

When All the World Was Cursed

Sunday, December 8 at 8:00 & 10:45

Second Sunday in Advent – 2013

Wednesday Services at 11 & 7; Meals at 12 & 6

Introduction: Dear friends, today, *on this second Sunday in Advent*, we turn our focus to John the Baptist – *the one who was sent ahead of the Christ to prepare the people for His coming!* People who lived 2,000 years ago were much like us today; *they were sinners who needed the Savior!*

Today, *as we consider the words of this hymn: “When All the World Was Cursed,”* we will discover ♦why it was cursed and ♦how we were cursed. We will also discover how the Almighty God took drastic action to turn *the horrible curse into a wonderful blessing!*

1. **Stanza 1:**

a. **When all the world was cursed, By Moses’ condemnation, Saint John the Baptist came, With words of consolation. //**

i. Moses’ condemnation:^{ESV} **2 Corinthians 3:7** “Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone [*the Ten Commandments*], came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses’ face because of its glory...⁸ will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory?⁹ For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, the ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory.” The LSB notes that **“The old covenant ultimately exposed**

sinners as those condemned to death [*since no one could keep God’s Law perfectly*]. **It gave way to the fulfillment of the Law and the promises of God by the ministry of Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit.”¹**

ii. John’s consolation (comfort): These words are recorded in John chapter 1: “**There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.**⁷ He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him.” (John 1:6 ESV) So how is that comforting? Through believing in Jesus, *we receive God’s gift of forgiveness!*

b. **With true forerunner’s zeal, The greater One he named, And Him, as yet unknown, As Savior he proclaimed. //** John said these things about the coming Savior: “**I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.** (Luke 3:16 ESV) John also said about Jesus: “**He must increase, but I must decrease.**” (John 3:30 ESV)

2. **Stanza 2:**

a. **Before he [John] yet was born, He leaped in joyful meeting, Confessing Him as Lord, Whose mother he was greeting. //** Do you remember that occasion? Mary had just become pregnant with the Son of God; then she went to visit her relative Elizabeth who, *in her old age*, was

¹ Engelbrecht, E. A. (2009). *The Lutheran Study Bible* (p. 1984). St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.

pregnant with John. The Bible says: “...when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit,⁴² and she exclaimed with a loud cry, ‘Blessed are you among women [because you were chosen above all others to bear the Savior], and blessed is the fruit of your womb [the Savior of the whole world]!’⁴³ And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?⁴⁴ For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.’” (Luke 1:41 ESV)

- b. **By Jordan’s rolling stream, A new Elijah bold, He testified of Him, Of whom the prophets told.** // We heard in today’s gospel reading about John’s preaching of repentance and baptizing in the Jordan River. John was different—*clothes of camel’s hair and locusts for food*; he also spoke with much boldness! Later, *Jesus said of John: “...he is Elijah who is to come.”* (Matt. 11:14 ESV)

3. **Stanza 3:**

- a. **Behold the Lamb of God, That bears the world’s transgression, Whose sacrifice removes, The devil’s dread oppression.** // Those words should cause us to recall the words spoken by John when he saw Jesus coming toward him: “*Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!*” (John 1:29 NIV) Since all the people of the world have sin, the Son of God came as the Lamb of God to be the perfect sacrifice for everyone! Now, *through Jesus’ finished work and God’s gift of faith*, the devil no longer has power over us!

- b. **Behold the Lamb of God, Who takes away our sin, Who for our peace and joy, Will full atonement win.** // Even though those words are set in a present and in a future tense, Jesus has already finished His work. Even now, *through our God-given trust in Him*, we have true peace and true joy – *because, by God’s grace, we know Jesus as our Savior!*

4. **Stanza 4:**

- a. **O grant, dear Lord of love, That we receive, rejoicing, The word proclaimed by John, Our true repentance voicing.** // So how are we hearing the call to *be sorry and believe*? With ♦deaf ears, ♦indifference, or ♦gladness! Our old nature wants us to →close our ears to God’s truth OR →change God’s truth to fit our sinful lives; doing so might make us feel like winners – for a while, *but ultimately we will be losers!* Therefore, God is calling us to †proper self-examination, †true sorrow for our sins, †saving faith in Jesus, and †Biblical fruits of faith!
- b. **That gladly we may walk, Upon our Savior’s way, Until we live with Him, In His eternal day.** // So how is that possible? When we know the Bible ♦is God’s Word and ♦is best for us; then we will gladly †know it, †live it, and †share it!

Conclusion: Since Jesus has removed the world’s curse, *let us share that good news!* And all God’s people said: **Amen!**