



Come, Thou Precious Ransom, Come

Text: Johannes Olearius (1611-1684)

Tune: Darmstadt, *Neuerfertigtes Gesangbuch*, 1699

As the Church begins the season of Advent, looking for the coming Messiah, the prayer, “Come, Lord Jesus” is often on her lips. The hymn “Come, Thou Precious Ransom, Come,” is one such prayer. It is an excellent Advent hymn and a good hymn for the Christian to pray throughout his life.



Johannes Olearius

“Come, Thou Precious Ransom, Come” was written by Johannes Gottfried Olearius. Olearius was born in 1611 while his father was Pastor of St. Mary’s Church in Halle, Germany. He entered the University of Wittenberg in 1529 where he eventually received a Master of Arts degree (1632) and later a Doctor of Divinity degree (1643). In 1643 he was appointed Court Preacher and Chaplain at Halle by Duke August of Sachsen-Weissenfels. He was later appointed to several positions in Weissenfels, positions he held until his death in 1684.

Olearius was a prolific writer, writing a Bible commentary, several devotional works, and also countless hymns. He was the compiler of one of the most influential 17th century hymnals, *Geistliche Singe-Kunst*, first published in 1671 in Leipzig. This hymnal contained 1,217 hymns, 302 of them written by Olearius. His hymns were very useful, since many filled gaps in existing hymnody, largely providing hymns for seasons and feasts of the Church Year which had few hymns or none at all. Many of his hymns were two or three stanzas long, simple in their construction,

and captured succinctly the importance of the topic at hand. Many of his hymns spread rapidly and were included in most hymnals at the time. ☒ *e Lutheran Hymnal* contains seven of Olearius’s hymns. He wrote two hymns for the Feast of the Nativity St. John the Baptizer, “When All the World Was Cursed” and “Comfort, Comfort, Ye My People.” Other hymns are “Lord, Open Thou My Heart to Hear,” “The Lord, My God, Be Praised,” “Come, Thou Precious Ransom, Come,” “O How Great is Thy Compassion,” and “Jesus Christ, My Pride and Glory.”



The first stanza is a prayer that the Lord would come speedily and ransom us from our sin. This Savior of the world is our only Hope. Because we desire His salvation, we wait anxiously for His appearing to bring us to Himself.

In the second stanza we pray for the Holy Spirit to come and make His dwelling in our heart. Though we are sinful, poor, and lowly, His gracious indwelling will give us riches beyond compare. These gifts all flow from faith, faith which receives all that Christ has accomplished.

The third stanza incorporates the Gospel for the First Sunday in Advent, the Triumphal Entry on Palm Sunday (Matthew 21:1-9). The hosannas and palms of our anxious prayers line the way for the Messiah, looking joyfully to His gift of salvation, His merit received by grace through faith.

Finally we repeat our hosannas, waiting to join Christ’s eternal kingdom where His scepter and crown bring us joy. The joy comes from these things because they indicate Christ’s reign in eternity, His reign to bring us everlasting peace and joy. We await and graciously look for the day when forever we sing “Hail, hosanna! to our King.”