

The Wonder of it All: “How Great Thou Art”

By Mark Jurkovich

Each time I go to write another entry in this current series, the hymn “How Great Thou Art” returns to my heart and mind. For it speaks of the very response I believe we should have as we gaze upon all the wonders of God’s creation. It should move us to rapturous praise of the one who created the things our finite eyes and mind are seeking to understand. So let’s take some time to ponder the words of this great hymn.



Photo credit: <http://epod.usra.edu/blog/2014/08/summer-lightning-in-florida.html>

Verse 1:

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.

“O Lord my God”; this hymn is a conversation with God himself, and only God is due our awe. But we can never fully comprehend, and so we wonder. What brings us to this awesome wonder?

When we consider the worlds (or works) of His hands; which is EVERYTHING; He made it all! Trying to take it all in, especially the things that display His overwhelming power (as in being caught in a thunderstorm, or trying to take in the countless stars visible in a dark sky) we see His power is truly displayed throughout the universe.

Chorus:

Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee,
How great Thou art! How great Thou art!
(repeat)

Each of these things should bring us to the same response as it did to the hymn writer, that our very soul sings out to our Savior God. And as our Savior God, we have a special relationship with the very God who created it all. Praise Him for His greatness!

Verse 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 hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze.



Caesar Creek Park, Ohio. Photo by author

But the same response to God’s crea-

tion can and should also come from the small, the quiet, the melodious. Thus we see God's presence in walks through his creation, the songs of birds, the sounds of water flowing, or of the gentle breeze. These first two versus of the hymn bring to mind the passage in 1 Kings 19:11-13 where God displays his power to Elijah three times, but is finally present in the gentle whisper, not in the displays of power. God sometimes has to get our attention through awesome displays, but it is when we are still enough to hear Him in the gentle whisper that we best understand "How Great Thou Art".

Verse 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.

As awe inspiring as God's creation is, and it should draw us into praise of Him, it pales in comparison to what the Creator of the universe did Himself for us. How can we possibly fathom the fact that the very creator of all we survey and are drawn in awe of Him for, gave himself up to go through the most unimaginable suffering possible just so that we could be restored to Him. We truly can scarce take it in. "Then Sings My Soul...!"

Verse 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 there proclaim, "My God, how great Thou art!"

"For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face." How true this

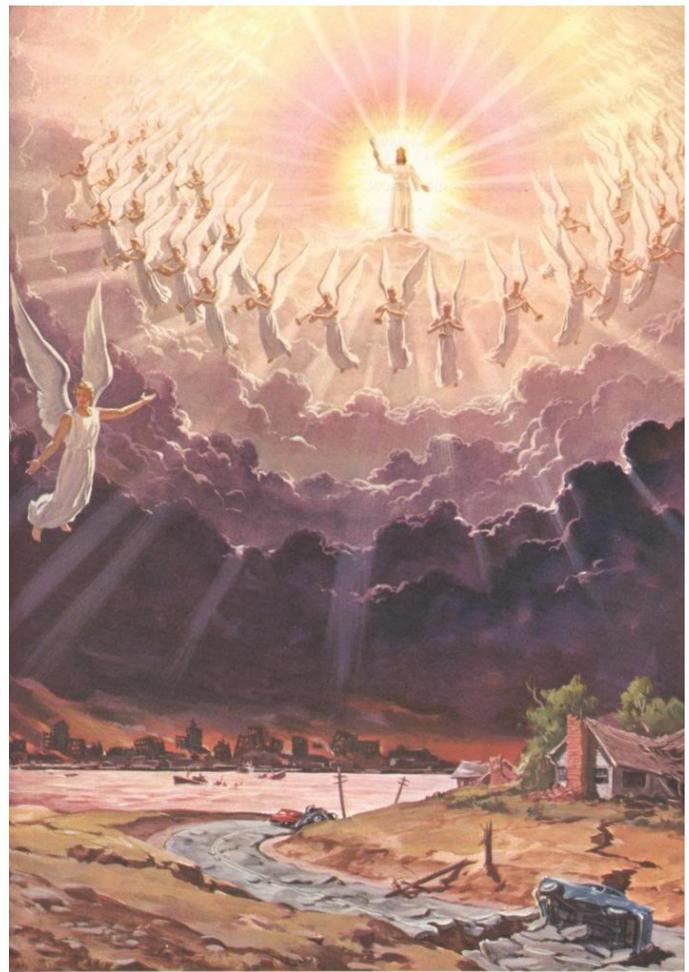
passage is from 1 Corinthians 13:12. All the tastes of God's glory while here on this fallen planet are just that, a taste. When we see Him face to face, then we shall know, even as we are known. Then we will fully understand "How Great Thou Art", and bow in humble adoration.

Hymn credit: By Carl Boberg, 1886. English translation and verses 3 & 4 ©1949 and 1953 by Stuart K. Hine

For a little background on the Hymn itself see:

<http://www.mannamusicinc.com/hgta.htm>

http://livinghymns.org/HH01_howgreatthouart.htm



<http://www.freejesuschristwallpapers.com/2010/07/jesus-christ-second-coming.html>