

Hebrews 1:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

Analysis

Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

Continuing the Psalm 45 quotation, this verse describes Christ's moral character and consequent exaltation. Christ has "loved righteousness" (ēgapēsas dikaiosynēn, ἠγάπησας δικαιοσύνην) and "hated iniquity" (emisēsas anomian, ἐμίσησας ἀνομίαν, literally "hated lawlessness"). This isn't mere preference but passionate devotion to righteousness and active opposition to sin.

The verb tenses are significant—the aorist tense points to Christ's completed earthly life where He perfectly loved righteousness and hated sin. In every temptation He chose righteousness; in every decision He opposed sin; in every action He demonstrated holiness. His entire incarnate life displayed unwavering commitment to God's will and moral excellence. This qualified Him as the perfect High Priest who can sympathize with our weaknesses yet remained "without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

"Therefore God, even thy God" presents a fascinating christological statement. Christ, who was just called "God" (verse 8), also has "God" as His God—showing the distinction of persons within the Trinity while maintaining the unity of divine essence. As the incarnate Son, Christ relates to the Father as "thy God" while remaining fully divine Himself. This mystery of the hypostatic union—Christ as fully God and fully man—is essential to Christianity.

Christ has been "anointed with the oil of gladness above thy fellows" (echrisen se ho theos, ho theos sou, elaion agalliaseōs para tous metochous sou, ἔχρισέ σε ὁ θεός, ὁ θεός σου, ἔλαιον ἀγαλλιάσεως παρὰ τοὺς μετόχους σου). The anointing with oil symbolizes the Holy Spirit's empowering for messianic ministry (Isaiah 61:1, Luke 4:18). Christ is exalted "above thy fellows"—whether these are interpreted as other kings, angels, or redeemed humanity, Christ surpasses all in His anointing, joy, and honor.

Historical Context

Anointing with oil had multiple significances in ancient Israel—consecrating priests (Exodus 29:7), installing kings (1 Samuel 16:13), and appointing prophets (1 Kings 19:16). The Messiah (literally "Anointed One") would embody all three offices perfectly. Jesus is the ultimate Prophet who reveals God (Deuteronomy 18:15-18, Acts 3:22), the eternal King from David's line (2 Samuel 7:12-16), and the great High Priest (Hebrews 4:14-5:10).

The "oil of gladness" suggests the joy that accompanied festive occasions, particularly coronations and celebrations. Christ's exaltation brings cosmic joy—the angels rejoice (Luke 2:13-14), creation will be liberated (Romans 8:21), and believers experience inexpressible joy (1 Peter 1:8). His victory over sin and death inaugurates the age of messianic blessing and gladness.

The distinction between "God" and "thy God" in this verse contributed to theological reflection on Christ's two natures. The church fathers recognized that Scripture presents Christ as both fully divine (worthy of being called "God") and fully human (having "God" as His God). The Council of Chalcedon (451 AD) articulated this biblical truth: Christ is one person with two natures, truly God and truly man, without confusion or separation.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does Christ's example of loving righteousness and hating iniquity shape your understanding of biblical love and holiness?
2. What does it mean practically that you share in Christ's anointing through the Holy Spirit, and how should this affect your daily life?
3. How can you cultivate both confidence in Christ's perfect righteousness and conviction about your own need for growth in holiness?

Interlinear Text

ἠγάπησας δικαιοσύνην καὶ ἐμίσησας ἀνομίαν· διὰ
Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity therefore
G25 G1343 G2532 G3404 G458 G1223

τοῦτο ἔχρισέν σε ὁ θεός ὁ θεός σου ἔλαιον
G5124 hath anointed thee G3588 God G3588 God even thy with the oil
G5548 G4571 G2316 G2316 G4675 G1637

ἀγαλλιάσεως παρὰ τοὺς μετόχους σου
of gladness above G3588 fellows even thy
G20 G3844 G3353 G4675

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 45:7 (Love): Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

Psalms 23:5 (Parallel theme): Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Isaiah 61:3 (Righteousness): To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

Galatians 5:22 (Love): But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

Romans 15:13 (References God): Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Isaiah 61:1 (References God): The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;

Luke 4:18 (Parallel theme): The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

Amos 5:15 (Love): Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the LORD God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph.

1 John 1:3 (Parallel theme): That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 61:8 (Love): For I the LORD love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.