

All Glory, Laud, and Honor

Lutheran Service Book 442 | study by John G. Fleischmann

Introduction

It was an exciting day. Jesus — the one who had taught with authority, performed miracles and recently raised Lazarus from the dead — was coming to Jerusalem.

The crowds wanted a glimpse of this one whom they thought would make a fantastic king of Israel. They knew of no other person like Him. So, they greeted Him as He entered Jerusalem for the last time, crying for Him to save them and lavishing Him with a royal greeting of palms and praises.

Exploring the Scriptures

Read the account of the first Palm Sunday in John 12:12–15.

- What kind of king did the people assume Jesus to be?
- When they cried, “Save us now” (the meaning of the word “Hosanna”), what do you think they meant?
- In verse 13, there are some very familiar words. Where are they found in our liturgy?
- What do we mean when we sing them? How is this different from what the crowd meant?

Read John 18:33–38, which is the exchange between Jesus and Pontius Pilate.

- What does Jesus say about His kingdom?
- What kind of king was truly sitting on the donkey’s colt?

Exploring the Hymn

Background

This hymn, written by St. Theodulf (762–821) of Orleans, France, has been sung in varying forms in the Church since the ninth century.

- How does singing this ancient hymn on Palm Sunday link us to the Church of all time?
- Why is this important?

According to legend, Theodulf, imprisoned for complicity in a plot to overthrow King Louis I, composed this hymn in his jail cell and sang it as the king processed through the town. Upon hearing it, Louis ordered the release of Theodulf.

While this legend cannot be confirmed, the hymn beautifully paints the picture of the triumphal entry.

The hymn “All Glory, Laud, and Honor,” traditionally used as the processional hymn on Palm Sunday, recaptures the scene of the “multitude of pilgrims” greeting Jesus at His triumphal entry, joining our praise with theirs as we hail Jesus as our King.

- What are some of the images that this hymn draws in your mind?
- What is the significance of the triumphal entry for Jesus?

Palm Sunday is also known as the Sunday of the Passion. On this day, the Church reads one of three Passion accounts (Matt. 26:1–27:66; Mark 14:1–15:47; or Luke 22:1–23:56). These accounts reveal to us the true reason that Jesus came into this world — to suffer and die for us so that our sins are forgiven. Read Matt. 27:23; Mark 15:14; and Luke 23:20.

- What word is the crowd shouting now? How is this different from what they said at the triumphal entry?
- What does this tell you about the tide of public opinion when it comes to Jesus?
- How have you done the same in your life?
- How do we live sanctified lives that avoid the sin of denying Jesus?

The crowds in Jerusalem did not comprehend that Jesus’ kingdom is not of this world. We do. This is reflected in each stanza as Theodulf beautifully weaves the uninformed praises of the Hebrews with those whom the Holy Spirit has now called, gathered, enlightened and sanctified. We blend our voices with the Church in heaven and the Church on earth because Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords.

- What are the three kingdoms of Jesus? (Hint: Refer to the explanation of “The Offices of Christ” in the Second Article in *Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation*, pp. 124–7.)
- How are you a part of each?

Text

In stanza 1, Jesus is called “the King of Israel / And David’s royal Son.”

- What is the prophetic meaning of Jesus being the King of Israel and David’s royal Son?

The first stanza not only declares that Jesus is *the* Christ, but that He is *our* King and Blessed One.

In stanza 2, the chorus of angels is joined with the voice of the Church in praise. Such cosmic worship leaves no confusion as to who this King is. Read Ps. 24:10.

- Who is the “King of glory”?
- How does all of creation join us in praising Jesus on high?

The third stanza cites the praise of the people on the first Palm Sunday. They did not understand that Jesus was the King of glory.

- How are “our praise and prayer and anthems” different from theirs? How are they the same?

Making the Connection

There is an irony in this hymn. While the people hailed Jesus as their king on Sunday, they had no idea what the following Friday held.

This irony is expressed in our liturgy on Palm Sunday, where we quickly turn from the entrance Gospel to our main Gospel and hear the account of Jesus’ Passion and death.

This irony is also expressed in our lives. Because of the resurrection, we know how our personal “story” will end — living and reigning with Jesus forever in heaven. And yet, we face the suffering and struggles that each day brings.

In Closing

The multitude of pilgrims in Jerusalem were excited that Jesus came to their city. They wanted to make Him king. Without realizing it, they did! They saw to it that He was crucified. All hope of an earthly reign was dashed by the cross. But this is precisely where Jesus’ reign begins. After becoming obedient unto death, He is exalted by God the Father above everything.

Jesus’ reign is now in heaven. There, He sits at God’s right hand for His Church. His reign is present in the Church today through the forgiveness of sins brought to us in Word and Sacrament. And His reign is over the world to which He will one day return to judge the living and the dead.

On that day, the devil and everything connected with sin, death and evil will be vanquished in hell, and we will give our eternal King glory, laud and honor forever in heaven.

In stanza 4, we get a glimpse of the true reason Jesus came into Jerusalem: His Passion. This parade will end in a much different way than it began.

Contrary to popular opinion, the cross, not earthly glory, awaits Jesus. To the world, the cross is folly — nothing good could come of it; it makes no sense (1 Cor. 1:18–25). For us, it is everything. Read the Epistle for the Sunday of the Passion: Phil. 2:5–11.

- What does it mean that Jesus is “now high exalted”?
- What hope does this give?

In the final stanza, we pray with confidence that Jesus would receive our praises as He received the praises of old. Acknowledging that our “good and gracious King” does receive them, the hymn ends in powerful adoration just as it began: “All glory, laud, and honor, / To You, Redeemer, King.”

- What are some of the things that keep your heart from singing?
- What comfort does this hymn offer you?

We sing the word “king” nine times in this hymn in the refrain and the verses.

- How is Jesus “king” in your life right now?
- Are there areas of your life where you’re still the king? If so, what are they? How can they be changed with the power of the Holy Spirit?

- Sing or read aloud together *LSB* 442.

Prayer

Almighty and everlasting God, You sent Your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, to take upon Himself our flesh and to suffer death upon the cross. Mercifully grant that we may follow the example of His great humility and patience and be made partakers of His resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen (Collect for Palm Sunday).