Come, Thou Almighty King

Text: Anonymous, 1757

- Published anonymously in George Whitefield's "Collection of Hymns for Social Worship" titled as "An Hymn to the Trinity"
- Potentially written as a response or counterpart to British patriotic hymn "God Save our Gracious King", which both originally shared the tune AMERICA ("My Country 'Tis of Thee")
- Often attributed to Charles Wesley; however, no other Wesley hymns use an odd meter as this does

Tune: Felice de Giardini (1716–1796), 1769

- Born in Italy, moved to England
- Well-known violinist in London
- Later operatic conductor in Moscow

1. A specifically Trinitarian hymn, the first three verses describe Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, respectively. In the first verse, God is addressed using the moniker "Ancient of Days". What does this mean, and what does it imply about God?

2. In verse two, Jesus (the Incarnate Word) is described as a "gird on Thy mighty sword". How do you interpret this?

3. Verse three, describing the Holy Spirit, juxtaposes the idea of "holy comforter" with "spirit of power". What does it mean to have a God who is both powerful and comforting, simultaneously? Have you experienced this in your own life?

Crown Him with Many Crowns

Text: Matthew Bridges (1800–1894), 1851

- Member of the "Oxford Movement", seeking renewed focus on church liturgy and sacraments, in addition to Anglican independence from government
- Left Church of England to become Roman Catholic in 1848, like many Oxford Movement members

Tune: George Job Elvey (1816–1893), 1868

- Born into a musical family, studied at Royal Academy of Music
- Organist of St. George's Chapel in Windsor for 47 years, starting at age 19
- Believed church music should be stately and inspiring, like cathedrals' vaulted ceilings and stained glass

1. This hymn was inspired by Revelation 19:12, imagining what the "many crowns" would represent. Notice the progression of titles for Christ: "Virgin's son" at His birth, "Lord of love" at his crucifixion, "Lord of peace" at His second coming, and finally "Lord of years" for all time. Do any of these verses resonate especially with you?

2. The first verse has an interesting contrast between praise to God universe-wide ("the heavenly anthem") and on a personal level ("awake my soul and sing"). Do you find in your own life that it really does "drown all music but its own"? How can you "sing" part of that anthem on an individual level?

Tell Out, My Soul

Text: Timothy Dudley-Smith (1926–), 1961

- Ordained a priest in the Church of England in 1951

- Served as Bishop of Thetford from 1981 until his retirement ten years later

- One of the first hymns he wrote (of 400+), marking the beginning of a resurgence of modern hymnody

  Said Dudley-Smith in 1982:

  > I did not think of myself … as having in any way the gifts of a hymn-writer when in May 1961 I jotted down a set of verses, beginning "Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord." I was reading a review copy of the New English Bible New Testament, in which that line appears exactly as I have put it above; I saw in it the first line of a poem, and speedily wrote the rest.

Tune: Walter Greatorex (1877–1949), 1919

- As a child, served as a chorister at King's College, Cambridge
- Later became Director of Music at Gresham's School, Holt in 1911

1. This hymn is written as a paraphrase of the Magnificat (also known as the Song of Mary) found in Luke 1:46-55, which in turn is patterned after the Song of Hannah in 1 Samuel 2:1-10. While they have their differences, these texts share many of the same ideas present in "Come Thou Almighty King" and "Crown Him With Many Crowns". What similarities do you find most striking?

2. A major theme in the Magnificat is "the great reversal", whereby God brings down the mighty and exalts the humble. In this hymn, praise to God is seen as a response to these mighty acts of God. In our own lives, though, we see that evil often goes unchecked and justice unfulfilled. How can we continue to praise God even under these circumstances?