

Welcome The King.

Text: Psa 24:7-10

1) Who the King is

Suggested Hymns:

2) Welcome Him

11, 489, 9, 18, 515

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Psalm 24:7-10, ⁷ *Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in.* ⁸ *Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, The LORD mighty in battle.* ⁹ *Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in.* ¹⁰ *Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory.* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

The Advent call *“Behold, Your King is coming to you”* rings out again in these pre-Christmas days. But, so few understand it, so few take heed, and so few are made temporally and eternally happy through it.

May we at least open the portals of our church, our homes, and our hearts, to let the Saviour in! Today’s text is an encouragement to *Welcome the King*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. Who The King Is

Firstly, the King is the Lord of Hosts. Our text begins, ⁷ *Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors!* This dramatic appeal, addressed to the gates and doors of Jerusalem, is meant for the inhabitants of Zion, the Church of both the Old and the New Covenant.

The doors and gates are to be opened wide in hearty welcome and joyous reception. For the King is such a glorious King, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. For when the solo voice asks ⁸ *Who is this King of glory?* the chorus answers in glad and powerful strains *The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory.*

Yes, Jesus, the incarnate only-begotten Son of God, is the Lord, Jehovah, the Lord of Glory, whom all the hosts of heaven worship and adore, Immanuel, God in our flesh and blood.

This is the message of the whole Bible. This is Christ's estimate of Himself. This has been the confession of the Christian Church throughout all ages. Jesus who comes is not a mere man, an illustrious earthly king of might and glory; He is our God. Truly, should not the gates be lifted up and the doors be opened wide to welcome such a King?

Secondly, the King is Mighty in Battle. And He comes as the Lord strong and mighty, mighty in battle. He is our Champion, our Hero, who is to meet the foes of mankind, sin, Satan, death, and hell. He has come to redeem us from shameful slavery, cursed bondage, filthy dungeons, wounding shackles and chains, and certain death! ⁷ *Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors!* And the gates are lifted up, the doors are swung open.

The King comes to Zion, the Church. *"Hosanna!"* they sing, *"Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' Hosanna in the highest!"*¹

Hosanna means save now! Yes, people of Zion, the Lord comes to save you, not, as you suppose, from the galling yoke of political bondage, but from the far worse bondage of sin and spiritual slavery; not from earthly foes, but from your spiritual enemies.

Jesus is riding into Jerusalem, not to begin a political revolution, but to complete a spiritual redemption. The King of Glory hears the wild acclaim. To His ears come the glad hosannas of the people. But He interprets them in the light of His omniscience and with the full understanding of the voice of prophecy.

He sees what the people do not see. He sees the gates of hell preparing for their last fierce and determined onslaught on the Son of Man. Before Him rises the mountain-high guilt of the world's sin. He views the fearful load of sin's awful penalty. He hears the thundering of the chariots of the army from hell's bottomless pit. He sees the twitching of Heaven's wrath.

Yes, Jesus knows what is coming in this week which begins with hosannas and hallelujahs and ends with "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"

Before His soul rises the agony of Gethsemane, the condemnation of the Sanhedrin, the shame and cruelty before Pontius Pilate's tribunal, the excruciating pain of Golgotha's black and gory cross, the chill and gloom of the rock-hewn grave in Joseph's garden.

O Zion, behold, look, your King comes to you, to suffer and to die for your sins. The King of Glory, mighty in battle, comes to take up the gauntlet with the enemies that hold you captive and to engage in the most momentous battle the world has ever witnessed: the battle for the redemption of the world.

Thirdly, the King is the Lord of Victory. We know the outcome. Our King is victorious. The battle has been won. Gethsemane, Calvary, the empty tomb, are emblems and signs of victory and glorious triumph. By Christ's vicarious suffering and death sin has been atoned for, God has been reconciled, heaven has been won, the serpent's head has been crushed, the hosts of hell vanquished, death defeated, and the grave made a scorn and a mockery.

Now there is peace, everlasting peace, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, peace between God and sinful men. *"The strife at last is ended."*² This is the blessed message of Advent! Zion, your King goes out to battle for you, to bleed for you, to die for you, and to triumph for you.

Fourthly, the Glorious Kingdom of the King belongs to Jesus. ⁷ ***Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors!*** The triumphant King of Glory comes to claim Zion as His rightful kingdom, and to ask the inhabitants of Jerusalem to be His willing subjects. He establishes His kingdom not by force of arms, but by the power of the Gospel.

His method of conquest is not armies, bullets, and blood, but the preaching of the sweet and magnetic Gospel of salvation. The kingdom He brings is not carnal but spiritual, the kingdom of heaven.

In it He parcels out primarily not earthly gifts, bread and butter, political power and honour, but the much more precious spiritual gifts, the benefits of His victory, the forgiveness of sins, peace with God, joy and comfort in believing, deliverance from the power of Satan, freedom from the cruel and ruinous service of sin. He also gives us the gifts of spiritual knowledge, moral power for holy living, victory over death, and triumph over the corruption of the grave.

The subjects of the Kingdom are all loyal soldiers of the Cross, who come to Jesus just as they are, weary and worn and sad, and make Him in His vicarious work, their Confidence and Reliance, their Comfort and Hope.

They are arrayed in the spotless garment of Christ's blood-bought righteousness; they put on the whole armour of God — the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit. The kingdom of our Lord knows no strict immigration laws. It bars no one on account of age, race, colour, education, or culture. The invitation to share the wealth of Christ's kingdom goes out to all, Jews and Gentiles, white and black, rich and poor.

2. Welcome The King

The hymnist writes,³

Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates!
Behold, the King of Glory waits;
The King of Kings is drawing near,
The Saviour of the world is here.

Firstly, we are sinners therefore welcome Jesus as King. Oh, that the gates of our hearts be lifted up and the portals of our soul be opened to welcome such a glorious King. Let nobody postpone it. Let nobody wait for a more convenient time, because it may never come. Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation.

Perhaps even now death with his glassy eyes has singled you out as his next victim. Perhaps before the bells ring in the new year, some bell will ring out your funeral knell. Perhaps before you again hear the sweet voice of the deathless love of Jesus, you will hear the voice of the Lord of life and death saying: "*Return, you child of man.*"

If the trumpet of God would sound now and this building would crumble and fall with a great noise, what, could you lift up your head with joy and greet with a happy heart the countenance of your Judge?

What still stands between you and Jesus? What still keeps you from being an out-and-out disciple of Jesus and a loyal soldier of the Cross?

- hearts that have never yet tasted the Saviour's love;
- hearts that once were almost persuaded;

- hearts that once were temples of the Holy Spirit, but now have developed a taste for the carnal and worldly lusts;

- hearts that were never sincere in their proofs of loyalty to their King, attempting to belong half to God and half to the world;

- hearts that in pride make your goodness and your works your reliance against the Day of Judgment,

- Therefore be lifted up and let the King of Glory in.

Without Jesus you are doomed. Without His blood-bought forgiveness you are poor in spite of all earthly riches, and your life is a fleeting dream which will end in a rude awakening in everlasting torments.

O sinner, come, let us reason together!

- You want to be happy. But there can be no abiding happiness without the forgiveness of sins.

- You want to be honoured? There can be no higher distinction than membership in the Church of Jesus Christ, adoption into the family of God.

- You want to be rich? There are no greater treasures than God's pardon and peace.

- Do you desire a high and noble destiny? There is none higher than eternal life with Christ.

- Do you wish to make your life worth while? There is no better way than to live for *"Him who died for you and rose again."*

Now, at this very moment, the call goes out to you: ***"Behold, your King is coming to you!"***⁴ Open the portals of your heart; receive Jesus Christ as your King; fall down and worship Him as your Saviour, your God and Lord.

Give Him your sins, and take from Him His righteousness. Give Him your heart, and He will make it a temple of the Holy Spirit. Give Him your life, and He will make it rich in service and godliness. Give Him your sorrows, and He will give you His joy. Give Him your death, and He will give you His life.

We read in Isaiah 1:18-20 ¹⁸ ***"Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool. "*** ¹⁹ ***If you are willing***

and obedient, You shall eat the good of the land;²⁰ But if you refuse and rebel, You shall be devoured by the sword”; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

Secondly, we are His Children therefore welcome Jesus as King, . You, dear friends, who have for many years been counted as the Saviour’s own, on this day lift up the portals of your heart, and swing wide the gates of your soul, and receive Jesus Christ into them afresh as your King.

Renew this day your pledge of allegiance to your Lord, who gives you freedom, treasures eternal, and glory untold in heaven. Never be embarrassed to own Him. Never love Him coldly.

Rather adore and worship Jesus with the sweetest psalms of praise, cling to Him in loyal faith, love Him with love’s intensest fire, and serve Him with renewed zeal and a richer measure of devotion in holiness and virtue, in service to His Church, in patient suffering, and let His Word and Sacrament be your strength on the way.

Dedicate to Christ your heart and mind, your body and soul, your home and your work, your money and your goods.

The hymnist continues,

O happy hearts and happy homes,
To which this King in triumph comes!

So⁹ Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in.

May every heart this day, in the most joyful welcome, be opened to Jesus that He may enter in and abide throughout eternity in the majesty of His greatness and in the beauty of His love. Hosanna in the highest! Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ Matthew 21:9

² Hymn 136

³ Hymn 18

⁴ Zechariah 9:9