psalm. These psalms are well-chosen, so it's too bad that they are not ordinarily read during the Divine Service.

Here at St Paul's, we do read the appointed Psalm each week at the opening of Bible Study, so at least we don't miss them entirely. But today, for this sermon on the first Sunday of Advent, I want to focus on the appointed Psalm of the day, Psalm 24. Hear the word of the Lord:

“Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle! Lift up your heads, O gates! And lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory!”

The message of this Psalm is clear, when it's paired with today's gospel from Matthew 21, the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, riding on a donkey to shouts of, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Glory to God in the Highest! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.”

Who is this King of glory, this man riding into Jerusalem, lowly and riding on a donkey, righteous and having salvation? Who is this Jesus, coming in lowly pomp through the ancient doors? For whom do the ancient gates lift up their heads? For whom do the people shout and wave palm branches and lay their cloaks upon the ground?

The Lord of Hosts, he is the King of Glory! This Jesus of Nazareth, this humble King, this man is truly the Lord God of Sabaoth. King of kings and Lord of lords is he.

The Lord, the Lord. Yahweh, Yahweh, who appeared on Sinai in smoke and glory, proclaiming his name. “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation.”

Yahweh incarnate, entering his royal city. The Lord, mighty in battle, coming to do battle and conquer Satan his enemy, to destroy death by his own death and resurrection. This is the Lord and there is no other. O Jerusalem, behold your God! “In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: ‘The Lord is our righteousness.’”

At his name, let every knee bow, and every tongue confess, that Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is Yahweh incarnate, the Lord, the God of Israel. Let all the nations worship him, to the glory of God the Father.

“Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, ‘Behold your God!’”

This is your King, your righteousness. Worship him and none other. Serve him with gladness, come into his presence with singing.

Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the royal son! May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice! May he defend the cause of the poor, give deliverance to the children of the needy, and crush the oppressor!

May they fear you while the sun endures, and as long as the moon, throughout all generations! May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth! In his days may the righteous flourish, and peace abound, till the moon be no more!

May he have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth! May desert tribes bow down before him, and his enemies lick the dust! May the kings of Tarshish and of the coastlands render him tribute; may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts! May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him!

For he delivers the needy when he calls, the poor and him who has no helper. He has pity on the weak and

the needy, and saves the lives of the needy. From oppression and violence he redeems their life, and precious is their blood in his sight.

Long may he live; may gold of Sheba be given to him! May prayer be made for him continually, and blessings invoked for him all the day! May there be abundance of grain in the land; on the tops of the mountains may it wave; may its fruit be like Lebanon; and may people blossom in the cities like the grass of the field!

May his name endure forever, his fame continue as long as the sun! May people be blessed in him, all nations call him blessed! Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things. Blessed be his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen and Amen!

Yes, blessed be the Lord, your King and God, Jesus Christ, who comes to you today. Righteous is he, and having salvation. "Let the peoples praise you, God, let all the peoples praise you!"

O Church of God, this is your King, your Bridegroom! This is the Royal Son, riding on a donkey. Blessed be his glorious name forever; the whole earth is filled with his glory!

And this, dear saints, is the purpose of Christmas, the purpose of Advent, the purpose of it all.

The purpose is to bring you to your knees, worshipping Jesus, your King and God incarnate. It's to prepare you to worship him, the infant in the manger, and recognize him as the mighty God. For if you do not recognize the little child of Bethlehem at Christmas as God incarnate, then you will not recognize him on Good Friday as God dying on the cross, and you will not recognize him on Easter as the risen, living God, and all your hope will be in vain.

For if you do not recognize him now by faith, he will not recognize you on the day of his return.

For in seeing him and knowing him, you see the salvation, and the love, and the mercy of God, the King of kings who chooses not to destroy, but to save. Who rides not on a warhorse, but on a donkey. Who comes not in terror, but in meekness. Who wears not a crown of gold, but a crown of thorns. Who conceals his majesty, and veils his glory in humility. "Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, hail the incarnate Deity."

This is the Lord, "Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

"So behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

And behold, your king is coming to you, righteous and having salvation is he, humble, and lifted up on a cross, on a tree of death, for your salvation.

And behold, your king is coming to you, righteous and having salvation is he, humble, in the church, in his word and sacraments, bringing you forgiveness in his means of grace.

And behold, your king is coming to you, righteous and having salvation is he, glorious on his final day of wrath, to judge the earth, to establish his throne and his kingdom forever.

This is your God. Fall down and worship him. Cry to him, "Hosanna, Save us Now!" Come, Lord Jesus. O Immanuel, God with us, come now and save us, Son of David!

"Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, Jesus Christ, he is the King of glory!" Amen.

Now may the peace of God which passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.