

“All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name” – a Hymn Study

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Introduction

The book of Psalms, written mostly by David, was the song book of God’s Old Testament people for a thousand years. However, some five hundred years earlier, Moses led the descendants of Israel in singing the great song of deliverance from their Egyptian slavery, followed by Miriam’s leading the women in yet another hymn of praise (Exo. 15:1–18; 21). Even before the church began, faithful people sang hymns of praise to Him (Mark 14:26). When the church was established, a part of the inspired pattern set forth for it was the singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs in worship to God (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). The number of hymns that have been composed through the centuries can never be known for sure because it is likely many have been lost. However, they must number into the many thousands, based on the quantity of those that have survived.

Every hymn that has survived has a history and a story behind it, although many of these stories have been lost even if the hymn has survived. Fortunately, the backgrounds of many, if not most, of the best-known Gospel songs and hymns have been researched and preserved by various historians. These histories make for interesting – and sometimes inspiring – reading. One of the most familiar hymns in our song books is “All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name.” John Julian makes the following claim about its popularity in Protestantism as a whole:

The use of this hymn in various forms and many languages is very extensive. In the number of hymnbooks in which it is found in one form or another, it ranks with the first ten in the English language.¹

The history of both its lyrics and of the most familiar tune to which it is sung are available to us.

Historical Notes

The lyrics of “All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name” were written by Edward Perronet. Perronet was born in the village of Sundridge, County Kent, England in 1726. His parents were Huguenots who had found refuge in England in 1680 from Roman Catholic persecution in Switzerland. Edward’s father, Vincent, vicar of Shoreham, was contemporary with and greatly admired by John and Charles Wesley. Edward was also counted among the Wesleys’ intimate

circle of friends until he published a poem in 1757 entitled "The Mitre," that stridently exposed abuses within the Church of England. This circumstance eventually led to their severance of fellowship. He spent his last several years preaching for a small independent congregation of dissenters at Canterbury, never ceasing his hostility toward the state church. Although he published several hymns, "All Hail the Power..." is the only one that has survived.

The initial publication of this powerful hymn was in the British periodical, *Gospel Magazine*, November 1779, in which only the first verse, identical to our modern first verse (except for one word), was published.² It was set to a tune (afterwards known as "Miles Lane") written by William Shrubsole, a young church organist and fellow-rebel with Perronet against the Church of England. It is conjectured that readers inquired of the editor of *Gospel Magazine* concerning additional verses, if there were such. The next April the periodical published the first stanza with seven additional stanzas under the title, "On the Resurrection, the Lord Is King." Perronet published several of his poems in 1785 in a book he titled *Occasional Verses, Moral and Sacred, Published for the Instruction and Amusement of the Candidly Serious and Religious*. He included "All Hail the Power..." in this collection under the abbreviated title, "On the Resurrection." The full eight verses of the hymn as published in the above work are as follows:

All hail the pow'r of Jesus' name;
Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the Royal Diadem,
To crown Him Lord of all.

Let highborn seraphs tune the lyre,
And as they tune it, fall
Before His face who tunes their choir,
And crown Him Lord of all.

Crown Him ye morning stars of light,
Who fix'd this floating ball;
Now hail the strength of Israel's might,
And crown Him Lord of all.

Crown Him, ye martyrs of your God,
Who from His altar call;
Extol the stem of Jesse's rod,
And crown Him Lord of all.

Ye seed of Israel's chosen race,
Ye ransom'd of the fall,
Hail Him Who saves you by His grace,
And crown Him Lord of all.

Hail Him, ye heirs of David's line,
Whom David Lord did call;
The God incarnate, man Divine,
And crown Him Lord of all.

Sinners! whose love can ne'er forget
The wormwood and the gall,
Go—spread your trophies at His feet,
And crown Him Lord of All.

Let every tribe and every tongue
That bound creation's call,
Now shout in universal song,
The crowned Lord of all.

Perronet's hymn caught on and soon began to be adapted and published by hymn compilers. Perhaps the first to do so was G. Burder, who included it in his *Collection* of 1784, under the title, "The Coronation Hymn." He shortened it to four verses, using numbers one, seven, five, and eight of the original (in that order) and changed Perronet's words in all but verse seven. The lyrics of this hymn have evolved through various adaptations to produce the words of its four verses that are familiar to us. The most significant adaptation (and that upon which our current version is based) was done by John Rippon in 1787 in his *Selection of Hymns*. He shortened the poem to seven verses, completely excising three of Perronet's original, greatly altering two others, and composing two new ones of his own. Rippon affixed an interesting subtitle to each verse, specifying the source of praise in each, as follows: (1) "Angels," (2) "Martyrs," (3) "Converted Jews," (4) "Believing Gentiles," (5) "Sinners of Every Age," (6) "Sinners of Every Nation," and (7) "Ourselves." The four verses that have come down to us are one, three, six, and seven of Rippon's adaptation, only three of which were in Perronet's original eight verses, and even those were altered to a greater or lesser extent. Despite numerous adaptations, it is still only right that Perronet be given credit for the hymn in its totality.

Three tunes have come down to the present to which the powerful words of “All Hail the Power...” have been sung.³ The three tunes (as they appeared chronologically) bear the respective names of “Miles Lane,” “Coronation,” and “Diadem.” As previously noted, the initial publication of Perronet’s first verse in 1779 was to a tune written by Shrubsole. Stephen Addington (who published his *Collection of Psalm Tunes* in 1780) named this tune “Miles Lane.” Addington preached at Mile’s Lane Meeting House in London at the time and simply named the tune “Miles Lane” after the church house address. “Coronation” is the name Oliver Holden, an American patriot and Puritan preacher, gave to the music he composed for Perronet’s verse in 1792. It was first published in his *Union Harmony, or Universal Collection of Sacred Music*, which he published in Boston in 1793 (according to Reynolds, one of eight such compilations of sacred songs he published between 1792 and 1793).⁴ The name of this tune is derived from the repeated final line of each stanza, “And crown Him Lord of all.” James Ellor, music director of the Wesleyan Chapel in Droylsden, England, wrote the “Diadem” tune in 1838. It was apparently named for the repeated references to the diadem in the first verse. Of the three tunes, “Coronation” is the one most common to American hymnals, perhaps because it originated in our nation.⁵ Understandably, “Miles Lane” and “Diadem” are still popular in England.

Content and Application

The clue to the “inspiration” for this song in the mind of Edward Perronet may be seen in the original title he ascribed to it when it was first published in full in 1780: “On the Resurrection, the Lord is King.” It is obvious that this was intended to be a song of praise not only to the risen Christ, but even more, to the ascended and exalted Christ. From even a casual reading of Perronet’s original eight verses one sees that his intent is to call upon all creation, both in Heaven and on Earth, both inanimate and animate, to join in the grand coronation of the Son of God that occurred when He rejoined His Father in the throne room of Heaven. Hence his first and second verses call upon the angelic hosts, including the seraphim and the angelic “choir,” to crown the Lord. These are followed by like exhortations to the stars (v. 3), those martyred for God’s sake (v. 4), those descended from Israel (v. 5), those descended from David (perhaps intended to represent all kings) (v. 6), all sinners (apparently referring to redeemed sinners) (v. 7), and finally, “every tribe and every tongue” (v. 8).

The premise of Perronet’s hymn as stated above is imminently Scriptural; in fact, it pertains to the very vitals of the Gospel – the resurrection, ascension, and enthronement of the

Christ. Daniel foresaw this glorious ascension and crowning of the Lord in one of his night-visions five centuries before it occurred:

One like unto a son of man” came with the clouds of heaven to the “Ancient of Days.” He was given “dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed (Dan. 7:13-14).⁶

The Lord foretold His death and resurrection to the apostles numerous times (which they had great difficulty believing till after the fact):

When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he spake this; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said (John 2:22).

Even before His death He began trying to prepare them for His departure from them after the resurrection. The principal purpose of Jesus’ lengthy address to the apostles in John 13–17 on the eve of His death was to prepare them for His departure from them when He would return to the Father. He was “taken up into heaven” through the clouds from the Mount of Olives some forty days following His resurrection as the astonished apostles looked on (Luke 24:51; Acts. 1:3, 9). Ten days later the great theme of the Pentecost sermon was the resurrection and exaltation of the Christ to His promised throne at the Father’s right hand, which the prophets had predicted (Acts 2:29–36). He there remains on the throne of His father David, reigning over His kingdom, the church, till the last enemy shall be destroyed (2 Sam. 7:13–14; Isa. 9:7; Dan. 7:13–14). Likely the fullest Scriptural summary of the grand theme of Perronet’s song is in Paul’s words to the Ephesians:

That ye may know what is the hope of his calling, what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to that working of the strength of his might which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come (Eph. 1:18–21).

Having given some attention to the general theme of the hymn, let us now consider each of the four verses that commonly appear in modern hymnbooks.

Verse One:

**All hail the pow’r of Jesus’ name!
Let angels prostrate fall!
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all.**

This verse begins by rightly recognizing the power in the very name of Jesus. Note that the five letters, *J-E-S-U-S*, are not some sort of magic formula or mysterious code, as some Jews in Ephesus once learned to their shame and pain. Seeing Paul casting out demons in the name of Jesus, they concluded that the mere word, *Jesus*, must be the secret to such power. They sought to do the same by adjuring an evil spirit to come out of a man “by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.” In one of the most humorous anecdotes of Paul’s illustrious apostolic career, the evil spirit responded, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?” The possessed man then gave the Jews a thrashing they did not soon forget (Acts. 19:13–16)!

The point is that the name of Jesus is symbolic of, stands for, His power or authority. This use of the “name” of the Lord is found frequently in the New Testament. Jesus thus used His name in Mark 16:17: “And these signs shall accompany them that believe: **in my name** shall they cast out demons; they shall speak with new tongues” (emph. DM). Paul was fulfilling this very promise in the incident in Ephesus mentioned above. Jesus commanded that repentance and remission of sins be preached **in His name** to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:47). Peter’s command on Pentecost was that sinners must repent and be baptized **in the name** of Jesus Christ unto the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; emph. DM). It was in the **name of Jesus Christ** that Peter and John commanded the lame man at the Beautiful Gate to walk (Acts. 3:6; emph. DM). When the council arrested these apostles after the lame man was healed, their first question of them was, “By what power, or in what **name**, have ye done this?” (4:7; emph. DM). Peter boldly replied:

Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that **in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth**, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even in him doth this man stand here before you whole (v. 10; emph. DM).

The name of Christ relates directly to our daily behavior: “And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, **do all in the name of the Lord Jesus**, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Col. 3:17; emph. DM). Dozens of additional illustrations of this usage and emphasis appear in the New Testament.

All glory, power, and honor belong to the Son of God! None but the other persons of the Godhead are excepted (I Cor. 15:27). This includes the angelic hosts – as Perronet expressed it, “Let angels prostrate fall!” They, like men, are creatures of free will and capable of sin. Also, like most men, some angels have chosen to rob the Lord of their praise and service due Him. All such will eventually be rewarded with eternal retribution (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6). However, in John’s

visions he repeatedly saw the innumerable hosts of Heaven praising God and His Son, the sacrificial Lamb:

And I saw, and I heard a voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a great voice, Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might and honor, and glory, and blessing (Rev. 5:11-12).

And all the angels were standing round about the throne, and about the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen (Rev. 7:11-12).

Verse Two:

**Ye chosen seed of Israel's race,
Ye ransomed from the fall,
Hail Him who saves you by His grace,
And crown Him Lord of all.**

It is possible that Perronet had in mind the fleshly Jews in the first phrase of this verse, and Gentiles in the second, thus embracing all men. However, if this were the case, the third verse ("Let ev'ry kindred, ev'ry tribe...") would be somewhat repetitious. Apparently, he had in mind the saints, those who constitute spiritual "Israel," the church, when he wrote this stanza. These, and these alone, are "ransomed from the fall." With the coming and death of Christ, fleshly Israel was no longer God's chosen people. Generally, Jews according to race and religion rejected the Son of God, either by rejecting His claims and His message or by directly participating in His crucifixion. They were thus rejected by God – they ceased to be the "Israel," the chosen people or "seed" of God.

It was with this principle in mind that Paul wrote:

For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Rom. 2:28-29).

He further explained: "That is, it is not the children of the flesh that are children of God; but the children of the promise are reckoned for a seed" (9:8). John said of the Christ:

He came unto his own [i.e., the Jews, DM], and they that were his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1:11-13).

Thus, those who have become children of God since the coming of Christ have not done so by being born Israelites, as under the Old Testament, but by being “born of water and the Spirit” (John 3:5). In the Christian era people become...

...sons of God, through [the] faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. **There can be neither Jew nor Greek**, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:26–28; emph. DM).

Clearly, the only “Israelites” who have been “ransomed from the fall” are New Testament Christians, whether fleshly Jews or Gentiles.

How grateful ought the redeemed to be for their salvation by the wonderful grace of the Lord! Only the most wretched ingrate could accept the merciful salvation proffered through Christ by obedience to His Gospel and then fail to express continual gratitude for such “great salvation” through word and deed. The Christ is the deserving Prince of Heaven because of the salvation He procured through the offering of His blood. We must never forget that we were redeemed “with precious blood, as of a lamb without spot, even the blood of Christ: who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world but was manifested at the end of times” (1 Pet. 1:18–20). Everyone who becomes a Christian must “crown Him Lord of all” in the very process of being saved:

If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom. 10:9–10).

We must continue to honor His Lordship by our diligent obedience to His will. Anything less is sheer hypocrisy: “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46).

Verse Three:

**Let ev’ry kindred, ev’ry tribe,
On this terrestrial ball,
To Him all majesty ascribe,
And crown Him Lord of all.**

From the original man and woman God created, mankind has proliferated into various races, kindred, tribes, and nations. Yet, they are all mankind and are all the creation of God, thereby owing God their allegiance, worship, and service. Whether in the benighted jungles of Africa or South America or in the remote pagan areas of India or China, all mankind owes to

the Son of God its ascription of majesty. This includes all classes and colors, all tongues and territories of men. It is the sacred duty of all...

that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being (Acts 17:27-28).

From the lowliest peasant in the rice paddies of Southeast Asia to the richest and most powerful figures on earth, and all levels in between — they all are under obligation to honor Him Who is “the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords” (1 Tim. 6:15).

However, most of the teeming billions know nothing of the only Savior who can bring them to peace with the one True and Living God. It was so when Jesus left the apostles behind with the charge to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation (Mark 16:15). Paul never ceased to be concerned about those who had not heard the Gospel. This concern was one of the relentless driving principles of his life after he obeyed the Gospel. After stating the axiom, “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved,” he then flawlessly reasoned with all who would ever read his words:

How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? (Rom. 10:13-15).

Let us all not only give Christ Jesus all the glory and honor we owe Him for our redemption but let us unceasingly seek opportunities to shine the light of Truth in this dark world, so that more and more can have the opportunity to “crown Him Lord of all.”

Verse Four:

**O that with yonder sacred throng
We at His feet may fall!
We'll join the everlasting song,
And praise Him Lord of all.**

This verse expresses the yearning and desire of every dedicated saint. We have heard the Gospel and embraced it. We have rejoiced upon our salvation from the guilt of sin through the blood of Christ. We have heard of Heaven, and our hope of being there while the eternal ages roll on grows ever stronger. John was permitted to glimpse into the very throne room of Heaven in his visions on Patmos. We have already briefly noted his description of the legions of angels who honored Deity in the celestial realm. However, he also saw other classes of spiritual

beings bowing low before the throne of God and of His Son, the sacrificial Lamb Who took away the sins of the world:

And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sing a new song, saying, Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou was slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon earth. And I saw, and I heard a voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a great voice, Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might and honor, and glory, and blessing (Rev. 5:8-12).

John was obviously given a glimpse of Heaven, as it will be when all of God's people are at home with Him forever, in the vision he recorded in Revelation 7:

After these things I saw, and behold, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands; and they cry with a great voice, saying, Salvation unto our God who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels were standing round about the throne, and about the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen (vv. 9-12).

Can the faithful child of God read these inspiring descriptions and not imagine himself or herself in them? Do we not yearn to be in that sacred throng, even now? Do we not thrill at the prospect of not merely escaping this world of sorrow and sin, but of seeing our Redeemer face to face at last? Surely it is not wrong to hunger for the hour when "all of God's singers get home" and we can join in the everlasting new song, the song of Moses and the Lamb (Rev. 14:3; 15:3). This is the very thought Paul expressed to the Philippians: "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.... But I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ; for it is very far better" (Phi. 1:21-23).

However, mere "hoping" is not "having." Mankind has been so long fed a diet of religious and philosophical mush that the mush has replaced his brain! The vast majority has no faith in God or His Son and not a clue about what lies beyond the grave. By far the most of those who profess to believe in the Christ and His Word seem to be under the impression that it matters little or not at all what one believes or practices in religion or how one behaves, Heaven awaits them all! This is a convenient and popular belief, but unfortunately for its holders, it did

not come from the Bible, and it is baseless and vain. The Bible clearly contradicts such careless unfounded optimism and wishful thinking. The Sacrifice of Calvary and Lord of glory warned instead...

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 who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Mat. 7:21-23).

It is evident from these words of the Lord, and from many others that harmonize with them, that only those who have seen fit to seek and do the Father's revealed Will can rightly entertain hope of entering His heavenly kingdom.

Conclusion

Jesus the Christ, the Son of the Living God, deserves to be crowned with glory and honor by every being in Heaven and on Earth. He presently enjoys such adoration and service by the heavenly beings, as John's visions prove. As earthly beings we can and must even now do our utmost to exalt our Lord. This is not accomplished by idly crying "Hallelujah" or loudly professing our discipleship or our faith. It is rather accomplished and measured by our respect for His Word: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). Notice that rejection of the words or teachings of Jesus – refusal to obey them – is tantamount to rejecting Him personally. It follows that it is necessary to obey the teachings of Jesus found in the New Testament in order to accept Him. One simply cannot have Jesus and His saving power apart from His Word, for it, the Gospel, "is the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16). Only if we "crown Him Lord of all" here on earth by obedience to His Word will we be able to "join the everlasting song and praise Him Lord of all"!

Endnotes

1. John Julian, ed., *A Dictionary of Hymnology* (New York, NY: Dover Pub., Inc., 1957 ed.), 1:42.
2. William Jensen Reynolds, *Hymns of Our Faith* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, rev. 1967), p. 8.
3. Interestingly, the hymn appears in all three musical versions in *The Baptist Hymnal* published in 1956.
4. Reynolds, p. 319.
5. I have over 20 different hymn books in my library, some of them well over a century old. "All Hail the Power..." is in all but three or four of them in at least one tune version. In several of the older books, it appears in two versions. If only one version is included it is almost invariably "Coronation," but where a second version is included it is usually "Diadem," but occasionally "Miles Lane." Also, in

some of the oldest books in the author's small collection a fifth verse is sometimes found, corresponding to Perronet's original seventh verse.

6. All Scripture quotations are from the American Standard Version unless otherwise indicated.

[**Note:** I wrote this MS for and presented a digest of it orally at the Memphis School of Preaching Lectures, hosted by the Forest Hill Church of Christ, Memphis, TN, March 29–April 2, 1998. It was published in the book of the lectures, *Lesson in Lyrics*, ed. Curtis A. Cates (Memphis, TN: Memphis School of Preaching, 1998).]

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