

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

The crowds cry out for a Savior. But it is not their cry alone. They add their voices to the timeless, ancient cry of the ages, the cry of the first man and woman, the cry of every generation since: “Hosanna!” “Save now!”

They cannot save themselves. They cry out for One who will set them free. They cry out for the One that will protect and lead them, the One who will give them life. They cry out for a True King, a King that will loose them from the rule of a cruel overlord. And the One that now rides in according to the ancient sign approaches Jerusalem to fulfill their prayers. He will do it in a way that they do not expect, and yet a way that will exceed their greatest hopes.

As they cry out, so He is their Savior, your Savior, cresting the hill outside the Holy City in perfect fulfillment of the Words of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, a Prophecy spoken 550 years earlier. To bring hope to Israel, the Prophet foretold the coming of the long-awaited Savior: “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, shout, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, your King is coming to you, He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.”

He fulfills the Old and the New, riding donkey and colt, David’s Son riding into the Holy City as did the kings of old. As the crowds shout “Hosanna”, the Prophecy is fulfilled. Their King comes. The True King comes. He rides in to save. They spread their cloaks on the ground before Him, a sign of honor as the Lord’s Anointed makes His way to the City that killed the Prophets and stoned the ones God sent.

Their cry does not stop at “Hosanna”. They name the Savior: “Hosanna to the Son of David.” Now the Son of Judah whom His brothers will praise, before Whom the sons of Israel will bow, the Lion promised of old, the Bearer of the Promised Scepter, Shiloh has come. He is Wisdom, Wisdom greater than that of Solomon. The True Son of David has come!

But there is more to the Prophecy, more that He must do. For Israel himself blessed Judah almost two millennia before, promising of the Messiah “He washed his garments in wine, And his clothes in the blood of grapes.” The garments of the Son of David, the Seed of Abraham, Mary’s Son, will be stained in His own Blood.

By worldly reckoning, He is a strange King. No one would choose Him to serve. No armies attend Him. No chariots go before or behind. He comes not in glory and honor and pomp, but lowly, humble, in weakness and submission. He will stand silent before His accusers, led as a lamb to slaughter, as a lamb before its shearers is silent, so would He open not His mouth.

By earthly appearances it is He that needs a savior. But no one will save Him. His disciples will abandon and deny Him. The Shepherd stricken, the sheep will flee. The ancient promise is that the Scepter shall not depart from Judah, but now, vested in purple, mocked, spit upon, the symbol of His reign is not a regal scepter, but a lowly reed that this Monarch holds, as they ridicule Him, kneeling before Him and taunting “Hail, King of the Jews”. And that Title, spoken in derision, would label Him as He died on the cross, the lifeblood poured from His sacred veins.

“Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord!” His arrest, torture and crucifixion was not blessed, it was cursed, for in taking your sins upon Himself He was cursed. He covered His perfect holiness, His immaculate sinlessness, in the sins of others, in your sins. Stripped of His tunic, He wrapped Himself in the evil, the hatred, the lust, the jealousy, the sloth, the gluttony, the pride and the greed of all men.

And vested in impurity and transgression, He suffered the just punishment – not His, but yours – your punishment, and the punishment of every man. So there, in the darkness, there, forsaken and abandoned, there, suffering and breathing His last, “Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord!”

We bless Him because was cursed for us. Blessed is He, for we could not save ourselves. Blessed is He, for He does what the crowds prayed, what you have prayed: “Save now!” To do that, to do what He came to do, to do what you needed Him to do, He was forsaken even by His Father, the very act that makes Him your Savior. He did what the crowds who shouted “Hosanna” asked.

He is the Promised Savior. He sets you free from sin. He looses you not from earthly kings, but from the slavery of sin and death. He protects you in this fallen world, keeping you from all evil and leading you in the Way of Righteousness. He takes away your death by dying it Himself, and gives you life. He is your King. He is your Savior. He saves you from the cruel overlord, the prince of this world, by adding you to His Kingdom, by winning for you the world to come.

So sing “Hosanna” with the crowds, “Hosanna in the Highest”, for “blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord”. He has answered your prayer, and the prayer of the generations. In love, in mercy, He grants that you may ever hail Him as your King, and, when He comes again, may go forth to meet Him with trusting and steadfast hearts, and follow Him in the way that leads to eternal life.

As a Blood bought subject of His Kingdom, the Kingdom of grace and love, the Kingdom of Heaven, He bestows His Gifts upon you this day. The Body Crucified, the Blood Shed, He places with Bread and Wine that Christ ride into you, that you be a partaker of His Divine Nature, that you receive the blessings of the innocent Blood of that Just Man. He who would not drink sour wine with gall gives you the sweetest Wine, the best Wine, the Wine that is His Blood, the Wine by which He pours His life into you.

He heard the joyous cries. But as He rode into Jerusalem, He knew what lay ahead. The road covered in cloaks would give way to a road reddened by His Blood. At Golgotha it would be He that gave up His clothes. A murderer would go free, He would serve the sentence. He did it to be your King. He did it to be your Savior. He did it to answer your prayers.

“Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”

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