



*25 But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. 26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: 27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. 28 And I will give him the morning star.* (Rev 2:25-28)

*16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.* (Rev 22:16)

Should we be surprised that it was the brilliant light of a Star that heralded the coming Light of the World – the Lord Jesus Christ? Those who had sat in the outer darkness of distant lands have seen a bright Light, and that Light is Christ! (see Isaiah 9:2) So the Star that the Wise Men so eagerly followed was a Light that grew in brilliance for them until they were confronted face-to-face by the Baby Jesus at Bethlehem.

The lyrics to this hymn are the composition of Philipp Nicolai (1597) and appeared in paraphrase form in *Psalmodia Germanica* (1722). Music is the arrangement of Johann Sebastian Bach, *Wie schön leuchtet* (Frankfort). It is amazing what a gold mine of treasure in music we have received from German authors and great musicians.

### **How Brightly Shines the Morning Star**

How bright appears the Morning Star,  
with mercy beaming from afar;  
the host of heaven rejoices;  
O righteous Branch, O Jesse's Rod!  
Thou Son of Man and Son of God!  
We, too, will lift our voices:  
Jesus, Jesus!  
Holy, holy, yet most lowly,  
draw thou near us;  
great Emmanuel, come and hear us.

Though circled by the hosts on high,  
he deigned to cast a pitying eye  
upon his helpless creature;  
the whole creation's Head and Lord,  
by highest seraphim adored,  
assumed our very nature;  
Jesus, grant us,  
through thy merit, to inherit  
thy salvation;  
hear, O hear our supplication.

Rejoice, ye heavens; thou earth, reply;  
with praise, ye sinners, fill the sky,  
for this his Incarnation.  
Incarnate God, put forth thy power,  
ride on, ride on, great Conqueror,  
till all know thy salvation.  
Amen, amen!  
Alleluia, alleluia!  
Praise be given  
evermore, by earth and heaven.

*How bright appears the Morning Star, with mercy beaming from afar; the host of heaven rejoices; O righteous Branch, O Jesse's Rod! Thou Son of Man and Son of God! We, too, will lift our voices: Jesus, Jesus! Holy, holy, yet most lowly, draw thou near us; great Emmanuel, come and hear us.* On a clear, cold morning before sunrise there is nothing brighter in the heavens than the Bright and Morning Star – the same that began the previous evening as the Evening Star. It followed us through the dark hours of the night just as our Lord is with us even in the Valley of the Shadow of Death – He is with us! There can be no doubt in the heart of the wanderer as to the identity of the Morning Star even while the host of other heavenly lights may escape our recognition. When there are no material obstructions to eclipse the Light, it can be seen over exceedingly great distances. In fact, the light of some stars that we view at night originated millions of light years ago – some of the stars we see no longer exist, but the light is still traversing that great distance to shed beauty for our eyes. Our Lord, in His human presence, is known as the Son of David (who was the son of Jesse). He is the rightly heir of the Throne of David in the spiritual Israel to which all true believers belong. But He is also the Son of God that identifies Him as a King of Divine Right. He left the opulence and beauty of Heaven to abide among us, and therefore is Emmanuel (God with us) – ALWAYS.

*Though circled by the hosts on high, he deigned to cast a pitying eye upon his helpless creature; the whole creation's Head and Lord, by highest seraphim adored, assumed our very nature; Jesus, grant us, through thy merit, to inherit thy salvation; hear, O hear our supplication.* That “pitying eye” was cast in eternity past ere the worlds were made. He is not only the whole Creations Head and Lord, but the very Author of Creation itself. *1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. (John 1:1-4) 11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. 14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. (John 1:11-14)* These

verses are among the most profound and powerful in Holy Scripture. As the hymn proclaims, it is through His merit (and none of our own) that, by grace, we are born into the newness of life and salvation.

*Rejoice, ye heavens; thou earth, reply; with praise, ye sinners, fill the sky, for this his Incarnation. Incarnate God, put forth thy power, ride on, ride on, great Conqueror, till all know thy salvation. Amen, amen! Alleluia, alleluia! Praise be given evermore, by earth and heaven.* Do the Heavens rejoice and praise our Lord? Did they do so from the first day of the foundation of the world? *4 Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. 5 Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? 6 Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; 7 When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?* (Job 38:4-7) Where were YOU when these momentous events took place? Did you exist at all? Yes, you did exist, but only in the Mind of God at that moment. The earth is not as inclined as is Heaven in her perfect praise of God. But the day shall surely come when the whole earth shall arise in praise and adulation for her Maker and her Lord. *5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* (Phil 2:4-11 see also Isaiah 45:23 and Romans 14:11)

The next time you are out early of morning, before the sunrise, look to that Morning Star of Hope that is precursor of the coming Daystar from on High. In this earthly walk, we have the Morning Star as a promise of a coming day of brilliant Light when the Daystar appears and all things of the dark night will be revealed in splendor. *19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: 20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.* (2 Peter 1:19-21)

Make no mistake, God's Word (every one of them) is without error. His Word is the Message and we the messengers if we corrupt not His Word.