

Holy God We Praise Thy Name

Te Deum

The hymn tune and text for “Holy God We Praise Thy Name” were originally joined in 18th-century Germany under the title, “Grosser Gott, wir loben dich.” But the text of this hymn is based on the first-century Latin “Te Deum” that dates back to the early church fathers, Ambrose and Augustine. This ancient hymn text pre-dates the Catholic/Protestant split and is still actively used by both groups. “Te Deum” are the first two words of the first line literally translated, “Thee, God, we praise.”

We praise thee, O God: we acknowledge thee to be the Lord.
 All the earth doth worship thee: the Father everlasting.
 To thee all Angels cry aloud: the Heavens, and all the Powers therein.
 To thee Cherubim and Seraphim: continually do cry,
 Holy, Holy, Holy: Lord God of Hosts;
 Heaven and earth are full of the Majesty: of thy glory.
 The glorious company of the Apostles: praise thee.
 The goodly fellowship of the Prophets: praise thee.
 The noble army of Martyrs: praise thee.
 The holy Church throughout all the world: doth acknowledge thee;
 The Father: of an infinite Majesty;
 Thine honorable, true: and only Son;
 Also the Holy Ghost: the Comforter.
 Thou art the King of Glory: O Christ.
 Thou art the everlasting Son: of the Father.
 When thou tookest upon thee to deliver man: thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb.
 When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death :
 thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.
 Thou sittest at the right hand of God : in the glory of the Father.
 We believe that thou shalt come : to be our Judge.
 We therefore pray thee, help thy servants :
 whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood.
 Make them to be numbered with thy Saints : in glory everlasting.

This text has been set numerous times by leading composers such as Haydn, Mozart, Berlioz, and Verdi. Modern composers, including John Rutter and Dan Forrest, continue to write new music for these glorious words. The poem acts as a summary of key texts in the Psalms, Isaiah, the Gospels, the Epistles and Revelation. In pure praise, it highlights the attributes of each member of the Triune God. When we sing this hymn, we join in chorus with believers throughout the world and down through the ages to declare that God is the Lord, the Father everlasting and to beg help from His Son who alone can redeem us and purchase our entry into glory.



A velum printing of the Te Deum from an early choir book. Books like these were hand drawn on sheep skin and were shared by the entire choir as they stood in a semi-circle around a single music stand.

*Holy God, we praise Thy name;
 Lord of all, we bow before Thee;
 All on earth Thy scepter claim,
 All in heaven above adore Thee:
 Infinite Thy vast domain,
 Everlasting is Thy reign.*

*Hark, the glad celestial hymn
 Angel choirs above are raising;
 Cherubim and seraphim,
 In unceasing chorus praising:
 Fill the heavens with sweet accord:
 Holy, holy, holy Lord.*

*Holy Father, holy Son,
 Holy Spirit: three we name Thee,
 Though in essence only one;
 Undivided God we claim Thee,
 And adoring, bend the knee
 While we sing our praise to Thee.*