



THE HYMNS THAT SHAPE US

WEEK 2 - *Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah*

OPENING PRAYER

God of all creation, of the music that moves us and the hymns that shape us, thank you for the gift of worship. Thank you for the ways you have met us in spaces of praise and lament. We ask now that your Holy Spirit would be at work in our hearts as we continue to meditate on your goodness to us. For it is in the name of Jesus Christ, our coming King, we pray. Amen.

CHECK IN

Invite folks to check in. This video was pretty full – lots to discuss!

Was there one thing brought up in the interview that particularly resonated with you or confused you?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1) Listen/watch the different versions of “Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah” below and answer these questions:

Which resonates most with you and why? What emotions does it elicit in you?

Would you choose one version over another for a particular occasion (i.e. a funeral, Lent, marriage, etc.)?

- [Click here](#) to listen to the version of “Guide Me” sung by members of The Princeton Seminary choir Martin refers to in his interview
- [Click here](#) to listen to the traditional CWM Rhonda tune that we sing from our Presbyterian hymnal. This is sung by a choir from a church in Wales, and the final verse is sung in the original Welsh.
- [Click here](#) to listen to Mahalia Jackson sing a rich, spiritual interpretation of the hymn.

2) Take a look at the hymn page attached to this study guide.

As you look at the words, are there particular phrases that stick out to you?

Comfort or confuse you?

- 3) This hymn is a prayer for a person going through tough times—a person traveling through a barren land—a thirsty person in need of water. Martin discussed how Lent is often thought of as a time of wilderness similar to that which the Israelites experienced in Exodus and the temptation Jesus endured at the beginning of his ministry. Much of the imagery in this hymn is taken straight out of the book of Exodus. Take a look below at the Scriptures associated with a few of the lines from the hymn.
- **What strikes you about these stories?**
 - **What was new or unfamiliar to you?**
 - **How do these Biblical images and stories work together to help us worship God on a Sunday morning when singing this hymn?**

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Bread of Heaven/ Manna

Exodus 16

² And the whole congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, ³ and the people of Israel said to them, “Would that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.” ... ⁹ Then Moses said to Aaron, “Say to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, ‘Come near before the LORD, for he has heard your grumbling.’” ¹⁰ And as soon as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. ¹¹ And the LORD said to Moses, ¹² “I have heard the grumbling of the people of Israel. Say to them, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.’”

¹³ In the evening quail came up and covered the camp, and in the morning dew lay around the camp. ¹⁴ And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as frost on the ground. ¹⁵ When the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another, “What is it?”^[a] For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, “It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat. ¹⁶ This is what the LORD has commanded: ‘Gather of it, each one of you, as much as he can eat. You shall each take an omer, according to the number of the persons that each of you has in his tent.’” ¹⁷ And the people of Israel did so. They gathered, some more, some less. ¹⁸ But when they measured it with an omer, whoever gathered much had

nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack. Each of them gathered as much as he could eat.

John 6

²⁵ When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?” ²⁶ Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. ²⁷ Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.” ²⁸ Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” ²⁹ Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” ³⁰ So they said to him, “Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform?” ³¹ Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” ³² Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” ³⁴ They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”

³⁵ Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

Crystal Fountain/ Water from the Rock

Exodus 17

¹ All the congregation of the people of Israel moved on from the wilderness of Sin by stages, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. ² Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, “Give us water to drink.” And Moses said to them, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?” ³ But the people thirsted there for water, and the people grumbled against Moses and said, “Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?” ⁴ So Moses cried to the LORD, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.” ⁵ And the LORD said to Moses, “Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. ⁶ Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb,

and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink.” And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. ⁷ And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the LORD by saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?”

1 Corinthians 10

¹ For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, ² and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, ³ and all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. ⁵ Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

- 4) Sarah and Martin got into a pretty dense conversation about something called the Tetragrammaton (basically a four-letter word in Hebrew for God). The way some traditions abstain from speaking the name of God out of reverence is one of the reasons the title of this hymn has been changed to “Guide Me, O Thou Great Redeemer”.
- **Do you have a preference for one or the other (Jehovah or Redeemer)? And why?**
 - **What images, scriptures, or memories come up for you when you hear those words? How might they direct your worship (for example, singing about a “redeemer” may focus your attention more on the redemptive work of Christ whereas “Jehovah” could bring up thoughts about the faithfulness of God in the Old Testament)?**
- 5) Has your perception of this hymn changed at all as you’ve learned more about it? What might be one “take away” for you this week as you anticipate singing this hymn in worship on Sunday?

CLOSING PRAYER

Take time to offer prayer requests before closing together in prayer. If you would like, you can also read a portion of this week’s hymn as the closing prayer.

Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah 65

1 Guide me, O thou great Je - ho - vah, pil - grim through this
 2 O - pen now the crys - tal foun - tain, whence the heal - ing
 3 When I tread the verge of Jor - dan, bid my anx - ious

bar - ren land. I am weak, but thou art might - y. Hold me
 stream doth flow. Let the fire and cloud - y pil - lar lead me
 fears sub - side. Death of death, and hell's de - struc - tion, land me

with thy power - ful hand. Bread of heav - en, bread of heav - en,
 all my jour - ney through. Strong de - liv - erer, strong de - liv - erer,
 safe on Ca - naan's side. Songs of prais - es, songs of prais - es

feed me till I want no more; feed me till I want no more.
 be thou still my strength and shield; be thou still my strength and shield.
 I will ev - er give to thee; I will ev - er give to thee.

Few Welsh hymns are as well known or loved as this 18th-century text that did not gain its popular tune until the early 20th century. In both its original text and in English translation, it is a stirring hymn of pilgrimage filled with vivid imagery from Hebrew Scripture.

TEXT: William Williams, 1762; stanza 1, trans. Peter Williams, 1771; stanzas 2-3, trans. William Williams, 1772
 MUSIC: John Hughes, 1907

CWM RHONDDA
 8.7.8.7.8.7.7

