

# The Essence of the Theocratic Greeting

Some people have been asking to know the essence of the greeting. “Hail Jehovah and Jesus Christ” which members of the God’s Kingdom Society, (GKS) the Church of the living God, use as a form of salutation and after opening and closing prayers in gatherings of the Church. This sermon is written to make the issue clear to all.

According to good dictionaries, the word ‘essence’ means “the most important quality of a thing, which makes it what it is”. The word “theocratic” means “pertaining to or of the nature of theocracy” (which is a government directed by God Himself). God’s Kingdom Society being one of the Branches of God’s universal government which He in fulfilment of His promise to set up in these last days, is controlled by God through His word, under the direction of His Holy Spirit. It is therefore, a theocracy, though not yet in a perfect form.- Isaiah 2:2-5; Daniel 7:22, 27.

The word “greeting” means “a salutation” while to “hail” means “to call out someone by name in recognition of his importance” or to acclaim, as “to praise or approve a person, action, or accomplishment with enthusiasm”. Jehovah is the Hebrew name of the Almighty God. It means self-existing One, One who lives of Himself. He lives from everlasting to everlasting. (Psalm 90:2) Jesus Christ is the name of the only begotten son of God. He is the only direct creation of God Almighty. Through him all other things, visible and invisible were created. – Colossians 1:15-17; Ephesians 3:9; John 1:10.

It is these two personalities that men ought to worship. Unfortunately however, people tend to be misled by the devil into doing reverence to their fellow human beings or sets up some grand scheme before them so that they will set their hopes on such makeshifts rather than in God Almighty. The danger in such false reasoning could be seen from the tragedies that had followed those who had been so misled. A striking instance happened during the Second World War, following the exaltation of Hitler, the then leader of the Nazi party, in Germany. In 1934 Hitler took the title of Führer (“Leader”), in addition to being the chancellor, and commander in chief of the army, consequent upon which “Heil Hitler!” became legally obligatory as a common greeting, as did the Hitler salute of the right arm fully thrust forward with the palm facing downward. Heil is the German word for “hail”.

Reports allege that during World War II, German soldiers captured some children and locked them up in a cell. When they said “yes” to the question as to whether they believed in God, the soldiers then asked them to pray to God to give them bread to eat, as they were hungry. And the children did just that by saying, “Oh, God, give us this day, our daily bread”. But no bread was forth-coming. Unknown to the children, the soldiers had packed some loaves of bread into the ceiling and prepared a device which at the touch of a button, will open up the ceiling for bread to start dropping from the ceiling. Thus, when the children changed the words of the prayer and started saying: “Hitler, give us this day our daily bread”, they saw to their pleasant surprise that bread started raining down from the ceiling. On seeing this, the children started chanting “Heil Hitler”, “Heil Hitler”. Thenceforth, people in Germany and the conquered territories started saying “Ha” or “Heil Hitler”, meaning that the German leader is the one in whom supreme power resides and whom the people should look to for their provision, protection and well-being generally. And so, in schools, work places, parade grounds, among the military and so on throughout Germany and in her colonies, the Hitler salute was followed by the words “Heil Hitler” .

When this report reached St. Urhobo, he was very angry and declared publicly that no man should ascribe to himself the power to save other human beings as that is the exclusive preserve of God Almighty. He then gave a lecture entitled “Hitlerism must be destroyed”. St. Urhobo then directed in the year 1943 that “Hail Jehovah and Jesus Christ” should be the mode of salutation among members and that it should be said at the end of every prayer held privately or

congregationally. Since 1943, this has become the tradition of God's Kingdom Society. Our reasons for using the theocratic greeting "Hail Jehovah and Jesus Christ are as follows:

1. That Jehovah is the Source of Salvation: The theocratic greeting gives the understanding that salvation comes only from Jehovah through Jesus Christ and is for the benefit of those who do His will and praise His holy name. "Salvation belongeth unto the LORD" said the Psalmist in Psalm 3:8. Furthermore God declared through His prophet Isaiah: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." – Isaiah 45:22  
All people who have faith in God know that neither Hitler nor any human being can bring salvation to the people. Salvation will only come to those who fully embrace Jesus Christ, the Bishop and Shepherd of our souls. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." – Acts 4:12; see also Hebrews 12:2.

The people of God believe that Jehovah is the only source of life and peace or salvation through Christ Jesus. Scriptures say "Salvation to our God (Jehovah) which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb (Christ Jesus). (Revelation 7:10) People of God cannot claim to be faithful to Him if they hail any being other than their Maker. (Jeremiah 10:6,7,10,11) Thus, the salutation is also a prayer for God to continue to protect, sustain and save us in His Kingdom by His grace.

2. It is a sign of complete allegiance to the two Higher Powers: We hail Jehovah and Jesus Christ because they constitute the two "Higher Powers". All who want to get life must be subject to Them. St. Paul said: "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers" (Romans 13:1) All other authorities in God's Organisation derive their powers from God Almighty through Jesus Christ. When people hail Jehovah and Jesus Christ, they thereby declare their complete submission to them and declare their readiness to do Their will at all times for their blessings and salvation in the end. The Bible says: "Then he sheweth them their work, and their transgressions that they have exceeded. He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity. If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures. But if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge." – Job 36:9-12. See also 1 Samuel 15:22,23; Jeremiah 7:22,23; Romans 2:8,9.

3. It shows that God is the source of blessings: By the theocratic greeting, we not only acknowledge and express appreciation for the blessings received from God and Christ but express faith that we shall receive more by His grace as long as we continue to do His will. – Isaiah 26:3,4; Psalm 29:11.

4. For purpose of identification: Those who have decided to take their stand on the Lord's side by identifying with the truth are peculiar people, who are zealous to do the will of God. The theocratic greeting is a way of publicly demonstrating their faith in God Almighty and Jesus Christ and identifying themselves as members of the God's Kingdom Society (GKS) the Church of the Living God. No true believer will be ashamed of showing himself or herself as being firm in his or her belief in God Almighty and Jesus Christ. "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation," said Jesus Christ, "of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy Angels." – Mark 8:38.

5. Spiritual Commitment: Those who use the theocratic greeting, should be fully conscious of its implications in that they are thereby committing themselves to the doing of the will of the God all the time. St. Paul stated: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart

from iniquity.” (2 Timothy 2:19) Again, Apostle Paul in his letter to the Christians in Rome declared: “Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.”- Romans 2:21-24.

Mode of saying the Theocratic greeting

In saying “Hail Jehovah and Jesus Christ” to close prayers the men should bow their heads while women bow the knee. This is however not necessary when the greeting is being used for salutation. Still, the men should remove their hats at all times when they hail, whether greeting fellow members or in prayer. But we should not genuflect or bend the knee when using it as greeting to our fellow members.

The Theocratic Greeting should not be said:

- When one had just woken up from bed and had not washed the mouth and face or taken one’s bath;
- When one is eating and the mouth is full of food;
- In unclean environments, such as the toilet , garbage heaps; etc.
- When the members are too far from each other.

Also, the greeting should not be accompanied by “sir” or “ma”. This is no disrespect because the salutation is a prayer to God and Christ Jesus wishing the recipient well in the Lord.

It is hoped with these clarifications, the mists have been cleared in regard to the theocratic greeting of the GKS and the mode of saying it, and that those using it will do so with better understanding and faith by God’s grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.