

No Accusations to Hold Against Us

ADVENT WEDNESDAY, 2017

1 PETER 3:18-22

¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, ¹⁹ by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, ²⁰ who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while *the* ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. ²¹ There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²² who has gone into Heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.

LUKE 8:26-39

²⁶ Then they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee. ²⁷ And when He stepped out on the land, there met Him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs. ²⁸ When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me!" ²⁹ For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had often seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles; and he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness. ³⁰ Jesus asked him, saying, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," because many demons had entered him. ³¹ And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss. ³² Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain. So they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them. ³³ Then the demons went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned. ³⁴ When those who fed *them* saw what had happened, they fled and told *it* in the city and in the country. ³⁵ Then they went out to see what had happened, and came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. ³⁶ They also who had seen *it* told them by what means he who had been demon-possessed was healed. ³⁷ Then the whole multitude of the surrounding region of the Gadarenes asked Him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. And He got into the boat and returned. ³⁸ Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, ³⁹ "Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you." And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.

Savior of the Nations Come, LSB 332, v. 5

God the Father was his source,

Back to God He ran his course.

Into Hell his road went down,

Back then to his throne and crown.

IN THE NAME OF JESUS.

For the Season of Advent this year we are going through the hymn, ***Savior of the Nations, Come***, a hymn written by St. Ambrose. The Church has been singing this hymn for over 1,600 years. So when we sing these words, we are joining our voices with the voices of our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ from around 400AD, and we can add in all the decades following that up until now.

When you sing a hymn, you are confessing something about Christ. This evening, we look at verse 5 of the hymn, and see what is there confessed of our Lord.

Hymn 332, verse 5:

God the Father was his source,

Back to God He ran his course.

Into Hell his road went down,

Back then to his throne and crown.

In Advent, we look at the Advent, or entrance, of the Son of God. He made his entrance into human flesh by a virgin who was found with child. He will make his Advent again on the last day, when he comes to Earth to judge the living and the dead. Meanwhile, he makes his Advent among us each week as he comes to his Church in his Body and Blood to forgive all sins.

But as this verse tells us, we can also think of his Advent, his entrance, into Hell.

Again, the words of verse 5:

God the Father was his source,

Back to God He ran his course.

Into Hell his road went down,

Back then to his throne and crown.

When did Jesus go into Hell?

St. Peter writes to the Church:

Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,¹⁹ by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison.

[1 Peter 3:19]

That's when Jesus descended into Hell. It was after he suffered once for sins—it was after, that is, his death on the cross.

All the suffering, the humiliation, the judgment for sin, the death—all of it reached its full culmination on the cross. Then, after his death, when his suffering and humiliation were complete, then he descended to Hell. This descent was not to suffer, not to be tormented by the demons, not anything of humiliation or punishment. All of that had been fully accomplished on the cross.

This descent into Hell was a march of triumphant victory. It was the conqueror marching right into the heart of the stronghold of the enemy, Jesus marching right into the prison of the demons, Hell, and announcing to them,

It is finished. It is over. I have taken all sin upon myself, I have put all sin and guilt to death in my own

body on the cross, I have destroyed the Law's condemnation of the sinner, and by destroying the Law's condemnation of the sinner, I have robbed you, Satan, and all your demons, of any power you had over the people to whom I have given my Name.

This entrance into Hell by God the Son was the victorious conqueror informing the demons that they have no accusation to hold against us, they have no more terror of guilt to hold over the heads of sinners, they have no power to condemn anyone to Hell—only God can do that, and the God who can condemn the sinner to Hell is the same God now standing in front of the demons proclaiming to them that the verdict applying to those who bear the Name of Jesus is the verdict of *Forgiven, Clean, Innocent*—the verdict that the sinner has been justified and brought into life by him who was crucified.

Into that promise, into that justification of the sinner, into that victory of the devil and that triumphant descent into Hell to rob the demons of their accusation—into that, Jesus has baptized us.

1 Peter 3:21:

Baptism now saves us—(not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²² who has gone into Heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.

IN THE NAME OF JESUS.