



Old Time Gospel Hymns Bible Study

**Gethsemane Lutheran
Church
2/22/2021**

Welcome

Trivia: A Biblical “Who Said It?”

**“Come, see a Man who told me all that I ever did.
Can this be the Christ?”**

The Woman at the Well; John 4:29

Trivia: A Biblical “Who Said It?”

“Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumsized Philistine will be like one of them, since he has taunted the armies of the living God.”

David, lobbying King Saul to allow him to go and face Goliath; 1 Samuel 17:36

Trivia: A Biblical “Who Said It?”

“Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.”

The boy Samuel, when the Lord called to him during the night in the temple; 1 Samuel 3:10

Trivia: A Biblical “Who Said It?”

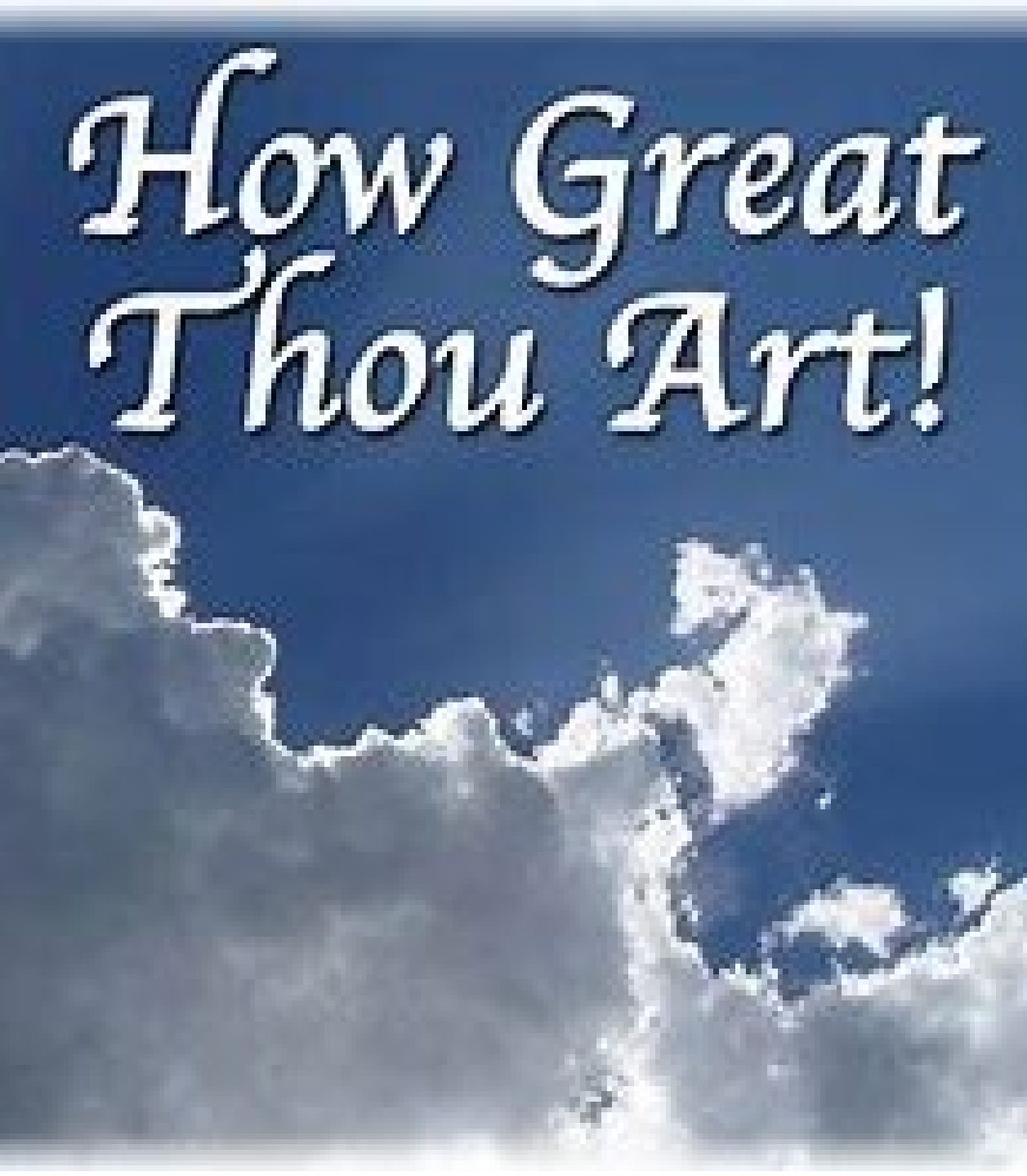
“These words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

Moses, delivering a message given by God to the people of Israel; Deuteronomy 6:6-9

Trivia: A Biblical “Who Said It?”

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.”

Solomon; Proverbs 3:5-6



**Spotlight Hymn:
How Great Thou
Art**

How Great Thou Art: The History

- The origins of How Great Thou Art grew from a 9 stanza poem written by Swedish poet and lay minister Carl Boberg in 1885.
- Boberg titled the poem “O Store Gud” (O Great God)



How Great Thou Art: The History

- The inspiration for the writing came when Boberg and some friends were walking home from an afternoon service near Kronoback, Sweden, and listening to church bells in the distance. A sudden storm arose and, just as quickly as it appeared, quickly gave way to a peaceful calm.
- In Boberg's own words: *"It was that time of year when everything seemed to be in its richest colouring; the birds were singing in trees and everywhere. It was very warm; a thunderstorm appeared on the horizon and soon there was thunder and lightning. We had to hurry to shelter. But the storm was soon over and the clear sky appeared. When I came home I opened my window toward the sea. There evidently had been a funeral and the bells were playing the tune of 'When eternity's clock calls my saved soul to its Sabbath rest'. That evening, I wrote the song, 'O Store Gud'."*

How Great Thou Art: The History

- The poem was first published in a local newspaper on March 13, 1886.
- It was paired up with the melody of an old Swedish folk tune, and had it's first known public singing during a church service in the Swedish province of Varmland in 1888. By the early 1890's, the hymn had begun appearing in Swedish hymnals.

How Great Thou Art: The History

- Very soon, the German version had reached Russia, and by 1912, had been translated into Russian by Ivan S. Prokhanov under the title “Velikiy Bog” (which translates as “Great God”).

How Great Thou Art: The History

- In 1931, British Methodist missionary Stuart K. Hine heard the Russian version while on a missionary journey to the Carpathian Mountains. Hine was then inspired to create an English paraphrase, which he and his wife Mercy began using in their evangelistic services.
- As events inspired him in the years thereafter, Hine began composing new verses, including what we know today as the 3rd and 4th verse (we'll look at those in more detail as we dig into the text).



How Great Thou Art: The History

- Hine first published his version (How Great Thou Art) in print in his own Gospel magazine *Grace and Peace* in 1949.
- Readers of Hine's magazine (many of them British missionaries) began spreading the hymn throughout their various mission territories throughout the world.

How Great Thou Art: The History

- One last key occurrence served to solidify the widespread popularity of the hymn.
- A young minister named Billy Graham had begun holding evangelistic crusades in the late 1940's.
- In 1954, the Billy Graham team had traveled to London for a crusade and were given a pamphlet containing Hine's work. Graham's team adopted the hymn, and first incorporated it into the program for their 1955 Toronto campaign.



How Great Thou Art: The History

- You may have heard of Graham's 1957 Madison Square Garden campaign in New York City.
- Originally scheduled to run for 6 weeks, the massive public response resulted in the campaign being extended 3 times, running for a total of 16 weeks.
- In total, 2.3 million people attended those services in person, and approximately 100 million watched via television. Graham's Madison Square Garden campaign was a milestone moment in the history of evangelism in the US.
- According to longtime Graham associate Cliff Barrows, How Great Thou Art was sung more than 100 times during that 16 week campaign, and had now become firmly embedded in the public consciousness.
- In 2001, a survey by Christianity Today ranked How Great Thou Art as #2 on the list of America's favorite hymns.



How Great Thou Art: The Text



1 Oh Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder
Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder
Thy power throughout the universe displayed

Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art!

2 When through the woods, and forest glades I
wander
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees
When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur
And see the brook, and feel the gentle breeze

Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art!

How Great Thou Art: The Text



3 And when I think that God, His Son not sparing
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing
He bled and died to take away my sin

Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art!

4 When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart
Then I shall bow in humble adoration
And then proclaim, "My God, how great Thou art!"

Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art!

How Great Thou Art: Theology

- What overarching message do you pick up from this song?
- Wonder at the greatness of God.
 - Wonder of the majesty of creation
 - Wonder at His power
 - Wonder at the sacrifice of His Son
 - Wonder at the grace and mercy we have received
 - Wonder that we shall be with Him

How Great Thou Art: Theology

- God's glory, majesty, and power are on full display in creation.
 - *"The heavens declare the glory of God. The skies proclaim the work of His hands."* Psalm 19:1
 - *"O Lord, how many are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all; the earth is full of Your possessions. There is the sea, great and broad, in which are swarms without numbers, animals both small and great."* Psalm 104:24-25

How Great Thou Art: Theology

- Boberg's original composition had focused very largely on the greatness of God as displayed in creation. Verse 3, however, was composed entirely by Stuart Hine.
- Historian Michael Ireland records the origin of this verse:
 - "It was typical of the Hines to ask if there were any Christians in the villages they visited. In one case, they found out that the only Christians that their host knew about were a man named Dmitri and his wife Lyudmila. Dmitri's wife knew how to read (evidently a fairly rare thing at that time and in that place). She taught herself how to read because a Russian soldier had left a Bible behind several years earlier, and she started slowly learning by reading that Bible. When the Hines arrived in the village and approached Dmitri's house, they heard a strange and wonderful sound: Dmitri's wife was reading from the gospel of John about the crucifixion of Christ to a houseful of guests, and those visitors were in the very act of repenting. In Ukraine, this act of repenting is done very much out loud. So the Hines heard people calling out to God, saying how unbelievable it was that Christ would die for their own sins, and praising Him for His love and mercy. They just couldn't barge in and disrupt this obvious work of the Holy Spirit, so they stayed outside and listened. Stuart wrote down the phrases he heard the repenters use, and it became the third verse that we know today: "And when I think that God, His Son not sparing, Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in."

How Great Thou Art: Theology

- *“What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave Him up for us all—how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.”*
Romans 8:31-34
- *“For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that One died for all, and therefore all died. And He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again. So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.” 2 Corinthians 5:14-21*
- One could argue that verse 3 is the Gospel itself captured in a just few short, yet beautiful lines.

How Great Thou Art: Theology

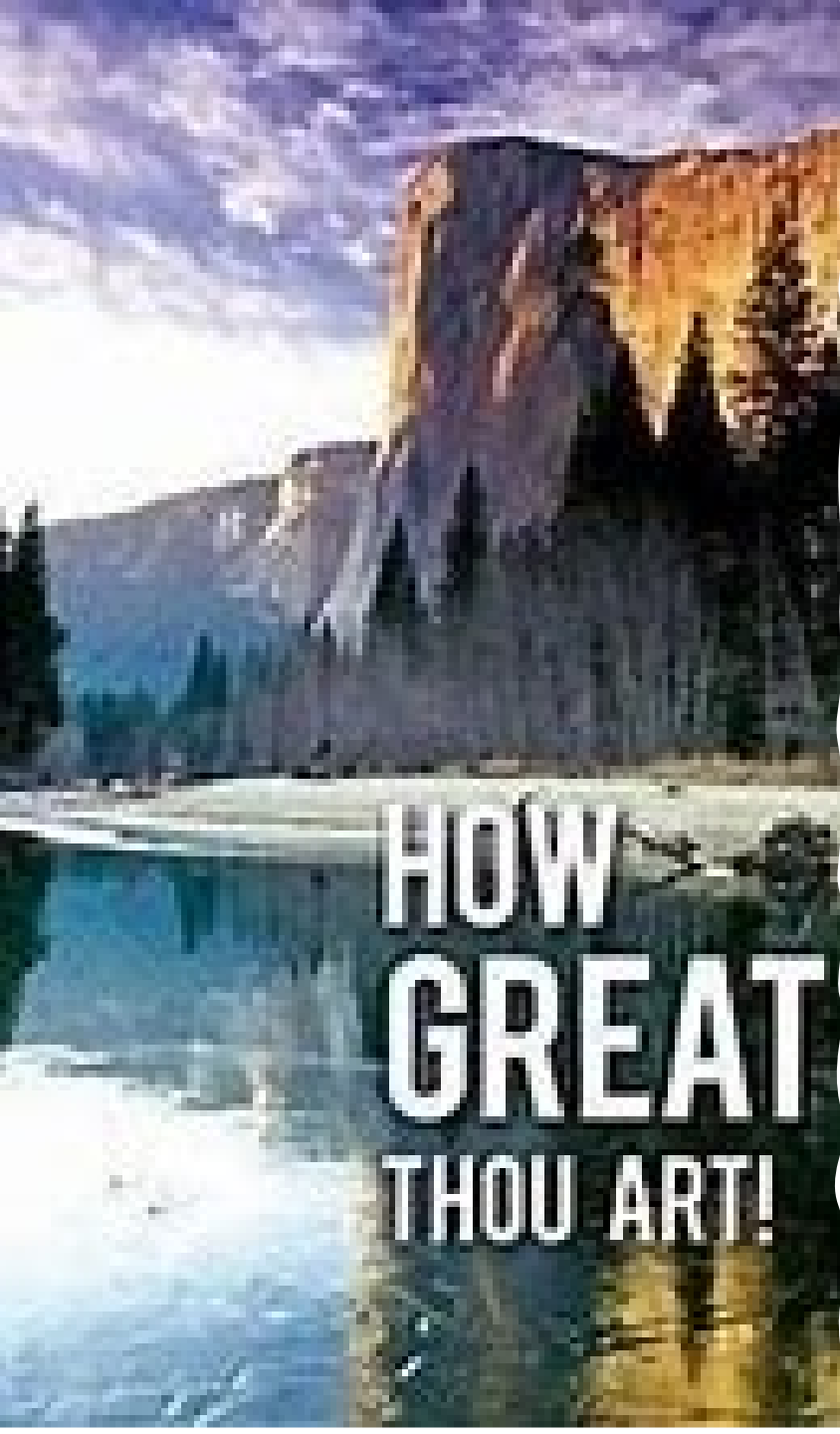
- Verse 4 was also a new composition by Hine, and was written shortly after WWII.
- Hine and a fellow missionary were visiting a camp in Sussex, England, where displaced Russians were being held. Historian Michael Ireland records the origin of the 4th verse:
 - “One man to whom they were ministering told them an amazing story: he had been separated from his wife at the very end of the war and had not seen her since. At the time they were separated, his wife was a Christian, but he was not, but he had since been converted. His deep desire was to find his wife so they could at last share their faith together. But he told the Hines that he did not think he would ever see his wife on earth again. Instead he was longing for the day when they would meet in heaven, and could share in the Life Eternal there. These words again inspired Hine, and they became the basis for his fourth and final verse to 'How Great Thou Art': "When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation to take me home, what joy shall fill my heart. Then we shall bow in humble adoration and there proclaim, My God How Great Thou Art!"

How Great Thou Art: Theology

- *“For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord’s Word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.”* 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18

How Great Thou Art: Reflection

Why has How Great Thou Art achieved such a high regard since it's introduction into the mainstream in the 1950's?



The Music

Final Thoughts/Comments

