

OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, KING OF THE UNIVERSE

Hebron = HEB-ruhn

With the first line, set a tone of regal solemnity.

Although Saul was king, it was David who led the armies and won many victories.

It was God's will that David be king. Speak "shepherd" and "commander" with great reverence.

They negotiate a covenant and then formally anoint him king.

For meditation and context:

LECTIONARY #162

READING I 2 Samuel 5:1-3

A reading from the second Book of Samuel

In those days, all the tribes of Israel came to David in Hebron and said:

"Here we are, your bone and your flesh.

In days past, when Saul was our king,

it was you who led the Israelites out and brought them back.

And the LORD said to you,

'You shall shepherd my people Israel

and shall be commander of Israel.'"

When all the elders of Israel came to David in Hebron,

King David made an agreement with them there

before the LORD,

and they anointed him king of Israel.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 122:1-2, 3-4, 4-5 (see 1)

R. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

I rejoiced because they said to me,
"We will go up to the house of the LORD."
And now we have set foot
within your gates, O Jerusalem.

Jerusalem, built as a city
with compact unity.
To it the tribes go up,
the tribes of the LORD.

According to the decree for Israel,
to give thanks to the name of the LORD.
In it are set up judgment seats,
seats for the house of David.

READING I

David, son of Jesse, was first anointed by the prophet Samuel at the Lord's command. Later, the people of Judah anointed David as king over the house of Judah. In today's reading, David is anointed a third time, this time as king over all the tribes of Israel. Besides the ordinary practice of anointing as a sign of respect, anointing was a rite of consecration for prophets, priests, and kings. David's anointing three times marked him as king by both the choice of God and of the people.

When all the tribes of Israel came to David in Hebron, they stated three reasons for him to be anointed. First, they are "your bone and your flesh," descended from the same ancestors. Second, even when Saul was king, David took on the role of military leader, proving himself to be strong and wise. The third reason comes from the Lord, who gave David two roles: shepherd and commander. Shepherds were responsible for watching over their flocks, protecting them from predators, and tending to their overall well-being; so should a shepherd king be for the people. Military com-

manders led their people in battle, fighting alongside them against their enemies. Both designations regard the king as closely linked with the people.

As a result of the people's entreaty, David made a covenant with them before the Lord. Like other covenants in the ancient world, this one entails obligations on both parties. David agrees to rule with justice, and the people promise loyalty. The covenant made before the Lord gave David's anointing as king of all Israel a religious solemnity and divine blessing.

READING II Colossians 1:12–20

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Colossians

Brothers and sisters:

Let us give **thanks** to the **Father**,
 who has made you **fit to share**
 in the **inheritance** of the **holy ones in light**.
He delivered us from the **power of darkness**
 and **transferred us** to the **Kingdom** of his **beloved Son**,
 in whom we have **redemption**, the **forgiveness of sins**.

He is the **image** of the **invisible God**,
 the **firstborn** of **all creation**.

For in **him** were **created** all things in **heaven** and on **earth**,
 the **visible** and the **invisible**,
 whether **thrones** or **dominions** or **principalities** or **powers**;
all things were **created through him** and **for him**.

He is **before** **all things**,
 and in **him** **all things** hold **together**.

He is the **head** of the **body**, the **church**.

He is the **beginning**, the **firstborn** from the **dead**,
 that in **all things** he **himself** might be **preeminent**.

For in **him** **all the fullness** was **pleased to dwell**,
 and **through him** to **reconcile** **all things** for **him**,
 making **peace** by the **blood** of his **cross**
 through **him**, whether those on **earth** or those
 in **heaven**.

Call your assembly to prayerful thanks that, in Christ, God made us worthy of salvation.

Because he loves us, God always takes the initiative. Proclaim this joyfully.

beloved = bee-LUHV-uhd

The ancient Christological hymn begins here.

Here are four categories of angels; distinguish each from the others.

Take joy and pride in naming these attributes of Christ, your Savior.

Employ a slower and more considered delivery here.

"The blood of his cross" helps set the stage for today's ironic Gospel.

READING II Today's reading from Colossians includes a short prayer of thanksgiving and a hymn exalting Christ. The thanksgiving amplifies Paul's opening prayer of thanks to the Father and his prayer for the community. Although he doesn't mention Baptism, the tone and content have the ring of a baptismal liturgy. Through Baptism into Christ, we already have a share in the inheritance of the saints, are already delivered from darkness, and are already transferred into the Kingdom of his Son.

After the thanksgiving, the soaring hymn proclaims Christ's sovereignty. Both in his identity and in his accomplishments, Christ is profoundly related to humanity and to creation. The Father to whom gratitude is due is invisible, the author of creation and redeemer of the people. Now Paul proclaims Christ as the very image of God; in Christ, works of creation and redemption are accomplished.

So extensive is his dominion that every dimension of time and space is under his rule. Repetition of the word *all* (eight times in six verses) emphatically attests to

the totality of his rule. In addition to repetition of *all*, three prepositional phrases that focus on Christ's saving power for creation are woven throughout the hymn: in him (three times), through him (three times), and for him (two times). These repetitions occur throughout the entire hymn, which has two distinct divisions. In the first, Christ is firstborn of all creation, and in the second he is firstborn from the dead. As firstborn, he has priority and absolute primacy over everything.