

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

Author [Joachim Neander](#)

Composer Stralsund Gesangbuch

[Daniel 4: 37](#)

[Psalm 23: 1-6](#)

[Psalm 103: 1-22](#)

[Psalm 106: 1-3](#)

[Psalm 148: 1-14](#)

[Psalm 150: 1-6](#)

[Psalm 148: 1-13](#)

[John 10: 1-29](#)

Thoughts on the Text

It would be difficult to reflect on this glorious hymn without retelling an interesting bit about its author, Joachim Neander. Neander, a reformed German in the latter half of the 17th century, wrote about sixty hymns and poems in his native Germany. By 1674 he became a teacher in Dusseldorf and enjoyed walking in the woods and valleys near the city. Eventually, he began to gather students in the woods to teach lessons and host conversations. However, his popularity with the local people gained him so much attention that he began to have problems with the church authorities who removed him from his post. Neander continued to enjoy and take inspiration from the valley throughout his life to such an extent that the valley was renamed in his honor in the early 19th century. It became famous in 1856 when the hulking skeleton of a pre-historic human was found in the valley. It was given the name Neanderthal.

That interesting historical tidbit aside, the reason Neander was known was not just because he liked to take walks in the woods but because of the fruit of the inspiration born in those woods. The most well-loved of his hymns is Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, surely one of the most sung and loved hymns in churches of all traditions.

The call to praise the King of creation is sent out to all who hear, maybe those who have been silent for too long, to let the Amen sound again. In my imagination, I picture a valley of clapboard white churches whose steeple bells are silent and have been silent as long as anyone can remember. The thick dust on the bells is merely a picture of the dormant faith that once was vibrant in this valley of my imagination. Into this scene comes one voice with one simple message, Waken. Praise the Lord. Praise Him with adoration. Praise Him again. And slowly one bell starts to sway, first with a creak then a furtive dong. Gaining confidence in itself and waking the echoes of the vibrant faith that once swung so powerfully, the bell, and then others like it begin to peel their music once again. One after another church bell, one after another soul, begins to sing praise to God once again. "O let all that is in me adore Him! All that has life and breath, come now with praises before Him!"

Is a modern day version of this scene possible? It must be. It has to be. Even in silenced churches, the Spirit is still there. Even in the most dormant dead faith, God is still present. Is it possible that what we are waiting for is one small voice to call us to remember the faith that once rung passionately in our hearts and can again?