Sermon Notes

Speaker: Patrick Mead

2/16/25

The King Appears

Luke 4:14-21

1. We recently went over Luke 4:14-21 but we come back to it today to help us process what we have learned in the Book of Hebrews over the last five weeks. To really grasp this passage, we need to go to its source, Isaiah 61:1-2.

2. And before we go there, we need to try to make the journey from our eyes to theirs, from our culture and knowledge base to theirs. That is quite a trip so let's begin with the concept of a "king." To most of us, a king is an outdated concept, a relic of a bygone age. Even in nations that still have kings or queens, their role is almost always ceremonial. They wield no real power, nor do we want them to.

3. To the Iron and Bronze Age people of the scriptures, a king was an entirely different concept. In some tribes in other places on the globe, a king was more like a sheriff and judge than a dictator, but in the Middle East, kings had absolute rule. That could go very, very badly for the people as God warned Israel through Samuel in 1st Samuel 8:10-22.

4. So why would anyone want a king? Because, without a king, there was chaos. No one was there to settle judicial issues, to protect the land from invasion, to organize defense, food, water, and the daily needs of people. Without a king, a people group could and often did descend into chaos as in Judges 21:25. "In those days there was no king in Israel and every man did what was right in his own eyes."

5. The arrival of a king could bring pain and deprivation, but it staved off greater pain…at least, that was the idea. That is why nations rejoiced when a new king was crowned. Order would be established. It might not be gentle or good, but it was order and order was better than disorder.

6. Israel had kings but not for long. Saul went sideways quickly. David was a great leader at first but then retreated from leadership and lived only for himself. Solomon was wise but foolish, making too many contracts with too many foreign nations, marrying women to solidify the deal, and setting up idols to keep the foreign women happy. He also taxed the people too heavily. When his son comes along, he raises taxes and declares that he will be a harsher king than his father. That caused the kingdom to split apart with the majority of the tribes crowning a new king. From that time on, the people were split into two nations, Israel and Judah.

7. Reading the Books of Kings can be depressing and give you a bit of déjà vu as one king after another fails. Then, the line of kings ends and the people are in captivity. The Northern Tribes disappear from history while Judah struggles to maintain its identity by gathering their books, creating a story to keep them together, and maintaining as much of the Old Law as they could while leaderless.

8. Isaiah was writing as the Kingdom of Judah was threatened by the Assyrians, the same people who took the Northern Tribes. Threats surrounded their tiny nation. Twice, Assyria came against Judah. Judah was only saved when an angel of God killed 185,000 Assyrian invaders in one night.

9. The people were ready to hear the message of God sent through His prophet, Isaiah, that said "God is sending you a king, and what a king he will be!" They would have to wait on the Lord – and that is never an easy thing – and watch their nation come under the Greeks and Romans, a series of despots and maniacs…but the king is coming.

10. Isaiah then describes this king in Isaiah 60-62. We will hit some of the high points because they are very important to our understanding of what Jesus did in that synagogue in Luke 4.

a. 60:1-9. Then, foreigners would rebuild their walls and work their fields. No one will dare come against you so your gates will always be open. Your enemies will fall into ruin.

b. 60:17-19,22.

c. 61:7-9.

d. 62:1-3.

e. 62:6-7. The promise comes – be a watchman on the wall!

11. And in the middle of this litany of joyous promise is this: 61:1-2.

12. Now…fast forward 700 years…yes, 700 long years… and the watchmen are tired. Some are still watching such as Simeon and Anna in the temple. All are still praying every day and at every holy day. And a young rabbi enters a synagogue in Nazareth, a nowhere village with a reputation for being rough and poor.

13. There is a lot of buzz around this rabbi. Some say he has done miracles. Some say he has been in the desert, locked in some spiritual battle. Now, he comes to sing and pray with the people of the village. He is handed the scroll of the scriptures, already opened to the passage of the day. And he reads. Luke 4:18-21.

14. The king has come. The hope of nations, the end of enemies, the source of light and life eternal. This is a king who will bring order through righteousness and mercy. This is the Messiah we have seen in the Book of Hebrews for the last five weeks. This is where our focus should lie.

15. For nearly 1000 years, people looked out at the desert, the hills, the ocean for the king to come. They strained their eyes and guarded their heart, they kept the faith. We, now, get to see what angels were not allowed to see, what the nations longed for.

16. 1st Peter 1:10-12.

17. Now that we see him, keep your eyes on Jesus. Behold the Lamb of God, our King, the God who came to take away the sins of the world. And rejoice.