

Ad Te Levavi
St. Matthew 21:1-9

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

It'll happen right there in the middle of the Sanctus during the Service of the Sacrament. You will sing the very same words sung to Lord Almighty, Jesus Christ the Savior, as He rode into Jerusalem to accomplish the taking away of the sins of the world. The King entered the royal city to claim His throne, the cross, in order to give His life as the ransom for the sinful, that they would be cleansed and purified and brought into His kingdom, and the people said, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"

Hosanna: "Lord, save us now," they proclaimed, and Jesus was coming to do just that. This is the Advent of the King, on His way to fulfilling the promise for which He was conceived and born—for which He took on flesh and blood like yours and became one like you, the Son of Man who is the Son of God. In three-and-a-half weeks, that fact will be celebrated, and the marvel at the Infant who is God will commence, but right off the bat as preparation is made for that celebration, the rubber is hitting the road.

So, this fact is inescapable: that Infant which is wrapped in swaddling clothes and suckling at the breast of Mary is the same Man who will shed His blood on the cross as your propitiation and gave His life as your ransom. You cannot get through Advent and to Christmas without acknowledging Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday—you cannot only celebrate the incarnation of the Son of God without the shedding of blood, death, and resurrection of the Son of Man. It works the other way around, too: you cannot praise God for the shedding of the blood, death, and resurrection of the Son of Man without celebrating the incarnation of the Son of God.

The logic is undeniable, for one thing: in order for the Son of Man to shed his blood and die and rise again for the redemption of mankind, the Son of God has to assume human flesh and blood. So, the Son of God was conceived and born in the natural way—in other words, He became man just like you—in order to die and give His life as your ransom. Without that flesh and blood, He would not have flesh to give and blood to shed, and in order for that shed blood and given flesh to be a complete sacrifice for you, He assumed it in the same fashion in which you become a man, knit together in your mother's womb. (cf. Psalm 139:13) He could have appeared on the scene as a fully-grown man, but then every stage of life would not be bound up in His flesh and blood. Given Jesus' incarnation, life, and death, you can say without doubt that Jesus came for all: infant, child, and adult.

And that leads into the second, more important point: your salvation and redemption is tied into the entire life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. In His incarnation, Jesus was at work to save you. In His birth, Jesus was at work to save you. In His death and resurrection, Jesus was at work to save you. In His ascension, Jesus is at work to save you. It may be difficult or impossible to comprehend how, in part, Jesus was and is at work to save you in every aspect of His life, but to confess that Jesus Christ and only Jesus Christ is your salvation is to confess that salvation is bound up in everything that Jesus is and embodies.

So, when the crowd proclaimed, "Hosanna," Jesus could have answered, "I am." And I mean that as much in the Johannine sense as in the simpler response to the request, "Oh Lord, save us now." It's the same thing as if Jesus could have said, "I am right here," to the petition, "Thy kingdom come." In the person of the Son, the kingdom is at hand and salvation is ever present. Jesus Christ is your Savior, from conception and unto life everlasting, and your entire self is wrapped up in the salvation that He is and that He brings.

Hosanna: "Lord, save us now," the people proclaimed. They needed it. They knew it, though to what extent is debatable. Still, they knew that they needed saving, either from an oppressive foreign

government or from themselves, they needed saving and they knew that Jesus was the One who would and could deliver. How right they were, who knew they needed to be saved from themselves. Inwardly, they knew themselves to be sinful, not measuring up to the demands of a holy God who created them. God gave them His expectations—the Ten Commandments and numerous other statutes—and the people said, “Hosanna. Lord, that is the good I want to do, but in my fallen flesh, I am unable to do what you expect or fulfill the demands that they require for my inability to do them. Please, save now.”

In a week’s time from that ride into Jerusalem, Jesus would shed the blood that He assumed in the womb of the Virgin and give His life for their ransom. He did so for your ransom, as well.

For you, too, as I said, will be singing the same song once again. You come into this place and confess your sins. You hear the absolution, and those words give you the very thing they proclaim to you, the forgiveness of your sins for the sake of Jesus Christ, in whose stead they are spoke to you. But as the Service of the Sacrament starts, you also cry out to God, “Lord, save us now.” And He does. “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.” You confess that Jesus, the blessed, comes to you to save you now, because He does. He gives His body as bread and bread as His body. He gives His blood as wine and wine as His blood.

It’s the same body that He assumed in the womb of the Virgin and gave on the cross. It’s the same blood that He assumed in the womb of the Virgin and shed on the cross. On the cross, where He gave Himself as your ransom, He gave His body so that you may eat it now as bread and be saved, and He shed His blood so that you may drink it now as wine and be redeemed. So, your cry of “Hosanna” is fulfilled, not only in the incarnation, birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of the Son of God, but also as the body and blood are on the altar.

And it is for the same reason that you cry out “Hosanna” as it was for the crowd that day outside of Jerusalem. You are confessing that you cannot save yourself. You acknowledge the expectation of God in His Law and statutes are not met in your flesh—both in what they demand that you do and what they demand of you for not meeting those demands—but that they are met for you in the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ. Jesus lived His life according to the Law of God for you, and He gave His life as justice according to the Law of God for you—Law kept and fulfilled. Now, Jesus comes to you today, another Advent of the King, to give Himself to you in Word and Sacrament in order that you would have His fulfillment, in order that you would be cleansed and purified and forgiven.

Following your cry of “Hosanna,” you also pray the Lord’s Prayer, and that petition is repeated once again, “Thy Kingdom come.” From there, look to the altar, for on it you will see bread and wine that will be for you the body and blood of the Son of God, the Kingdom of God come to you and into you. Jesus answers the prayer, and comes to give Himself to you, a gracious King who is your propitiation, your Redeemer, your Savior.

Hosanna: “Lord, save us now.” “Thy Kingdom come.” Jesus is come and will come again. He is the King who has come—incarnate, born, live, died, and rose again—and has saved you. To you, He comes again and again, bringing you His Word, His body, His blood, His kingdom. By this, you are forgiven for all of your sins.

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.