

Grace, Mercy, and Peace be unto you from Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior and God our Heavenly Father. Amen! Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

[Introduction]

In Dublin on April 13, 1742, at Neal’s Music Hall, the choir voices sang:



Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Hallelujahs! fills the auditorium.

A great crowd had gathered, which included King George II of England.

Exactly why he stood is not known,

but upon hearing the Hallelujah Chorus,

King George II sprang to his feet,

an action which seemed to prompt the whole audience to do the same.

After all, if the king stands you stand.

I like to think King George II stood for the King of Kings, Jesus.

Now from that day on,

Whenever and wherever in the world the “Hallelujah Chorus” is sung,
the audience stands. They stand for the king.

[Jesus]

On that Palm Sunday they stood as Jesus entered Jerusalem.

Jesus sends two of his disciples ahead as the advance preparation team.

They’re to go into the village.

They’re to find a colt tied.

They’re to untie it and bring it back with them. If anyone asks them why they’re doing this,

They’re to respond, **“The Lord has need of it”** (v 3).

And you know, everything happened just as Jesus said it would.

On that Palm Sunday the colt takes Jesus along the road at a casual pace.

People have gathered along the way.

They stand – excited to see Jesus.

They’re mostly just plain folks.

People from Bethany and the surrounding area were anxious to see Jesus,
who raised Lazarus from the dead.

He was coming to the Holy City, Jerusalem,
where they expected him to be enthroned and overthrow the Romans government.
The crowd eagerly put their cloaks on the road along with palm branches.

On that Palm Sunday Jesus enters Jerusalem with simple, sublime dignity.
He's not riding warhorse or chariot.
Still, the crowds saw in Jesus their hope for salvation and deliverance.

They shout "*Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!*" (vv 9–10).

Hosanna is a beautiful word. It means "Save now, Lord!"

The crowds see Jesus as the one who will finally restore the kingdom
as it was in the days of David. They see, in Jesus, their future.

[*Future*]

What would we like to see Jesus restore for our futures?
America as we think we remember it,
America that looks more like us,
America that we imagine was once greater than it is now? The good old days?

Would we like Jesus to restore the dreams we once had of a corner office,
an impressive title behind our names,
a cushy retirement?

Would we like Jesus to bring back the security we felt back before 9/11?

Ah, but what do we *need* Jesus to restore to us?

The Lord Jesus is a great King who brings the coming kingdom of his father David.

What the crowd didn't understand was that our Lord's kingdom
was more than an earthly physical reign from Jerusalem.

Jesus was not overthrowing the Romans and other rulers with conventional forces.
Pontius Pilate questioned Jesus about his kingdom.

And Jesus acknowledged that indeed he was a king
but that his kingdom was not of this world.
Jesus is unlike any other earthly ruler.

[Crowned King]

This king was betrayed by a friend under the cover of darkness,
while the crowds who welcomed Jesus on Sunday slept.

In a hurried manner,

Jesus appears before the High Priest, before King Herod, and before Pontius Pilate,
all in a quick succession.

Pilate knew Jesus was not guilty of a capital offense,

but to please the crowd he gave Jesus over to death.

Stripped, whipped, beaten, and adorned with a crown of thorns,

Jesus is enthroned on the tree of a cross at Golgotha.

And His disciples flee.

Yet it was there in the unnatural darkness of midday

that Jesus was enthroned as King forever.

Oh, Satan and his minions thought they'd won a great victory.

The enemies of Jesus rejoiced; but short was their triumph,

for Jesus rose on the third day.

Sin is overcome. Jesus lives and death is conquered.

Forty days later, Jesus ascends to the right hand of the Father,

where he continues to rule all things on behalf of his Church.

King Jesus is coming back.

There will be no mistaking his identity the second time around.

[Coming Back]

Yes, Jesus is coming back.

The trumpet will sound, the voice of the archangel will be heard.

Graves will open, and the dead will rise.

King Jesus is returning (1 Thess 4:13–18).

Every eye will see him, even those who persecuted him. (Rev 1:7).

At his name, *“every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”* (Phil 2:10–11).

Jesus, who holds the keys of death and of Hades in his hands (Rev 1:18),
will welcome home his saints, those who were faithful to the point of death.

He will say to those on his right, *“Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world”* (Mt 25:34).

The Kingdom we’ve always really needed Jesus to restore.
The Kingdom that comes with forgiveness of our sins,
including the sins of wishing for a kingdom of our own.

[Conclusion]

Meanwhile we wait by observing another season of Advent.
Advent starts four Sunday’s before Christmas, and during Advent...
We look back at Jesus’ first coming in Bethlehem and give thanks.
We see the climax of that first coming with his enthronement upon the cross.
We celebrate, yet ponder this awe-filled mystery –
The manger and the cross are made of wood.
Jesus came to die. He came to give his life as a ransom for all (Mt 20:28).

Now we walk by faith in the Son of God, who loves us and gave himself for us.
He remains with us, our Immanuel.

His presence is sacramental.
His presence is hidden in Word, water, bread, and wine.
He takes these ordinary elements and uses them literally to join himself to us.

Soon we will see Jesus as he really is.
What was hidden will be seen by everyone.

His kingdom of glory will surpass every expectation in its power, splendor, and majesty.

King Jesus is coming for you.
He comes to take you to be where he is,
that you may dwell in the house of the Lord,
before his eternal throne, forever.

So when our king speaks, like in the Gospel reading, we stand.
Here comes the king.
Come, Lord Jesus! Come quickly. Amen.

“Now may the God of peace... equip you with everything good that you may do his will,
through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.” (Heb 13:20-21)
