

# A Discussion on the Songs We Sing and What They Can Teach Us About Creation Care

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By Steven Muir

## All Creatures of Our God And King

All creatures of our God and king  
Lift up your voice and with us sing,  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Thou burning sun with golden beam,  
Thou silver moon with softer gleam!

Thou flowing water, pure and clear,  
Make music for thy Lord to hear,  
O praise Him! Alleluia!  
Thou fire so masterful and bright,  
That givest man both warmth and light

Dear mother earth, who day by day  
Unfoldest blessings on our way,  
O praise Him! Alleluia!  
The flowers and fruits that in thee  
grow,  
Let them His glory also show.

Let all things their creator bless,  
And worship Him in humbleness,  
O praise Him! Alleluia!  
Praise, praise the Father, praise the  
Son,  
And praise the Spirit, Three in One!

## Questions for All Creatures

- There are many psalms and songs that imply all creatures/creation worship God in their own way. Do you think this is real or metaphorical?
- All creatures OF God – God as creator has ‘ownership’ of all creatures. We are living in a time described as a mass extinction (caused by humans). How do you think God feels about this mass extinction and what do you think this means for us in relating to other parts of creation that belong to God.
- Some people are uncomfortable with animistic implications of ‘mother earth’ (nature worship) but others go to the opposite extreme and treat the Earth as having no value other than resources to be exploited by us and miss the wonder of God’s glory revealed in nature. How do you view this?
- Francis of Assisi in his original poem uses very personal terms to refer to his relationship to creation (brother, sister, mother). Some psychologists talk about nature deficit disorder to describe people today who get almost no connection with nature and suggest more time in nature is healthy for our wellbeing. Do you agree? How connected to the rest of creation do you feel personally? Is this something you intentionally practice?

## How Great Thou Art

O Lord my God! When I in awesome wonder  
Consider all the works Thy hand hath made.  
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,  
Thy power throughout the universe  
displayed.

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

O when I see ungrateful man defiling  
This bounteous earth, God's gifts so good  
and great;  
In foolish pride, God's holy Name reviling,  
And yet, in grace, His wrath and judgment  
wait.

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

### *Questions for How Great Thou Art*

- We often use beautiful sunsets, forest glades, lofty mountains, waterfalls, e.t.c as background images in worship songs which are peaceful and relaxing images showing that God appreciates beauty. Rolling thunder and wild storms are distinctly uncomfortable parts of nature yet can also reveal some of God's character. What about earthquakes and tropical cyclones and mosquitos? Are they part of God's good creation too and what can we learn from them?
- The verse about ungrateful man defiling the earth is usually left out of English versions of the hymn but is in the 1953 translation from Russian (by Stuart Hine). What does this verse add to the hymn or mean for you?
- The last verse about being led home implies that this Earth is not our long-term home but we spend eternity in a 'heavenly' realm. Is this how you view the afterlife and what implications does this have for how we treat the Earth in this life?

## Joy to the World

Joy to the world  
The Lord is come  
Let earth receive her King  
Let every heart prepare him room  
And heaven and nature sing  
And heaven and nature sing  
And heaven, and heaven and nature  
sing

He rules the world  
With truth and grace  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of his righteousness  
And wonders of his love  
And wonders of his love  
And wonders, and wonders of his love

Joy to the world  
The Saviour reigns  
Let men their songs employ  
While fields and floods  
Rocks, hills and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy  
Repeat the sounding joy  
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy

### *Questions for Joy to the World*

- Joy to the world has a different view of the Earth, where God is establishing his kingdom, in part at Jesus birth and to be fulfilled sometime in the future when the Earth is renewed (rev 21 1-3). Does this view change how we treat the Earth now?
- Revelation 21:2-3. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

Additional song for 11am service replacing You Shall Go Out With Joy.

### **Let Us Adore**

Let us adore  
The everliving God  
And render praise  
Unto Him  
Who spread out the heavens  
And establishes the earth  
And whose greatness  
Is revealed in the heavens above  
And whose glory  
Is manifest throughout the whole earth  
He is our God  
There is none else

Let us care for  
the earth as God desires  
Steward wisely  
All of God's treasures  
but creation groans in pain  
for the life that is no more  
and the waters  
are rising up in anger  
and God's glory  
*Unison:* is mined and burned,  
polluted for our greed  
forgive us O Lord (*echo*)  
give us courage to change

### *Questions for Let Us Adore*

- Usually when we sing songs about appreciating God in nature they focus on the beautiful things. The second verse of this song recognizes the damage we are doing to God's creation. How does it feel singing about this?
- The Bible has a number of laments, complaining psalms, and reflections on how unfair life can be sometimes. We don't often sing about the negative side of life these days. Why do you think that is?
- People who write about environmental destruction recognize that if you are too negative about what is happening, then the general public switch off and don't change their creation-destroying behavior. Have you found any ways to encourage positive behaviour change that work well and don't result in compassion fatigue?