

Proper 9/Seventh Sunday after Pentecost (Series C)
“Jesus Has Come and Brings Pleasure” (*Lutheran Service Book* #533)

Johann Ludwig Conrad Allendorf was a Lutheran court preacher at Cöthen for a quarter-century after Bach departed for Leipzig. During his tenure he wrote 132 hymns, “hymns of love to Christ, the Lamb of God, and the Bridegroom of the believing soul” (*Dictionary of Hymnology*, New York: Scribner’s, 1892, p. 50), although only five found their way into English. “Jesus ist kommen, Grund ewige Freude” gained popularity in Germany during the 19th century. Thanks to Paul Bunjes, editor of *Lutheran Worship* (1982) (where it appears as #78), four stanzas of the original 23 have been made available to us in Oliver Rupprecht’s translation. In addition to LSB, these also appear in *Christian Worship Supplement* (WELS) as #711.

I couldn’t locate the full hymn text as Allendorf penned it, but nine stanzas in German can be viewed at <http://www.liederdatenbank.de/song/289>. From these we gain a wider perspective on the dazzling variety of implications that Jesus’ arrival on earth has for humanity. Jesus comes as the source of eternal joy; with thundering power he shatters chains of death and sets us free from our bondage to fear; as Redeemer of the world he overwhelms Satan; he takes his place as the king of glory; he is the prince of and wellspring of life, he is the offering for our sins, he is the origin of blessing and the source of grace.

The tune was known as originally known as CÖTHEN and must have been joined to the text at the time the hymn was written. This is a perfect marriage, for the music’s majestic, processional character invites us to be not only witnesses to this great event but also active participants in past, present and future. In the course of Rupprecht’s four stanzas we have a foot in the past as we ponder the miracle of the Word made flesh; we are grounded in the present as we reflect on what this means for our lives at this very moment (“See now the threatening strong one disarmed!”); and we face the future we ponder the implications of this mighty act of God’s love and what it means to “take the crown he has for you!”

It’s interesting to note that LSB places “Jesus Has Come” in its “Redeemer” section, whereas it was in the Epiphany section in *Lutheran Worship* and *Christian Worship Supplement* and under Advent in the older German hymnals. In the hymn’s context of Christ as Redeemer, we gain a deeper awareness of how the text can shape and transform our lives of faith. It pronounces that Jesus’ triumph over Satan means that we no longer need be imprisoned by the fear of death, a fear that wrenches us away from God to worship the false idols of money, power, and control. We are free to live fully, free to receive God’s love with open arms, and free to return that love to God in greater measure through all the gifts of ministry God has given us. On top of all that, the hymn sends us forth in mission: Jesus has come! Now proclaim this great wonder!

Nancy Raabe
Milton WI



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Jesus has come and brings pleasure eternal,
Alpha, Omega, Beginning and End;
Godhead, humanity, union supernal,
O Great Redeemer, you come as our friend!
Heaven and earth, now proclaim this great wonder:
Jesus has come and brings pleasure eternal!

Jesus has come! Now see bonds rent asunder!
Fetters of death now dissolve, disappear,
see him burst through with a voice as of thunder!
He sets us free from our guilt and our fear,
lifts us from shame to the place of his honor.
Jesus has come! Hear the roll of God's thunder!

Jesus has come as the mighty Redeemer.
See now the threatening strong one disarmed!
Jesus breaks down all the walls of death's fortress,
brings forth the pris'ners triumphant, unharmed.
Satan, you wicked one, own now your master!
Jesus has come! He, the mighty Redeemer!

Jesus has come as the King of all glory!
Heaven and earth, O declare his great pow'r.
Capturing hearts with the heavenly story;
welcome him now in this fast-fleeting hour!
Ponder his love! Take the crown he has for you!
Jesus has come! He, the King of all glory!

Text: Johann Ludwig Conrad Allendorf, 1693—1773)
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Tune: JESUS IST KOMMEN, GRUND EWIGER FREUDE
Cöthen, c. 1733.

[This devotion was prepared for the website of the Center for Church Music. It may be downloaded and duplicated for local use.]