



# Hail to the Lord's Anointed

In “Hail to the Lord’s Anointed,” James Montgomery relies heavily upon the words of an ancient text: the 72nd Psalm, which is attributed to King Solomon. The span of the Psalm and thus the expanse of the hymn is rich and teeming with Messianic undertones, especially when read in the light of texts from Isaiah 61, and Amos 5.

Solomon was one of the great kings of Israel, known for his wisdom and riches. But Solomon’s father, David, has been heralded as the *greatest* of Israel’s kings. Montgomery points us to the magnitude of Jesus as Messiah whom he calls the “Lord’s anointed” by also calling him, “David’s greater Son.”

He is greater than Solomon. He is greater than David. He is the Messiah.

But just what kind of Messiah *is* he? This is the purpose of Montgomery’s hymn – to describe Jesus’ Messiahship.

We hear echoes of Isaiah 61 throughout the text of the hymn. This chapter of scripture foreshadows the Messiah and when Jesus broke out that scroll in his hometown temple as recorded in Luke 4 he was, in no uncertain terms, proclaiming his identity. “He comes to break oppression, to set the captives free.” “He comes with justice speedy to those who suffer wrong.” Anyone claiming to do such things in the name of God during the political climate of 1st century Palestine was claiming the role of Savior. The people were craving such a man – a man who would “rule with equity” over them.

Here we are, twenty centuries later, craving the same kind of Savior. We long to be given “songs for sighing,” and our “darkness turned to light.” We cry out for peace. We hunger for “love, joy, and hope” that spring up with life like flowers, just as Montgomery describes. This world of ours is starving for a Messiah.

In the face of the suffering we see around us, how can we choose to sing “Hail to the Lord’s Anointed?” We can sing this hymn because of our faith that claims that Jesus was who he said he was, that he is indeed the Messiah, and that that *means* something for a broken world.

If Christ was dead and has been raised to life, as the Biblical writers claim (see: 1 Corinthians 15, for example), then we have put our hope in the fact that there is a “kingdom still increasing, a kingdom without end.” “The tide of time shall never his covenant remove.” We have put our hope in someone and something that is eternal.

What we see here and now is but a shadow, a dim reflection of the new heaven and new earth that will be (see: 2 Peter 3). In the meantime, while we wait for Christ to come and make all things new, we cling to the knowledge that “His name shall stand forever.” Thanks be to God, “that name to us is Love.”