



Anthem: "And Can It Be?"

Charles Wesley (1738)

Plew

Dan Forrest

This anthem arrangement uses three of the five stanzas of Charles Wesley's hymn of the same title. Wesley is considered by many to be the greatest hymn writer. "From the time of his conversion in 1738, Wesley wrote an average of two hymns a week every week for fifty years, composing between five and six thousand hymns during his lifetime. Most of these hymns were written on horseback as he traveled with his brother John, preaching and ministering to the poor."¹

"With every spiritual experience or thought that crossed Charles' mind, a new hymn was born. Even on his deathbed it is said that he dictated to his wife a final hymn of praises to the Lord."²

In this text, Wesley begins by exclaiming, "And can it be that I should gain an interest in my Savior's blood!" This is followed by a profound yet personal message that Jesus died for me "who caused his pain." Wesley choose the word *amazing* to describe this kind of love. The line "No condemnation now I dread," mirrors the message in Romans 8:1: "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Wesley then adds to this the beautiful image of glorification in the life to come.³

Thoughts for personal prayer time: Though difficult, I should think on Jesus' pain, suffering, and shed blood on my behalf. For it is by Jesus' sacrifice and God's amazing love that I no longer face the condemnation for my sin. For it is through Jesus' pain and suffering that I have peace, security, and anticipation of what is to come. All thanks and honor I give to God and Christ Jesus.

Anthem Text

And can it be? Amazing love, how can it be?

And can it be that I should gain an int'rest in the Savior's blood?
Died He for me, who caused His pain? For me, who Him to death pursued?

Amazing love! how can it be that Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

He left His Father's throne above, so free, so infinite His grace;
Emptied Himself of all but love, and bled for Adam's helpless race;
'Tis mercy all, immense and free; for, O my God, it found out me.

And can it be? Amazing love, how can it be?

No condemnation now I dread; Jesus, and all in Him is mine!
Alive in Him, my living Head, and clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach the eternal throne, and claim the crown, through Christ my own.

Amazing love, how can it be that Thou, my God shouldst die for me?

¹ Brown, Robert and Mark Norton, ed. *The One Year Book of Hymns*.

² Osbeck, Kenneth. *Amazing Grace: 366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions*.

³ adapted from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-and-can-it-be-that-i-should-gain>