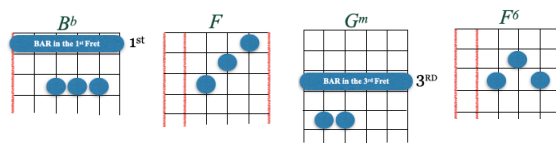


# Were You There?

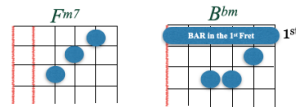
Traditional American Spiritual arranged by Eric Ball

Sing along with International Salvation Army Male Chorus from a 10" shellac 78rpm single recorded in the late 1930's @ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=knLk6vnMWFA>

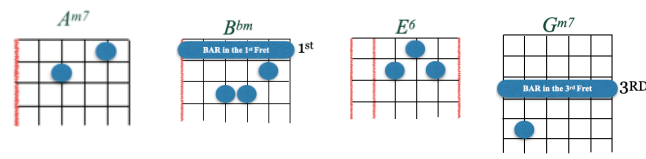
*B<sup>b</sup>* *F* *G<sup>m</sup>* *C* *F* } INTRO  
 Were you there when they crucified my Lord?  
*B<sup>b</sup>* *F<sup>6</sup>* *F<sup>m7</sup>* *F* *B<sup>b</sup>* *A<sup>m7</sup>* *C*



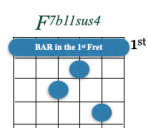
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?  
*F* *B<sup>bm</sup>* *E<sup>6</sup>* *F* *G<sup>m7</sup>* *F<sup>m7</sup>* *F* *F<sup>7b11sus4</sup>* *B<sup>b</sup>* *F<sup>6</sup>* *C*  
 O sometimes it causes me to tremble, brother, tremble.



*B<sup>b</sup>* *F* *G<sup>m</sup>* *C* *F*  
 Were you there when they crucified my Lord?



*B<sup>b</sup>* *F* *G<sup>m</sup>* *C* *F*  
 Were you there when they laid Him in the tomb?  
*B<sup>b</sup>* *F<sup>6</sup>* *F<sup>m7</sup>* *F* *B<sup>b</sup>* *A<sup>m7</sup>* *C*



Were you there when they laid Him in the tomb?  
*F* *B<sup>bm</sup>* *E<sup>6</sup>* *F* *G<sup>m7</sup>* *F<sup>m7</sup>* *F* *F<sup>7b11sus4</sup>* *B<sup>b</sup>* *F<sup>6</sup>* *C*  
 O sometimes it causes me to tremble, brother, tremble.

*B<sup>b</sup>* *F* *G<sup>m</sup>* *C* *F*  
 Were you there when they crucified my Lord?



VERSES FROM ORAL AND WRITTEN TRADITION FOR OTHER PARTS OF THE EASTER SEASON

- Were you there when they nailed Him to the cross *or tree*?
- Were you there when the sun refused to shine?
- Were you there when Our Lord forgave the thief?
- Were you there when the temple veil rent in twain?
- Were you there when He declared that all was done?
- Were you there when they pierced Him in the side?
- Were you there when God raised him from the tomb?
- Were your there when He rose up from the grave *or dead*?
- Were you there when the stone was rolled away?

# Scripture and History

"**Were You There**" is an American spiritual from the African tradition that probably predates the Civil War. It was first published in William Barton's *Old Plantation Hymns* (1899). The origins of the hymn are impossible to trace, borne not from the pen of an individual but out of the communal experience of people living in slavery, and possibly flowing from earlier roots in a spiritual from European traditions known in Tennessee as "Have You Heard How They Crucified My Lord?"

The series of questions that forms the basis of the song are meant to function as a form of *anamnesis*. The Greek, anamnesis literally means to remember, yet is much more than simple mental recall of an event. It calls the community to re-member the past to the present, to bring these historic events to bear on the now and make them part of our story.

When Moses tells the second generation of Hebrew people about to enter the promised land in **Deuteronomy 5:3**, "Not with our ancestors did the Lord make this covenant, but with us, who are all of us here alive today," it is anamnesis; when Jews continue to proclaim at



Moses Speaks to Israel, by Henri Félix Emmanuel Philippoteaux

the Passover Seder, "*We* were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and the Lord our God took *us* out," it is anamnesis; and when the Christian community celebrates the Lord's Supper "in remembrance" (and the Greek word here is anamnesis!) of Christ, it is anamnesis.

"**Were You There**" is then an anamnetic song that is meant to bring the past events of Christ's suffering and death into the present and transform us in its light. The text invites us to identify and walk with the witnesses to Christ's death and resurrection. With distances of geography and time removed, we become part of that great body of

people who come trembling to the cross of Christ for salvation.

by David Bjorlin and from the *Psalter Hymnal Handbook* on <https://hymnary.org/>  
see Mr. Bjorlin's entire article at [www.umcdiscipleship.org](http://www.umcdiscipleship.org)

Eric Ball was born in Kingswood, Gloucestershire, the eldest of 16 children whose parents were active in the Salvation Army. He learned piano and organ, and in 1919 started work in the Salvation Army musical instrument department in central London, soon moving to the Musical Editorial Department as a composer. He became an officer in the Salvation Army, and in 1928 re-established and led the 18-member Salvationist Publishing and Supplies (S. P. & S.) Band. In 1942, he became bandmaster of the International Staff Band (I.S.B.), the premier Salvation Army band, with the rank of major.

Wikipedia



Jesus Breaking Bread  
By J Drake  
Image from [WildBlessings.com](http://WildBlessings.com)

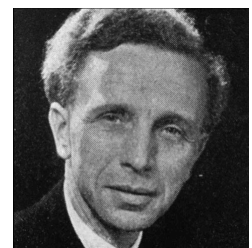


Image from  
[nezzyonbrass.com](http://nezzyonbrass.com)

*Lent Hymns and Songs as you go*