



Around the Word
Bible Study
Epiphany, 2016

Hymn Study

O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright (Stanza 6)

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"

This Bible Study is brought to you by Issues, Etc. Listen on demand at www.issuesetc.org.

Issues, Etc.



Christ-Centered Cross-Focused Talk Radio
www.issuesetc.org

Opening: "O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright" (Stanza 6)

What joy to know, when life is past,
The Lord we love is first and last,
The end and the beginning!
He will one day, oh, glorious grace,
Transport us to that happy place
Beyond all tears and sinning!
Amen! Amen!
Come, Lord Jesus!
Crown of gladness!
We are yearning
For the day of Your returning!

Compare stanza 6 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?

"The Lord we love is first and last"

See Revelation 1:8. Most translations leave the Greek words "Alpha" (α) and "Omega" (ω) untranslated, which are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. In English, this verse reads, "I am the A and the Z." What we have here is an expression of God's eternity.

This title (Alpha and Omega) is also applied to Christ in Revelation 22:13, indicating that Jesus did not begin to exist at His conception, but that He, like the Father and Holy Spirit, are eternal. Compare John 1:1, 14; Hebrews 7:3.

In Isaiah 5:25–26; 7:18–20, God warns His people that the day will come when He will whistle for their enemies (as if summoning a bee) and they will go into exile. While this is not welcome news, how does knowing this in advance reassure the Israelites that God is not powerless against their adversaries?

See also Isaiah 41:1–4, where God promises to raise up those "from the East" (the Persians) to defeat the Babylonians, where the people are in captivity. Notice how God describes the Persian King (Cyrus) in Isaiah 44:28 and the work he will accomplish on behalf of Israel. What does this, like Isaiah 5 & 7, suggest about God's control over their situation?

How does the proclamation that God is the first and last reveal the foolishness of idolatry? See Isaiah 43:10.

See Revelation 1:17. Brighton points out that while "First and Last" is similar to "Alpha and Omega" in that both indicate God's eternalness, these terms aren't exactly synonymous (*Revelation*, 52). See Isaiah 44:6 and 48:12. In addition to revealing Himself as "the First

and the Last," what also do we learn about God in these verses?

How does the close identification between God being the "First and Last" with His being Israel's Redeemer (Isaiah 44:6) and their being called by Him (Isaiah 48:12) teach about when our election in Christ took place? Compare Ephesians 1:4.

What happened when John saw the glorified Christ in Revelation 1:17 before he was given the reassurance that he also was included in God's eternal plan of redemption?

Compare also Isaiah 6:1–7 and Matthew 17:1–8. Why do Isaiah and the apostles have the reaction they do to being in the presence of God? See Exodus 33:18–20 and Isaiah 6:5.

How does God make it so that sinners can stand in His presence without being endangered by His holiness? See Isaiah 6:7. Notice how this anticipates Matthew 26:28 and Luke 24:45–47.

See also Revelation 10:9–11. How does what happens here correspond to the preaching of Law and Gospel, or God's work of killing and making alive?

Revelation 4:8, 11 records the beginning of the great hymn of praise to God (*te Deum*), which is sung by the heavenly hosts in the presence of God and by the saints on earth. See Revelation 11:16–18. The 24 elders represent the entire people of God (12 OT patriarchs and 12 NT apostles, thus all the saints from the OT & NT). Compare Hebrews 12:22.

This great hymn of praise *te Deum* (to God) continues throughout the book of Revelation, with various stanzas being contributed by different voices at different places throughout the book (cf. Rev. 5:9–10, 12; 7:10, 14–17; 11:17–18; 12:10–12; 15:3–4; 16:5–7; 19:1–3, 6–8).

What reason do the four living creatures give for their praise in the first stanza of this *te Deum* (Revelation 4:11)? What do the refrain (4:8) and other stanzas (see list, above) contribute to our understanding of God and His work?

See Revelation 21:6. Keeping in mind the context from above (especially Revelation 4:8, 11), we can also understand "Alpha" and "Omega" as references to God's work of creation, that He is the beginning and end of all life (compare Colossians 1:13–20; Acts 17:28; Reve-

lation 3:14). What creative work of the Alpha and Omega is specifically highlighted in Revelation 21:1–6?

“Transport us to that happy place beyond all tears and sinning”

See Revelation 7:15–17, which provides us with a picture of life in eternal communion with God. What aspects of our relationship to God and the Lamb are highlighted in these verses?

How does Revelation 7:15–17 portray the fulfillment of God’s promises to David from Psalm 23?

What is responsible for the futility, tears, suffering, and corruption of this present creation? See Romans 8:20 and Genesis 3:17.

God promises to spread a “tent” (σκηνή) over those who dwell in His presence (ESV: “He who sits on the throne will shelter them [or, “tent them,” σκηνώσαι] with His presence”). In Revelation 21:3, the nearness of God to His people in the new creation is highlighted by portraying His dwelling together with His people in the close quarters of a tent (ESV: “the dwelling place [“tent,” σκηνή] of God is with man,”).

How does the proclamation of the Gospel bring this reality about even now? See 1 John 1:3–5. How does God tabernacle/tent/dwell among His people? See John 1:14; Matthew 18:20; and 28:18–20. Be careful to notice the conditions to which Christ ties His presence in both passages from Matthew.

“Come, Lord Jesus!”

What is the final promise Christ makes to His people in Holy Scripture? See Revelation 22:20.

“Crown of Gladness”

How is Jesus described in Revelation 6:2 and 19:11? Revelation 19:11 portrays Christ as waging war. How does this correspond to the way God is described in Exodus 15:3? Against whom does He fight? See Ephesians 6:10–20.

When did Christ emerge victorious? See Matthew 28:2–6; 1 Corinthians 15:54–57; Revelation 2:8.

Closing: Psalm 45

¹My heart overflows with a pleasing theme;
I address my verses | to the king;*

my tongue is like the pen of a | ready scribe.
²**You 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!

⁴**In your majesty ride out victoriously for the cause of truth and**

Bible Study

Hymn Study O Morning Star (st. 6)

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.

⁶**Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.**

The scepter of your kingdom is

a scepter of up- | rightness;*

⁷**You 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 instru-
ments | make you glad;***

⁹**daughters 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,

¹¹**and 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.

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

¹⁴**In 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.

¹⁶**In 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.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR Rev. Eric Andersen (rev.ena40@gmail.com; seelsorge40.wordpress.com) is pastor of [Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church](#) in Summit, IL and [Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church](#) in Hodgkins, IL. He is also Bible Study Editor for [Around the Word](#).