

Our Bible reading for today: **Matthew 27:32-50**

“Hero Worship!”

We all like our heroes, whether it’s Superman or Wonder Woman, an actor, politician, sports legend or rock musician. Or maybe a real person who risked his/her life for others – or maybe even gave his/her life in a successful rescue. Many of our heroes’ bodies are laid in military cemeteries under simple markers listing only their name, rank and branch of service, and dates, with not a word about their stories or acts of valor.

Truly the greatest hero of all gave His life for others, but doesn’t lie in any cemetery. **“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.”** (^{KJV} Isaiah 53:5) Of course these words are about Jesus as our Redeemer, as the purpose and effectiveness of His valor were described by the Old Testament Prophet Isaiah about 700 years before Jesus died for us. He really suffered and He really died! But He’s not in any tomb because He arose from among the dead, not as a dead hero, but as a victorious conqueror.

I love the powerful hymn “How Great Thou Art!” Especially 2 of its stanzas! In its current form it is a relatively new hymn for English worshipers. It’s the second or third translation of a translation of a translation. Originally it was written in Swedish in 1885 by a writer Carl Boberg. It found its way into German in 1907, then into Russian in 1912, from which it was first translated into English in 1925 with the beginning words, *“O mighty God”*. Another more obscure version’s title was “Great Is Thy Love!”

Stuart Hine, a Methodist missionary, heard the song in the Ukraine in Russia and translated it into English. When an American seminary professor, Dr. J. Edwin Orr (a leading theologian and conference speaker) heard a group in India sing it in 1955, he was stirred. Because of his enthusiasm, Tim Spencer of the *“Sons of the Pioneers”* recorded it; then *“The Blackwood Brothers”* recorded it. But it was George Bev Shea singing it in London and New York every night in extended Billy Graham Crusades that finally won world audiences. Today it is ranked only second to “Amazing Grace” as the world’s most beloved hymn! God used an amazing path and a lot of *“heroes”* to bring the hymn to us.

***“And when I think that God, his Son not sparing,
Sent him to die, I scarce can take it in,
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin.”***

***“When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation,
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart!
Then I shall bow in humble adoration,
And there proclaim, My God, how great thou art!”***

These two stanzas stir my heart, because of what *“My Hero”* did for me, and what He will do!