**Advent Vespers III,**

 **The Third Week Sunday in Advent,**

13 December 2020.

 *Concordia Lutheran Mission,*

Terrebonne, Oregon.

**“God Goes Up with a Shout to Reign Graciously**

 **over Men through the Gospel.”**

God is gone up with a shout,

the LORD with the sound of a trumpet.

**Psalm 47:5.**

**Introduction**.

God has gone up with a shout. How does that work? How can God go anywhere because He is omnipresent? God is already everywhere so how can Scripture speak of God going up or anywhere else for that matter? God insofar as He is God does not do that. But now that God has become man He can and does go here and therein the Service of the Salvation of sinners.[[1]](#footnote-1)1

 Whenever one sees change in Christ, that change occurs because it occurs in Christ according to His assumed human nature for the sake of the Salvation of men. God was born, lived, died, and raised from the dead and ascended to the Right Hand for the Sake of the Salvation of men.

 God went through all stages of human development so He could give to men the Fruits of His Holy Life lived Perfectly to sinners to save them and to them life everlasting.

 Christ has now ascended to the Right Hand of God in order to rule Graciously over the world to gather His Church by forgiving sins and saving from sin.

 God has gone up with a shout, a great shout of victory over sin, death, and the power of the devil, in order to Rule Graciously to forgive the sins of all men and save.

**I. Christ Vanquished Death by His Passion.**

**A. Changes in Christ occurred not in His Divine Nature but in the Human Nature united with the Person of the Son of God.**

When we see changes in Christ, these changes occur not according His Deity, but according to His assumed Human Nature. God never changes.[[2]](#footnote-2)2 St. James writes:

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.[[3]](#footnote-3)3

According to His assumed Human Nature, Christ did change. The Evangelist St. Luke, for example, writes:

And Jesus increased in wisdom and statue, and in favour with God and man.[[4]](#footnote-4)4

How can it be that God increases in wisdom, stature, and favor, with God and man, when God is omniscient, namely, He already knows everything because He’s God? God does not increase in wisdom because God is omnisapient (all wise) and omniscient. This passage refers only to Christ according to His assumed Human Nature. God in and of Himself does not develop because God *just is* forever.[[5]](#footnote-5)5 [[6]](#footnote-6)Rather, this passage, like any passages expressing changes in Christ, refers not to His Deity but rather to the Human Nature He assumed in the Incarnation.

**B. Christ passes through all the stages of human development to save men from their sins.**

Why did God become man and go through all these human developments? God became man not, obviously, for Himself but for our sakes and sake of all men because we are all fallen in sin.[[7]](#footnote-7)6 The Apostle St. John writes:

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.[[8]](#footnote-8)7

The works of the devil was to destroy man, God’s creation, through sin. In order to wipe out the devil’s work, God became man in order to live a perfectly Holy and Human Life for all men from the womb to the tomb and beyond. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

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. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father.[[9]](#footnote-9)8

 From Christ’s conception in the womb of the Virgin St. Marty Christ lived a perfectly holy life, waking and sleeping, in order to confer that Holy Life for the salvation of men through the Gospel. The Apostle St. Matthew writes of this all encompassing Work of Christ for men:

... Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, ... Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.[[10]](#footnote-10)9

Christ says His Entire Life is a Ransom. In other words, Christ lived not one moment, waking or sleeping, working or at play, for Himself, but rather for us and for all men in order that we may have holy life forever pleasing to God and, therefore, living forever in the lap of luxury of God’s everlasting Kingdom. The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper writes of Christ’s Entire Holy Life lived for us and all men:

Jerome Kromayer (professor of theology at Leipzig, d. 1670) ... says: “Christ passed through all stages of our life in order that He might thoroughly heal our sinful conception and birth.”1[[11]](#footnote-11)0

 But what about Christ’s death? If Christ lived a holy life, why did He die? After all, the Apostle St. Paul teaches us that the wages of sin is death. The answer from Scripture is that Christ did not die for His sins; He had none because He lived a perfectly Holy Life forever pleasing to God. *Christ rather died for our sins and the sins of all men because God reckoned them to Christ in order to deliver us from the dreadful judgment of God for sin*. 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 ... .1[[12]](#footnote-12)1

Plainly, Christ died not for any transgression He committed, but for our transgressions and the transgressions of all men. The prophet Daniel likewise makes this plain when he prophesied of Christ’s Work 500 years before Christ’s Birth:

And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself ... .1[[13]](#footnote-13)2

Jesus is not cut off, i.e., killed, for Himself, i.e., for any sin He committed, but rather for the our sins imputed to Him by God in order than we and all men not bear the everlasting and dreadful burden of God’s judgment for our sins, but that God Himself bear them in order to save us from the dreadful consequences of our sin and save.

 Christ, by His Passion, Atoned for the sins of all men and created for men the path of righteousness forever pleasing to God that goes on forever.

**II. Christ is Seated the Right Hand of God in order to Rule the World through the Saving Gospel.**

**A. Christ is seated at the Right Hand of God to Preach the Gospel for the salvation of men.**

 Now that Christ has completed His Passion He is seated at the Right Hand of God and continues to work for the salvation of men through the Gospel. In catechism we learned:

**What comfort do you derive from Christ’s sitting on the right hand of God?** We derive the comfort that it is the *exalted* Christ who -- ... As our *Prophet* *sends men* to preach the Gospel of redemption; 387 [God] set Him [Christ] at His own *right hand* in heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put *all things under His feet* and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that *filleth all in all*. *Eph. 1:20-23*.1[[14]](#footnote-14)3

 David writes of Christ’s session at the Right Hand of God:

The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make then enemies thy footstool. The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.1[[15]](#footnote-15)4

 The Scepter with which Christ rules the world is the Gospel, namely, God’s Word and Sacraments in order to forgive sins and save men. Luther writes of Christ’s Scepter:

Hence, the scepter is nothing else than the office of the public ministry, which the Lord Christ began Himself and later on commanded to be extended by His messengers, the apostles and their successors, and to be continued until the Last Day. In this consists His entire kingdom and government as far as it can be seen or grasped outwardly, for here He indicates and mentions nothing else by which this King will rule except this scepter. ... Here, however, something is to be begun and established. It is to be a scepter which does not speak of, make arrangements for, or give commands regarding outward matters and physical activities. It is not to rule by means of physical force or by terror or the imposition of the Law, as Moses did. The scepter is to be nothing but the Word or preaching which proclaims how we shall be saved; that is to say, how to be redeemed from sin and death and brought to eternal righteousness and life by this Lord, something which neither secular government nor the Law of Moses can do for us.1[[16]](#footnote-16)5

 We sing in the Christmas hymn Joy to the World the Christ reigns that world “with truth and grace”1[[17]](#footnote-17)6, i.e., with His Gracious Gospel.

**B. Christ keeps and preserves His Church.**

God has “gone up with a shout”, i.e. with the shout of victory over the world the flesh and the devil. With such knowledge of our Salvation in Christ, we know that the Lord is ruling all history for our everlasting benefit. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.1[[18]](#footnote-18)7

St. Bernard, quoted by Luther, wrote:

This is the kind of joy and comfort St. Bernard1[[19]](#footnote-19)8 had in his heart, so that he could say, on the basis of this article: “How can I ever become sad and mournful or discouraged? After all, my flesh and blood sits in heaven above. I expect He will not be my enemy.”1[[20]](#footnote-20)9

**Conclusion**.

 The Incarnate Lord “goes up with a shot” because He has conquered sin, death, and the power of the devil by His Passion to save men from their sin and give life everlasting.

 The Lord ascended in order to take His seat at the Right Hand in order to send men to preach the Gospel for the salvation of men and to govern this world to work all of human history to the benefit of believers unto life everlasting and the resurrection of the body on the Last Day when He returns again in glory.

 ***Amen.***

1. 1“According to Scripture, Christ’s entire life was dedicated to His office. He spent it in the service of God and man. He did not live unto Himself. ‘Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many’ (Matt. 20:28). ‘He pleased not Himself’ (Rom. 15:3). In the Old Testament His title was ‘My Servant’ (Is. 42:1; Zech. 3:8). Had he lived unto Himself, He would not have lived so humbly that the multitude mistook Him for John the Baptist, Elias, or Jeremiah (Matt. 16:13 ff.). He would have appeared among men in such a form as to oblige everybody to exclaim at all times: ‘There is God, walking on earth!’ Christ’s human nature, in which all the fulness of the Godhead dwells as in tis body, would have reflected the full brightness of His divine glory at all times had He wanted to use it ... Had Christ, however, appear in this form, which would have been His normal form, He could not have been made under the Law and suffered and died. His parents and relatives, the Jews, the high priests and their servants, Pilate and his mercenaries, would have fled in consternation before Him. In the interest of His office He, therefore, limited the use of His divine majesty. He did not appear as Lord, but as servant, not as the God-Man, but as man like unto other men, submitting even to the death on the Cross.” The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. II, p. 286. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. 2“It is true, human reason cannot understand how the Son of God, impassible [incapable of suffering] in His divine Person, could really and truly share in the suffering of His humanity. It is evident how at this point have wrestled with human speech, as Cyril’s paradox: ‘Without suffering the Son of God suffered’ ... shows. That sounds like yes and no at the same time. Manifestly, however, Cyril meant to stress three thoughts: 1. According to Scripture, the Son of God in Himself is impassible; 2. According to Scripture, the Son of God did actually suffer in His human nature; 3. Any further explanation of the *how* must not be attempted.” The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. II, p. 140, amplification in brackets added. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. 3**St. James 1:17**. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. 4**St. Luke 2:52**. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. 5“Properly and formally speaking, the Father begot neither by will nor by necessity, but by nature.” The Rev. Dr. John Gerhard, *On the Person and Office of Christ*, tr. Richard J. Dinda, edited with annotations by Benjamin T. G. Mayes, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, p. 74. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. 6“... the Redeemer had to take the place of men both in keeping the requirements of the Law and in suffering the penalties of the Law, the Law which was given to men and binds all men (Gal. 4:4-5; 3:13), and this He could do only by becoming like unto all men in all things, sin excepted, by assuming the full human nature.” The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. II, p. 67. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. 7**I John 3:8**. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. 8**Galatians 4:4-6**. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. 9**St. Matthew 20:25**, **28**. “The axion of Gregory Nazianzen: ... whatever was not assumed was not redeemed [healed] ... condemned any curtailment of the human nature of Christ.” The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. II, p. 68. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. 10The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. II, p. 306. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. 11**I Corinthians 15:3**. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. 12**Daniel 9:26**, underscore added. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. 13*The Small Catechism*, p. 119, question 155. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. 14**Psalm 110:1-2**. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. 15Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 13, pp. 265, 267. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. 16*The Lutheran Hymnal*, #87, stanza 4, verse 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. 17**Romans 8:28**. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. 18“**Bernard of Clairvaux, St.**, 1091 to 1153. The most influential man of his

day; an upright monk (Cistercian),spending himself in ascetic practises. His wise rule as first and lifelong abbot of the newly founded cloister at Clairvaux, France (1115), served to extend the order (now also called Bernardinos) throughout Europe, and the influence of his eloquence and personality gave a new impetus to monasticism.... he was a sincerely pious, a truly humble Christian, and he was that because he loved the Bible and because he believed in justification by faith, deploring on his deathbed, as throughout his life, the sinfulness of his life (Perdite vixi), and imploring the mercy of God for the sake of the righteousness gained by Christ ... Luther says: "When Bernard is speaking of Christ, it is a pleasure indeed to listen to him; but when he leaves that subject and discourses on rules and works, it is no longer St. Bernard." *Concordia Cyclopedia*, p. 72, **s.v. “Bernard of Clairvaux*.*** [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. 19*Luther’s Works*, Vol. 13, p. 245. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)