



Around the Word
Bible Study
 Epiphany, 2016

Hymn Study

O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright (Stanza 3)

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.
 —John 1:5

[O Morning Star is] a spiritual bridal song of the believing soul concerning Jesus Christ, her heavenly Bridegroom, founded on the 45th Psalm of the prophet David.
 —Philipp Nicolai

One morning Nicolai was in great distress and tribulation in his quiet study. He rose in spirit from the distress and death which surrounded him to his Redeemer and Saviour, and while he clasped Him in ardent love there welled forth from the inmost depths of his heart this precious hymn of the Saviour's love and of the joys of Heaven. He was so entirely absorbed in this holy exaltation that he forgot all around him, even his midday meal, and allowed nothing to disturb him in his poetical labours till the hymn was completed.
 —Richard Lauxmann, on the composition of "O Morning Star"

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Opening: "O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright" (Stanza 3)

Lord, when You look on us in love,
 At once there falls from God above
 A ray of purest pleasure.
 Your Word and Spirit, flesh and blood
 Refresh our souls with heav'nly food.
 You are our dearest treasure!
 Let Your mercy
 Warm and cheer us!
 O draw near us!
 For You teach us
 God's own love through You has reached us.

Compare stanza 3 of "O Morning Star" with Psalm 45, which was the basis for this hymn. Where do you see elements of psalm 45 in this stanza?

"When You look on us in love"

Genesis 11 relates the tower of Babel account, which was an incredible display of human accomplishment and technology. What was the goal of building this city and tower, according to Genesis 11:4. Did the tower actually extend to the top of the heavens? See Genesis 11:5. God was only able to see the tower by doing what?

In Genesis 11, we see God looking upon His people in judgment. Why did/does this happen? See Genesis 11:6. Why does God rescue us from our idolatry and call us to repentance rather than forsake us and leave us with those things we use as a substitute for Him (e.g., our idols, our "towers of Babel", or whatever it is that we look to for blessing apart from God)? See Judges 10:14. Why is it foolish to fear, love, or trust in anything else above God? See Psalm 2; Isaiah 44:9–18. Notice also how Isaiah describes idols in Isaiah 44:18. What does Isaiah say will happen to those who worship idols? See Isaiah 6:9–10. How will they become like that which they worship? In whose image are we made and whose image are we to reflect to creation? See Genesis 1:27. How does the Christian reflect Christ? See John 13:34–35; Matthew 5:14–16; Matthew 10:16–25.

How does God look upon His people today when they gather together for the Divine Service? See Numbers 6:24–26.

What was life like for the Israelites in Egypt? See Exodus chapter 1. How does God respond when He sees the affliction of His people? See Exodus 3:7–10. How did God finally convince Pharaoh to let the people go? See Exodus 12:5–13, 29–31. How did God intend the Egyptians to receive the Passover? See Exodus 12:12. How does God's discipline continue to function in the life of a Christian today? See Revelation 3:19, 9:20–21. How does God deliver His people from sin, death, and the devil? See John 1:29. How do John's words here about Christ identify Him

with the Passover Lamb from the time of the exodus?

Psalm 80 describes what life is like when God's face is not shining upon us (notice the plea in v. 3, 7, and 19). How does it affect us when God does not look on us in love, according to this psalm? How does this serve as a warning to us to avoid sin?

"A ray of purest pleasure"

See Psalm 4. How do verses 6–7 agree with what stanza 3 of "O Morning Star" teaches? If the light of God's face warms and cheers us, what causes our hearts to grow cold and sorrowful? See verse 2b. What sort of doctrine consists of "vain words" and "lies"? Why has God given us His Word and those who teach it? See Ephesians 4:14.

What temporal benefits are mentioned in verse 7 that often accompany the love of vain words and pursuit of lies? How does David's condition compare to that of his enemies as a result of his holding to pure doctrine, according to verse 7? How was Christ repaid for His faithfulness? See 1 Peter 2:19–25.

See Psalm 31. What does verse 17 imply about the current condition of the wicked? Compare also Job 21:7. As he wrote this psalm, David's temporal circumstance provides a strong contrast to that of his enemies. What example does David set in this psalm for those who are, like him, in distress? Where, specifically, does he seek relief? Compare Psalm 138:3; 146:5; Romans 15:13; 1 Peter 1:17–21.

"Your Word & Spirit"

Does the Holy Spirit speak on His own authority, when and where He chooses? See John 16:13. To what has the Spirit bound Himself? See 2 Timothy 3:16. The Greek word θεόπνευστος, "God-breathed" teaches us that Scripture has been written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who does not speak on His own authority, but has bound Himself to this Word (cf. the phrase, "who spoke by the prophets" in the Apostles' Creed).

"Luther emphasized that the Word is the instrument of the Spirit, that the outward Word is the incarnation of the Spirit, and that it corresponds to the Spirit as the voice corresponds to man's breathing, or as the rays of the sun correspond to the warmth of the sun," (Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 103).

"God has now permitted his holy gospel to go [forth] in such a way that he deals with us in two ways. One way is externally, the other is internally. In an external sense he deals with us by means of the spoken Word of the gospel and by means of external signs, as they come in baptism and sacrament. Internally he deals with us by means of the Holy Spirit and faith, together with other gifts. But all this takes place in such a way and [in] such an order that the external elements ought to and need to come first

and the internal aspects come afterward, through the external elements; he decided it in this way that he would not give any human being the inner elements except by means of the external ones. For he does not desire to give anyone the Spirit, nor faith, without the external Word and sign that he has instituted for this" (Luther, *Against the Heavenly Prophets*, as cited in Bayer, *Martin Luther's Theology*, 246).

How should the Church handle God's Word, according to 1 Corinthians 11:23? What was Luke's purpose in writing his Gospel, according to Luke 1:1-2? Why is it important that this happens? See Luke 1:3-4. Where does God continually direct us for divine guidance? See Luke 16:29-31; John 8:31-32; John 14:23. How does Jesus fend off Satan in Matthew 4? What happened when Adam and Eve sought blessing apart from God's Word? See Genesis 3.

"In short, enthusiasm clings to Adam and his descendants from the beginning to the end of the world. It is a poison implanted and inoculated in man by the old dragon, and it is the source, strength, and power of all heresy, including that of the papacy and Mohammedanism.¹⁰ Accordingly, we should and must constantly maintain that God will not deal with us except through his external Word and sacrament. Whatever is attributed to the Spirit apart from such Word and sacrament is of the devil.¹¹ For even to Moses God wished to appear first through the burning bush and the spoken word, and no prophet, whether Elijah or Elisha, received the Spirit without the Ten Commandments.¹² John the Baptist was not conceived without the preceding word of Gabriel,¹³ nor did he leap in his mother's womb until Mary spoke. St. Peter says that when the prophets spoke, they did not prophesy by the impulse of man but were moved by the Holy Spirit, yet as holy men of God. But without the external Word they were not holy, and the Holy Spirit would not have moved them to speak while they were still unholy. They were holy, St. Peter says, because the Holy Spirit spoke through them," (*Smalcald Articles III:VIII, 9-13*).

"Warm and cheer us"

What impact did the Word of God have on Simeon's conscience? See Luke 2:29. What is the purpose of pastoral care, according to 1 Timothy 1:5, Psalm 51:10-15, and Hebrews 9:14?

"O draw near us"

It has always been God's desire to dwell with His people. Where did He first dwell with man? See Genesis 3:8. Where did God dwell with His people during the wilderness wanderings? See Exodus 25:8, 40:34-38. During the monarchy? See 2 Chronicles 7:1-3. How does Matthew 27:51 indicate that we have direct access to God through Christ in Word (His voice) and Sacrament (being named as His child and via His Body and Blood) today? Be sure to connect this to what our Lord teaches in John 2:19-21. What do John 12:32 and Acts 2:39 teach about who takes the initiative in our relationship with God?

"God's own love through You has reached us."

How do you know beyond all shadow of a doubt that God loves you? What has He done to demonstrate this? See John 3:16. What does God give us in exchange for the death of His Son, according to this verse?

Closing: Psalm 45

¹My heart overflows with a pleasing theme;

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Hymn Study O Morning Star (st. 3)

I address my verses | to the king;*

my tongue is like the pen of a | ready scribe.

²You are the most handsome of the sons of men; grace is poured up- | on your lips;* therefore God has blessed you for- | ever.

³Gird your sword on your thigh, O | mighty one,* in your splendor and | majesty!

⁴In your majesty ride out victoriously for the cause of truth and meekness and | righteous- ness;* let your right hand teach you | awesome deeds!

⁵Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's | enemies;* the peoples fall | under you.

⁶Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of up- | rightness;*

⁷You have loved righteousness and hated | wickedness.

Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your com- | panions;*

⁸your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and | cassia.

From ivory palaces stringed instruments | make you glad;*

⁹daughters of kings are among your ladies of honor; at your right hand stands the queen in gold of | Ophir.

¹⁰Hear, O daughter, and consider, and in | cline your ear:*

forget your people and your | father's house,

¹¹and the king will desire your | beauty.*

Since he is your lord, | bow to him.

¹²The people of Tyre will seek your fa- | vor with gifts,*

the richest of the | people.

¹³All glorious is the princess in her chamber, with robes interwoven | with gold.*

¹⁴In many-colored robes she is led to the king, with her virgin companions following be- | hind her.

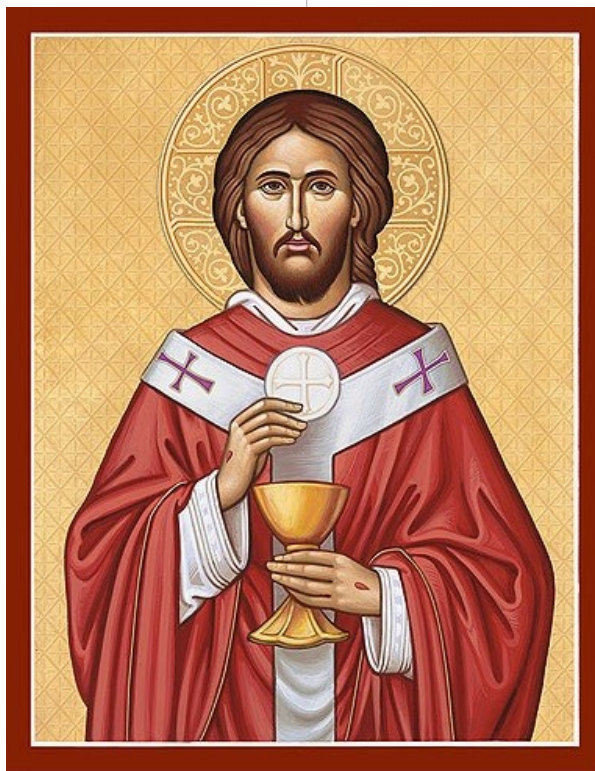
¹⁵With joy and gladness they are | led along* as they enter the palace | of the king.

¹⁶In place of your fathers shall | be your sons;* you will make them princes in | all the earth.

¹⁷I will cause your name to be remembered in all gener- | ations;*

therefore nations will praise you forever and | ever.

Glory be to the Father and | to the Son* and to the Holy | Spirit; as it was in the be- | ginning,* is now, and will be forever. | Amen.



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