

Ah, Dearest Jesus

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He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief:
and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows:
yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities:
the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way;
and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah 53:3-6

Background of the Hymn:

1. Refer to the hymn or song by Johann Heerman (words in 1630) and Johann Cruger (music in 1640).
2. The common words were translated into English by Robert S. Bridges in the *Yattendon Hymnal* (1899).
3. The common score for the 11-11-11-5 metered hymn is, *Herzliebster Jesu*, German for *Beloved Jesus*, which was further harmonized by J.S. Bach and used by him in at least three different compositions.
4. An alternative score for those not appreciating minor songs, even for this theme, is by F. F. Flemming.
5. The original hymn had fifteen stanzas and was first published in Heerman's work, *Devoti Musica Cordis Hauss-und Herz-Musica* (1630), with the caption, "The cause of the bitter sufferings of Jesus Christ and consolation from His love and grace. From Augustine."
6. Song's themes likely came from Jean de Fecamp (990-1079) work in *Meditationes Sanctorum Patrum*.
7. Consider that Heerman was compared to Paul Gerhardt (1607-1676), translator of, *O Sacred Head, Now Wounded*, which had been written by Bernard of Clairvaux (1091-1153), two timing similarities.
8. *The Hymnal* of the Evangelical and Reformed Church of 1941 is unique by using Bridges's translation but substitutes "Dearest" for "Holy" and "dear" for "kind" twice, though no explanation for it is given.
9. It is a shame that the *Trinity Hymnal* not only loses all three references to "dear" Jesus, but does not capitalize pronouns referring to him, unlike the rare hymnal of the Christian Reformed that does both.
10. For history about the author, composer, the hymn's themes, musical variations ... [a study of the hymn Ah, Holy Jesus \(hymnstudiesblog.wordpress.com\)](#), [History of Hymns: Ah, Holy Jesus \(umcdiscipleship.org\)](#), [Behind the Hymn: Ah, Holy Jesus \(anglicancompass.com\)](#), the hymn text [Ah, Holy Jesus, How Hast Thou Offended \(hymnary.org\)](#).

Introduction to the Sermon:

1. Preaching is to declare and explain the word of God, and here such is based on prompts we often sing.
2. Paul warned Corinth to sing with the Spirit and with the understanding, which means we should know what we are singing, which David also taught in the Old Testament (I Cor 14:13; Ps 47:7; Col 3:16).
3. A young man of 19, though he had known about Jesus and his need to be saved by Christ, while being converted to know and convicted to love and serve the Savior, found this hymn with perfect timing.
4. It was the proverbial needle in a haystack that he found it, for neither he nor anyone he knew had sung it or used the book it was in, and to continue God's marvelous work, he has loved it now for 50 years, and for any asking, the gift of four books by a closet Calvinist occurred about that time totally separate.
5. This hymn or song, using the first person, is perfect for personal reflection about our Lord's death, your complicit guilt in it, your desperate need for it, and your large debt of worship because of it.
6. The hymn progresses beautifully for soul contemplation from why Jesus had to die ... to personal guilt by sin of His crucifixion ... to the purpose designed ... to the personal claim ... to personal commitment.
7. Having just studied the facets of salvation, which was doctrinal in nature, now it is time for personal meditation at the foot of the cross pondering the reason for His death and any resulting obligations.
8. If we limited ourselves to one passage of scripture for it, we should prefer Isaiah 52:13-15; 53:1-12, where Jehovah's Servant (though Son) gave Himself for rebellious sinful rabble to gain heaven's glory.
9. Preparing an outline to preach, though necessary, was at times a distraction from personal spiritual joy.
10. The song is not inspired (though preserved); the inspired and preserved scriptures back up each line.

**Ah, dearest Jesus, how hast Thou offended, That man to judge Thee hath
in hate pretended? By foes derided, by thine own rejected, Oh, most
afflicted.**

- A. It is the cry of a soul that knows and loves His great sacrifice against his own vileness, for you may note the opening, "Ah", with the closing, "Oh," for sympathetic reflection.
- B. "Dearest" is better than "Holy," for it replaces an unrelated attribute with devoted love, and of all the uses of Bridges' translation of the song, this change is found in only ours.
- C. The question mark, with two questions connected, should provoke humble meditation.
- D. Jesus did not offend in any real way, thus the hatred described as mere pretense to judge.
- E. He had perfectly pleased God His Father in every way in His life (Matt 3:17; John 8:29).
- F. Even rabid enemies, with previous conspiratorial planning, could not align accusations.
- G. He was derided by Jewish rulers and priests as told in Psalm 22 and the Gospel accounts.
- H. Isaiah included himself along with all the reprobate Jews as mocking Him (Is 53:1-4).
- I. Pilate knew there were no valid accusations and assumed correctly it was only for envy.

- J. He was hated by the world, though He was the most perfect man in history (John 15:15).
- K. He was rejected by His own, the Jews, though with dated prophecies for Him (Jn 1:11), and their vile presumption to judge Him was meted out against them forty years later.
- L. Note the dual hatred and opposition against Jesus Christ – both enemies and His people.
- M. If you know or love Him truly, it was by God's regenerating difference (John 1:12-13).
- N. He who knew no sin was made sin for us by the reconciling choice of God (II Cor 5:21).

Who was the guilty? Who brought this upon Thee? Alas, my treason, Jesus, hath undone Thee! Twas I, Lord Jesus, I it was denied Thee; I crucified Thee.

- A. Meditation on the death of Jesus and why He had to die from the first verse is right here.
- B. The first verse had ruled out faults of His own, for His enemies had to pretend crimes.
- C. Substitutionary atonement is assumed. Jesus died not for Himself, but for another. Who?
- D. Look not at the doctrine of justification but rather at your sins that had to be paid for.
- E. Worry not about the extent of the atonement beyond yourself as the culprit causing it.
- F. Your slightest sin was sufficient for His cruel death, for it was against an infinite God.
- G. How was it treason? You aided and abetted His arch enemy the devil (Ephesians 2:1-3).
- H. Until you see yourself clearly as the cause of His death, you will not love Him as Savior.
 - I. We all went astray; we all turned to our own way; God laid our sins on Him (Is 53:6).
- J. We should not isolate Peter as the treasonous denier, for each of us has done so often.
- K. Falling away from the gospel crucified Him afresh (Heb 6:6), which you do by any sin.

Lo, the Good Shepherd for the sheep is offered; The slave hath sinned, and the Son hath suffered: For man's atonement, while he nothing heedeth, God intercedeth.

- A. Let the opening word, "Lo," be as, *Behold*. There is good news following the horrible.
- B. Ordinarily shepherds keep sheep in order to slaughter them for the benefit of owners, but this Good Shepherd was slaughtered voluntarily for the saving benefit of the sheep.
- C. He is the Good Shepherd and laid down His life for sheep given Him (John 10:11,15).
- D. He is the Good Shepherd and the Lamb of God, which takes away your sin (John 1:29).
- E. He is the Great Shepherd that died to activate the everlasting covenant (Hebrews 13:20).
- F. If the shepherd comparison is not enough, the Son died for a sinning slave (Gal 4:1-5).
- G. Our sins, starting with that in Eden, made us only slaves to God, not friends or sons.
- H. He suffered for your sins, the Just for the unjust, to bring you safely to God (I Pet 3:18).

- I. He made atonement for you, reconciling you by making peace with God (Romans 5:11).
- J. What did you contribute to your salvation? Nothing. You would not heed (Rom 3:9-18).
- K. Man does nothing! Though creation, providence, conscience, scripture all scream truth.
- L. God interceded to correct a damning situation that you did not care or think about at all.
- M. The world takes pride in their interventions, but God in Christ was infinitely greater.
- N.

For me, dear Jesus, was Thine incarnation, Thy mortal sorrow, and Thy life's oblation; Thy death of anguish and thy bitter passion, For my salvation.

- A. The personal claim. It was for thee, elect sinner; He died to save thee. Dost thou believe?
- B. Love the valuable change of "kind" to "dear" in our version here; it is more affectionate, and of all the uses of Bridges' translation of the song, this change is found in only ours.
- C. His incarnation, to become flesh, was to humble Himself to crucifixion (Phil 2:5-8), yet at this time you should not think of the extent of His death, but rather its cruelty for you.
- D. See the substitutionary atonement by the use of the first person. Wilt thou believe it so?
- E. His sorrow, past bare grief, took His mortal life; His oblation, or sacrifice, was His life.
- F. He sacrificed His life – He offered it to God – for you. There was no other reason for it.
- G. He was scourged and tortured before being hung upon a tree for your sins (1 Peter 2:24).
- H. If you have forgotten the various torments He endured, then read Psalm 22 or explore the four categories of suffering Jesus endured at his crucifixion posted on our website.
- I. His death was not easy, peaceful, or merciful – it was full of anguish and bitterness.
- J. Though Son of God, He learned obedience to be Author of your salvation (Heb 5:8-9).
- K. Without His death, you are damned and doomed to eternal death, so exalt His dearness.

Therefore, dear Jesus, since I cannot pay Thee, I do adore Thee, and will ever pray Thee; Think on Thy pity, and Thy love unswerving, Not my deserving.

- A. Love the conclusion of the hymn by its "therefore," a declaration of adoration forever.
- B. Love the valuable change of "kind" to "dear" in our version here; it is more affectionate, and of all the uses of Bridges' translation of the song, this change is found in only ours.
- C. Since He died for you in the previous verse, and since you cannot pay here, then adore.
- D. **Adore.** To reverence or honor very highly. To regard with utmost respect and affection.
- E. No form of the verb "adore" is found in our KJV Bibles, so embrace the verbs "admire" and "love" and the

adjective “precious” (II Thes 1:10; Eph 6:24; I Cor 16:22; I Pet 2:7).

- F. What can you pay for His loss? He though rich became poor for your riches (II Cor 8:9).
- G. What can you pay? Your absolute poverty and impotence can add nothing to His glory.
- H. But you can pay! You can adore Him and constantly worship Him in prayer (and song).
 - I. We can gladly join three choirs above that praised Him at His coronation (Rev 5:8-14).
 - J. You should dedicate your life to be a living sacrifice to Him (Romans 12:1-2; 13:14).
- K. With the publican, you must appeal to His mercy and eternal love to sinners (Luke 8:13).
- L. Nothing can separate from Christ’s love, so make your election sure (Rom 8:35,38-39).
- M. With Paul and Peter, you can live the rest of your life for Him (Gal 2:20; I Peter 4:1-2).
- N. With Stephen, you can release your spirit to Jesus with the last 11 words of this hymn.