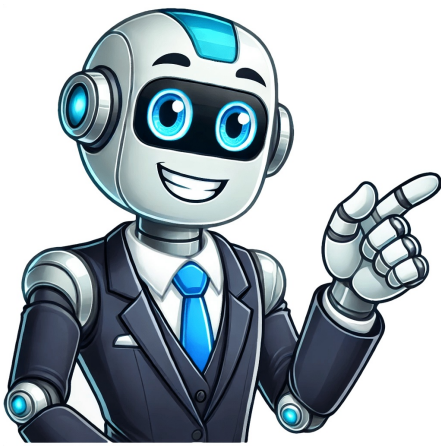


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"Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah," written by William Williams and later translated, is hymn number 127 in The United Methodist Hymnal. This song has been used in worship globally across various denominations and was featured in significant televised events like Princess Diana's funeral (1997) and the royal wedding of Prince William and Catherine Middleton (2011). Its enduring popularity can be attributed to its universal themes of struggle, God's provision, and redemption. William Williams, born in 1717 in Carnarthenshire, Wales, initially intended to become a doctor. However, after encountering Howell Harris' preaching, he converted and later devoted himself to Methodism in 1744 following accusations against the Church of England. It was during this period that he composed the Welsh text for "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah" in 1745. The hymn's lyrics are a testament to Williams' hardships as a traveling minister. He skillfully weaves imagery from the Old Testament book of Exodus, evoking God's guidance through strife. The song affirms the reality that God provides and redeems wrongs in the world, referencing biblical stories such as the "Bread of Heaven" (Exodus 16) and the "crystal fountain" and "healing stream" (Exodus 17:6). In one stanza, Williams references Exodus 13:21 – the "fire and cloudy pillar" that guided the Israelites by day and night. This rich biblical imagery conveys a God of provisional grace who provides sustenance for the hungry, guides followers by day and by night, and quenches the thirst of those longing for water. The hymn also references Exodus 17:6 in its allusion to "whence the healing stream doth flow." These themes maintain the idea of a God who intervenes on behalf of his people, providing sustenance, guidance, and redemption. Guide me O Thou Great Redeemer - The hymn ends in climactic fashion with the Hebrew people finally reaching their destination after forty years of wandering in the desert (Joshua 3:9-6:17). This stanza references the book of Joshua with the crossing of the river "Jordan" and the arrival at Canaan. The final lines conclude with exuberance, as the "people of Israel" sing of victory to their Redeemer and Provider. O dearest protector, Be with me always, my steadfast guardian. 3. When I stand at the threshold of eternity, calm my doubts and fears; Guide me safely across the void into the promised land. Songs of worship, songs of adoration, I will sing to you forevermore.

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