



## How Great Thou Art



"O 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!

"When thru 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 hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze.

"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!

"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 there 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!"

"There is no one like You among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like Yours  
... For You are great and do wondrous deeds; You alone are God." - Psalm 86:8,10

"I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my  
being. My meditation of Him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord." - Psalm 104:33-  
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"How Great Thou Art" seemed like a fitting hymn to focus on today. It was written in 1886 by Carl Boberg, who was an author and editor, as well as a member of the Swedish Parliament. While visiting a beautiful country estate, Boberg was caught in a sudden thunderstorm. The awesome thunder and lightning soon ended, and the sky was filled with brilliant sunshine. The birds could be heard singing in the trees as he fell to his knees in humble worship of Almighty God. Carl wrote nine stanzas of praise which were set to a Swedish folk tune.

The text was later translated into German and Russian. In the early 1920s, Rev. Stuart Hine left England with his wife to serve as missionaries in Ukraine where they heard the Russian version of the hymn. Rev. Hine then wrote original English lyrics and made his own arrangement of the Swedish melody.

When war broke out in 1939, it was necessary for the Hines to return to Britain, where Stuart added the triumphant fourth stanza of the hymn. It was after the end of World War II that "How Great Thou Art" became an international favorite as it was used in the Billy Graham Crusades during the late 1940s and early 1950s. It has been listed as the second favorite hymn by Americans, behind "Amazing Grace" by John Newton.

Psalm 145 is the last of 75 psalms written by David, king of Israel. He begins by praising his King, saying: "I will extol You, my God, O King, and I will bless Your name forever and ever." David celebrates the King of Eternity for who He is, what He has done, and what He has promised, and he is committed to blessing the name of his great God for every day of his life.

This song of praise continues in verses 3-5: "Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised, and His greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall praise Your works to another and shall declare Your mighty acts. On the glorious splendor of Your majesty and on Your wonderful works I will meditate."

David tells us more about this great God in verses 8-9, saying, "The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and great in lovingkindness. The Lord is good to all, and His mercies are over all His works." And he ends with these comforting words:

"The Lord is righteous in all His ways and kind in all His deeds. The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He will also hear their cry and will save them. The Lord keeps all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy. My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord, and all flesh will bless His holy name forever and ever."

We would do well to read Psalm 145 carefully and often, for it directs our minds away from our earthly concerns to the God who cares and is more than able to meet our every need. Praise Him today for His awesome greatness, and meditate on His wonderful works. And let us be grateful for the four men - a Swede, a German, a Russian and an Englishman - who wrote and preserved this grand hymn that leads us in true worship of the great Creator - our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.