

There's a Great Day Coming

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ..." (2 Cor. 5.10)

INTRO.: A hymn which talks about that time when every one of us shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ and give account of himself to God is "There's A Great Day Coming" (#284 in *Hymns for Worship Revised* and #336 in *Sacred Selections for the Church*). The text was written and the tune (Great Day) was composed both by Will Lamartine Thompson (1847-1909). Born in East Liverpool, OH, and educated at Mt. Union College in nearby Alliance, OH, Thompson began his career writing secular and patriotic songs. His "Gathering Sea Shells by the Seashore," penned when he was 26, swept the nation from shore to shore and gathered a fortune for the youthful composer. However, at age 40, he turned his attention to writing sacred songs, and his firm, Will L. Thompson & Co., with offices in East Liverpool and in Chicago, IL, became quite successful. "There's a Great Day Coming" was published in 1887, and the copyright later belonged to Hope Publishing Co.

Three of Thompson's other hymns have also remained quite popular: "Lead Me Gently Home, Father," "Jesus Is All The World To Me," and "Softly And Tenderly." Among songbooks published by members of the Lord's church during the twentieth century for use in churches of Christ, "There's A Great Day Coming" appeared in the 1935 *Christian Hymns* (No. 1), the 1948 *Christian Hymns No. 2*, and the 1966 *Christian Hymns No. 3* all edited by L. O. Sanderson; the 1963 *Abiding Hymns* edited by Robert C. Welch; and the 1963 *Christian Hymnal* edited by J. Nelson Slater. Today it can be found in the 1971 *Songs of the Church* and the 1990 *Songs of the Church 21st C. Ed.* both edited by Alton Howard; the 1978/1983 *Church Gospel Songs and Hymns* edited by V. E. Howard; and the 1992 *Praise for the Lord* edited by John P. Wiegand; in addition to *Hymns for Worship*, *Sacred Selections*, and the 2007 *Sacred Songs of the Church* edited by William D. Jeffcoat

This song encourages us to be prepared for the coming of Christ and judgment.

I. Stanza one calls it a "great" day

"There's a great day coming, a great day coming,
There's a great day coming by and by,
When the saint and the sinner shall be parted right and left;
Are you ready for that day to come?"

A. It will be great because it will be a day of judgment: Jude v. 6

B. Saints and sinners will appear there because every one of us shall give account of Himself to God: Rom. 14.12

C. However, the saints and sinners shall be separated: Matt. 25.31-32

II. Stanza two calls it a "bright" day

"There's a bright day coming, a bright day coming,
There's a bright day coming by and by.
But its brightness shall only come to them that love the Lord;
Are you ready for that day to come?"

A. It will be bright because the saints will be granted eternal life with God: Mk. 10. 30

B. However, its brightness will not come to everyone because many choose to enter the broad gate and travel the wide way to everlasting destruction: Matt. 7.13-14

C. Rather, its brightness will come only to those who truly love the Lord: 2 Tim. 4.6-8

III. Stanza three calls it a "sad" day

"There's a sad day coming, a sad day coming,

There's a sad day coming by and by,

When the sinner shall hear his doom, 'Depart, I know ye not;'

Are you ready for that day to come?"

A. It will be sad because it will bring everlasting punishment to those who do not know God and who do not obey His gospel: 2 Thes. 1.7-9

B. On that day, the sinner will hear his doom: Matt. 7.21-23

C. All those who are not right with God will be told to depart into everlasting fire: Matt. 25.41, 46

CONCL.: The chorus asks us if we are ready for that great day (Heb. 9.27).

"Are you ready, are you ready, Are you ready for that day to come?

Are you ready, are you ready, For the judgment day?"

In *Hymns and History*, Forrest M. McCann says, "According to Kenneth Hanson, Thompson's religious roots were in the Stone-Campbell Movement." That is certainly possible, but the evidence seems to indicate that whatever the religious background of his family, Will L. Thompson himself was in all probability a member of the Methodist Church. There was a gospel preacher of the early 20th century in Texas named Will M. Thompson, so there also might be some confusion on that account. However, we still sing some of Will L. Thompson's hymns, and this one is often used as an invitation song to encourage both saint and sinner to be ready because "There's A Great Day Coming."

Source: <https://hymnstudiesblog.wordpress.com/2008/11/14/quotthere039s-a-great-day-comingquot/>

He Owns the Cattle on a Thousand Hills

A popular song by John W. Peterson starts out with the words, "He owns the cattle on a thousand hills, / The wealth in every mine." The song lyric comes from [Psalm 50](#), which says, "Every animal of the forest is mine, / and the cattle on a thousand hills. / I know every bird in the mountains, / and the insects in the fields are mine" ([Psalm 50:10-11](#)). Saying that God owns the cattle on a thousand hills is another way of saying that everything belongs to God.

The context of [Psalm 50](#) sheds some light on the meaning of the statement of God's ownership of cattle. Beginning in verse 7, God is "testifying" against Israel. He says, "I bring no charges against you concerning your sacrifices," which means that the Israelites were carrying out their duties regarding the [sacrifices](#) according to the Law; they were doing things right, externally. But then God puts the sacrifices in perspective, saying, "I have no need of a bull from your stall / or of goats from your pens" (verse 9), and He reminds them that "every animal of the forest is mine, / and the cattle on a thousand hills" (verse 10). God can get animals anywhere; they are already His. He doesn't need to be offered them by man. Why is God telling the people He doesn't need their animals?

The answer is in the message of this psalm, which includes these points:

1) God requires more than *external* compliance to commands; He desires *internal* righteousness. Even though the people were procedurally blameless in regard to the sacrifices, they were lacking in true worship. In [Psalm 50:14-15](#), God says, "Sacrifice thank offerings to God, / fulfill your vows to the Most High, / and call on me in the day of trouble; / I will deliver you, and you will honor me."

2) God does not *need* sacrifices for “food.” God does not need anything; He is the Self-existent One. He is the Creator and Sustainer; nothing creates or sustains Him. This is in direct contrast to the pagan gods, whose mythologies taught their need to eat. Sacrifices brought to the idols were considered the food of the gods. The One True God of Israel makes a clear distinction between Himself and the false deities ([Psalm 50:12–13](#)).

3) God rebukes “worship” based solely on obligation; thanksgiving is an important part of true worship ([Psalm 50:14](#)), as is a relationship grounded in salvation: “I will deliver you, and you will honor me” (verse 15).

4) God defies the notion that what people give to Him is “theirs” and that they are being magnanimous in parting with their property for God’s sake. Many people today harbor the false perception that they own stuff and then give some of it to God. God owns the cattle on a thousand hills—is it really generous of us to give God a cow every now and then? If everything we have is the Lord’s, how magnanimous is it to give God ten percent?

God owns the cattle on a thousand hills. He owns every animal and every bird and every beast. He owns us. For His greatness and goodness, we “continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name” ([Hebrews 13:15](#)).

Source: <https://www.gotquestions.org/cattle-on-a-thousand-hills.html>

Kneel at the Cross

Words: Charles Ernest Moody (b. Oct. 8, 1891; d. June 21, 1977)

Music: Charles Ernest Moody

Note: Charles Moody was a Georgia composer and musician who played the fiddle, the banjo and the harmonica. He came from a musical family, and music was in his blood. He is said to have traded a shotgun for his first fiddle.

In the late 1920’s and early 1930’s Moody was a member of the legendary Georgia Yellowhammers, a secular string band. Charles Moody wrote a popular novelty number, *The Song of the Doodlebug*, but he also contributed around a hundred gospel songs.

His compositions (such as 1924’s *Drifting Too Far from Shore*) became standards of southern gospel music. *Kneel at the Cross* was published in 1948. After the Yellowhammers disbanded, Moody was for many years the choir director of the Calhoun Free Methodist Church.

Though I want to discuss one aspect of this song that I hope will be instructive, it is not a selection that I can recommend overall. I realize there are simple, repetitious gospel songs that have blessed many. But in my view this one is too weak in content and theology for me to find much use for it.

Who is being asked to kneel? Saint or sinner? The fact that the cross is prominent, and there’s an offer of “life anew” suggests it’s the latter. Yet there’s no mention of sin. (The closest we get is “give your idols up,” stanza 3.) And no mention of cleansing and forgiveness of sin.

Then *why* does the song invite us to come to the cross? It all seems very Me-centred, reminiscent of the weak gospel preaching that urges sinners to come to Jesus so their life's problems will be solved. Little is said of the fact that we come weighed down with guilt and shame because we have wronged the eternal Lord of all, and we realize that His grace is our only hope.

There is no mention in the song that, as lost and hell-bound rebel sinners, we have offended a holy God. That we kneel at the cross to confess our helplessness and seek cleansing and forgiveness. That it is there we receive eternal salvation, and there we bow to Christ and own Him as our Saviour and Lord.

Instead, we are to “leave with Him [our] care and begin life anew” (stanza one and refrain). We come to share His glory and find bliss, and we are told that “harm can ne'er befall” those who are anchored there (stanza two). This last assertion is not precisely accurate. It is true that no one and nothing can separate the Christian from the love of Christ (Rom. 8:35-39). But many believers suffer persecution and other “harm” in this life. The apostles certainly did.

Finally, there is the fact that the song pictures Jesus waiting at the *cross* to meet the seeker. While there may be a sense in which the one who trusts in Christ for salvation, sees Him, by faith, on the cross, we know that Calvary is a past historical event. Christ is now risen and glorified, seated at the Father's right hand (Rom. 8:34). There He is our heavenly Advocate and Intercessor (Heb. 7:25; I Jn. 2:1). But we find none of that here either.

The one thing about the song that I'd like to discuss for a moment is the appeal to *kneel* in prayer (mentioned nine times, counting the repeated refrain).

Of course there is nothing magical about the posture used in prayer. In Bible times, some *stood* to pray (Gen. 18:22; I Sam. 1:26; Lk. 18:13), or *bowed their heads*—especially in worship (Gen. 24:26; Exod. 4:31; 12:27). Others *sat* (Neh. 1:4), some even prayed while *lying in bed* (Ps. 63:6), and still others *fell face down*, prostrate before the Lord (Num. 16:22; Josh. 5:14). But one option is *kneeling* (I Kg. 8:54; Dan. 6:10; Lk. 22:41; Acts 9:40).

“Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker” (Ps. 95:6).

Though not involved a church where kneeling was a regular thing, I can recall occasions when I served as a pastor that I felt it was important for us to kneel together—all of us, including me. Some found it difficult, because of age or infirmity. Others objected because it was something different. But we did it. Even if that's not our usual practice, it would be fitting to kneel for a time of prayer occasionally, either as a congregation or privately on our own.

Why? What does kneeling add to our praying? In one sense, not a thing. If we are kneeling on the outside, but rigidly refusing to kneel on the inside, bowing the knee will be rank hypocrisy and an insult to God. But let us suppose there is a willingness to do so, and a desire to understand what is meant by it.

1) Reverence. Kneeling is an expression of reverence and respect. It is what subjects traditionally do before a ruler. To kneel before the Lord in prayer is an expression of reverence for Him, and a recognition of who He is, our heavenly Lord.

2) Dependence. There is in the posture an expression of dependence, even of vulnerability. It seems to signify the opposite of strength and dominance. Sinful rebellion asserts our independence of God. But when we kneel in prayer it says we need the Lord and we are appealing for his aid, and trusting in Him.

3) Submission. Kneeling also expresses submission. We are not only to reverently worship the Lord our God, and depend upon Him, we are to subject ourselves to His will. Kneeling represents that, as well. It is the act of a servant ready to be commissioned and commanded, ready to obey.

1) Kneel at the cross, Christ will meet you there,
Come while He waits for you;
List to His voice, leave with Him your care
And begin life anew.

*Kneel at the cross, leave every care;
Kneel at the cross. Jesus will meet you there.*

Source: <https://wordwisehymns.com/2013/07/19/kneel-at-the-cross/>