

First Sunday In Advent

Isaiah 2: 1-5

December 1, 2013

My Fellow Redeemed In Christ,

With This First Sunday In Advent We Have Begun A New Year In The Church Calendar. During The Season Of "**Advent**", Which Is From The Latin **Adventus**" For "**Coming**", We Emphasize The Three-Fold Coming Of Jesus: His **First** Coming At Christmas; His **Second** Coming To Take Us To The Eternal Life That He Has Prepared For Us; And In Between These Two Comings Coming His To Us In His Means Of Grace, The Word And The Sacraments At The Time Of Isaiah Our Lord Jesus Had Not Yet Come. It Would Be Another Seven Hundred Years. But Isaiah And All Of The People Of Israel Were Waiting For Him Just As We Are Waiting For Him To Come A Second Time.. In Our Text For This Morning God Gave Isaiah A Glimpse Into The Future...Which He Calls The "**Last Days**". In The Bible The Period Called The "**Last Days**" Is The Entire Time Period Between Jesus First Coming At Christmas And His Last Coming At The End Of The World. So The **Apostle Paul** Was In The Last Days, **Martin Luther** Was In The Last Days And **We** Are In The Last Days. And Gave God Isaiah And The People Of Israel A Sign So That They Would Know When The Last Days Would Begin What Was That Sign? The City Of Jerusalem Would Become The Most Important City In All The World. But There Is A Little Surprise Here. For God Is Speaking Of "**A New Jerusalem**".

I. Despite What Some Tv Preachers And Others Might Say....Today's Earthly City Of Jerusalem In Modern Day Israel Is No More Important Than Seattle Or Any Other City In The World. Ah, But Jerusalem Is Important As A Symbol....Because Of What Happened In Jerusalem Long Ago.

A. And This Brings Us To Jesus Christ. It Was In The City Of Jerusalem That Jesus Died For The Sins Of All Of Mankind. The Guilt And Punishment Of Billions Of Human Beings Was Placed On Jesus. And When He Died Mankind's Debt Of Sin Was Canceled In Full. And That Includes Your Debt And Mine. What An Honor For The City Of Jerusalem! It Was Also In The City Of Jerusalem The Jesus Was Raised From The Dead On The Third Day To Demonstrate His Victory Over Death Itself And To Give Eternal Life To All Who Trust In Him. What An Honor For The City Of Jerusalem! And So, It Was In The City Of Jerusalem That God Reconciled The World To Himself. What An Honor For The City Of Jerusalem. And Of Course, This Is Why So Many Christians Visit The City Of Jerusalem. They Go To See Where Jesus Walked....Where He Was Crucified, Buried And Rose From The Dead. You See, It Is Jesus That Makes Jerusalem So Important. Take Away Jesus And Jerusalem Is Just Another City. And So Isaiah Says, "**In The Latter Days...The Mountain Of The House Of The Lord Shall Be Established As The Highest Of**

The Mountains, And Shall Be Lifted Up Above The Hills...." And Remember....The **"Later Days"** Began With The Birth Of Jesus On That First Christmas.

B. The Gospel Of Jesus Christ And The Christian Church Began In Jerusalem....But They Wouldn't Stay There.....Both Would Go Into All The World As Jesus Told His Disciples At The End Of Luke's Gospel: **"Rpentance And Forgiveness Of Sins Should Be Proclaimed...To All Nations, Beginning From Jerusalem" (24: 47, Esv).** **"Beginning From Jerusalem"** Jesus Says....And This Is Exactly What God Had Told Isaiah Over Seven Hundred Years Before It Happened: **"For Out Of Zion Shall Go The Law, And The Word Of The Lord From Jerusalem".** The Word **"Law"** Is Not The Best Translation Of The Hebrew Word Because God Is Not Referring To His Ten Commandments....But To The Gospel Of Jesus Christ. And So Through Isaiah God Foretold The Spreading Of The Gospel Of Jesus Christ Throughout All The World...Here We Are Talking About Evangelism And Missions...The Adult Information Class And The Sharing Of Your Faith. The Gospel Of Jesus Christ Brings Forgiveness, Life And Salvation Along With Peace, Joy And Hope. And Through The Gospel The Holy Spirit Brings People To Faith In Jesus.....People From All Over The World.....As We Read: **"And All The Nations Shall Flow To It And Many People Shall Come And Say: 'Come Let Us Go Up To The Mountain Of The Lord, To The House Of The God Of Jacob..."** This Is Not To Be Understood In An Earthly, Literal Way. God, In Old Testament Imagery, Is Describing The Spread Of The Gospel. In Other Words In Jesus Christ Everyone Who Believes In Him Will Have A Relationship With The One True Living God. Or To Put It Differently The Savior Of The Whole World, The Savior Of All Peoples, Tribes, And Nations.....Is A Jew...As Jesus Said To The Woman At The Well: **"Salvation Is From The Jews" (John 4: 22, Esv).** And This Is What We Are Singing About In Our Post Communion Canticle, The **"Nunc Dimittis": "O Lord, Now Let Your Servant Depart In Heavenly Peace. For I Have Seen The Glory Of Your Redeeming Grace; A Light To Lead The Gentiles Unto Your Holy Hill, The Glory Of Your People, Your Chosen Israel" (Lsb, Ds Four, P. 211).** **"Gentiles"** Is The Name Of People Of Who Are Not Jewish. The **"Gentiles"** Are All The Nations Of The World.....And A Jew, Jesus Christ, Is Their Only Savior.

Ii. This Means That The Earthly City Of Jerusalem, The One That You Can Go And Visit, Is No Longer Important. What Made Jerusalem Important Is What Happened In The Past With The Birth, Life, Death And Resurrection Of Jesus Christ.....The Christian Church Is Now The Spiritual Jerusalem Where God Dwells With His People In Jesus Christ.. As The Author Of Hebrews Says: **"You Have Come To Mount Zion, To The Heavenly Jerusalem, The City Of The Living God." (12: 22, Esv).**

A. God Used To Dwell In His Temple In Jerusalem....That's Why It Was Called The City Of God. But No More. The Temple Isn't Even There Any More. Now God Dwells In The Christian Church As Paul Says In Second Corinthians: **"Do You Not Know That You Are God's Temple..." (3: 16, Esv).** The

Christian Church Brings The Truth Of God To The Whole World As Again Paul Says In Ephesians: **"...So That Through The Church The Manifold Wisdom Of God Might Now Be Made Known" (3: 10, Esv).** This Is True Because The Church Preaches The Gospel Of Jesus Christ As Isaiah Says In Our Text: **"...That He May Teach Us His Ways".** This Was Fulfilled In Jesus Christ As The Jewish Leaders Once Told Him: **"...Teacher, We Know That You Are True And Do Not Care About Anyone's Opinions For You Are Not Swayed By Appearances But Truly Teach The Way Of God" (Mark 12: 4, Esv).** And The Teachings Of Jesus Christ Continue Only Through The Christian Church.....Those Who Believe In Him. God's Kingdom Then Is Not Established And Defended Like An Earthly Kingdom With Armies And Weapons, Including Modern Day Israel.And Jesus Made This Clear At His Trial Before **Pontius Pilate: "My Kingdom Is Not Of This World. If My Kingdom Were Of This World, My Servants Would Have Been Fighting, That I Might Not Be Delivered Over To The Jews. But My Kingdom Is Not Of This World (John 18: 36, Esv).** And The Apostle Paul Makes This Same Point In His Second Letter To The Corinthians: **"We Are Not Waging War According The Flesh. For The Weapons Of Our Warfare Are Not Of The Flesh But...We Destroy Arguments Against The Knowledge Of God, And Take Every Thought Captive To Obey Christ (10: 4, 5, Esv).** And This Is What Isaiah Is Getting At When He Says: **"He Shall Judge Between The Nations, And Shall Decide Disputes For Many Peoples; And They Shall Beat Their Swords Into Plowshares And Their Spears Into Pruning Hooks; Nations Shall Not Lift Up Swords Against Nation, Neither Shall They Learn War Any More" (V. 4).** Here God Says That In His Kingdom Disputes And Differences Are Not Settled With Violence As Worldly Nations Do. But In His Kingdom, The Christian Church, Disputes Are Settled In Peaceful Ways With God's Word As The Judge Of The Truth And Harmony.

B. And So God's Kingdom Is Not Established Or Defended Like Normal Kingdoms....Only God's Word Can Do That.....Only His Word Can Lead Us Into The Truth Of God Just As Isaiah Says: **"That We May Walk In His Paths...Let Us Walk In The Light Of The Lord."** In The Darkness It Is Impossible To Follow A Path Without A Light. And So To Stay On God's Path We Need The Light Of His Word As King David Says In Psalm 119: **"Your Word Is A Lamp To My Feet And A Light To My Path (V. 105, Esv).** We Can Only Learn About God From His Word.....Only God Can Tell Us The Things Of God As Again Isaiah Says: **"...That He May Teach Us His Ways" V.3, Esv)** And As Paul Says In Ephesians: **"Understand What The Will Of The Lord Is" (5: 17, Esv).** And This Is Why You Come To This Place Called Messiah Lutheran Church. It Is In This Place That You Learn From God's Word How Much He Loves You And What He Has Done For You In His Son Jesus Christ. It Is In This Place That You Learn About God's Forgiveness And The New Life He Gives To You. And Because You Want To Live For Jesus Who Died And Rose Again For You.....You Come Here Also To Learn From His Word What Pleases Him. You See Then? The Word Of God Is Everything. God's Kingdom Only Comes With His Word.

The Word Of God Is Everything. Without It We Live In Darkness.....With It We Live In Light Of God.
Conclusion: Soon We Will Celebrate The First Advent Of Jesus At Christmas. And Now We Are Waiting
For His Second Advent To Take Us To The Eternal Life That He Has Prepared For Us....In The
Meantime..... He Still Comes To Us In His Word. Through This Word You Have Been Brought To
Faith In Jesus Christ..... You Have Come To The Mountain Of The Lord....To The House Of The God Of
Jacob. And This Means That Even If You Never Go To Visit Modern Day Jerusalem....Well, .That's
Ok.....Because You're Already In The Only Jerusalem That Counts...The New Jerusalem.....The
Christian Church. Amen.