



HYMN HISTORY

“Praise to the Lord, the Almighty”

August 13, 2023

- I. **Contributors to the Hymn**
 - A. Text: Joachim Neander, 1650–1680
 - B. Tune: German folk tune, first used in *Stralsund Gesangbuch*, 1665
 - C. Translation: Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878

- II. **Biography of Joachim Neander (1650-1680)**
 - Considered the greatest of early Reformed German hymnists
 - Wrote around 60 hymns, including many tunes, most of them which were rousing songs of triumph.
 - Recognized as a rising scholar in theology, literature, and music
 - Pastored a Reformed church in Dusseldorf, Germany
 - Died at the ripe age of 30
 - Unlike many great early hymns, the tune used today was the one selected by the author.

- III. **Biography of Catherine Winkworth (1827–1878)**
 - Winkworth was an early advocate of women’s education.
 - She was acclaimed for her skill in translating German and helped popularize many German hymns in England.
 - Winkworth’s translation is one of about 10 English renderings, but hers has become the standard.
 - Another famous translation of hers is the hymn, “Now Thank We All Our God,” a hymn often associated with harvest time.

IV. Audio Samples



Traditional Version
“Classic Hymns” YouTube Channel



Jehoachim Neander



Acoustic Version
Fernando Ortega

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HEADING v. 0 Authorship David	OPENING CALLS TO PRAISE: BLESSING YAHWEH FOR HIS PERSONAL GRACE vv. 1-5	CENTRAL MEDITATION: REMEMBERING YAHWEH'S GRACE TO THE NATION vv. 6-18			CLIMACTIC CALLS TO PRAISE: BLESSING YAHWEH FOR HIS SOVEREIGN GREATNESS vv. 19-22
Threefold Exhortation to Personally Bless Yahweh vv. 1-2 Delineation of Yahweh's Benefits vv. 3-5 Forgiveness of Sins v. 3a Healing from Sickness v. 3b Deliverance from Death v. 4a Honored with Kindness v. 4b Satisfaction of Needs v. 5a Renewal of Life v. 5b	Reflection on Yahweh's Goodness to Israel vv. 6-8 Yahweh's Record of Bringing Deliverance v. 6 Yahweh's Self-Revelation to Moses vv. 7-8 <i>The Moses Narratives Recalled</i> v. 7 <i>The Divine Revelation Quoted (Exodus 34:6)</i> v. 8	Exposition on Yahweh's Divine Revelation vv. 9-14 His Temporal Anger v. 9 His Undeserved Mercy v. 10 His Overwhelming Kindness v. 11 His Immeasurable Forgiveness v. 12 His Fatherly Patience v. 13 His Gracious Understanding v. 14	Exposition on Yahweh's Enduring Grace vv. 15-18 Human Frailty Depicted vv. 15-16 <i>Like the Flourishing of Flowering Grass</i> v. 15 <i>Like Forgotten Flowers offer the Wind</i> v. 16 Divine Faithfulness Declared vv. 17-18 <i>The Unending Expression of His Loyal Love</i> v. 17 <i>The Covenantal Conditions for Experiencing His Love</i> v. 18	Celebration of Yahweh' Cosmic Supremacy v. 19 Four-fold Exhortation for the Heavens to Bless Yahweh vv. 20-22 Two Exhortations to Angelic Beings vv. 20-21 <i>The Mighty Angels Called to Worship</i> v. 20 <i>The Multitude of Angels Called to Worship</i> v. 21 Inclusive Exhortation to All Creation v. 22a Concluding Self-Exhortation v. 22b	
PURPOSE: David praises Yahweh for His covenant faithfulness to the individual believer & the nation. He is worthy of praise for His benefits of undeserved mercy & restoration all thru life & history. The chorus on earth is encouraged to join the angelic chorus of praise from heaven. Type: Song of Praise from the Individual in the Congregation Author: David Date: Perhaps around 970 BC, late in his life Note: V. 19 shares phrases with David's prayer in 1 Chron 29:12 at Solomon's second accession.					

Stanza 1

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty,
The King of creation.
O, my soul, praise Him
For He is thy health and salvation.
All ye who hear, now to His temple draw near;
Praise Him in glad adoration.

Stanza 2

Praise to the Lord Who o'er all things
So wondrously reigneth;
Shelters thee under His wings,
Yea, so gently sustaineth.
Hast thou not seen how thy desires all have been
Granted in what He ordaineth?

Stanza 3

Praise to the Lord Who doth prosper
Thy work and defend thee;
Surely His goodness and mercy
Doth daily attend thee.
Ponder anew what the Almighty can do
If with His love He befriend thee.

Stanza 4

Praise to the Lord, O, let all that
Is in me adore Him;
All that hath life and breath,
Come now with praises before Him
Let the "Amen" sound from His people again
Gladly for ever adore Him!

V. EXPLICATION

- A. The text is a loose paraphrase of Psalm 103:1-6. The hymn also alludes to other passages including Pss 23:6; 61:4; 150:6.

B. STANZA 1 renders the beneficence of Yahweh in Ps 103:1-3

1. Some pastors and hymnists have objected to the reference to the "Temple," arguing that this was inappropriate language for Christian worship. Some hymnals amend the wording here.
2. The NT describes the gathering of the local church as a temple. 1 Cor 3:10-17; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:21ff; 1 Pet. 2:5-10.

C. STANZA 2 borrows the imagery of Ps 61:4 in our sheltering under Yahweh's wings, a zoomorphism for His tender care. The latter half of the stanza encourages us to look back with satisfaction on the gracious hand of providence in caring for us.

- D. Neander's original hymn contained a stanza that was excluded from Winkworth's translation. The Evangelical Lutheran Hymnal (1880) places it between Stanzas 2 and 3 and renders it this way.

Praise to the Lord, who hath fearfully,
Wondrously made thee,
Health has vouchsafed, and when heedlessly
Failing hath stayed thee;
Fainting and weak, When not a word thou couldst speak,
Wings of His mercy did shade thee.

- E. STANZA 3 speaks of the positive blessings of Yahweh, enabling us to accomplish the work He sets before us. The 2nd line borrows wording from Ps 23:6. Just as stanza 2 encourages us to look back, the end of stanza 3 encourages us to think of all the potential good Yahweh can accomplish for us as His cherished ones.

F. STANZA 4 again draws on the wording of Ps 103:1, calling upon every part of our inner being to praise God.

1. Most of stanza 4 is a call to worship along the lines of Ps 150:6.
2. Winkworth's original rendering of the end of stanza 4 was, "Gladly for aye we adore Thee." The word "aye" (pronounced as a long A) is a rare English adjective that means "forever," and is now considered obsolete.