

Worship the King

We are moving into the holiday period that stretches from Thanksgiving Day through Christmas when the birth of Jesus Christ will be celebrated in many ways – dramas, magazine articles, nativity scenes, television specials, music on the radio, choir performances and, of course, worship services.

More than likely, during the next few weeks you will hear several renditions of the *Hallelujah Chorus* portion of Handel's *Messiah*. People often ask why the audience stands during the singing of this magnificent piece of the oratorio.



The custom dates back to the 1740s, when England's King George II heard the presentation for the first time. He was so moved by the *Hallelujah Chorus* that he stood to his feet in honor of the King of kings and Lord of lords. Since no one remains seated when royalty stands, the rest of the audience stood as well, and audiences have stood ever since.

In his book *Turning Points*, Dr. David Jeremiah, senior pastor of Shadow Mountain Community Church in El Cajon, Calif., gives some background. "In the ancient Near East, the superlative form of an adjective or adverb was not described in one word, as it is in English (such as best, brightest, or funniest). The best song was 'the song of songs,' and the greatest king was 'the king of kings.' Artaxerxes, king of Persia, referred to himself as the 'king of kings,' according to Ezra 7:12, and God gave Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon the same title (Ezekiel 26:7).

"A day is coming," Dr. Jeremiah continued, "when the whole world will recognize the true 'King of kings,' Jesus Christ. If He is not the king you worship, wouldn't now be the time to worship Him as the King of kings?"

Whether standing or bowing, worship is due the King of kings – in the buildup to Christmas and throughout the year.

The Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings (Revelation 17:14).

– Beecher Hunter