

A Brief History of the Doxology

Born in Hertfordshire, Bishop Thomas Ken (1637–1711) was orphaned as a child and raised by his sister Anna and her husband Izaak Walton. Ken was ordained as an Anglican priest in 1662, serving as rector to several parishes and as a chaplain to Princess Mary of Orange (1679–80), **King Charles II (1683)**, and the Tangier Expedition (1683–84). The original date of composition by Ken for the text of “Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow” is unknown. The first mention of the hymn is in 1674 as the presumed final stanza of two longer hymns: “Awake, My Soul and with the Sun” and “Glory to Thee, My God, this Night.”

Commonly called “The Doxology,” Ken’s acclamation of praise is actually one of many doxological declarations that appear in many hymns, often in final stanza. See, for example, the last stanzas of “Of the Father’s Love Begotten,” “All Creatures of Our God and King,” and “Now Thank We All Our God” (1647). Though less common now, the pattern for many mainline Protestant congregations has been to sing another doxological acclamation, the “Gloria Patri,” earlier in a worship service, and Ken’s stanza at the time of the offertory. Of note is the cosmic character of Ken’s praise - “all creatures here below” and “above ye heavenly hosts”—calling on the entire cosmos to praise God. The Trinitarian structure of Ken’s hymn has also led to its common liturgical use. The first line describes the person of God the Father as the source of all blessings. The second line, though, speaks to God the Spirit through whom all creatures praise God. The third line points to God the Son, who is begotten of the Father, firstborn of heaven and superior to angels and the heavenly host. The fourth line summarizes the stanza and all of praise in general, since all praise is directed toward God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The United Methodist Hymnal pairs this text with the hymn tune OLD 100th, which is attributed to John Calvin’s composer, Louis Bourgeois c 1510 – 1559.

September 25, 2022

Psalm 91

¹ Those who dwell in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, ² will say to the Lord,

**“My refuge and my fortress;
my God, in whom I trust.”**

³ For the Lord will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence;

⁴ and will cover you with his pinions,

**under the Lord’s wings you will find refuge;
God’s faithfulness is a shield and buckler.**

⁵ You will not fear the terror of the night,
nor the arrow that flies by day,

**⁶ nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness,
nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.**

⁷ A thousand may fall at your side,
ten thousand at your right hand,
but it will not come near you.

**⁸ You will only look with your eyes
and see the recompense of the wicked.**

⁹ Because you have made the LORD your refuge,
the Most High your habitation,

**¹⁰ no evil shall befall you,
no scourge come near your tent.**

¹¹ For God will give his angels charge over you
to guard you in all your ways.

**¹² They will bear you up on their hands,
lest you dash your foot against a stone.**

**¹³ You will tread on the lion and the adder,
the young lion and the serpent you will trample under
foot.**

¹⁴ Because they cleave to me in love, I will deliver them;

I will protect them, because they know my name

¹⁵ When they call to me, I will answer them;
I will be with them in trouble,
I will rescue them and honor them.

**¹⁶ I will satisfy them with long life,
and show them my salvation.**

1 Timothy 6: 6-19

⁶ Now godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷ For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out. ⁸ And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. ⁹ But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all *kinds* of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. ¹¹ But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. ¹² Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. ¹³ I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and *before* Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, ¹⁴ that you keep *this* commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, ¹⁵ which He will manifest in His own time, *He who is* the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶ who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom *be* honor and everlasting power. Amen.

¹⁷ Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. ¹⁸ *Let them* do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, ¹⁹ storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

St Luke 16: 19-31

¹⁹ "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. ²⁰ But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, ²¹ desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. ²² So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

²⁴ "Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' ²⁵ But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. ²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'

²⁷ "Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, ²⁸ for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' ²⁹ Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' ³⁰ And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' ³¹ But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.' "