

Hallelujah

The word hallelujah means 'Praise Jehovah' and is most commonly rendered in the Psalms as 'Praise ye the LORD', Ps. 106:1, etc. In the New Testament it is found in one place only: at the beginning of Revelation chapter 19, where it appears as 'Alleluia', verses 1,3,4,6. Therefore in the new covenant day this word sounds exclusively in heaven: 'And after these things I heard a great voice of much people *in heaven*, saying, Alleluia', Rev. 19:1. Therefore the church of Jesus Christ is not recorded as having used this word on earth at all.

This may come as quite a surprise to some, especially in a day of so much 'praise and worship', where the word is used so freely and gratuitously. When I was young we used to sing a chorus which began, 'Hallelu-hallelu- hallelu- hallelujah! Praise ye the Lord!' But the words of the song didn't give any reason why we were praising the Lord, just that – aided by a 'goey' tune and 'actions' – we could praise him regardless.

Now although it is true that the Lord is 'greatly to be praised' just for who he is: because his Person is so glorious; nevertheless this phrase is usually heard in a specific context: because of a particular attribute of his Person, or as a result of a certain work he has wrought. So more often than not we will read, 'Praise ye the LORD, *for...*' cp. Ps. 117, etc. In Revelation 19 the use of the word is as a direct consequence of the overthrow of the wicked city Babylon, cp. chapter 18. So, 'Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God'; Why? 'For true and righteous are his judgments'; In what context? '*For* he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever', Rev. 19:1-3.

And then to show that this repeated cry of 'Alleluia' had nothing to do with the vacuous, smiley-faced 'joy' of so much modern (false) worship, but was rather closer to 'rejoicing with trembling', Ps. 2:11, the cry comes again from heaven, yea, from out of the very throne itself, 'Praise our God, all ye his servants, *and ye that fear him...* And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude... saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth', verses 5,6; that is, he reigneth over his enemies to destroy them and to avenge our blood at their hands.

Now go and take *that* message into so many churches and hear the hallelujahs instantly fall silent. And they will fall silent because the vast majority who use the word are not suffering at the hands of ‘the city Babylon’, for they are actually part of it; they do not ‘serve the Lord’, but serve their own lusts, albeit in his name; they do not possess ‘the fear of the Lord’, because they do not know him and have not experienced his salvation; and because their understanding of his ‘reigning’ never reaches to his destruction of the wicked in the lake of fire. But these are the *sole reasons* this word sounds in the gospel age – according to the testimony of scripture.

But it may be that some would argue that they *are* being scriptural in their use of this word, because the children of Israel and the psalmist did use it in the worship of God on more than one occasion. Well, again, if they want to associate themselves with the saints of old then let them first be found walking in the path the psalmist walked – especially in the presence of his enemies, Psalms 7, 18, 23, 27, etc; let them experience the same salvation – in all its aspects – which the psalmist experienced, Psalms 32, 40, 51, etc; and let them know by revelation the same Jehovah which those who walked by faith truly did praise, Psalms 139, 107, etc; and then, perhaps, their hallelujahs might be counted as genuinely Spirit-wrought.

But the plain fact is that, generally speaking, the modern profession of the name of the Lord is *not* equal to that of the psalmist, cp. Psalm 119, or to that of the early church, cp. Acts 2:42-47; 5:11-14, etc. Therefore what use all their singing, praising, waving of hands, tightly closed eyes – in their attempts to ‘really, really praise him’ – and wallowing in soft and gentle tunes? It is all, at best, vanity, and at worst, ‘taking the name of the Lord in vain’ upon their lips.

Nevertheless, for all that, the word hallelujah *does* sound truly under the new covenant: it sounds over the destruction of the wicked and because of the almighty, sovereign reign of Jehovah.

But how can this be when – as someone said to me recently – ‘God’s greatest attribute is love’? Surely God has ‘no pleasure in the death of the wicked’, Ezek 33:11. These are objections which some will immediately bring forth; but they will be mistaken in doing so. First of all God’s

‘greatest attribute’ is not love; indeed, he has no greatest attribute. This is the cry of the Arminian: the hater of all revealed truth. God is one, and all his attributes are equal. God is love, and God is light. God is holy, and God is just. God is good, and God is almighty. God is eternal, and God is sovereign. God is great and God is wise. God is a jealous God, and God changeth not. Yea in all, God is God indeed. All these are innate attributes of God and none is ‘greater’ than another, they are all equal, and all determine his thoughts, will and works; none can be used to contradict another – none *do* contradict another; all work in perfect harmony.

As to the second objection: Well, who says that God *does* derive pleasure in the death of the wicked? Do we really think that God delights in the fact that ‘the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God’? No. But he *will* punish the wicked, and the unbeliever, and all those who will not turn from their evil ways, be they professing but false Christians or the heathen; for his holiness, his justice and his righteous anger toward the wicked in their sin demand it; cp. Psalms 7:8-17, 9:15-20, and Psalm 97.

Those who merely cry, ‘But God is love... *all* love’, more or less to the exclusion of all his other attributes, just don’t know him. They are ignorant of the God they profess and are totally out of the way. Furthermore, they know not Jesus Christ, for he is God manifest in the flesh; and as such, love is not his only attribute either. Just a cursory reading of the four Gospels will reveal that. These people just believe in ‘another Jesus’, 2 Cor. 11:4, and will stand aghast on the day of judgment at ‘the wrath of the Lamb’; well, they won’t stand at all, Rev. 6:12-17.

‘Jesus rejoiced’

In thinking of this word hallelujah, and the sole context in which it is used in the New Testament, my mind went straight to the Lord Jesus, and to the only time he is recorded as having ‘rejoiced’ while here on earth. The reason for this is because the contexts are very similar in principle. Luke 10:21 tells us that ‘In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said...’ And why did he rejoice? Because of the Father’s love for all mankind? For his greatness in potentially being able to save the whole world if only all will believe? No. The Saviour’s rejoicing was because the Father’s sovereign will was being carried out in ‘hiding’ the truth from certain individuals

and ‘revealing’ it to others; and therefore he was rejoicing over the outworking of the election of God:

‘In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him’, Luke 10:21,22.

Now, how many today whose praise flows with abundant hallelujahs can rejoice with the Lord Jesus in *these* things?

But let us look in more detail at the reasons for Jesus’ rejoicing. First of all it was in the sovereignty of God the Father exercised in hiding ‘these things’ from some while, at the same time, revealing them to others. What ‘these things’ are we will come to. It rejoiced Jesus’ heart to see the carrying out of the will of his Father, even though it meant the blinding of men. This was a fundamental characteristic of the Saviour’s life – his delighting in his Father’s will. Indeed, it was the very purpose for his coming: ‘Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart’, Ps. 40:7,8; Heb. 10:7-9. What single-minded devotion, submission and faith this shows in the Son of God; his delighting in the Father’s will despite the consequences. For not only were the consequences the blinding of some to the truths of the gospel but, in his own case, following his Father’s will led to his death on the cross: ‘Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.’ Indeed, his whole life and ministry was bound to his Father’s will: ‘I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me’, John 5:30. His very meat – that which sustained him day by day – was ‘to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work’, John 4:34.

Now this is the way that all of God’s people are ultimately led, as Jesus said: ‘Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; *but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven*’, Matt. 7:21. ‘Who is my mother? And who are my brethren?...

Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother', Matt. 12:48-50; cp. also Heb. 10:36.

Is the will of the Father our delight? It was Job's. Even amidst all his loss, Job could see the working of the will of the LORD, and it caused him to fall on his face in unquestioning faith and in true worship: 'The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD', Job 1:20,21. In this, Job could echo the words of his Redeemer, 'Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.'

In the carrying out of his will of hiding and revealing, then, the Father revealed his sovereign election of some, and his reprobation of others. For Jesus does not say, 'I thank thee that thou hast revealed these things unto some and left the others in their blindness', but specifically, 'Thou hast hid these things' from certain ones. A deliberate act. This is why the Lord Jesus spoke to the people in parables: just read Matthew 13:10-17 and look for that word 'lest'. How the natural man, the proud man, hates the sovereignty of God! Again, those who cry 'God is love, God is love', really despise his right to be God at all! But God, being eternal – that is, one who has not emanated from time – unlike us – has therefore an eternal purpose, cp. Eph. 3:8-12; and he created time in which to carry it out. Therefore his election is like himself: eternal, sovereign, and uninhibited by creatures of time – i.e. rebellious sinners – in the outworking of it.

This is why Paul could write of Esau and Jacob in his doctrine in the way that he did: Romans 9:10-13. Before their birth, before they had done any works, whether good or evil, their eternal destinies were fixed, showing 'that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth.' Thus it is written, nay, Jehovah said it! Mal. 1:1-3, 'Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated' – from the womb!

The scriptures are replete, and those who are taught of God and know their own natures *know*, that God *must* be first in the saving of a soul, and that to purpose the salvation of that soul must be a sovereign act. If God is going to save a man, God must have chosen to save him before he carried out the work. Why? Because 'No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him.' Because, 'No man knoweth who the Son is but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.' Because, 'God commendeth his love toward us, in

that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.’ Because, ‘Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners... He shall save his people from their sins.’ Because the salvation and calling of God’s people is ‘according to his own purpose and grace, which was given [them] in Christ Jesus before the world began.’

In these and in many other scriptures it is evident that the will of the Father which brought Christ into the world was the saving of those people who were eternally elected in him. They are, after all, ‘the elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father’ – and to be foreknown is to be foreloved – and were chosen in Christ ‘before the foundation of the world’. Surely Peter in his First Epistle and Paul to the Ephesians would be making no sense in writing these things if election were not from eternity.

Contrary-wise – as we have already hinted – the *not* saving of others is, too, a predetermined act of God. In choosing some to salvation God, because he is God, must, at the same time, necessarily choose *not* to save the others. Again, of his own people he can say, ‘And I know them’, while of the others he will say, ‘I never knew you.’ And this knowledge is again as himself: eternal. And in response to cries of, No. No. Well, who art thou, O man, or woman, that repliest against God? With whom took the Almighty counsel when ‘forming’ his eternal purpose of electing grace? With you? But you weren’t there; you’re just a creature of the dust. Don’t you realise that over-against the ‘chosen generation’ stand those ‘which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed’? 1 Peter 2:7-9. And don’t you know that there are ‘ungodly men, [who] turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, and deny the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation’? Jude 1:4.

And don’t forget Pharaoh. The LORD said of him to Moses, ‘I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go’, Ex. 3:19. How did he know? Because ‘I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go’, Ex. 4:21. The LORD was determined to set his people free from captivity in Egypt ‘with a strong hand’, Ex. 6:1, cp. Jer. 32:17-22, in a way which would cause them to ‘spoil the Egyptians’, Ex. 3:22, and which would make the hearts of the nations to faint and melt before them, which they did, Ex. 15:15, cp. Josh. 2:8-11,24, 5:1 (40 years later!). Thus he saith unto Pharaoh, ‘Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up’; Why? To save him? No, not

to save him, but ‘that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth’, Rom. 9:17, which it was! cp. again 1 Sam. 4:6-8 (over 200 years later!).

Note the phrase of the LORD to Pharaoh: ‘for this cause *have I raised thee up*’. There is a new born baby boy in the land of Egypt. He has been kept in his mother’s womb and is being preserved in infancy and childhood by the unseen and unknown hand of God. He has the breath of life sustained in his lungs through early manhood into maturity. He is raised up to the throne of Egypt to, with an especially cruel heart, suppress the children of Israel; and all by the sovereign hand and will of God; *so that*, when the time arrives for Moses to come in before him with his demands, the Lord can harden his heart – because ‘whom he will he hardeneth’ – and, as ‘a man of war’, purposefully and deliberately cast him and his host into the sea to be drowned, Ex. 15:3-5, dying with the same hard heart which the Lord had hardened; and all for the good of his people. That is why Pharaoh was raised up, for the elect’s sake. And who is to say that there are not multitudes of Pharaohs today? Indeed are not all the non-elect in every generation merely clay moulded in a myriad of ways according to the purposes of the Lord to bless his people? Of course! After all God hath put all things [including people] under Christ’s feet, and has given him to be the head over all things *to the church*, Eph. 1:22; thus ‘all things are yours... the world, life, death, things present, things to come’, 1 Cor. 3:21,22, cp. also Isaiah 43:4.

This, of course, is too much for most religious people to stomach – a sovereign God gratuitously using the non-elect for the benefit of his people before throwing them aside. But who cares what anybody thinks about what God does. Let them reply against the Almighty; let them harden their hearts against him – as Pharaoh did; and then let them perish in their sin – which is what they want to do anyway; and the Lord will have all the praise, all the glory, and all the honour. Still not convinced? Very well, *Who is the Lord of history? Who is the great sovereign administrator of the lives of all men and nations? Just read Revelation chapter 5; then put your hands over your mouths and worship.*

One other point has to be made regarding election; for election was fundamental to the reason for the rejoicing of the Lord Jesus in the passage we are considering. In Romans 9 again we read these words: ‘I

will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion... and whom he will he hardeneth', verses 15,18. The Lord Jesus rejoiced over his Father's blinding of individuals *because it was evidently the Father's will to do so*. Here we see God acting purposefully according to his electing grace and mercy, *and* according to his purposed reprobation.

But who are God's elect? Or, rather, Who is God's elect? The first mention of 'the elect' is in Isaiah 42:1: 'Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.' This is evidently the Lord Jesus as Matthew confirms in 12:14-21 of his gospel. And the second reference is a little while later in Isaiah 45:4, 'Israel mine elect'. By the way, this is in context of the Lord speaking to Cyrus, another heathen king raised up, sustained, anointed even, for the good of His people; but not for his own salvation, for he knew not the Lord.

In the context of the whole of this last section of Isaiah – chapters 40-66 – 'Israel' is ultimately the spiritual seed of Abraham for whose transgressions 'my servant' was 'smitten of God', Isa. 52:13ff. Thus the Son of God was from all eternity the chosen Person in the Godhead to be made flesh, and to redeem his people. Therefore he is 'the elect'; and because of their union with him in the eternal counsels and purpose of God, then all those redeemed by his blood are the elect also. It is a wonderful doctrine: the doctrine of the union of Christ and his people. In this respect 'As he is, so are they'. He is the head of the body, the church, they are the body. And in this body there has never been – nor will/can there ever be – any severance of the head from the members. They have been 'in Christ' from all eternity. So when the Son was chosen to redeem them they became as much 'the elect' as him.

Therefore to deny 'election' is actually to deny Christ himself: it is to deny the reason for his coming; it is to deny the eternal union of Christ and his people; and it is to deny God's eternal purpose in Christ. Please do read and meditate upon Ephesians 3:8-12 and 1 Peter 1:18-21.

'These things'

Now we come to 'these things' which have been hidden from the wise and prudent, but revealed unto babes, Luke 10:21. Remember that this work of

the Father caused Jesus to 'rejoice in his spirit'. To find out what 'these things' are we have to look at the immediate context; what had happened, and what had been said, to bring forth these words of the Lord.

In verse one of this chapter we read that 'the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.' And in sending them he spoke specifically regarding 'the harvest', 'labourers', 'wolves', 'the kingdom of God', 'the mighty works', 'repentance', and of Christ's union with his Father, and therefore of the fact that rejecting Christ is rejecting the Father also, verses 2-16. Then in verse 20, the seventy having returned and expressed their (carnal?) joy over the devils being subject unto them, Jesus – always with this in mind – said, Nay, '...but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven' – election! These, then are 'these things' which are hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes.

First, 'the harvest', Luke 10:2. Here Jesus is speaking of the specific time of his coming into the world: the 'fulness of the time'. The 'fields being white unto harvest', the Son of God was come 'to preach the gospel to the poor'; 'to fulfil the law and the prophets', and to take away the old covenant of law and works and bring in the new covenant in his blood and by faith. Signs without number had already shown that here was the Messiah come 'to redeem Israel', spiritual Israel, that is; 'to finish the transgression' of his people, 'and to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness', even the righteousness of God for them, Dan. 9:24. Now he was come to preach these things to Israel. But the wise and prudent – that is, those wise in their own eyes – who said 'we see' – and the 'naturally intelligent' – prudent – were blinded to these things. Harvest? What harvest? Signs? What signs? The times? A shrug of the shoulders. We know who thou art, the son of Joseph! Jesus, the carpenter from despised Nazareth!

Secondly, 'labourers'. Labourers? Do we need labouring amongst? Who are these men coming into our city? What's this strange message they are bringing? We cannot receive these things they are saying! What's that they're doing now? 'Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you.' Well, who do they think they are?! Why, they were those whom the Lord had sent to declare his message to the

professing people of God. And their 'wise and prudent' response was the same then as it would be today if the Lord again sent men to preach among the churches. And it would not be long before these preachers would likewise wipe the dust off their feet against them.

Thirdly, 'wolves', verse 3. But they thought they were 'the sheep of thy pasture'; the people of God. After all to them pertained 'the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises'; how could they be wolves? But the vast majority had no faith, who, far from being of 'Abraham's seed', were of their father the devil, regardless of their circumcision, cp. John 8:31-59; Rom. 9:1-8; Gal. 3.

Fourthly, they were blind and ignorant to 'the kingdom of God', verse 9. The gospel which Jesus – and after him his apostles – preached, was 'the gospel of the kingdom of God', Mark 1:14, Luke 8:1, Acts 19:8, 28:23-31. Indeed, the very fact that Jesus 'cast out devils by the Spirit of God' proved that the kingdom of God had come to them, Matt. 12:28. But it was not given to 'Jerusalem which now is' – 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!' – which was in bondage with these her children, to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God', Mark 4:11. So all they could say was, in effect, 'How can these things be?' But except they were 'born again' they could not see the kingdom of God; which is evident, for how can one see with blinded eyes?

The fifth of 'these things' which were hidden from them, was 'the mighty works' which Christ wrought, verse 13. Having fed 'a great multitude' with five barley loaves and two small fishes, the people presently asked Jesus, 'What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee?' John 6. After Jesus had healed a man with a withered hand, and another 'possessed with a devil, blind and dumb', 'then certain of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee', Matt. 12. Who could ask such questions but the blind? Nay, but Jesus would show no sign to 'a wicked and adulterous generation' – which is what all are who practice fleshly religion – but one sign only: the sign of Jonas the prophet. 'For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth', Matt. 12:38-40. But before that 'the Lamb of God' must be taken, and by wicked hands be crucified and slain, thereby 'taking away the sin of the world'; but the blind wouldn't see that either – they would

just see a man on a cross being mocked because he had said, 'I am the Son of God'.

What 'mighty works' were performed upon the cross! But the darkness which was over the whole land was a sign of the spiritual blindness which the Father had given them to these things – '*thou hast hid these things*' – so they perceived nothing.

Sixthly, they were blind to 'repentance', verse 13. A woe was cast upon the cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida because, if the mighty works which had been done in them had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented 'a great while ago... sitting in sackcloth and ashes', cp. Ezek 3:4-7. Those who had rejected the message of John the Baptist – the one sent to 'prepare the way of the Lord' – were hardly then going to hear and fall under Jesus' same message of the need for repentance. This is what Jesus was testifying to Nicodemus when he said, 'We – John and I – speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness', John 3:11. John had come, and after him Jesus came crying to Israel, 'Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven/God is at hand', Matt. 3:1-2, Mark 1:14,15.

What repentance was this, which was hidden from the wise and prudent? It was a turning from the old covenant to the new. A turning from the works of the law to the faith of the gospel; from looking repeatedly to 'the blood of bulls and of goats' for the washing away of sin, to 'the blood of the Lamb' to be sacrificed once and for all. It was a repenting from drawing nigh unto God with outward, carnal, religion, to 'worshipping the Father in Spirit and in truth'. It was a throwing aside of the idea that 'Israel after the flesh' was the true seed of Abraham, to realising that 'the Israel of God' was actually made up believing Gentiles as well as believing Jews. What a word that was to Abraham: 'And in thy seed [Christ] shall *all the nations of the earth* be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice', Gen. 22:18, Gal. 3:6-9,16.

Therefore to repent was to have the eyes opened to the testimony of the old covenant itself when it said that 'sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required... the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise', Psalms 40:6, 51. Thus it

was realising that, all along, even from the time of Abel – way before the law was given – ‘the just have always, actually, lived by faith’! Repentance was coming to see Abraham in his true light; that the works of Abraham – who knew nothing of the law – were the works of faith, and of believing God when he spoke and promised. Repentance is, after all, a change of mind and therefore of understanding regarding the things of God: that, despite the giving of the law, and of the sacrifices, God had always looked on the heart of the people who had performed these outward things. Faith in the offerer had always been the key to the sacrifices being acceptable to God. But the blind were oblivious to their need of such monumental repentance; as those who believe in ‘the law as a rule of life’ are today.

Seventhly, they were ignorant of Christ’s union with his Father. ‘He that heareth you’, said Jesus to the seventy, ‘heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me’. Luke 10:16. In the conversations between Jesus and the Jews in John chapters 8 to 10, the Saviour said, ‘...I proceeded forth and came from God... Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad... Before Abraham was, I am’. Then took they up stones to cast at him, but Jesus escaped out of the temple. Then after the intervening episode with the man born blind, in which Jesus, having hid himself in the city and remaining largely out of their sight, appeared again to tell them... of their blindness(!) And during the following conversation he said ‘...I lay down my life... I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.’ But for the moment this caused little more than a division among them. But soon Jesus was saying, ‘I and my Father are one’; ‘then the Jews took up stones again to stone him’; but Jesus, remaining still this time, said, ‘Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him’. ‘Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand’, and this time left Jerusalem.

This is a good argument you could try with the Jehovah’s Witnesses. Why did the Jews take up stones to stone Jesus? ‘For blasphemy’ – which is evil speaking – ‘and because that, thou being a man, makest thyself God’, John 10:33. When Jesus said ‘I and my Father are one’, *they heard*, ‘I am

the same as God.’ Therefore the Jews of Jesus’ day would reject the JW’s denials of Jesus being God because they knew that he had, in effect, said ‘I am God.’ Furthermore he declared, ‘Before Abraham was, I am’, John 8:58. The Lord Jesus, of course, said these things very deliberately, knowing full well that the people would understand perfectly what he was declaring about his own Person. Alas, the JW’s will just say that his Name – ‘I am’ – is not the same as his Person! because the truth is hidden from them.

In all this, then, the wise and prudent were ignorant and blinded to the fact that in despising and rejecting Christ they were despising and rejecting the One they called Jehovah, the LORD, as well. This, ultimately is where spiritual blindness leads. To despise Christ is to reject God; and to reject God is to be ignorant of him; to be ignorant of him is not to know him; and not to know him is to be devoid of eternal life; for ‘this is life eternal... to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.’

Nevertheless it rejoiced Jesus’ heart to see that his Father had ‘hid these things from the wise and prudent, and had revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.’ Now, again, I ask; Can we rejoice with Jesus in ‘these things’? If not, then ‘our’ Jesus can only be another Jesus.

‘Do not I hate them’

We must now investigate another line of thought which came to mind when seeing the word ‘hallelujah’ in its original context. And that is the issue of the Lord’s people ‘hating’ those that hate God: counting them their enemies. After all, what manner of people must they be which bring forth such rejoicing and praise from the saints in heaven who have been rescued from their hand? They must be their enemies; but more: the saints must have known them to be *God’s* enemies; and because they love God, his overthrowing of them causes genuine, heartfelt rejoicing: ‘Alleluia’.

The words, of course, which spring to mind are the words of David near the close of Psalm 139. It is indeed a dreadful* thing to enter into David’s experience, and find, at times, the same words well up from within; but it does happen, and when it does – in the right context – it is not wrong;

and a consideration of them might be of some help and comfort to those who are often nagged by 'today's' Christians: who love to tell them that they must 'never judge' – although they're quite happy to judge you – and must always 'love your enemies' regardless. So when they often *do* feel like David did, they are afraid to express it. Well, child of God, *do* express it!

*I use this word in the same sense as it is used in Genesis 28:17.

David said of the wicked, 'They speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain'. So he goes on to say – and he meant what he said; and his heart was clean before the Lord in saying it: 'Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? And am I not grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies', Ps. 139:19-22.

The immediate thing to say here is that it is no good directly going on to quote the following verses *if* they are just going to be used – with some sort of false humility – to disannul what David had just said; and I've heard that done more than once. Regardless of the following words, David did still say what he said in verses 21 and 22, and they deserve to be considered in their own right.

David, the man of faith, yea, the man after God's own heart; the man indwelt of the Spirit of God; could justifiably feel and voice hatred for God's enemies, without rebuke from God. Now, I've looked up the word in the original Hebrew to see what the literal translation of it is; and the word means *hate*! So nothing has been lost in translation – and, yes, it is the same word used in Malachi 1:2 quoted above: the LORD hated Esau. But this is not the first time in the Psalms that God's hatred for the wicked has been declared; in Psalm 5:4-6 David had said, 'For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.' In those verses 'leasing' means lying, and 'abhor' means abominate.

So David's hatred was not misplaced: if his God hated all workers of iniquity, would not his people do the same? This may be hard for some to take, as it was for me when I first read Psalm 5. The reason for this was

that, having been brought up under an erroneous gospel – an Arminian – I was told from a young age that ‘God hates the sin but loves the sinner.’ And that is true if the sinner is to be manifest as a chosen vessel of mercy, but it is not true otherwise, as this Psalm declares.

What is important to grasp here is that God, as well as David, doesn’t distinguish between the wicked and their sin; his hatred is directed toward the workers of iniquity. Take God’s hatred of Esau. The Lord didn’t say, ‘Jacob have I loved, but the wickedness of Esau have I hated.’ No, ‘*Esau* have I hated.’ If it had been the former then God’s hatred of Esau would have been for something done by him; which would have likewise meant that God’s love for Jacob must have been for something good seen in him, or for some good work he performed – like faith. But by nature both Esau and Jacob were sinners; born in sin and shapen in iniquity. What goodness was found in Jacob? Just read the account of his early life and see the opportunism, deceit, lying, and stealing, with no hint of repentance or faith, Gen. 27:18-36. No. God didn’t love Jacob for the kind of man he was; the Lord loved Jacob according to his eternal purpose of electing grace. If you want to add a ‘because’ to God’s love for Jacob – outside of the realm of grace – then you’re in to the idea of God’s favour being bestowed because of works foreseen, or innate goodness found in the creature; and with that you will overthrow the nature of grace completely; which, of course, is what Arminianism does, cp. Rom. 11:5-8, 4:4,5.

Another reason people reject this thought of God and his people hating His enemies is simply because they don’t have sufficient love for the truth of God themselves; if they did then they too would abhor all those who hated and opposed it. David was grieved – what a deeply felt emotion that is: *grieved* – because God’s enemies spoke against Him wickedly, and took His name in vain. How prevelant this is in the modern church! What is preaching ‘another gospel’ if not speaking wickedly against God and his Son? And what is taking the name of the Lord in vain if not drawing nigh unto him with the mouth, and honouring him with the lips, while the heart remains far from him? Matt. 15:1-9.

So David hated God’s enemies. And to show that this hatred was not sinful David tells us that it was ‘perfect’ hatred; he hated them ‘completely and to perfection’. This had therefore become an innate and settled hatred in

David, which is why he could now count them as *his* enemies. They were God's enemies, but because David was so close to his God; was so intimate with his mind and will; and was so absorbed in his truth and ways; his God's enemies were now his. And he felt it. This was no sudden pique of loathing because David had been hurt or upset by these people, this was 'My God's enemies are become my enemies, and I feel the same towards them as my God does.' And as it is no sin for *God* to hate his enemies, then it was no sin for David either.

Now if there are still some having trouble with this, then let me ask you a question: Don't you hate Satan? Yes? There. You hate at least one of God's enemies. And surely you feel the same towards those who oppose and scoff at the truth of the gospel; for the prince of the power of the air dwells in them, while the Spirit of your Father dwells in you; and what is there but hatred and enmity between God and Satan? Please do remember that the overthrow of the great city Babylon, of which these are a willing and active part, brings forth shouts of 'Alleluia' in heaven. Moreover, don't you also hate your own flesh – your carnal mind, which is enmity against God? All those taught of the Father feel and hate the enmity.

Now, can we find the same mentality in the people of God under the new covenant? But surely we are supposed to 'love our enemies, bless them that curse us, do good to them that hate us, and pray for them which despitefully use us and persecute us'? Yes we are. But it is not the same thing. Although David hated *God's* enemies, and then hated them as his own enemies, he would still have obeyed this commandment of the Lord Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount because here 'to love' etc. is not 'to like', or 'to have nice feelings towards', but is to *do good towards them*, if needs be, regardless of the fact that they are your spiritual enemies and that you loathe them for their hatred of your God; cp. Romans 12:18-21.

This can be clearly seen in the parable of the Samaritan who had compassion on the man fallen among thieves, Luke 10. The point of the parable was to show the self-righteous lawyer that a natural enemy – the Samaritan of the Jew – could still 'love' him, and that he was to 'love' his neighbour as himself. For it was the Samaritan's compassion in binding up the man's wounds and caring for him which was 'loving' him – something the man's fellow religious countrymen – the priest and the Levite – didn't have and didn't show. And this is what loving your enemies

means. They are no less your enemies, and you may no less possess perfect hatred toward them for their hatred of your God and his truth, but 'If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat, and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink', Prov. 25:21; for who can tell, he might at length be manifest as one for whom Christ died, although as yet he is still in open rebellion and hatred against your God. After all, is this not how the Lord Jesus wrought? Did not God commend his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners – in active rebellion against him – Christ died for us? We must always remember that the Saviour never commands his people to do something he hasn't done himself.

Therefore to love our enemies is to bless them, do good to them, and to pray for them, even though spiritually speaking we 'hate them with perfect hatred.'

'A man's enemies'

The apostle Paul, on one of his journeys travelled back through certain places 'confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that, we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God', Acts 14:21,22. And what causes so much tribulation to the children of God than that – because of the gospel – they are found to be at enmity with their own 'loved ones'? Paul spoke of having 'suffered the loss of all things for Christ', and that would most likely have included the affections, at least, of his family. But this is the stated work of the Lord Jesus himself: to bring this enmity between his people and others. 'Think not that I came to send peace on earth', he said, 'I came not to send peace, but a sword.' He came to do it! as he continued; 'For I am come to...' for this very purpose, '...to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother...' and what closer relationships are there outside of the marriage union itself? 'And a man's foes [enemies] shall be they of his own household', Matt. 10:34-36. And what tribulation this causes the saints.

But the enmity, and the tension, is more heightened when the saint's enemies are professing Christians themselves. For there is no greater enemy to the truth of the gospel, and to those who walk by the gospel, than those who profess Christ but have no love for the truth of the doctrine of Christ. Your 'unchurched', irreligious neighbours don't care about what you believe and stand for, or for the differences between, say,

law and faith; or how travellers of the narrow way differ from those on the broad – both professing Christian pathways, by the way; no, Gallio-like, they care for none of these things, cp. Acts 18:12-17. But when you start speaking to your church-going relatives of those things which Christ has taught you by revelation then they, being devoid of the same – though they may ‘love Jesus’ and seek to ‘live their lives for him’ – will soon jump on you, will oppose the truth that you speak, and will start accusing you of being judgmental, superior, ‘better than us?’, the only one! too serious, too narrow-minded, and, yes, *unloving*. And unless the Lord opens their eyes to their false profession then the enmity will be sealed and fixed for ever; their hearts will increasingly harden against you; and what you once thought was a loving relationship will be irreparably damaged: blood certainly is *not* thicker than water when the Lord comes into a family with his sword.

But the time will come when you must ‘shake the dust off your feet’ against them. Jesus meant by this that his disciples should no longer ‘cast their pearls before swine’, or ‘give that which is holy unto the dogs’; painful as it is, there comes a time even with your own kith and kin, when you must refrain from telling them the precious truths of the gospel if they *will not* hear them – unless the Lord suddenly gives you liberty one more time to warn them when you hadn’t planned on, or indeed wanted to say anything.

All this will be very painful: you will get much opposition, experience much tribulation, yea, and see a different kind of hatred appear: for it will not be a ‘perfect’ hatred on their part but a murderous hatred: you will see it in their eyes, and hear it in their voice; ‘ye shall be hated of all [these] men for my name’s sake’, said Christ, and in their hearts they will want you dead, cp. 1 John 3:15, Matt. 10:21,22, 1 Peter 4:12-16. But, here and now, ‘Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so [opposed and] persecuted they the prophets which were before you’, Matt. 5:10-12. And then, on that day, and thereafter for all eternity, cry, ‘Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth... for true and righteous are his judgments’, Rev. 19.

These are not natural cries; they are Spirit-wrought cries. Before that day comes, though ‘rejoicing and being exceeding glad’, you will have pain in your heart and tears in your eyes; but your love for your God and his truth

outweighs even natural affection. The Lord's enemies will be finally defeated; all those who oppose the truth of the gospel will forever be cast into the lake of fire, and, yes, many of your family might be among them. But *then* you won't remember them; there will be no bitterness mixed with the rejoicing in glory, for there will be no more curse; like the Lord Jesus your rejoicing will be because the will of the Father has been done, and that, but for his grace, you would have been no different from his/your enemies.

The Lord Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children [who turn out to be your spiritual enemies], or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life', Mark 10:29,30.

And please do remember this also: the Lord promises some that 'I will take you... two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion', Jer. 3:14; not every child of God is destined to be the only one called by grace in his family.