

Advent Vespers I
The First Sunday in Advent
30 November 2014
Concordia Lutheran Mission
Terrebonne, Oregon

“Christ is God in the Flesh to be Our Righteousness in Our Place in Order to Save and Give Life Eternal.”

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this *is* his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD our Righteousness.¹

Jeremiah 23:5-6

Introduction

This great passage from the prophet Jeremiah makes clear that the Messiah and our Savior is the Almighty God Himself in the flesh. For the Lord calls him, “The LORD our Righteousness”. Here Jeremiah uses the Name of the Lord, of which we know only the Four Letters – and called, therefore, the Tetragrammaton² (the four letters) -- which come over into English as “YHWH”³. It is sometimes translated “Jehovah” or “Jahveh”. Because, however, the vowels were omitted because the Lord’s Name was never pronounced by the people of Israel, substituting instead the vowels for “Lord”, we do not know exactly how His Name was

¹In the 1905 Concordia Publishing House edition of Luther’s German Bible this chapter is caption, “Christ, the Promised Good Pastor and Great Prophet.” *Die Bibel oder die ganze Helige Schrift Alten und Neuen Testaments, nach der deutschen Uebersetzung Dr. Martin Luthers (The Bible or the Entire Holy Scripture, Old and New Testaments, according to the German Translation of Dr. Martin Luther)*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1905, p. 752.

²Tetragrammaton means the four “tetra” letters “grammaton”. God’s Name as it appears in the Hebrew is hwh̄y. y = Y, h = H, w = W, and, finally, another h. Hebrew reads from right to left so I started at the right with y when giving the transliteration into English. The vowels of the Lord’s Name were omitted by writers of the Old Testament.

³God’s unpronounceable name because no vowels were ever attached to it. The people of Israel merely said, “Lord”, when they came to this Name and never pronounced the Name itself. Hence, the vowels that do appear are the vowels for “Lord” (“Adon”).

pronounced. We, however, do know that because this Man is called by the Lord's Personal Name, that This Man is the Incarnate Lord and our Savior.⁴

The Lord is Incarnate not for His sake – He after all is God and has no need of any human experiences – but rather for us in order that He establish on earth human righteousness pleasing to God forever through His Obedience to God throughout His life.⁵ Because the Lord is our human righteousness for us, we gain the righteousness of God and are reconciled to God.

Because we are reconciled to God through the Righteousness of the Messiah for us, we gain salvation and life eternal, dwelling safely forever as the Lord promised.

I. The Messiah is God Incarnate to Fulfill Vicariously the Righteousness of God for All Men to Save.

A. Judah in decline in the time of Jeremiah.

During this season of Advent⁶ we will be meditating on three great Messianic prophecies in the book of Jeremiah. These prophecies are especially fitting for Advent because each

4“... when the Tetragrammaton is attributed to the Son of God, we conclude solidly from this that He is the true, eternal, and uncreated God.” The Rev. Dr. John Gerhard, *Theological Commonplaces ... On the Person and Office of Christ*, tr. Richard J. Dinda, Benjamin T. G. Mayes, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009, p. 46.

5“... Christ is our righteousness not only according to the divine nature but also according to the human nature (Jer. 23:5; 33:15; 1 Cor. 1:30)” The Rev. Dr. John Gerhard, *Theological Commonplaces ... On the Person and Office of Christ*, tr. Richard J. Dinda, Benjamin T. G. Mayes, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009, p. 46. p. 250.

6“Advent as a season of preparation for the Nativity originated in France. Its observance was general by the time of the second Council of Tours, 567. In some places six or seven Sundays were included. When Rome accepted this Gallican [French] innovation, she limited the period to four Sundays. ... While Advent never attained the severely penitential character of Lent, it has always been regarded as a season of solemn anticipation and of spiritual preparation and purification. Lossius, the friend of Melancthon and the editor of a famous Reformation cantionale, speaks of a threefold advent – his coming in the flesh, his return to judgment, and his daily coming in the ministrations of the Word and Sacraments.” The Rev. Dr. Luther Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy*, p. 466, amplification added.

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Messianic passage begins with, “Behold, the days come ...”, an expression for the Days of the Messiah.⁷

“Come” in Latin is *venire*⁸, from which advent derives⁹. In the *Vulgate*¹⁰, the Latin translation of the Bible, this meaning of coming (advent) becomes plain from the Latin translation of these passages: “ecce [behold] dies [the days] veniunt [come]”. So also in the familiar Advent hymn, “Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel”, we find this same expression. The original Latin version of this beloved hymn goes like this, “*Veni (Come, Thou), Veni (Come, Thou), Emmanuel.*” Specifically, these prophecies speak of the Advent or Coming of the Messiah and His Gracious reign and repeats the central theme of the Old Testament¹¹ of the coming of the Messiah and the faith and hope His Coming gave to His people, the Church.

These prophecies show us that the Messiah is God Himself in the flesh to establish human righteousness on earth in the place of fallen men that saves sinners. This Work of the Messiah in our behalf is reckoned to us by the Gospel through faith. Finally, the era of the New Testament is a reign of truth and grace that blesses all men with the forgiveness of sins through the Gospel by faith unto life eternal.¹²

7“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw *it*, and was glad.” **St. John 8:56.**

8“to come”.

9“**Advent**, *n.* [L. *adventus*, pp. of *advenire*; *ad*, to, and *venire*, to come.] 1. ... a coming; approach; visitation.” *Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary*, p. 28, s. v. “**Advent**”.

10Vulgate means “common” because it was a translation in the common tongue of the people.

11For example, **Genesis 49:10** is one of the earliest passages in Scripture that speaks of Christ’s Advent. “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*.” The Hebrew word used here stems from the Hebrew word *bo’*, which means “he has come”. Advent means “coming”. We translate this Hebrew word into English with “come”. The Latin Bible, *The Vulgate*, which dates from the fourth century, translates **Genesis 49:10** with “*veniat*”(subjunctive mood), which means “he come”(subjunctive mood). *Veniat* has the same root word as “advent”, namely, to come, *venire*. *The Vulgate* was the translation of the original texts of the Bible into Latin by St. Jerome. “Among Jerome’s works, besides the Bible translation noted above, now known as the Vulgate (‘the common,’ since it was intended for the use of all men) Jerome. One of the Fathers of the Church; b. 331 at Stridon, on the frontiers of Dacia; d. near Bethlehem, in 420 ; of Christian parentage” *Concordia Cyclopedia*, p. 373, s.v. “**Jerome**”.

Hence, here in the First Book of Moses, we have one of the earliest uses of the term advent to express Christ’s coming, of His Incarnation and His birth in Bethlehem, indicating, once again, that the central theme of Scripture and human history is the Advent of the Messiah.

12“There are several notable prophecies in the Book of Jeremiah, some of them being veritable gems of epigrammatic utterance. But the most beautiful passages are the Messianic prophecies

These prophecies were especially important to the faithful in the time of Jeremiah because it reminded them that Judah would not perish in spite of the great evils Judah was committing, culminating in the Babylonian exile and captivity because of its persistent rebellion against God. Judah would not perish in spite of all of these calamities because the Messiah was yet to be born. Until the Messiah was born, Judah must remain in spite of the greatest difficulties and worst of times.¹³

The time in which the prophet Jeremiah worked was a difficult time in Judah. Many in Judah were falling away from the faith. The Rev. Dr. P. E. Kretzmann writes:

As the brief outline of Jeremiah's life shows, the period of Jewish history in which he lived was the critical time preceding the nation's doom. Only one of the five kings under whom Jeremiah prophesied was a pious ruler. The people became guilty of gross idolatry and, as they relapsed into paganism, of immoral practices. Covetousness, dishonesty, murder, adultery, stealing, false swearing, and other sins were prevalent throughout the nation. Year after year Jeremiah came with messages from God, whose mercy and compassion sought to turn His people to repentance, but the moral corruption was too great, and the people refused to obey. They preferred to listen to various false prophets, who predicted peace and prosperity.¹⁴

Under the Law of Moses, were Israel to engage in such disobedience to God's Word, they would suffer civil as well as spiritual penalties. Moses writes:

But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee
The LORD shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out

concerning the Lord, our Righteousness. Cp. chap. 23, 5, 6; 30, 9; 33. The prophecy of the New Covenant refers to the days of the New Testament, which began with the coming of Christ. Chap. 31, 31-34.1." The Rev. Dr. P. E. Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary of the Bible, The Old Testament, Volume II, The Poetical and the Prophetical Books*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1924, p. 398.

13"But though the work of Jeremiah, to all outer appearances, was vain, it resulted, in fact, in a clearing of the situation, since, as a consequence, the true Israelites were preserved in faith." The Rev. Dr. P. E. Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary of the Bible, The Old Testament, Volume II, The Poetical and the Prophetical Books*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1924, p. 398.

14The Rev. Dr. P. E. Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary of the Bible, The Old Testament, Volume II, The Poetical and the Prophetical Books*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1924, p. 398.

one way against them, and flee seven ways before them: and shalt be moved into all the kingdoms of the earth.¹⁵

B. The Messiah is the Righteous Branch of David and God Himself born to Redeem Men.

While the majority of the people of Judah, the unfaithful, obviously didn't get it, the faithful were concerned because this rampant disobedience to God wound up in the deportation to Babylonia. What would become of the Gospel? The Gospel? What would physical deportation do to imperil the Gospel? Physical deportation could imperil the Gospel because the Salvation of the Jews and all men rests on the Very Physical Human Body of the Messiah.¹⁶ If the people of Judah were destroyed, there would be no Jewish people from which the Messiah could take His Human Nature and redeem the world in and through that human nature according to God's Promise.¹⁷ Because the Gospel hinges on the Birth of the Son of David, what would become of the Gospel with the throne of David in jeopardy? This concerned the faithful in Jeremiah's day.

15**Deuteronomy 28:15, 28.** **“THE CURSE ON THOSE WHO DISOBEY** When Israel turns from God and His Word then will follow the curse of unfruitfulness and drought, of sicknesses and other plagues, and they will surrender to the enemies.

“Both were fulfilled. During the times that Israel served God faithfully, as at the time of Joshua and David, and the first years of Solomon, they were victorious against all their enemies, Canaan being a land flowing with milk and honey.

“But when Israel after the days of Solomon fell away, misfortune was added to misfortune, and the neighboring heathen nations plundered and ravaged the land.

“The same thing happens today. Where the fear of God rules in the land there the blessings of God are experienced. On the other hand as Luther often mentions, lands that were formerly blessed, have now become waste and desert, and the inhabitants have become barbarians, because the people despised God's Word and the Gospel. The people that go to God's house are concerned about their welfare.” The Rev. Dr. George Stoeckhardt, *Wisdom for Today, Volume I, A Short Explanation of the Old Testament Historical Books*, tr. the Rev. Arthur E. Beck, Ft. Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary, p. 150.

16True, we generally call the doctrine of justification the central article of the Christian doctrine, the *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae* [the article upon which the Church stands or falls]. But this article is directly based on the doctrine of Christ, on the doctrine of Christ's theanthropic [God-Man] Person and theanthropic work.” The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. II, p. 44, translation from the Latin and amplification in brackets added.

17“... for salvation is from the Jews.” **St. John 4:22.** “... the Scripture Truth that the Son of God became Man to destroy the works of the devil in and through the human nature” The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. II, p. 274.

For this reason, Jeremiah delivers a number of wonderful Messianic prophecies to strengthen the faith of the believers in Judah during this difficult time. Jeremiah writes:

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this *is* his name whereby he shall be called, The LORD Our Righteousness.¹⁸

Here the prophet Jeremiah reminds the people of Judah, i.e., the Church, that the Messiah is the God Almighty in the flesh to establish God's Righteous Reign amongst men through the Gospel of the Cross of Christ. The Apostle St. Paul writes that the Son of God was born of the Virgin St. Mary in order to fulfill all righteousness for all men¹⁹:

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.²⁰

18Jeremiah 23:5-6.

19This Work is called the "Vicarious (Substitutionary) Atonement. "The expression vicarious satisfaction is an ecclesiastical term...Christ vicariously (in the place of man) rendered to God, who was wroth over the sins of man, a satisfaction which changed His wrath into grace toward men...The term vicarious satisfaction brings out the Scriptural truth that God laid upon Christ, and that Christ willingly accepted, the obligation in man's stead both to keep the Law and to bear the punishment the Law exacts of the transgressors. Christ fulfilled the Law in the stead of man, for Scripture declares: 'God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law' (Gal. 4:4-5)...And Christ vicariously suffered the punishment which men had incurred by their transgression of the Law, for Scripture declares: 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us' (Gal. 3:13); 'One died for all' (2 Cor. 5:14); 'Christ hath once suffered for sin, the Just for the unjust (I Pet. 3:18)...It means that Christ subjected Himself to the Law and underwent its punishment 'in the stead of men' (loco hominum). It was 'for our benefit' only because Christ died 'in our stead'...The term vicarious satisfaction reproduces the teaching of Scripture that through Christ's substitutional obedience and death God's wrath against men was set aside. Roman 5:18: 'By the righteousness [v. 19: obedience] of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.'...And this reconciliation took place not by a fiat of His power, but through the intervention of Christ as Mediator ('Mediator between God and man'), through the interposition of His obedience and suffering ('by the righteousness of One,' 'by the obedience of One,' 'by the death of His Son,' 'One died for all')." Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. II, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951, pp. 344, 345, 346, underscore added.

"Whoever denies the substitutional satisfaction of Christ denies the very essence of the Christian faith, because only the reliance on Christ's vicarious satisfaction (I Cor. 2:2; 15:1-3; John 1:29) is the Christian faith." The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. I, p. 232.

20Galatians 4:4-5.

Luther writes of this passage from Jeremiah:

From this passage we are eager to prove and demonstrate that it is necessary that the Branch of David, or the Messiah, to whom all concede this passage must be understood to refer, is true God. For he says: This His name by which men call Him, “Lord”, and the tetragrammaton²¹ [YHWH²²] is used here which belongs to God alone. Therefore we contend that Christ is true God who justifies because He has a name which is assigned to God alone.²³

Seeing that this Branch of David is also the Almighty God in the flesh also explains *how* Christ could be Righteous before God for all men who have ever lived or who ever will live. That burden is impossible for anyone other than the Almighty God. For Christ, however, it is as God Himself calls it a “light” thing because Christ is the Almighty God in the flesh. The prophet Isaiah writes:

And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.²⁴

How can God call the eternal burdens of all the people of Israel a “light” thing? While, indeed, these burdens are impossible for any one man, they are not impossible for the Son of

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22God’s unpronounceable name because no vowels were ever attached to it. The people of Israel merely said, “Lord”, when they came to this Name and never pronounced the Name itself. Hence, the vowels that do appear are the vowels for “Lord” (“Adon”).

23Luther’s *Works*, Vol. 6, p. 248, amplification added. “The term ‘Jehovah,’ however, is used only of God and has therefore been designated as *nomen Dei essentielle et incommunicabile* [the essential and incommunicable name of God]. And this specifically divine name is ascribed not only to the Father, but also the Son and to the Holy Ghost. The ‘Angel of the Lord’ in Ex. 3:2, that is, the messenger of the Lord, par excellence, the Son of God, is according to vv. 4, 7, 15, Jehovah Himself, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In Ps. 85:8 the Psalmist says: ‘I will hear what God the Lord [Jehovah] will speak,’ but this Lord, or Jehovah, is the ‘Spirit of the Lord,’ who spoke through David (2 Sam. 23:2), and the ‘Spirit of Christ,’ who foretold the future glory of the New Testament Church through the Prophets (1 Pet. 1:11). The Holy Spirit is therefore the Lord Jehovah.” The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. I, p. 386, translation of the Latin in brackets added.

24Isaiah 49:6.

God who is now Incarnate. These burdens, infinitely great and eternal as they are, are dwarfed by the Almighty Power of the Incarnate Son of God. The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper writes:

Christ could not dispense with His deity in the state of exinanition [humiliation²⁵]. He had to attach the full weight of His deity to His obedience, suffering, and death, as Scripture tells us Gal. 4:4-5 and Rom. 5:10.²⁶

Hence, even this infinite and eternal obligation men owe to God are dwarfed by the Almighty Power of the Son of God. God, therefore, calls it a “light thing”, not to belittle the Blessed Work of Christ but to reveal to us the Inexhaustible Power of Christ to fulfill our obligations for us under the law.

Christ likewise pressed His Almighty Power into suffering and dying for the sins of all men. The Rev. Dr. John Gerhard writes:

Miserable man had angered the infinite God with his sin; therefore, he fell into an infinite evil. Such an infinite evil could be paid for and removed in no other way than with the infinite Good. Now then, apart from God nothing is infinitely good. That’s why God became man, so that man be enabled to pay on the strength of the infinite divinity, so that this divine payment avail for the benefit of man on account of the personal union, and so that divine righteousness adequately accomplish this.²⁷

Because Christ is the Almighty God, He has Power to spare so He also can be the Savior of the Gentiles according to God’s Promise. The prophet Isaiah writes:

25“134. **Wherein did Christ’s State of Humiliation consist?** Christ’s State of Humiliation consisted in this, that according to His *human* nature, Christ did *not always* and *not fully use* the divine attributes *communicated* to His human nature. ²³⁴ Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being *in the form of God*, thought it not robbery to be *equal with God*; but made Himself of *no reputation* and took upon Him the *form of a servant* and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in *fashion as a man*, He *humbled Himself* and became *obedient unto death*, even the death *of the cross*.” *The Small Catechism*, p. 109.

“Christ thought it not robbery ‘to be equal with God.’ ... Christ did not parade His equality with God, He did not make a show of it. ... ‘Christ did not display His deformity like spoils’” The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. II, p. 290.

26*Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. II, p. 289.

27The Rev. Dr. John Gerhard, *Seven Christmas Sermons*, pp. 37.

And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.²⁸

In the Cross of Christ, Christ, as the prophet Jeremiah says, “executed judgment and justice” on earth. The prophet Isaiah also refers to the Work of Christ on the Cross has Christ establishing Justice on earth:

Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, *in whom* my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth:²⁹ and the isles shall wait for his law.³⁰

Christ “executed judgment and justice” on earth not on men who deserved it but upon Himself because He bore the guilt of our sins. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures ...³¹

Justice means to do right by someone. Now in the Cross of Christ all Justice has been done. By His Death, Christ Atoned for our sins against God. By His Death, Christ Atoned for all our sins against our neighbor. By His Death, Christ Atoned for all our neighbors sins against us. Now on earth All Justice has been done in the Cross of Christ and we have Peace on Earth. For this reason we read in **Psalm 85** that Righteousness and Peace are not odds but harmonize perfectly because it speaks of the Justice of the Cross:

Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed *each other*.³²

When, therefore, the heavenly choir sang of the Birth of the Righteous Branch of David in Bethlehem, they sang of peace on earth:

28Isaiah 49:6.

29“Till He has established justice in the earth. He wants to denote the cross.” Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 17, p. 67.

30Isaiah 42:-1-4.

31I Corinthians 15:3.

32Psalm 85:10.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold. I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this *shall be* a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.³³

II. Christ's Gracious Reign Extends to All the World through the Gospel to Bless All Men with Life Eternal.

A. Christ's Gracious Reign extends to all men through the Gospel.

Christ, the Righteous Branch of David, rules and reigns Graciously through the Gospel. The prophet Isaiah writes:

Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.³⁴

By His Knowledge, i.e. by the Knowledge of His Passion, His Execution of Justice Upon Himself for all men, Christ justifies many. This Knowledge is the preaching of the Gospel that justifies men by faith. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.³⁵

Christ Our King prospers because He justifies many, i.e., creates many believers, His Great Church, through the Gospel. Consequently, Christ prospers because He gathers for Himself a Great Church by His Gracious Rule through the Gospel. Moses writes:

And Jacob called unto his son, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you *that* which shall be fall you in the last days. ... The sceptre shall not depart

33St. Luke 2:10-14.

34Isaiah 53:10-11.

35Romans 3:26-28.

from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him *shall* be the gathering of the people.³⁶

Shiloh is Christ's Name and Means "Man of Peace". Shiloh comes from the Hebrew word *shalah*, which means to be at peace.³⁷ The name emerging from that word is "the Man of Peace." Hence, Shiloh refers to Christ³⁸ because He brings peace from God to men.³⁹ Through

36Genesis 49:1, 10-11.

37"Luther evidently derives *shiloh* from the root *shalah*, meaning to be secure and at ease or rest, which in turn is related to the Hebrew greeting *shalom*, which corresponds to the Latin greeting *salve*, both meaning your health, peace, welfare, and prosperity." *Luther's Works*, Vol. 45, p. 216, footnote 33.

Even the liberal interpreters C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch concur with Luther based on Hebrew usage: "It only remains therefore to follow *Luther*, and trace [Shiloh] from [shalah], to be quiet, to enjoy rest, security." *Commentary on the Old Testament, C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, Volume 1, The Pentateuch, Three Volumes in One, ... Genesis, Exodus 1-11*, tr. James Martin, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishing, First Printing, February 1989, p. 394.

38The common understanding down through history is that Shiloh is Messiah : "We regard *Shiloh*, therefore, as a title of the Messiah, in common with the entire Jewish synagogue and the whole Christian Church, in which ... there is perfect agreement as to the fact that the patriarch is here proclaiming the coming of the Messiah." Keil-Delitzsch, op. cit., p. 397.

The Rev. Dr. Alfred Edersheim gives an overview of the Jewish interpreters understanding that Shiloh refers to the Messiah: "*Gen. xlix. 10*. This well-known prediction ... is in *Yalkut*, u. s., applied to the Messiah, with a quotation of *Ps. ii. 9*. The expression 'Shiloh' is also applied to the Messiah, with the curious addition, that in the latter days all nations would bring gifts to Him. Alike the Targum Onkelos, Psuedo-Jonathan, and the Jersusalem Targum, as well as *Sanh. 98 b*, the Midrash on the passage, and that on the passage, and that on *Prov. xix. 21*, and on *Lam. i. 16*, where it is rendered *shelo*, 'whose it is,' refer the expression "Shiloh," and, indeed, the whole passage, to the Messiah Another remarkable statement occurs in the Midrash on the passage , which applies the verse to the coming of Him of Whom it is written, *Zech. ix. 9*. Then He would wash his garment in wine (*Gen. xlix. 11*), which is explained as meaning the teaching of the Law to Israel, and His clothes in the blood of grapes, which is explained as meaning that He would bring them back from their errors. One of the Rabbis, however, remarks that Israel would not require to be taught by the King Messiah in the latter days, since it was written (*Is. xi. 10*), 'to it shall the Gentiles seek.' If so, then why should the Messiah come, and what will He do to the congregation of Israel? He will redeem Israel, and give them thirty commandments, according to *Zech. xi. 12*. The Targum Psuedo-Jon. and the Jer. Targum also apply *verse 11* to the Messiah. Indeed, so general was this interpretation, that, according to popular opinion, to see a palm-tree in one's dreams was to see the days of the Messiah" *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Volume Two, New American Edition, Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962, 39th printing, pp. 712, 713.

this Gracious Reign of Peace with God through His Work delivered in the Gospel, Christ gathers men from all nations unto Himself. So we sing in the Christmas hymn, “Joy to the World”:

He rules the world with truth and grace⁴⁰

Because God is at peace with us, then God is with us and nothing ever can harm us. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?⁴¹

In the days, therefore, of the Messiah, the Church dwells safely. The prophet Jeremiah writes:

In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this *is* his name whereby he shall be called, The LORD Our Righteousness.⁴²

B. Christ’s Gracious Reign through the Gospel gives life eternal.

Christ’s Gracious Reign through the Gospel gives to men life eternal. Jesus prays in His High Priestly Prayer on the Eve of His Passion:

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.⁴³

39“Out of Judah should come the Ruler, the Bringer of Peace, Shiloh, unto Him should the gathering of the people be. Gen. 49, 10.” The Rev. Dr. George Stoeckhardt, *Christ in Old Testament Prophecy*, tr. Erwin W. Koehlinger, Ft. Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, p. 5.

40*The Lutheran Hymnal*, #87, stanza 4, verse 1.

41**Romans 8:31-32**

42**Jeremiah 23:6.**

43**St. John 17:3.** “Concerning this knowledge and its power the prophets have spoken gloriously and clearly prophesied, as in Isaiah 53[:11]: ‘By knowledge of Him shall He (My Servant, the Righteous One) make many just or righteous.’ This means: ‘He will redeem them from sins and snatch them from the devil’s jaws solely through this; that they know Him and who He is.’ ... Likewise, Jeremiah 9[:23-24] says: ‘Let no one boast of his wisdom nor of his might nor of his riches’ – in short, let no one boast at all – ‘but if anyone wants to boast, let him boast in this, that he knows Me and knows who I am: the Lord, who does good and establishes righteousness and justice on earth.’” Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 69, pp. 35, 36.

The Apostle St. Paul writes:

But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.⁴⁴

Conclusion

The Almighty Son of God came in the flesh in order be righteous in our place for us. This included fulfilling all righteousness for us⁴⁵ and also suffering on the Cross the eternal consequences of our failure to fulfill God's righteousness. In this way, the Way of the Cross, the Branch of David establishes justice and righteousness on the earth.

This Righteousness Christ delivers to men through His Gracious Reign of the Gospel, wherein He absolves all sin, robes us in His Perfect Righteousness, gives saving faith, life eternal, and the resurrection of the body.

Amen.

44Titus 3:4-7.

⁴⁵“And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer *it to be so* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.” **St. Matthew 3:15.**