



Around the Word
Bible Study
 Epiphany, 2016

Hymn Study
**O Morning Star, How
 Fair and Bright (Stanza 4)**

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 4)

Almighty Father, in Your Son
 You loved us when not yet begun
 Was this old earth's foundation!
 Your Son has ransomed us in love
 To live in Him here and above:
 This is Your great salvation.
 Alleluia!
 Christ the living,
 To us giving
 Life forever,
 Keeps us Yours and fails us never!

Compare stanza 4 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?

"In Your Son You loved us when not yet begun..."

The fourth stanza begins, "Almighty Father, in Your Son You loved us when not yet begun was this old earth's foundation."

The *Formula of Concord* speaks of election in this way:

"We should accordingly consider God's eternal election in Christ, and not outside of or apart from Christ. For according to St. Paul's testimony we have been elected in Christ "before the foundation of the world was laid" (Eph. 1:4), as it is written, "He has loved us in the Beloved" (Eph. 1:6). This election is revealed from heaven through the proclaimed Word when the Father says, "This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased; listen to him" (Luke 3:22). And Christ says, "Come to me, all who are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). And of the Holy Spirit Christ says, "He will glorify me" (John 16:14) and recall everything to you that I have told you. Thus the entire holy Trinity, God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, directs all men to Christ as to the book of life in whom they are to seek the Father's eternal election. For the Father has decreed from eternity that whomever he would save he would save through Christ, as Christ himself says, "No one comes to the Father but by me" (John 14:6), and again, "I am the door; if anyone enters by me, he will be saved" (John 10:9). Christ, "the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father" (John 1:18), has proclaimed the Father's will and thereby our eternal election to eternal life when he says, "The kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the Gospel" (Mark 1:15); and again when he says, "This is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life" (John 6:40); and again, "God so loved the world," etc. (John 3:16)," (*Solid Declaration, XI, 65–67*).

What point must we constantly maintain concerning election? See Ephesians 1:5. How do we know that God wants all to be saved and has not arbitrarily predestined some

to damnation without regard for their sin? See Luke 24:47; John 1:29; Romans 11:32; 2 Peter 3:9; 1 Timothy 2:4. How does the teaching that God predestines some to damnation conflict with these passages?

What does Christ have to say about election in Matthew 25:34–40? How do we know the good works of the righteous (verses 35–40) cannot be the basis of their election, according to verse 34?

What does Isaiah say about our good works? See Isaiah 64:6. What does St. Paul say about them in Romans 3:10–20?

Far from creating doubt and uncertainty, when the doctrine of election is considered rightly, it is a most comforting doctrine. Again, the *Formula of Concord* says:

"This doctrine also affords the beautiful and glorious comfort that God was so deeply concerned about every individual Christian's conversion, righteousness, and salvation and so faithfully minded about it that "even before the foundation of the world was laid" he held counsel and ordained "according to his purpose" how he would bring me thereto and keep me therein. Furthermore, God wanted to insure my salvation so firmly and certainly — for due to the weakness and wickedness of our flesh it could easily slip from our fingers, and through the deceit and power of the devil and the world it could easily be snatched and taken from our hands — that he ordained my salvation in his eternal purpose, which cannot fail or be overthrown, and put it for safekeeping into the almighty hand of our Savior, Jesus Christ, out of which no one can pluck us (John 10:28). For this reason, too, Paul asks, Since we are called according to the purpose of God, "who will separate us from the love of God in Christ?" (Rom. 8:35)," (*Solid Declaration, XI, 45–47*).

"Your Son has ransomed us in love"

What does Psalm 49:7–9 say about our ability to pay the ransom price for our salvation? What, according to verse 9, is the consequence of failing to do so?

To what does Romans 6:23 attribute death? In John 8:51, our Lord tells us what will keep us from seeing death. What is it, and how does this agree with what St. Paul says in Romans 6:23? How does Romans 8:38–39 affirm our Lord's promise from John 8:51?

When does eternal life in Christ begin? See Romans 6:3–4; 2 Corinthians 5:17.

How do the priorities of James and John often correspond to our priorities? See Matthew 20:20–21. How did the reaction of the ten (v. 24) confirm that they had the same selfish ambition?

What does our Lord say about authority in Matthew 20:25–28? How does Jesus demonstrate this in the following verses (29–34)? What was the crowds' reaction to the cries of the blind men? See verse 31.

Why did a ransom need to be paid for our salvation? See Hebrews 9, especially verse 22. What was the price? What was the Old Testament basis for this? See Hebrews 9:18–20 and Exodus 24. Notice how the Lord's Supper is anticipated in Exodus 24:11.

What advantage do we have over those who lived under the Old Testament? See Hebrews 9:13–14.

"To live in Him here and above"

What does Romans 6 teach about living the Christian life now? Compare this with 1 Corinthians 6:20 and Galatians 2:19–20. What is the purpose of living by faith? See Matthew 5:14–16.

In light of this, it might be said that Christianity is about practicing for eternity. How does our election in Christ affirm the importance of living holy and blameless lives? See Ephesians 1:4.

See Exodus 7:6–8. Why did God choose Israel out of all the nations, and what responsibility did their election confer upon them?

God calls His children to be holy, to set an example for the nations. What happened when Israel became lazy and began to take advantage of their elect status? See Amos 3:1–2.

"Keeps us Yours and fails us never"

What does Christ say about the salvation of the elect in John 10:27–28? In Jeremiah 23:4? What is it that keeps us from going astray? See John 8:31; Deuteronomy 5:32–33.

How does Christ affirm the security of the elect in John 6:39 specifically with respect to death, which appears to contradict His promise?

How did the Jews respond to our Lord's teaching in John 10? See especially John 10:31. Why did the Jews want to kill Him? See John 10:33. What, then, was our Lord's only "crime"?

What assurance do we have that we are Christ's and that He will fail us never, even when the circumstances of our lives might suggest otherwise? See Isaiah 27:2–3.

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!

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⁴**In 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.

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 strung 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.



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