

Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah

Scripture Allusions, Bible References, and Devotion for the Hymn, “Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah”

Scriptures for Verse 1:

“Then the LORD said unto Moses, ‘Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land.’ And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, ‘I am the LORD: And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH^a was I not known to them. And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers.’ ” (Exodus 6:1-4 KJV)

“And it shall serve as a sign to you on your hand, and as a reminder on your forehead, that the law of the LORD may be in your mouth; for with a powerful hand the LORD brought you out of Egypt.” (Exodus 13:9)

“Now when Pharaoh had let the people go, God did not lead them by the way of the land of the Philistines, even though it was near; for God said, ‘The people might change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt.’ Hence God led the people around by the way of the wilderness to the Red^b Sea; and the sons of Israel went up in martial array from the land of Egypt. Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had made the sons of Israel solemnly swear, saying, ‘God will surely take care of you, and you shall carry my bones from here with you.’ Then they set out from Succoth and camped in Etham on the edge of the wilderness.” (Exodus 13:17-20)

“Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether or not they will walk in My instruction. On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily.’ ” (Exodus 16:4-5)

“The sons of Israel ate the manna forty years, until they came to an inhabited land; they ate the manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan.” (Exodus 16:35)

“Jesus then said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world.’ Then they said to Him, ‘Lord, always give us this bread.’ Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.’ ” (John 6:32-35)

^aJEHOVAH – The Hebrew word is Y^chōvâh (*yeh-ho-vah*) (Ref. 2, Hebrew #3068) = (the) self-Existent or Eternal, Jewish national name for God – Jehovah, the Lord.

^bliterally, Sea of Reeds

Verse 1 (Sing or read together):

**Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
pilgrim through this barren land.
I am weak, but thou art mighty;
hold me with thy powerful hand.
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
feed me till I want no more; (want no more)
feed me till I want no more.**

Scriptures for Verse 2:

“Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” (Revelation 22:1-2)

“The LORD was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.” (Exodus 13:21-22)

“Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Pass before the people and take with you some of the elders of Israel; and take in your hand your staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and

you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.’ ” (Exodus 17:5-6)

“You, in Your great compassion, did not forsake them in the wilderness; the pillar of cloud did not leave them by day, to guide them on their way, nor the pillar of fire by night, to light for them the way in which they were to go. You gave Your good Spirit to instruct them, Your manna You did not withhold from their mouth, and You gave them water for their thirst. Indeed, forty years You provided for them in the wilderness and they were not in want; their clothes did not wear out, nor did their feet swell.” (Nehemiah 9:19-21)

“The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and I am helped; therefore my heart exults, and with my song I shall thank Him.” (Psalm 28:7)

Verse 2:

**Open now the crystal fountain,
whence the healing stream doth flow;
let the fire and cloudy pillar
lead me all my journey through.
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer,
be thou still my strength and shield; (strength and shield)
be thou still my strength and shield.**

Scriptures for Verse 3:

“Now it came about after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' servant, saying, ‘My servant is dead; now therefore arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel. Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you, just as I spoke to Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon, even as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and as far as the Great Sea toward the setting of the sun will be your territory. No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you.’ ” (Joshua 1:1-5)

“ ‘Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Be strong and very courageous;

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be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go. This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.’ ” (Joshua 1:6-9)

“Then Joshua said to the people, ‘Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you.’ ” (Joshua 3:5)

“It shall come about when the soles of the feet of the priests who carry the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan will be cut off, and the waters which are flowing down from above will stand in one heap. So when the people set out from their tents to cross the Jordan with the priests carrying the ark of the covenant before the people, and when those who carried the ark came into the Jordan, and the feet of the priests carrying the ark were dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks all the days of harvest), the waters which were flowing down from above stood and rose up in one heap, a great distance away at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan; and those which were flowing down toward the sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were completely cut off. So the people crossed opposite Jericho. And the priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan while all Israel crossed on dry ground, until all the nation had finished crossing the Jordan.” (Joshua 3:13-17)

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.” (Psalm 23:4)

“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.” (Revelation 20:11-14)

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“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.” (John 5:24)

Verse 3:

**When I tread the verge of Jordan,
bid my anxious fears subside;
death of death and hell's destruction,
land me safe on Canaan's side.
Songs of praises, songs of praises,
I will ever give to thee; (give to thee)
I will ever give to thee.**

Comments:

“Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah” uses prayer language asking for God’s guidance and provision through our pilgrimage of life. Note the verbs and their objects – “Guide me,” “hold me,” “feed me,” “open” (now the crystal fountain), “let” (the fire and cloudy pillar), “be” (thou still my strength and shield), “bid” (my anxious fears subside), and “land me” (safe on Canaan’s side).

The hymn focuses on our God who leads us through our life-long pilgrimage, and especially during the “barren” times of our earthly life. Just as God provided the Israelites with clear, visible guidance in the form of fire and cloudy pillar, we ask God to guide us in ways that God makes plain to us.

The hymn reminds us to trust God who provides for our daily needs such as bread, water, and healing.

Finally, we trust God to be with us when we transition from this earthly life to the promised land of eternal life with our Lord Jesus Christ.

In response, we offer our lives to God, and forever sing praises as “I will ever give to thee, I will ever give to thee.”

Apply:

In what area or areas of your life today do you need God's guidance or provision?

Pray:

God of guidance and provision, thank you for guiding the Israelites through their time in the wilderness. Thank you for leading them with your fire and cloudy pillar, and for providing them manna to sustain them. Thank you for delivering them from slavery to the land you promised to give them.

Thank you for guiding us through our life's journey. Help us to be obedient to your leading, and to be thankful for your provisions. We thank you that through your Son, Jesus, we have eternal life, and we look forward to your leading us and being with us through our days ahead. Amen.

History:

William Williams (1717-1781) was the son of a wealthy farmer. He graduated from university as a physician, intending to become a medical doctor (Ref. 4). William was converted through the preaching of Howell Harris, and subsequently became a physician of the soul – a preacher (Ref. 4). During forty-three years of itinerant ministry, William traveled over 95,000 miles. He is best remembered for his hymns, and is called the “Watts of Wales.” He composed more than eight hundred hymns, including this auto biographical prayer with its many Old Testament allusions. (Ref. 4)

The tune, “Cwm Rhondda,” sung in the trenches and mines as well as at numberless rugby matches, was composed in 1905 by John Hughes for a singing festival. (Ref. 5) Legend has it that he wrote it in chalk on a tarpaulin (though why he should have done so has never been explained). The repeated high notes of the verse's last line are a gift to Welsh tenors keen to show off their larynxes and can be drawn out to awesomely vulgar musical effect. (Ref. 5)

The hymn was sung at the Princess of Wales's funeral in 1997. (Ref. 5)

Hymnsite.com provided the lyrics for “Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah.” (Ref. 6). Hymnary.org provided the score. (Ref. 7)

References:

1. Scripture quotations are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*[®], Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.
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Mr. Whitney V. Myers is a church music composer and arranger, as well as a devotion and Bible Study writer. Mr. Myers has published over 30 choral arrangements, hymns, and songs on the www.whitneytunes.com website as well as hymn and song videos on the Whitneytunes YouTube Channel*. Mr. Myers is a graduate of Gettysburg College (B.A.), George Washington University (M.S.), and the University of Maryland (MBA, with honors).

* link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJbcUsgCRWyxyvysgTkdpOxQ>

Lyrics for the Hymn, “Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah”

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