



O'er Jerusalem Thou Weepest

Text: Anna Bernadine Dorothy Hoppe (1889-1941)

Tune: Louis Bourgeois (1510-1561)

“O'er Jerusalem Thou Weepest” is a perfect example of a hymn written for a specific Sunday in the Church Year. This hymn, written in the early 20th century, was inspired by and written for the Gospel for the Tenth Sunday after Trinity, Our Lord weeping over Jerusalem’s rejection of their Messiah. Though its content can be appropriate for any sort of a focus on confession of sins, this hymn finds its happiest home on this Sunday of the Church Year.



Anna Hoppe

Anna Hoppe, the text's author, was born May 7, 1889, the daughter of Albert and Emily Hoppe of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Early in her childhood she wrote patriotic verses, but in early adulthood made a transition to writing only spiritual poetry. Many religious periodicals published her hymns, which aroused great interest in her and her work. Her own Synod periodical, the *Northwest Lutheran* of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, first published her writing, which spread quickly to those of other Lutherans and many other denominations. Three of her hymns were included in the 1925 hymnal of the Augustana Lutheran Synod (a Scandinavian body which eventually joined the Lutheran Church in America, a founding body of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America [ELCA]). She published a large body of her hymns in a work entitled *Songs of the Church Year*. Her goal was to write 1,000 hymns by her death. Though it is unclear if she ever attained that goal, by 1930, her 41st birthday, she had already written over 400 hymns. She also translated several hymns from German and in that way was also a blessing to the Church. All of this work is remarkable, since her education was extremely limited. She only received a grade school education and then entered the workforce as an office secretary.

Though she took some night classes sporadically, she never completed her education. Despite a busy life, she made hymnwriting a priority. On her writing she said: “Many of my hymns have been written on my way to and from church and to and from work. I utilize my lunch hours for typing the hymns and keeping up correspondence. I used to do quite a bit of writing on Sunday afternoons, but now we have a Laymen’s Hour in our church at that time, and I do not like to miss it. I also attend our Fundamental Bible lectures, Jewish mission-meetings, and the like. Still I find a minute here and there in which to jot down some verse.” Anna refused to copyright any of her hymns, though several people encouraged her to do so. She did not want any hindrance to be put in place for any church or denomination wanting to use her hymns to teach the faith. Sadly, she died at a very young age—52—on August 2, 1941.

Anna insisted on using tunes already well known. For this hymn she chose a tune written by Louis Bourgeois, a French composer and music theorist during the Renaissance. His most famous melody, OLD 100TH, is the tune for the Common Doxology (“Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow”). By 1547 he was teaching in Geneva where he began to write tunes to which the Psalms could be sung. However, on December 3, 1551 he was arrested for writing new tunes for some Psalms. Though his friend, John Calvin, freed him from prison, the controversy continued. People did not want to learn new tunes and the town council ordered that his work be burned for being “too confusing.” He went on to work extensively in music before his death in 1561.

Stanza one serves as a retelling of the Gospel for Trinity X, St. Luke 19:41-48. Stanza two is moved by the events of that Gospel and serves as a confession of sin, imploring Jesus to forgive our sin and to dwell within us, something He can do because “Thy precious Blood hath bought us.” The hymn concludes with a prayer for Divine Grace. We beseech the Lord to grant us His “blood-bought peace,” and that He would also cause our faith and love to increase. Finally we sing a fourfold petition for grace to love the Word, to keep its message, to keep Jesus as our only Treasure, and to love Him without measure.