

can be saved. He sent His Son! Paul thought about this, "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His ways past finding out." (Romans 11:33) Ephesians 3:14-18 describes the "width and length and depth and height – to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." We hear King David saying, "Many, O Lord my God, are Your wonderful works which You have done; And Your thoughts toward us cannot be recounted to You in order; if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered." (Psalm 40:5)

**d. That on the cross, my burdens gladly bearing, He bled and died to take away my sins** - Jesus died on a cross for OUR sins! 1 Peter 2:24-25 says that He [Jesus], "Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness. By whose stripes you are healed." See also Hebrews 9:28, "He was offered once to bear the sins of many." Peter wrote "that He suffered for us in the flesh." (1 Peter 4:1) and John the Baptist introduced Jesus saying, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!" (John 1:29)

#### 4. Hope for future times - Vs. 4

It is said this verse was penned at the end of WWII. Hine was visiting Russian refugees at a camp in England. One of the professed Christians told of his life - that at the end of the war he had been separated (unwillingly) from his wife because of circumstances. When separated his wife was a believer and he was not. Since then he had become a believer and hoped to one day be reunited with his wife so that they could share their faith together. But he told Hines he did not think it would happen and was therefore longing for the day when they would meet in heaven and could spend eternity together. This account resulted in the 4<sup>th</sup> verse of our song.

**a. When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation** - We are told in scripture that the Lord will return one day in the Rapture to take his church home, (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) and later return to earth to live and reign with his own at that time. (Revelation 5:10, 11:15; 20:6; 22:5). These passages describe the comfort we can have and with which we ought to comfort one another because the Lord will return. 1 Thessalonians 4:18, tells us, "So comfort and encourage each other with these words."

**b. And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart** - Rejoice in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 which says, "...And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so shall we be forever with the Lord." To read of the victory of that day, ponder the words of 1 Corinthians 15:50-56, which describes how we will be changed and find our victory in Jesus Christ.

**c. Then I shall bow in humble adoration and there proclaim, "My God how great thou art" !!**

We are told in Philippians 2:10-11 "that every knee shall bow before His name and every tongue will confess Him the true Lord of Lords." For the doomed and rebellious this will be a great day of dread. But for the redeemed, this will be an honor and a great day of glory. With gladness we will profess, "MY God how great Thou art!"

#### Are you looking forward to that day?

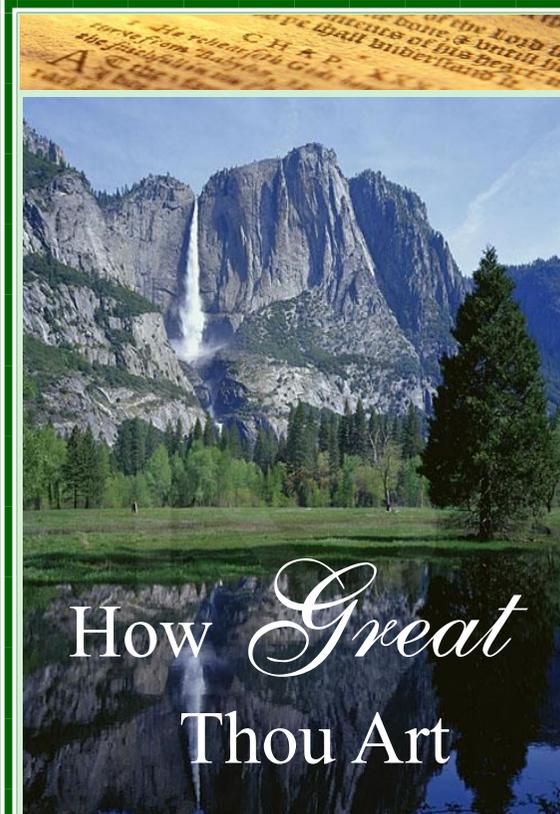
#### V. Chorus –

**Then sings my soul** – with joy we can sing of our hope. The joy of the Lord fills the heart with praise. (Psalm 63)

**My Savior God to thee** – in our singing we must first remember that we are praising God. With gladness we ought to continually praise God with the fruit of our lips – Hebrews 13:15. In Ephesians 5:19, we are encouraged "to sing and make melody in your hearts to the Lord."

**How Great Thou Art** – David sang, "My heart is confident in you, O God; no wonder I can sing your praises! I will waken the dawn with my song. I will thank you, Lord, in front of all the people. I will sing your praises among the nations. For your unfailing love is as high as the heavens. Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds. Be exalted, O God, above the highest heavens. May your glory shine over all the earth." (Psalm 57:7-11—NLT) Take time to read Psalm 145:1-7.

Surely this great Hymn of the faith - "How Great Thou Art" is a song that lifts the heart in praise and adoration, as we focus on the greatness of our God and our Savior—Jesus Christ.



**How Great  
Thou Art**

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# “HOW GREAT THOU ART”

by Andy Hollier

Truly this is one of my favorite songs. The song was originally written by Carl Boberg in 1885. Boberg composed the hymn simply as a poem. Several years later he heard his poem put to the melody of a Swedish folk song.

It all began after Boberg was walking home from worship services, he had seen a thunderstorm on the horizon with lightning in the sky and strong winds in the meadows, and then the rain. After the storm there was a rainbow. Arriving at home he opened his window and saw the Bay of Monsteras nearby and in the woods he heard the singing of birds. These observations prompted him that evening to write the first two verses of the poem that would become this hymn. When it was first sung in public it contained 8 verses, with a ninth verse added in 1891. The version found in most song books was published in 1949 by Stuart K Hine, who was a British Methodist missionary. According to Manna Music Inc, there have been more than 1700 documented recordings of this hymn, second only to Amazing Grace.

As we examine the message of this hymn, we realize that its message is true to God's Word and thus we can sing it scripturally (Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16).

Let us now examine the message of this hymn.

## 1. Verse 1 is descriptive of the power and awe of God

a. **O Lord My God** – As this song begins it acknowledges our Creator. The term Lord at times refers to Jesus, but at other times it refers to God the Father. Especially in the Old Testament, the term LORD acknowledged God – Psalm 48:8, 11, Revelation 21:22,) Genesis 2:7 says, “*And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living being.*” This is the first of 538 times in the NKJV we read the expression “Lord God.” In this song, right at the beginning, we find an acknowledgment of the greatness of God as our Lord or ruler. Of course, all three of the Godhead were involved in the creation of the world and similar acknowledgment could be made of them all.

b. **When I in awesome wonder** - truly God is to be held in awe and reverence. It is an acknowledgment that involves respect. In

every aspect of life and His being, God ought to be held in awe. Psalm 33:8 says, “*Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.*” And Psalm 111:9 says, “*Holy and awesome is His name.*” (The KJV & ASV say, “*Holy and reverend is His name.*”) Hebrews 13:28 tells us that we ought to serve God with “reverence and godly fear.”

## c. Consider all the worlds thy hands have made –

The rest of this verse describes some of God's creation - stars, thunder, “*Thy power throughout the universe displayed.*” I see in these expressions of this verse the greatness of God's power – in the stars we find innumerable strength. There are billions and billions of stars, all created by God. The vastness of our universe within itself is a declaration of power! Thunder is often associated with power as well – the result of lightning in the atmosphere produces a deafening sound that will demand the attention of anyone and strike fear. Often the voice of God is described in terms of thundering calling for the great **awe** He deserves (Exodus 19:16, 20:18; Psalm 18:13, 29:3, etc.) Paul in Romans 1:20 tells us, “*For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and godhead, so that they are without excuse...*” When man considers the intricacy of this world, how can he deny the existence of a Creator? Psalm 19:1-6 tells us that “*the heavens declare the glory of God.*”

## 2. Verse 2 describes how in nature we see evidence of God and His peace –

Vs. 2 is descriptive of our awareness of God as we look at nature.  
a. Man has sought to create some wonderful things and places to go. But no matter how much he does, nothing compares to that hike in the midst of a forest where for miles around you see nothing but the majestic nature of God. As you drive along a scenic highway, you pull over to view the grandeur. Man created the overlook, but it was GOD who created the view that is seen.

b. The author saw God's presence, power and peace in nature. We could spend hours discussing how the existence of God is demonstrated in the smallest and greatest things in this world (and beyond). But let us suffice to say that as we consider all that He has made, and may it humble us to declare how truly great He is.

c. May it give us a “*peace that surpasses all understanding*” (Philippians 4:7). Colossians 3:15 says, “*And let the peace of God*

*rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.*”

d. Consider with these first 2 verses, Psalm 8 speaks of the excellence of God and how it ought to humble us. Psalm 33:6-9 says, “*By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth...*”

## 3. Verse 3 – God's grace and our salvation

a. It is recorded that this verse was penned as Mr. Hine and his wife were visiting a village in Russia. After inquiring for the whereabouts of Christians in the village, he and his wife arrived at the home where the only believers in town were assembled and he listened as the “*call to repentance*” was being issued. Rather than disrupting the occasion, he stood outside and listened hearing various responses of repentance. He wrote down some of the phrases he heard and they became part of vs. 3.

## b. And when I think that God His Son not sparing, sent Him to die

As great and marvellous as nature is in demonstrating the awesomeness of God, it pales in comparison to what He did for us. John 3:16 says, “*For God SO loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.*” 1 John 4:9-10, “*In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*”

c. **I scarce can take it in** - Think about this – the earth is a single planet orbiting around an insignificant star (the sun) in a universe that is 1000s of light years in size and continually expanding. On this planet, there are more than 7 BILLION souls among the billions of billions of living things. Of all the things in this vast universe, you and I are created “*in the likeness of God*” AND blessed with a soul that has opportunity to spend eternity with Him. It is true that everyone of us is SPECIAL! And when you consider all that happens in this world, both good and evil, God CARES about you and me so much that He provided a plan by which we