

# The Advent of Grace I – *Isaiah 42:1-4*

*“A bruised reed he will not break”*

**Introduction** – “Advent” is defined as “the arrival of a person, thing, or event” as in “the advent of the Internet,” or “the advent of the president’s term of office.” Advent is the celebration of The Arrival. Advent is a meditation of the meaning and purpose of that arrival, and our ongoing enjoyment of its (or His) arriving. Jesus is the Person who arrived and Grace (or Salvation, or the New Creation, or the Kingdom of God, or...) is the event or thing that arrived. As fallen as our race was (and is in Adam), God the Father, the very One offended by our sins, was pleased to graciously bring forth the work of redemption. Where sin abounded, grace abounded much more (Rom 5:15, 20-21).

**Appointed for Grace** (v1) – God composes and sings Advent and Christmas songs and Isaiah 42 is one of them. In stark contrast to the idols who can do nothing to save us (41:24), God chose His Servant for He alone was competent to determine how any mediation and reconciliation could be made to satisfy His just holiness. This one is “*My Elect One in whom My soul delights*” revealing how glad God was to bring forth His Son for such a purpose (John 3:16-17) and so He puts His Spirit upon Him. The baptism of Jesus unquestionably reminds us of this verse (Matt 3:13-17).

**An Unobtrusive Grace** (v2) – The ministry of Jesus came without secular pomp or military splendor such as commonly attends earthly kings. Born in humble circumstances, for thirty years He lived in relative obscurity and even as His ministry began, He regularly admonished those who recognized Him to keep quiet (i.e. Matt 8:4, 9:30). One time, when great multitudes followed Him, He healed them all, and then warned them not to spread this news (Matt 12:14-17). Matthew then explicitly tells us that this identified Jesus as that Elect One of Isaiah 42:1-4 (Matt 12:18-21). His ministry was to lead Him to the Cross before the Crown and so there is this mingling of humility and grandeur. To be a servant, He took upon Himself our form and humbled Himself (Phil 2:7-8). He would clearly declare His deity (i.e. John 8:58) and then bend down and wash the disciples feet (John 13:1-20).

**A Patient and Compassionate Grace** (v3) – Here is grace. He came to give us new life by giving His life for His people. He comes knowing our frame, our condition, our circumstances (also v7, Psalm 103:11-14). God is honest with us. He is a Calvinist, fully knowing that we are Totally Depraved (Rom 3:9-18). But Jesus didn’t come to break us, to put us out – although He has the authority and right to do so. He didn’t come simply to conquer, but rather in His conquering, He liberated those in the prison of their fallen nature and sin. This also means that our Lord’s attention will be especially directed to those who are exceptionally needy, weak, and helpless (Mark 9:42).

And there is ongoing forbearance with Jesus as well “...for wherever any spark of piety is seen, He strengthens and kindles it, and if He were to act towards us with the utmost rigor, we should be reduced to nothing...He does not at once cast them off as utterly useless, but bears long, till He makes them stronger and more steadfast” (Calvin). “Christ values us by what we shall be, and by what we are elected unto. We call a little plant a tree, because it is growing up to be so. “Who has despised the day of small things?” (Zech 4:10) – Christ would not have us despise little things” (Richard Sibbes).

It is by looking to Jesus, and not to our bruised or smoking state, that we do not become weary or discouraged (Heb 12:1-4). This is not only an exhortation for us, but to give to one another, where when we see the feeblest sparks of faith, we are to kindle them with all our might. The conversion of a saint is objective and immediate; while the sanctification of each saint is progressive which means we measure the trajectory and not simply the station.

**An Efficacious, Conquering Grace** (v4) – But that is not to suppose that we excuse sin, our vices and corruptions, because we are told here to believe that Christ will succeed in his plan. “*He will not fail nor be discouraged*” refers to how Christ feels towards you. Right now. You who feel like a bruised reed or a smoking flax, He is speaking to you about you. He knows how easily you fall to temptation. He knows how often you have failed and sinned again. But God the Father, Who has given His Son for you, will not fail, will not be discouraged in His work in You, and will complete what He has begun (Phil 1:6, Rom 8:31-32). “*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*” (Matt 5:3).

But this verse is not only for you – it is for the salvation of the world. Jesus will not fail “...till He has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands shall wait for His law.” This is the true justice of the Gospel, condemning us all in our sin, but atoning for all the elect by the blood of Jesus. And how far will this atonement reach? “*If we are to be true servants of God and disciples of Jesus Christ we must be partakers of this glowing hopefulness. To be discouraged is to fail. To hope is to be strong*” (Simpson). Jesus was not discouraged. From Bethlehem to Golgotha He ploughed through all opposition and now the exalted Redeemer is moving steadily on to His final and complete triumph.

**The Advent of Grace** - Where sin abounded, grace abounded much more. Advent is the remembrance, celebration, meditation of The Arrival of grace, and the expectation of the arrival of more grace. For those who feel as though a bruised reed, “*a holy despair in ourselves is the ground of true hope...Be of good comfort, He calls you. Conceal not your wounds, open all before Him and take not Satan’s counsel. Go to Christ, although trembling as the poor woman who said, “if I may but touch his garment” (Matt 9:21)”* (Sibbes).

Dave Hatcher – December 1, 2019

## Notes for Little Saints

*Isaiah 42:1 “Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.*

In the New Testament we are taught that our passage is speaking of Jesus in the work of your salvation that the Father sent Him to complete.

What does the Father think of Jesus and His work?

“My \_\_\_\_\_ One in whom My soul \_\_\_\_\_!”

Does God the Father love the work of your salvation?

Look at Isaiah 42:4 in your Bible.

What does it say that Jesus will not do in this work?

How far will this salvation go?