

O for a Thousand Tongues To Sing: The Complete Version

This hymn was written by Charles Wesley in 1739 to commemorate his conversion on May 21, 1738. It was first published in the Wesleys' collection *Hymns and Sacred Poems of 1740* under the title "For the Anniversary Day of One's Conversion." It has traditionally held a place of honor as the opening hymn in Methodist hymnals ever since Wesley's 1780 hymnal, *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists*.

Apparently the only publication of all original eighteen stanzas was in the 1740 hymnal. Seventeen stanzas were included as number 58 in *The United Methodist Hymnal* (1989). The number, ordering, and wording of the text stanzas have varied in the different hymnals. The original stanza seventeen was omitted from the 1989 hymnal as being perceived as possibly racist, and stanza six includes an editorial note that it may be omitted because it may be perceived discriminatory or offensive to people who cannot hear, speak, or see. Stanza seven of the 1989 hymnal's number 5, (which is the original stanza eighteen) has also been altered, changing "With me, your chief" to "In Christ, your head." In the original language, Charles Wesley was identifying himself with Paul in 1 Timothy 1:15 as "the chief of sinners."

Glory to God, and praise and love
be ever, ever given,
by saints below and saints above,
the church in earth and heaven.

On this glad day the glorious Sun
of Righteousness arose;
on my benighted soul he shone
and filled it with repose.

Sudden expired the legal strife,
'twas then I ceased to grieve;
my second, real, living life
I then began to live.

Then with my heart I first believed,
believed with faith divine,
power with the Holy Ghost received
to call the Savior mine.

I felt my Lord's atoning blood
close to my soul applied;
me, me he loved, the Son of God,
for me, for me he died!

I found and owned his promise true,
ascertained of my part,
my pardon passed in heaven I knew
when written on my heart.

O for a thousand tongues to sing
my dear Redeemer's praise!
The glories of my God and King,
the triumphs of his grace.

My gracious Master and my God,
assist me to proclaim,
to spread through all the earth abroad
the honors of thy name.

Jesus! the name that charms our fears,
that bids our sorrows cease;
'tis music in the sinner's ears,
'tis life, and health, and peace!

He breaks the power of canceled sin,
he sets the prisoner free;
his blood can make the foulest clean;
his blood availed for me.

He speaks, and listening to his voice
new life the dead receive;
the mournful, broken hearts rejoice,
the humble poor believe.

Hear him, ye deaf, his praise, ye dumb,
your loosened tongues employ;
ye blind, behold your Savior come,
and leap, ye lame, for joy.

Look unto him, ye nations, own
your God, ye fallen race!
Look, and be saved through faith alone,
be justified by grace!

See all your sins on Jesus laid;
the Lamb of God was slain,
his soul was once an offering made
for every soul of man.

Harlots and publicans and thieves,
in holy triumph join!
Saved is the sinner that believes
From crimes as great as mine.

Murderers and all ye hellish crew,
ye sons of lust and pride,
believe the Savior died for you;
for me the Savior died.

Awake from guilty nature's sleep,
and Christ shall give you light;
cast all your sins into the deep,
and wash the Ethiop white.

With me, your chief, you then shall know,
shall feel your sins forgiven;
anticipate your heaven below
and own that love is heaven.

— Charles Wesley, 1739

This hymn text and brief commentary are not copyrighted and may be freely copied and used.

For additional reading:

Frank Baker's commentary note on this hymn, page 56, *The United Methodist Hymnal*

Carlton Young's commentary on this hymn, pages 510-511, *Companion to The United Methodist Hymnal* (Abingdon, 1993). See also the paragraph on page 137 about how the hymnal revision committee dealt with language issues.

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/o-for-a-thousand-tongues-to-sing-the-complete-version>

