

Come, Lord Jesus

⁷ They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on.

⁸ A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” “Hosanna in the highest heaven!” ¹⁰ When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, “Who is this?” ¹¹ The crowds answered, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”

It should come as no surprise that peaceful times are the best to live in, but they are also the most boring to read about. For example, we don’t know anything at all about the son of King David and his wife Abigail who was named Daniel or Kileab,^a probably because he stayed out of the rebellions of his younger brothers and led a peaceful life. But speaking of those brothers and reading history, we seldom hear about the Kings of Israel riding regally into Jerusalem except in cases of rebellion, as when Absalom went riding on his mule,^b or ten years later when David’s officials put Solomon on the king’s own mule at David’s order to counter the rebellion of another of David’s sons.^c

The ride of Jesus into Jerusalem was no rebellion, but we know that it made King Herod nervous. Who was this man, more popular than the Beatles, whose fame seemed to be everywhere?

After three years of ministry, Jesus was called rabbi by the people, prophet, teacher, master, and even shepherd. The titles we’re concerned about are even more profound: Jesus as King, Jesus as Christ, the Anointed One, and especially Jesus, the Son of God.

The Holy Spirit proclaims Jesus to be truly God (1) by the name, God, simply and precisely. (2) He is also proclaimed to be truly God by his birth and begetting, because he is called “the Son of God” many times in the Gospels, in the Epistles, and in the Psalms. (3) He is also truly divine on account of his divine nature, his almighty power, and by his own confession, because Christ confessed that God is his Father and that he is equal to the Father.

The Bible also describes Jesus having three offices in his ministry: Prophet, Priest and King. While there are many examples of the first two on display all through Jesus’ ministry, It is especially here at ride into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday that we see him as King.

^a 2 Samuel 3:3; 1 Chronicles 3:1

^b 2 Samuel 18:9

^c 1 Kings 1:33,44

As King, Christ governs everything and all things in heaven and earth, and especially he protects his Church against its foes and enemies. In this life, his kingdom is called either the **kingdom of power** or the **kingdom of grace**. When we say **kingdom of power**, we especially think of his dominion over heaven and earth and his rule over all creatures. When we use the term **kingdom of grace**, we're thinking of the operation of God's grace in the church-- especially this is the sending and preservation of the apostles, evangelists, teachers, pastors and ministers in the church, the gathering of the church which is so often illustrated in Jesus' parables, and the regeneration, renewal illumination and sanctification-- the making holy-- of believers through the word and sacraments.

In the other life, the life of the world to come, we call his rule **the kingdom of glory**. This will begin with the raising of the dead, the judgment of all mankind and the angels, the sending of the unbelievers to hell and the glorification of believers, when Christ "hands over the kingdom to his Father."^a

We know that the Son of God was ruling over the kingdom of power already before his incarnation in the days of the Old Testament, when he so often appeared as the Angel of the Lord. He showed his authority and power to rule all things during his ministry in particularly humble ways, but we see flashes of his rule when, for example, he drives out demons and is obeyed even by the wind and the waves.

Now in heaven the Bible describes Jesus as sitting at the right hand of the Father, as Paul says in Ephesians: "**God seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms... and God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church.**"^b

Who was it who recognized this King and accepted him as King during those days of his time in the world? There were three groups, to my thinking. Which of them would describe us today? First there were a few faithful Old Testament believers, Mary and Joseph, Anna and Simeon, the disciples, two men sitting on the ruling council of the Sanhedrin (Joseph and Nicodemus). Then there were a few Gentiles, beginning with the Wise Men who came to see him as a baby, and some soldiers and Greeks^c who believed in him. Thirdly and lastly of all, there were demons who recognized him, but Jesus silenced all of them, because what value does the testimony of the damned carry? We want to hear the testimony of the Holy Spirit, not those who rejected the Lord of all.

But think now of those who reject Jesus as King, the Son of God. Of course there are the heathen, and those of religions that turn their ears away from the holy Scriptures. But there are also those who know Christ but don't look to him for forgiveness.

^a 1 Corinthians 15:24

^b Ephesians 1:20,22

^c John 12:20-22

To see him riding as the ancient kings rode, as David rode a thousand years before, the very cloaks, the shirts and coats of the disciples laid down for a saddle, and more coats and shirts laid on the road so that the hooves of the donkey he rode and her little foal with them would not need to touch the dusty road but quietly clopped on this carpet of cloth. To see Jesus sitting and riding, having planned to it himself, accepting the praise of the people as their King of kings and Lord of lords!

The crowds quoted Psalm 118, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” The idea of doing anything **in the name of the Lord** goes back Genesis and by my count there are 18 distinct ways in the Scriptures of doing anything “**in the name of the Lord**,” whether preaching, blessing, swearing friendship, confessing faith, to prophesy, live one’s life, to be washed and baptized, to pray, **to come** meaning approach and arrive anywhere to proclaim God’s word and his promises and to do anything in faith.

But what he came to do was what any king, any government, is truly responsible to do: He came to rescue his people from danger. The most deadly danger known to man is the threat of eternal hell. And we who have faith in Christ are not in danger of hell, but we still agonize over our mistakes because we know in our hearts and our God-given consciences that we have earned hell with our sins, the temptations that fascinate us, the sinful distractions that pull us away from worshiping the approaching King.

These are the things we have to cast before him, not soft cloaks and the very shirts off our backs, but our sins for him to carry to the cross. And carry them he did. They are all forgiven in his blood, not just some, but every sin, every mistake, every temptation that caused us to slide away.

And whatever we have today we offer to him, use for him, praise him with. Do we still have troubles? Thank Jesus in heaven that we do. For with our troubles and our challenges, we are called by God to turn to him for help, and we are so often snatched out of the trap of self-reliance so that we can throw ourselves into the loving arms and protection of our King.

We find riches in poverty, honor in dishonor, joy in sorrow, life in death, and it is faith in him that strengthens, strengthens us to bear up under all things. We are no longer held captive by the devil, but set free by Christ our King.

So **Hosanna** we cry with the crowd. **Hosanna to the Son of David, Hosanna in the highest!** These words place Christ where he truly belongs, in the highest heaven and the right hand of the Father. Amen.

*From the Catechism: **How does God want us to use our possession? God wants us to use our possessions (1) to provide for our families, (2) to give or lend to those in need, (3) to pay the taxes we owe to the government, and (4) to make regular and planned offerings for the work of the church.** As Paul writes: Those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. (1 Cor 4:2)*