

THE NAME OF THE ENTHRONED ONE IN YOUR PERSONS

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

Hear the Word of God for this Eve of the Nativity, with our hearts centered by the following freshly translated verse:

For (a) Child is born to us, (a) Son is gifted to us, and it will be, the government, upon His shoulder. His Name will be called:

Wonder;

Counselor;

Mighty El;

Eternal Father;

Prince (of) Shalom (Isaiah 9:6 (5)).

This night, we celebrate the departure of the penitential Advent season. We rejoice as we begin the 12-day celebration of the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord. Most of you know that God has led up to the Christmas season this year with an emphasis on the public confession of the Faith. Tonight, we will hear of promises of individuals who have been named with the Name of the Holy God in Baptism, confess the Faith of His Church. They will promise to hold onto Him, and this Church, and to suffer even mortal death rather than fall away from them.

For some of you who continue being troubled by national and international news, such public confession may ring more clearly this year. Some reports, from web-media sources, indicate that Christian congregations are being targeted for attack this season by worshippers of a false god in a religion of submission. One such follower of Satan's lies had been arrested in the Phoenix area earlier today.

Really, such threats to Christians, to Christianity, to the Church in any given place in any given time, are not new. Remember how God chose to inaugurate His New Covenant Church—in His blood! It is because Jesus did that which He came to do—to bear all sins into death in His sinless Person, and to rise again to grant new, blessed, eternal life to all who believe. It is because He is faithful that we are free to be faithful. That is, to make such good confessions of the Faith as the five among us will tonight. You, and they, can, will, and have done so because with the water and Word of Holy

Baptism you have come to bear the Name of the Enthroned One in your persons. Just what is that Name as the Scripture declares it tonight? The prophet of old declares:

For (a) Child is born to us, (a) Son is gifted to us, and it will be, the government, upon His shoulder. His Name will be called:

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Mighty El;

Eternal Father;

Prince (of) Shalom (Isaiah 9:6 (5)).

From words recorded, declared and heard in the Church for more than 2,700 years, we recall this evening God's fulfilling His Promise to gift the Child Who would reign over His eternal kingdom. In modern times, some who wish to remain in God's eternal kingdom – In His Church on earth – would see in tonight's text a Child given to King Hezekiah as the one who would fulfill God's promise. In viewing the promised Gift to be a merely human son of an ancient faithful Israelite king, these theologians follow the teaching of the Jews who deny that Jesus is the Christ of God.

Yet, God, through the prophet Isaiah, makes the good confession of the Faith that this Son gifted to God's people would have an everlasting kingdom rule. That excludes all mortal humans – for we all die. Only a divine and human Being could be the fulfillment of that eternal Promise. In fact, earlier in the Good News (Gospel) section of his book, Isaiah declares that this Ruler would be Immanuel, that is, "God with us!" In this section, the prophet declares the Throne Name of the coming Ruler – the One Whom you know to be Jesus – the Son of Mary and Son of God. He says,

His Name will be called:

Wonder;

Counselor;

Mighty El;

Eternal Father;

Prince (of) Shalom (Isaiah 9:6 (5))

Those of you familiar with Handel's "Messiah" will recall how he chose to point that verse to melody. Now that some of you are turning that about in your head, think

on this: as you have been attached to the Lord Jesus Christ through Holy Baptism, and He is your head, as the Body of Christ, His Throne Names apply to you, to us, to we as one! That should take away any surprise you might have when the confirmands promise to suffer all, even death, than to depart from the Triune God and this, His Church.

Through months of confirmation work, God has prepared the candidates who will present themselves before His Table this evening. They are here because they bear the Name of God in their Persons. They desire to confess before God, and you, the eternal truth of the gifts which they received from God – Who gave us His only-begotten Son to live the perfect life, die the sinner’s death, rise from the dead, ascend into the heavens, and rule in His Church through His Word visible and proclaimed. With that in mind, we return to the Promise given 27 centuries ago, fulfilled 20 centuries ago, and lived out in the Faith since and into the end of time. Isaiah says:

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The Name of Jesus stands as the culmination of all the Old Covenant titles used by Moses, the Writings and the Prophets to describe the Coming One. This is eternally true according to His Human and Divine Natures and works in heaven and on earth.

In tonight’s text, the first word that describes the eternal King of David’s line is translated, “Wonder.” That means He is full of wonder, or wonderful. That is the manner in which God describes Himself elsewhere in Scripture as He promises the son, Samson, to a barren woman. It is a word that God uses for Himself. In tonight’s text, He uses it for the Son Who is gifted to Israel. It is therefore a Divine title.

The next throne Name for the Son-gift to the faithful is translated, “Counselor.” God, in Scripture, declares Himself to be His own Counselor. In dialogues with, say Job,

God asks who is there to give Him counsel. In His eternal essence, Father – Son – Holy Spirit counsels in Himself His wonders to perform.

Then, if it were not clear that the Promised Son given to Israel was divine, Isaiah declares Him to be named, “Mighty God.” In Moses’ books, this name is attached to the Divine, as He calls His people to repentance. In Isaiah’s book, this name is declared as a Name of God.

Next, God declares the Son to be Eternal Father. While Jesus later declares that anyone who sees Him sees the Father, in the context of this text the Throne Name given to Him means that He will be the Father of an eternal nation. In the Psalms (72), His rule is shown to be an eternal dominion. Those who are named with His Name, will, with Him endure and reign forever.

Finally, the Gift is named, עֶרֶב־שָׁלוֹם [tsar shalom] (That kind of sounds Russian and Hebrew). That is, He is given the Throne Name, “Prince of Peace.” That means that Peace will coexist, subsist, exist, and find its root, source and endurance in Him. His Throne Name that indicates Peace with God and all who remain in His kingdom. This is the Peace that was declared at His birth. It is the Peace He died to effect as He threw down all the enemies of Peace from the eternal realms. Here they have some small reign – as news reports go forth of human and demonic religions works of zealotry. Yet, in the end, on the Last Day, His Peace will reign in, through, among, upon all Who are named with His Name and hold onto the good confession of the Faith until their last day. With what majestic Names the Babe of Bethlehem was weighted. Isaiah continues to describe how the Promised Son’s rule will prosper.

For the increase of the government of Him, and of shalom, there will be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to cause to establish it and to uphold it also in righteousness from this time and unto forever. (The) zeal of YHWH Sabaoth will do this! (Isaiah 9:7(6)).

Therein we hear a confession of the eternal kingdom of this Descendant of King David. From the time Christ became incarnate in the flesh of the blessed Virgin, God has

continued increasing His kingdom. Through the Word of the Promise proclaimed as fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, sinners have become declared saints. In generation after generation, the faithful have fallen asleep in the good confession of the Faith – Jesus the Christ was born to die to grant you forgiveness of sins, and blessed life everlasting. That has been true whether the faithful have been fully sainted in their slumbers, or have died at the hands of brutal murderers, religious zealots, or followers of false gods in a religion of submission to evil on earth.

The Word of God, in the Person of Jesus the Christ, Whose Nativity we celebrate with joy this night endures forever! His is the zeal – the glowing fire – that lights this most holy of nights for all who will believe. God has established His Kingdom in Christ, and calls you to be one in it. Those realities shall make for a Merry Christmas!

The peace which passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus

Eve of the Nativity (Midnight Christ-Mass)

Isaiah 9:2-7; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 1:26-38; Luke 2: 1-14

December 24-25, 2015

Pastor Michael A. Morehouse

Soli Deo Gloria