



# At The Name Of Jesus

Tune: King's Weston

How do you know if a hymn is really good or not? One way is to see if the text and music go together well. Does the music emphasize the text, or does it get in the way? Does the music call attention to itself, or does it form a perfect match with the text? I think that "At the name of Jesus" is a fine example of perfectly matched text and music.

The text was written by Caroline Noel. The music was written by Ralph Vaughan Williams. Both of these people were born in England where they lived all of their lives. Each of their fathers was a minister, so it was natural for them to deal with hymn texts and tunes. Vaughan Williams was the editor of *The English Hymnal*, published in 1906, which became one of the most important hymnals for many years to come. During his lifetime Vaughan Williams became one of England's most important composers.

Look in your Bible at Philippians 2:5-11. These are the verses used by Caroline Noel as the basis for the text of "At the name of Jesus." What similarities do you see between scripture and hymn text. What does *dominations* mean? \_\_\_\_\_.

Another characteristic of a good hymn is the form, or shape, of its tune. Where does it begin? Where does it go? Where does it end? *King's Weston* (the name of the tune) begins and ends on the same note. The rhythm of the second phrase is nearly identical to the first, but the tune is higher by the interval of a third. The third phrase brings us back near our beginning note, then rises quickly at the end of the phrase, moving directly to the climax of the whole tune which occurs at the beginning of the fourth phrase before bringing us back home. A good tune, a good design, by a master composer.

Note that the hymn is to be sung in unison. One hymnal adds "with vigour." (*Songs of Praise*, London, Oxford University Press, 1931). We don't know if these are the original wishes of Vaughan Williams nor not, but when we sing this hymn in unison "with vigour" the text is emphasized in a way that lets us know that we are in the midst of a very important event.

*Questions about what you've learned.*

Why is this a good hymn tune? \_\_\_\_\_

In what country did author Caroline Noel and composer Ralph Vaughan Williams live? \_\_\_\_\_

In music, what is an "interval of a third?" \_\_\_\_\_

What other song do you like to sing "with vigour?" \_\_\_\_\_

Hymn Study by John Erickson