

## Hymns by Isaac Watts

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by Wayne Goff

Isaac Watts wrote over six hundred hymns in his lifetime, and we sing many of them without realizing that he wrote them. "Joy to the World," "Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed," "Am I A Soldier Of The Cross?", "At The Cross," "I Sing The Mighty Power of God," "We're Marching to Zion," and "I'm Not Ashamed To Own My Lord" to mention some very well-known ones.

He lived in a time where it was customary to sing only Old Testament psalms. At the young age of 20, he complained to his father that they were not singing songs with the gospel message. His father encouraged him to write something better, and so he did. He often used themes found in the prophetic Psalms and with his knowledge of their fulfillment, he wrote beautiful hymns whose words still linger within our memories today.

Think of the **conviction** behind the words "Alas, and did my Savior bleed, and did my Sovereign die? Would He devote that sacred head for such a worm as I?" This one verse declares Christ's absolute power as God, His absolute love for humble man, and our unworthiness to accept such a gift.

Another stanza says, "Well might the sun in darkness hide so pure and undefiled to make a sinful one like me Your chosen, precious child?" Indeed the sun became dark at mid-day when the Son of God died upon the cross of Calvary. It was for us that He died, and heaven's sun could not show that horrific deed! But Jesus endured this for the "*joy set before Him*" (Heb. 12:2) "endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." What a contrast between the dastardly deed done in crucifying the Innocent One, and the forgiveness of a cruel, darkened race!

Pick up a song book and read the lyrics of Mr. Watts' songs. They are both thrilling and chilling because they indeed tell the message of Christ's love for us and our need to be dedicated and committed to Jesus.

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