

"King of Glory"  
Psalm 24:7-8

December 4, 2013

1st Advent Service

Our theme (special) song for Advent is the Quempas carol, an old Christmas carol from Bohemia (Germany) which was old when Martin Luther lived. The Latin name means "He whom shepherds once came praising." The song is actually three songs blended together but not so smoothly. The messages in the lyrics seem to conflict at times. I suppose that happens when you blend three songs together. The first verse for tonight is a good example of that. It says the shepherds were *"Cheered by angel news amazing: "King of glory, Christ is born!"*

Who is this "King of glory?" "The King of glory" is a title from Psalm 24, written by King David. We recently read it together. Glory here seems to imply light and power and might. And that is how the David describes this king. He is "The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle." Two things are clear. This King is the Lord Himself. This King is strong, mighty, and will fight in battle.

David says this King of glory is coming: "Lift up your heads, O gates. And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in." Where is the King coming to? David speaks of "the hill of the Lord" which refers to the tabernacle on Zion and also the "holy place" – the altar - inside it. Imagine that: the Lord God Almighty comes to a specific place. Did He have to? No. David has already said, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness therefore, the world and those (people) who dwell therein (on earth)." He could have gone anywhere. He could have stayed in heaven, aloof and uncaring, but He does not. He comes to earth – to a very specific place. He does not come for (help) Himself. He comes for (help) us.

But who can approach Him? David asks that, "Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place?" Our answer would be, "Anyone can go to the Lord. He loves and accepts everyone just the way they are." But the King of glory does not allow us to approach Him on

our terms (ways), but on His terms (ways). David says that the person who can approach God and stand before Him is, “He who has clean hands and a pure heart.”

What is meant there? A person with clean hands is a person who has clean actions. This is the person who has done nothing sinful, nothing evil, nothing to make his hands and life dirty. A person with a clean heart is even stricter. This is the person that has thought nothing sinful, felt nothing evil. This is the person whose thought and emotions are pure and without sin.

Who here is like that? Who here has clean hands, never having sin or evil to stain them? Who here has a pure heart, never having lust, hate, or any other evil to make their heart impure? The Bible says that no one has clean hands and clean actions. No one has a pure heart and pure thoughts and clean emotions. The Bible says, “All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.” None are good enough for the King of Glory.

So the King of glory does an extraordinary thing which cheers the shepherds and us. As the song says, “King of Glory, Christ is *born*.” That doesn’t fit together smoothly. There seems to be conflict. The King who has glory; the Lord who is strong and mighty; the Lord who is mighty in battle – is born. He becomes a baby boy, born from a poor and insignificant virgin, named Mary. He lies in a cattle trough in the tiny town of Bethlehem. This may seem cute to us, but where is the glory? We don’t see it.

We see the glory 33 years later, but it doesn’t seem like glory. When Jesus said, “Now is the time for the Son of Man to be (receive) glorified,” He was not talking ascending to a golden throne and engaging in a military battle. Jesus meant that it was time for him to ascend a wooden cross and engage in a great spiritual battle. THERE He was glorified. THERE He showed His strength and might in humility and weakness. THERE Jesus was mighty in battle. He fought Satan and won, earning forgiveness for all our sins. He fought death and won, becoming alive again and guaranteeing life after death to all who would believe in Him.

Now the cry goes out to all the world, ““Lift up your heads, O gates. And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.” Where does the King of glory come now? Although the King of glory fills the universe, He comes to us in a very exact way and to a very specific place. He now comes to us through His Word (Holy Bible) which we hear and see. His very body and blood come to us in bread and wine which we eat and drink. Here, He gives us His gracious gifts of forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. We find His precious body and blood not everywhere. We find it here where he gives it. The shepherds heard the Word from the angels, believed the Word of the angels, and followed the Word of the angels to the manger and there beheld the Lord of glory in the manger. In the same way, we, so, too, when we hear His Word from modern day angels – pastors – we believe His Word, we follow His Word to the altar and there we see the Lord of glory on the altar with the bread and wine.

Our Quempas carol for Advent and Christmas may seem disjointed and conflicted, but that’s okay. Our message for this season is the same. We proclaim the King of glory. We also proclaim the Christ Child. We receive His gifts – forgiveness, new life, and the promise of salvation – because He came long ago. We eagerly await to receive His gifts – holiness, eternal life, and salvation fulfilled (finished) – when He will come again in the future. This is our prayer, our confession, and our hope: Come, Lord Jesus, come! Amen.