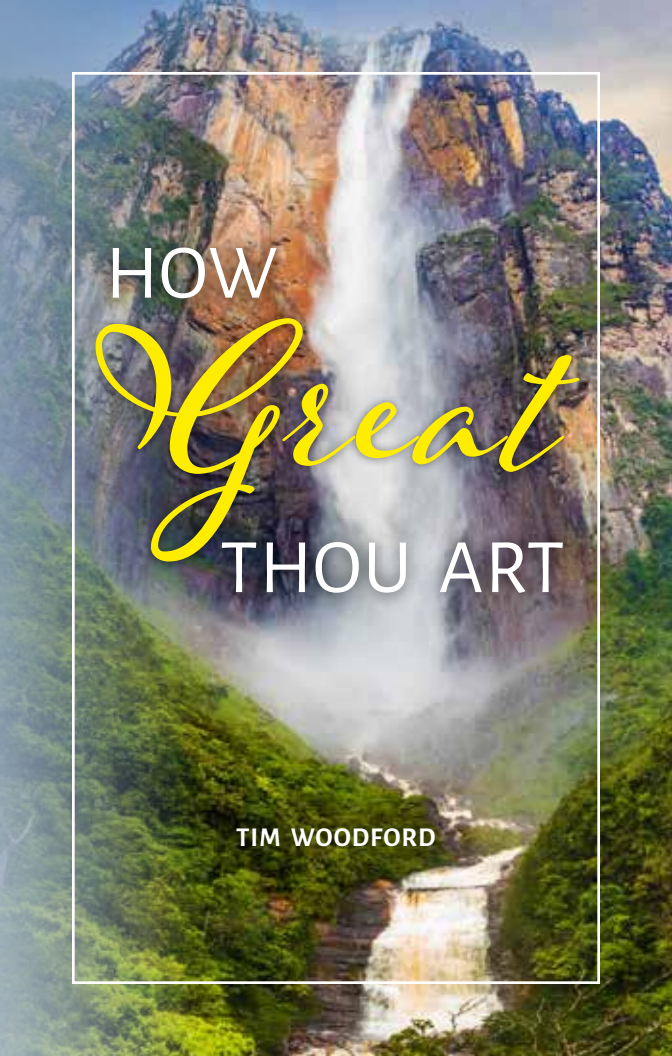

HOW
Great
THOU ART
TIM WOODFORD

Many have come to recognize and appreciate the hymn *"How Great Thou Art,"* but many don't know the story of its origin.

The year was 1885, and the young preacher Carl Boberg was on his way to his home in Mönsterås, Sweden, along the coast of the Baltic Sea. Suddenly, a thunderstorm broke out over the Kalmar Strait. Carl ran quickly in search of shelter from the lightning and deafening thunder. To his surprise, within a short time the storm calmed just as suddenly as it had started and amazed, he continued home. Upon arriving, he opened the windows, and the view of the bay stirred his soul. The clear sky, the melody of the birds, the fresh breeze, and the sound of bells in the distance, inspired him to sit down and write the poem, *"O Store Gud"* (Oh, Great God).

Through a long series of events, the poem was assigned a tune, and over time was translated into dozens of languages. In 1931, missionary Stuart Hine heard the

hymn in German and decided to translate it into English. In the process, he also wrote several more stanzas. Two of these are now the 3rd and 4th verses of our English version. Before long, it was being sung in many congregations. Later, the world-famous singer, Elvis Presley, recorded it in English, and it became even more widely known.

The contrast between the fury of the storm and the deep calm afterwards makes us think of two biblical characters: Jonah and Jesus Christ. Jonah was a prophet who, due to his disobedience, found himself in the middle of a storm. We observe that God sometimes sends us "storms" to wake us up to our sin too. Jesus Christ, the obedient Son on the cross, experienced the storm of divine judgment due to our sin (ISAIAH 53:6) in order to offer us a refuge from God's wrath against the sinner. The storm for Jonah and his companions did not cease until the guilty man was punished, while the storm for Christ did not cease until the Innocent was punished. Did you know there is now

shelter available to every sinner who takes refuge in the One who endured the storm's fury on our behalf?

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.

Our desire is that you will soon be able to say not only, *"How Great Thou Art"*, but also say **"my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour"** (LUKE 1:47 ESV). Recognizing that God is great is a good start; knowing Him personally through His Son, as your Saviour and Refuge from the coming judgment – now that is far better!

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