

ADVENT VESPERS READINGS

Wednesday December 4, 2019

READING 1. A Problem and a Promise

Genesis 3:1-6, 14-15

³Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?’”

²The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; ³but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.’”

⁴But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not die; ⁵for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

⁶So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. . . .

¹⁴The Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.

¹⁵I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between *your offspring and hers*; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.”

The theme of “offspring” appears later in Genesis, when God makes a great promise to Abraham:

Genesis 22:17-18

¹⁷I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore.

And *your offspring* shall possess the gate of their enemies,

¹⁸and by *your offspring* shall all the (Gentile) nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.”

NEW TESTAMENT

Galatians 3.8, 16, 29

⁸And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentile (nations) by faith, declared the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘All the Gentiles shall be blessed in you.’ . . .

¹⁶Now the promises were made to Abraham and to *his offspring*;

it does not say, 'And to offsprings', as of many; but it says, 'And to your offspring', that is, to one person, who is Christ.

²⁹ And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

READING 2. A King to Care like a Shepherd

Micah 5:2-5a

²But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.

³Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. ⁴And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.

And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; ⁵and he shall be the one of peace.

NEW TESTAMENT

John 10:10-14

Jesus said . . . ¹⁰The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.

I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

¹¹"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

¹²The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.

¹³The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep.

¹⁴ I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me

READING 3. A King to Establish the Best Path of Life

Isaiah 9:6-7

⁶For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named ***Wonderful Counselor***, Mighty God, Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace. ⁷***His authority*** shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace for ***the throne of David and his kingdom***.
He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will
do this.

NEW TESTAMENT

1. At Jesus' Birth -- Matthew 2:2

The Wise Men asked, 'Where is the child who has been **born king of the Jews**? For we observed his star at its rising and have come to pay him homage.'

2. On Palm Sunday -- Matthew 21:1, 2, 4, 5

¹At the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ²saying to them, 'Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me.

⁴This took place to fulfil what had been spoken through the prophet, (Zechariah 9:9) saying,

⁵ 'Tell the daughter of Zion: Look, **your king is coming to you**, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'

3. At Jesus' Death -- Matthew 27:37

Over his head they put the charge against him, which read,

-- **'This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.'**

4. At Jesus' Ascension -- Matthew 28:18-20

¹⁸ Jesus came and said to his followers: "**All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me**." ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

READING 4. A King to Judge: Restoring Fairness and Safety

Isaiah 11:1-9

¹A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

²The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

³His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.

**He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide by what his ears hear;**

- ⁴**but with righteousness he shall judge** the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
- he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
- ⁵**Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,**
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

⁶The wolf shall live with the lamb,
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
and a little child shall lead them.

⁷The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

⁸The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.

⁹They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain;
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 24:23-27 – Jesus speaks about “The Second Coming”

(see also, many of Jesus' Parables)

²³ Then if anyone says to you, 'Look! Here is the Messiah!' or 'There he is!' —
do not believe it.

²⁴ For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and produce great signs
and omens, to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.

²⁵ Take note, I have told you beforehand. ²⁶ So, if they say to you, 'Look! He is
in the wilderness,' do not go out. If they say, 'Look! He is in the inner rooms,'
do not believe it. ²⁷ For **as the lightning comes from the east and flashes as far
as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.**